PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 107

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1986-87

COMPRISING PERIOD
8 DECEMBER—19 DECEMBER 1986

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
£62.00 net

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP, OCTOBER 1986)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC
LORD CHANCELLOR—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hailsham of St. Marylebone, CH
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Edwards, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER—The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. John Moore, MP

LAW OFFICERS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Havers, QC, MP
LORD ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC, MP

MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Young
Mrs. Lynda Chalker, MP
Minister for Overseas Development—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
Timothy Renton, Esq, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, TREASURY—The Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, HOME OFFICE—
David Waddington, Esq, QC, MP
David Mellor, Esq, MP
The Earl of Caithness
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Alick Buchanan-Smith, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—
Minister of State for the Armed Forces—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
Minister of State for Defence Procurement—The Lord Trefgarne
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY—
Minister for Health—Antony Newton, Esq, OBE, MP
Minister for Social Security and the Disabled—John Major, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE—Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—
The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead

MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—
Minister for Local Government—Dr. Rhodes Boyson, MP
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction—John Patten, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, SCOTTISH OFFICE—The Lord Glenarthur
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
Minister for Information Technology—Geoffrey Pattie, Esq, MP
Minister of State—Giles Shaw, Esq, MP
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT—David Mitchell, Esq, MP

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—
MINISTER—The Rt. Hon. Michael Jopling, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY—Donald Thompson, Esq, MP

Arts and Libraries, Office of—
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—
The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, MP

Defence—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Lord Trefgarne
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP

Education and Science—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Robert Dunn, Esq, MP
George Walden, Esq, MP

Employment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
PAYMASTER GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
David Trippier, Esq, MP
John Lee, Esq, MP

Energy—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Alick Buchanan-Smith, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Alastair Goodlad, Esq, MP
David Hunt, Esq, MBE, MP

Environment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Local Government—Dr. Rhodes Boyson, MP
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction—John Patten, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Richard Tracey, Esq, MP
The Lord Skelmersdale
Christopher Chope, Esq, MP

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Young
Mrs. Lynda Chalker, MP
Minister for Overseas Development—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
Timothy Renton, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Timothy Eggar, Esq, MP

Health and Social Security—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Health—Antony Newton, Esq, OBE, MP
Minister for Social Security and the Disabled—John Major, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Baroness Trumpington
Mrs. Edwina Currie, MP
Nicholas Lyell, Esq, QC, MP

Home Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
David Waddington, Esq, QC, MP
David Mellor Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—
The Hon. Douglas Hogg, MP

Law Officers' Department—
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Michael Havers, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP

Lord Advocate's Department—
LORD-ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC, MP

Lord Chancellor—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hailsham of St. Marylebone, CH

Management and Personnel Office—
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Northern Ireland Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Lyell
Richard Needham, Esq, MP
Dr. Brian Mawhinney, MP
Peter Viggers, Esq, MP

Paymaster General and Minister for Employment—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP

Privy Council Office—
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Scottish Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Lord Glenarthur
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
John MacKay, Esq, MP
Michael Ancram, Esq, MP
Ian Lang, Esq, MP

Trade and Industry—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Information Technology—Geoffrey Pattie, Esq, MP
Minister of State—Giles Shaw, Esq, MP
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
John Butcher, Esq, MP
Lord Lucas of Chilworth
Michael Howard, Esq, QC, MP

Transport—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. John Moore, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—David Mitchell, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Peter Bottomley, Esq, MP
Michael Spicer, Esq, MP
The Lord Brabazon of Tara

Treasury—

FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORDS COMMISSIONERS—
The Hon. Timothy Sainsbury, MP
Michael Neubert, Esq, MP
Tony Durant, Esq, MP
Peter Lloyd, Esq, MP
The Hon. Mark Lennox-Boyd, MP
ASSISTANT WHIPS—
The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
Gerald Malone, Esq, MP
David Lightbown, Esq, MP
Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP
Michael Portillo, Esq, MP

Welsh Office—

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Edwards, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
Mark Robinson, Esq, MP

Her Majesty's Household—

LORD CHAMBERLAIN—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Airlie, GCVO
LORD STEWARD—The Rt. Hon. The Duke of Northumberland, KG, TD
MASTER OF THE HORSE—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Westmorland, KCVO
TREASURER—John Cope, Esq, MP
COMPTROLLER—The Hon. Robert Boscawen, MC, MP
VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Denham
CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD—Viscount Davidson
LORDS IN WAITING—The Viscount Long, The Lord Beaverbrook, The Lord Hesketh, The Earl of Dundee
BARONESS IN WAITING—The Baroness Hooper

SECOND CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER, REPRESENTING CHURCH COMMISSIONERS—Sir William van Straubenzee, MBE, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

THE SPEAKER—Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, MP

CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Harold Walker, MP

FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Ernest Armstrong, MP

SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Sir Paul Dean, MP

CHAIRMEN'S PANEL

Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP, Ian Campbell, Esq, MP, Donald Coleman, Esq, MP, Patrick Cormack, Esq, MP, David Crouch, Esq, MP, Stan Crowther, Esq, MP, Miss Janet Fookes, MP, Mr. John Forrester, Esq, MP, Sir Philip Holland, MP, John Hunt, Esq, MP, David Knox, Esq, MP, James Lamond, Esq, MP, Ted Leadbitter, Esq, MP, Hugh McCartney, Esq, MP, Albert McQuarrie Esq, MP, Sir Anthony Meyer, MP, Michael Morris, Esq, MP, Sir Michael Shaw, MP, Michael Shersby, Esq, MP, Sir John Wells, MP, Nicholas Winterton, Esq, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—

Rt. Hon. The Speaker (Chairman), Alan Beith, Esq, MP, Rt. Hon. John Biffen, MP, Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP, Sir Paul Bryan, DSO, MC, MP, Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, MP

SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION—R. B. Sands

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY—P. J. Kitcatt, CB

SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—H. Knorpel, CB, G. E. Gammie, CB

SPEAKER'S CHAPLAIN—Rev. Canon T. Beeson

TRAINBEARER (PARLIAMENTARY)—D. J. Lord

DEPUTY TRAINBEARER (ADMINISTRATION)—P. L. Warwick

ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—P. Harvey, CB

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS

SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—D. W. Robson

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—Sir Kenneth Bradshaw, KCB

CLERK ASSISTANT—C. J. Boulton, CB

CLERK OF COMMITTEES—D. A. M. Pring, CB, MC

PRINCIPAL CLERKS—
- J. H. Willcox (Public Bills)
- R. S. Lankester (Select Committees)
- D. W. Limon (Table Office)
- H. M. Barclay (Private Bills)
- M. T. Ryle (Journal Office)
- J. F. Sweetman, TD (Overseas Office)
- W. R. McKay (Financial Committees)
- C. B. Winnifrith (Select Committees)
- J. R. Rose (Standing Committees)

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERKS—A. J. Hastings, R. J. Willoughby, S. A. L. Panton, R. B. Sands, G. Cubie, M. R. Jack, PhD, D. G. Millar, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Ms. A. Milner-Barry, R. W. G. Wilson, W. A. Proctor, F. A. Cranmer, R. J. Rogers, C. R. M. Ward, PhD, Ms. H. E. Irwin, D. W. N. Doig, A. Sandall, MLitt

SENIOR CLERKS—M. H. Cooper, PhD, D. L. Natzler, E. P. Silk, Mrs. S. A. de Ste. Croix, A. R. Kennon, D. W. Robson, L. C. Laurence Smyth, A. R. Gren, S. J. Patrick, D. J. Gerhold, C. J. Poyser, D. F. Harrison, S. J. Priestley, C. P. R. Bennett, A. H. Doherty, P. A. Evans, R. I. S. Phillips, R. G. James, J. Hallowell (acting), J. B. Ingram (acting), P. D. Austwick (acting), W. T. Deakin (acting)

ASSISTANT CLERKS—Miss E. J. Baker, Miss P. A. Helme, D. R. Lloyd, R. A. Lambert, B. M. Hutton, J. S. Benger, Mrs. E. C. Samson, P. A. Hibbert

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—E. F. Riddles, K. J. Brown, G. E. Clayton, I. C. Bryan

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—C. L. Watson, L. L. Kaye, Miss R. J. Challis, A. P. Hubner, Miss S. J. Fox, P. G. Moon, Mrs. P. Fisher, F. McShane, J. D. Whatley, S. D. Barrett, M. Clark, Miss A. M. Loader

SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS—I. S. Orton, Ms. H. C. Beaumont, Miss J. Ward, R. A. Wilkins, P. R. Daley

EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR OF THE VOTE—G. H. Bright DEPUTY—B. Tidball SENIOR ASSISTANTS—Miss B. Balcomb, Miss L. Lewis ASSISTANTS J. Puricelli, Mrs. L. M. Nugent, K. B. Wood

EXAMINERS OF PETITIONS FOR PRIVATE BILLS—H. M. Barclay, J. M. Davies

REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS—R. S. Lankester

TAXING OFFICER—H. M. Barclay

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—R. A. Broomfield, Miss S. M. Pritchard, Miss F. L. Allingham

DEPARTMENT OF THE SERJEANT AT ARMS

SERJEANT AT ARMS—Major G. V. S. Le Fanu

DEPUTY SERJEANT AT ARMS—Major P. N. W. Jennings

ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—M. J. A. Cummins

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SERJEANTS AT ARMS—P. A. J. Wright, J. F. Collins

CLERK IN CHARGE—Miss M. Frampton, MBE

ASSISTANT CLERK IN CHARGE—D. W. Snell

ADMISSION ORDER OFFICE—E. D. Palfrey, A. Chipperfield, BEM, Mrs. S. V. Warren

PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—J. Blood

SECOND PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—G. H. Sargeant

SENIOR DOORKEEPERS—H. D. Bloxham, S. E. R. Skinner, R. T. Warboys, R. A. F. Chapman, J. D. Garnett, R. H. Usher

HEAD OFFICE KEEPER—W. H. Hazard, MBE

SENIOR OFFICE KEEPERS—M. Bryant, K. R. Kemp, W. J. Stokes

NURSING SISTER—Miss E. Needham

DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN—D. Menhennet, DPhil

DEPUTY LIBRARIAN—D. J. T. Englefield

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH—

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS—H. J. Palmer, G. F. Lock

DEPUTY ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS—J. B. Poole, PhD, Miss J. B. Tanfield, S. Z. Young, Mrs. H. R. Coates, Miss P. J. Baines, BLitt, K. G. Cuninghame, Mrs. J. M. Wainwright, FI InfSc, C. C. Pond, Ph.D, Mrs. C. B. Andrews

SENIOR LIBRARY CLERKS—Mrs. J. M. Lourie, Ms. F. Poole, Mrs. J. M. Fiddick, C. R. Barclay, Mrs. C. M. Gillie, Miss C. E. Nield, R. C. Clements, R. J. Ware, DPhil, Ms. D. Gore, PhD, R. J. Twigger, B. K. Winetrobe, T. N. Edmonds, R. J. Cracknell, Miss O. M. Gay, Miss E. M. McInnes, Mrs. G. Allen

ASSISTANT LIBRARY CLERKS—Miss C. J. Gilmour, PhD, Miss M. Baber, C. M. Bowlby, Miss A. J. Saville, A. D. Lyall, Mrs. P. Carling (Temp.)

SENIOR LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Miss R. Wheatman, ALA, Mrs. S. M. Withers, ALA, Mrs. H. V. Holden, ALA, Miss J. Seaton, FLA, K. N. H. Parry, ALA

EDUCATION OFFICER—Mrs. E. R. Stones,

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Mrs. P A. Bozdan

HIGHER LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—J. A. Prince, MLS, Mrs. P. V. Wiles, Mrs. D. W. Clark, M. Southgate, Miss C. E. Fretten, ALA, Miss M. H. Fletcher, Miss G. C. Howarth, Miss A. Siswell, Ms. V. R. Cattell, Mrs. S. M. Hingley, AIIA, Ms. A. Muir, Mrs. P. E. Cook, ALA, Miss I. O. White, ALA, Ms. H. Armstrong, Miss E. J. Jones, ALA

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—J. R. Hutson

LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. M. A. Azim, ALA, G. Haig, Mrs. J. A. P. Skipworth, ALA, Miss B. Mee, MIInfSc., Miss G. L. Cooper, Miss S. Holland, LLA, Mrs. F. M. Ward, A. D. Parker, ALA, Miss A. R. Bacon, Mrs. E. H. Riley, ALA, Ms. J. B. Hall

CHIEF OFFICE CLERK—D. J. Plowright, Miss N. Harland

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—J. F. Youle, P. R. Davis, J. S. Came, S. A. Wise, Mrs. J. MacDonald, Miss B. A. Rowlands, ALA, D. B. Inns, I. M. Duncan, BEM (Head Library Attendant)

VOTE OFFICE—

DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—G. R. Russell

DEPUTY DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—H. C. Foster

ASSISTANT DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—O. B. T. Sweeney

SUPERINTENDING CLERKS—C. J. Montgomery, C. D. Lister

VOTE OFFICE ASSISTANTS—T. E. Aves, T. S. Wilson, Mrs. S. Fuzio, B. G. Underwood

SALE OFFICE—SUPERINTENDING CLERK—C. C. Clarke, MBE

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT—A. C. J. Poole

FEES OFFICE—

ACCOUNTANT—J. L. G. Dobson

DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT—A. J. Lewis

SENIOR ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—G. P. Brown (Temp.)

ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANTS—F. W. Brewer, A. R. Marskell, M. J. Barram, Miss M. M. McColl (Temp.)

DEPUTY ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—K. E. Johnson, R. Gunn, M. J. H. Caswell, Mrs. P. D. Page, Mrs. J. Yexley, Mrs. N. Norman (Temp.), Mrs. G. Crowther (Temp.), D. A. Tucker (Temp.), Mrs. P. M. Lowther

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—Miss D. E. Johnson, Miss T. D. Ruewell (Temp.), Mrs. D. K. P. Simons (Temp.), Mrs. D. Hill, Miss P. Hurford (Temp.), Mrs. J. C. Ponting (Temp.), B. W. Palmer (Temp.), Miss J. Bell (Temp.)

ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICE—

HEAD OF OFFICE—G. A. Roberts

DEPUTY HEAD OF OFFICE—J. A. Robb

ASSISTANT HEAD OF OFFICE—

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss R. A. Cole, V. H. Stocker

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—N.P. Crawley

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—P. C. Kingsley

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—R. S. Harrison, Miss J. Bremner

COMPUTER OFFICE—

COMPUTER OFFICER—R. S. Morgan, FBCS, FIInfSc, ASSISTANT COMPUTER OFFICER—Mrs. G. S. P. Smith

STAFF INSPECTOR—R. C. Collins

INTERNAL AUDITOR—Miss C. D. Stone, FCCA

WELFARE OFFICER—Miss L. Hunt

DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

EDITOR—K. S. Morgan

DEPUTY EDITOR—L. R. Johns

PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT EDITORS—R. V. Hadlow, J. Gourley, F. G. Brotherston, C. R. G. Watson, OBE

ASSISTANT EDITORS—P. Walker, E. Holland, I. D. Church, J. Withers

COMMITTEE SUB-EDITORS—W. G. Garland, Miss V. Grainger, J. Ledgerwood, D. Crosswell, Miss C. Ritchie, Miss V. A. A. Clarke, Mrs. A. Roberts, Miss H. A. Hales, Miss L. Sutherland, Mrs. E. J. Gregory, S. M. Hutchinson, Miss V. A. Widgery, Miss C. Fogarty

REPORTERS—Miss H. Thompson, Miss M. Babington, Miss A. Harris, L. Gilmore, Ms G. Hardgrave, P. Ogilthorpe, Miss C. Hanly, Miss J. K. Belcher, Miss J. A. Bradshaw, Miss E. Morris, Miss K. Stewart, Miss J. Beck, M. Watson, Miss J. Brown, Miss J. Goodman, Miss I. McCarthy, Miss L. Sinclair, Miss E. Watt

PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—D. N. Harrington

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBERS—Mrs. E. M. Bangay, Mrs. H. Stollery

PRINCIPAL HANSARD ASSISTANT—D. J. Lawler

SENIOR HANSARD ASSISTANT—Miss R. Washington

ANNUNCIATOR SUPERINTENDENT—H. J. Wellings

REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER—W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER—E. J. Nash, MCFA

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR—Mrs. S. Nicholls

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO GENERAL MANAGER—Mrs. A. G. Lunn

BANQUETING MANAGER—C. J. Griffiths

CATERING ACCOUNTANT—D. R. W. Wood, FCA

ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley

EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay

HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe

HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER (PSA)—W. H. Lewis, OBE

HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent I. K. Slessor

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—Mrs. J. Garbutt

POSTMASTER—C. E. Tomkins

TRANSPORT MANAGER—Mrs. M. Hannant

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES — VOLUME 107

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1986-87

House of Commons

Monday 8 December 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

Labour Statistics

1. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; what were the equivalent figures for 1979; and what has been the percentage increase in each case.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Nicholas Edwards): On 9 October 1986 the total numbers of unemployed claimants in the Newport travel-to-work area, Gwent and Wales were 12,833, 28,863 and 174,105 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a comparable basis.

Mr. Hughes: Has the Welsh Office been notified that we are approaching the year of the homeless? Surely this is not the time to slash £2 million from Newport's housing budget, when there are 6,000 people on the waiting list and 3,000 families in urgent need. Why does the Secretary of State not put his back into a major housing drive which could do a lot of social good, besides taking thousands out of the dole queue? Perhaps he might then not have to fiddle the unemployment figures.

Mr. Edwards: We have given substantially increased allocations to local authorities, and there will be a substantial increase in housing expenditure in the year ahead, I have also announced several other major new initiatives in Wales which will help to create a large number of new housing projects in the Principality.

Sir Raymond Gower: Is it not a fact that there has also been some increase in the number of notified vacancies in the areas that my right hon. Friend mentioned in his answer?

Mr. Edwards: Not only has there been an increase in the number of notified vacancies there has been a fall during the past year in the number of people who are unemployed. Allocations of Government factories in Wales are running at about 2·25 million sq ft, which is an all-time record, and the number of jobs being provided by regional selective assistance and regional development grants is also running at record levels.

Mr. Ray Powell: As the Secretary of State continually comes here to Welsh Questions and whines about unemployment and his inability to get it down, might I suggest that he would be well advised to advise some industrialists to get on their bikes? Some industrialists on the south-east coast might show some initiative and come to Wales and the valleys. The Secretary of State talks about the 174,105 unemployed claimants in Wales, which is the fiddled figure. The Government have taken 18 steps to reduce the unemployment figure. The true figure is nearer 250,000. Is it not time that the Government started to tell industrialists to get on their bikes and come to Wales?

Mr. Edwards: A large number of industrialists are doing just that, which is why we have attracted 20 per cent. of all inward investment into the United Kingdom during the past three years, why I can announce today that Celatose is proceeding with an expansion project at Pontllanfraith, which will help to create an additional 190 jobs, and why there is such splendid activity by the private sector through the Ogwr partnership trust, which, through its initiative, is creating some 946 jobs in the hon. Gentleman's constituency. One could go on with a series of other examples.

Mr. Terlezki: Does my right hon. Friend agree, and do the Opposition agree, that unemployment in Wales has

come down by more than 6,000 during the past few months, and that that is due to my right hon. Friend, who travels around the world, trying to bring industries to south Wales where they employ labour? Is that not a credit to my right hon. Friend and to the industries that come to Wales and provide jobs?

Mr. Edwards: I am glad that there are signs of improvements and that the unemployment figures are about 8,500 down on the same time last year. I believe that the major series of initiatives that we have announced in recent weeks will help to accelerate that process.

Sheep

2. **Mr. Harvey** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to introduce quotas on sheep production in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: There are no plans to introduce sheep meat quotas in the Community.

The June 1986 census results record a further 2·3 per cent. increase in the sheep breeding flock in Wales, and the industry continues to benefit under the EC sheepmeat regime.

In the last marketing year sheep producers in Wales benefited by £73 million under the two sheep premium schemes and hill livestock compensatory allowances.

Mr. Harvey: I welcome those excellent figures, but does my right hon. Friend agree that farming faces one of its most uncertain prospects for years because of factors outside the Government's control? Will he consider introducing quotas on sheepmeat production to protect upland farmers from the lowland farmers who are going out of cereals? Will my right hon. Friend also assure us that there will be no swingeing cuts in the milk quota?

Mr. Edwards: I can understand the great concern in the industry, and I raised the question of sheepmeat quotas in my speech to the NFU at Aberystwyth only a few weeks ago. The industry ought to be considering that matter, although the issues are complicated and we are still a long way from self-sufficiency in sheepmeat. It is right that the industry should be considering the possibilities.

Mr. Geraint Howells: I am sure the Secretary of State will agree that his Government virtually abolished the dairy industry when the quota system was introduced. If things remain as they are, will he introduce, not a quota system for sheep, but measures to get rid of the surpluses in intervention in the Community?

Mr. Edwards: It is all very well asking us to get rid of surpluses within the Community, but it is wrong then to pretend to the electorate that that can be done without difficulty and pain. That approach is wholly dishonest. We have listened to the ideas put forward by the hon. Gentleman's party, but they offer no solution to the problems of the industry.

Dr. Roger Thomas: Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that unless we tackle the CAP comprehensively, other sectors of farming, such as those taken out of cereal growing, will turn to sheep and those lowland areas will have a terrific advantage over hill sheep farmers in Wales?

Mr. Edwards: Clearly we must look at the problems of the CAP against the background that changes in any one commodity have results on others. We must be very careful to look at the knock-on effects.

Mr. Best: Does my right hon. Friend accept that the small farmer is the backbone of agricultural life in Wales and that there needs to be positive discrimination in favour of the small farmer in any changes made in agriculture? As well as that positive discrimination in favour of the small farmer in whatever sector, we need to take a comprehensive view of agriculture, rather than each sector being viewed separately. That will overcome the uncertainty faced by agriculture.

Mr. Edwards: The Government did favour the smaller producers when the milk quota system was introduced. However, the consequences must be fully thought through, because we must remember that there are many more small producers in Europe than in this country. The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) has suggested that those producing 250,000 litres or less and those with financial difficulties should be entireley sustained in their businesses, but if we reduce production that will involve even more severe consequences for the medium-size and larger farmers. I hope that that is recognised and that people have worked out what a policy of maintaining support for smaller farmers will mean for agriculture generally.

Mr. D. E. Thomas: In view of the relatively greater importance of the sheep industry to Wales than to other countries in the United Kingdom, why is the Secretary of State in the Chamber today and not representing Wales with British Agriculture Ministers at discussions in Brussels? Will he at last accept our criticism that he will not be taking seriously his responsibilities as the Welsh Minister of Agriculture until he goes there?

Mr. Edwards: There is absolutely no doubt that the sheepmeat regime and the support for the sheep industry has been one of the great success stories. Indeed, the reason why my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Harvey) asked the question was to express concern that if the success continues and the number of sheep increases, we shall over-produce. The hon. Gentleman should be congratulating us on the success of our sheepmeat support policies.

Local Authority Housing

3. **Mr. Alex Carlile** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many new council houses he expects will be built in Wales in 1987-88.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Mark Robinson): No reliable estimates are available. Local authorities are free to determine their own priorities for housing investment within the resources available to them.

Mr. Carlile: Does the Minister agree that the current level of council house building in Wales is abominably low? Bearing in mind that 40 per cent. of council house applicants are single people without other accommodation of a reasonable sort, will he tell us what specific measures he will take to ensure that accommodation is made available for single people and for young couples who are just embarking on their life together?

Mr. Robinson: Local authorities are responsible for the matters that the hon. and learned Gentleman raises, but they are not the only public sector bodies responsible for housing provision. Public sector starts as a whole were 17 per cent. higher in 1985 than in 1984.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Does my hon. Friend accept that, from whatever Left-wing party it comes, merely throwing more taxpayers' money at the problem will never be the real answer? Is not, instead, the example of Cardiff city council, in partnership with a housing association and free enterprise finance, a classic example of the right way forward?

Mr. Robinson: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. Only last week I was pleased to announce an increase in provision of 22 per cent. to the Housing Corporation. In terms of throwing money at the public sector housing stock, I am pleased to say that we have increased gross provision for 1987-88 by 19 per cent., or a total of £154 million.

Mr. Anderson: Surely the Minister must be aware that council house waiting lists are shooting up in Wales for the demographic reason that there is an increase in those in the 20 to 30-year-old group? Does he say that only housing associations should be involved? My city council, for example, will have no completions on the general list next year. Is that what the hon. Gentleman wants? Surely if he looks at the facts, he must avoid his ideological distaste for local authority housing and see a role for both local authorities and housing associations in providing general housing.

Mr. Robinson: The question whether any local authority has any public sector housing starts in a given financial year depends on the priorities of that local authority.

Mr. Raffan: Will my hon. Friend tell the House how many Welsh local authorities are selling land to private builders for the provision of starter homes, how many authorities are entering licensing or partnership schemes with private builders, and what the Welsh Office is doing to encourage more to do so?

Mr. Robinson: Private sector starts rose by almost 30 per cent. in 1985, and we have seen an increase in the provision available for new housing in the Principality over the past year.

Mr. Wigley: How on earth can the Minister expect local authorities to build houses when his Government refuse to give them the capital allocations to do that and refuse them permission to use the capital that they have from the sale of council houses? Is he not misleading the House when he says that there has been an increase of 17 per cent. in public housing—yes, up to 1,400 houses—when there were 4,000 in 1979 and 9,000 in 1975? Is that not a record to be ashamed of?

Mr. Robinson: I do not know where the hon. Gentleman has been for the past week, because I have just given local authorities a huge increase in housing expenditure.

Mr. Barry Jones: Is it not the case that housing allocations return the total only to 1984-85 levels and that Ministers are involved in an electoral ruse because Wales has a housing crisis for which the Government have no strategic answer whatever?

Mr. Robinson: The hon. Gentleman forgets that in 1984-85 we made a special allocation to improve the private sector housing stock. That was a special allocation for one year only. I must point out that the allocations that we have made this year are equal to the level that we had in 1984-85.

Welsh Development Agency

4. **Mr. Rowlands** asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he next hopes to meet the chairman of the Welsh Development Agency to discuss the agency's budget for 1987-88.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I am in regular contact with the chairman of the agency and I have already informed him that the level of resources likely to be available in 1987-88 is about £85 million, which is nearly 13 per cent. higher than the agency's estimated gross expenditure in the present financial year.

Mr. Rowlands: Does the Secretary of State realise that the budget for the WDA next year requires a much bigger input than the one he is suggesting, especially for land reclamation and factory building? Will he tell us whether the budget makes an assumption about the sale of properties by the WDA?

Mr. Edwards: Every year we include an assumption about the sale of properties. In the current year that has been a realistic assumption. I have no reason to think that the estimates are unreal. I announced last Friday that we were making provision to increase the WDA's land reclamation budget by £4 million, which is some 30 per cent. up on the present year. When we are considering the expenditure by the WDA, we should also be considering the sums being made available for other parallel public bodies. I have just announced that substantial provision will be made available for the new Cardiff Bay Development Corporation.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the feeling that the WDA could, and should, do more in the rest of Wales, such as is being done by Mid Wales Development in mid-Wales, to help the launching of small rural enterprises? That does not necessarily involve large sums of money, but it does require the sort of leadership that the WDA could give.

Mr. Edwards: I have approved an additional £2·8 million expenditure by the agency in the present financial year. Of that sum, £1 million is tied to new activity, £500,000 for additional resources for the highly successful subsidised rural loan scheme, and £500,000 for factory building. There is no doubt that the new initiatives that the WDA is taking in that sector are being successful, and we are supporting the agency and seeing that it gets adequate provision for that.

Mr. Livsey: Will the Secretary of State say what proportion of the WDA's budget he expects will be spent on agriculture-related projects? I am thinking particularly of food processing and the updating of abattoirs.

Mr. Edwards: The agency has only just received the provisional indications and now, clearly, has to prepare its budget for the next year. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that the agency has been giving increased priority to the sector to which he refers. It has launched a number of initiatives in that area, such as the agri-food initiative. I have no doubt that it will make provision for that important sector.

Mr. Best: Will my right hon. Friend report on the successful conference last Friday of the WDA's urban renewal unit in Cardiff?

Mr. Edwards: We dealt with urban renewal throughout Wales, especially with some of the major projects being undertaken in the valleys. The conference covered the valleys initiative, the announcement of the garden festival and the work being done in north Wales. I also took the opportunity to announce the extremely exciting and important initiative for the redevelopment of south Cardiff around Cardiff bay.

Mr. Barry Jones: The right hon. Gentleman has announced no bonanza. We know that the agency could easily spend an extra £20 million on derelict land clearance and advance factory building. Does he agree that there is a chasm between the City of London and the industrial areas of Wales, and that there is prejudice in the City against investment in the coalfields and steel areas? What is he doing to ensure that British venture capital companies provide finance for Wales? It is a fact that those venture capital companies provide only 2 per cent. in terms of the British total for Wales, yet we know that fraudsters are making a fast buck in the City. We believe that the right hon. Gentleman has failed to get venture capital for Wales.

Mr. Edwards: As usual, the hon. Gentleman asked a series of questions. The 30 per cent. increase in land reclamation is, as it happens, exactly the figure that the hon. Gentleman requested for land reclamation in comments in the newspapers last week. There has been a substantial interest in Wales by the venture capital market in the past year or two and some very encouraging support, especially for initiatives led by the Welsh Development Agency. The venture capital market is showing that it is aware of the improved financial prospects in Wales. I believe that the initiative that I announced last Friday is by far the most substantial ever announced to encourage private investment in Wales. It opens up massive prospects for private investment in the Principality. I am astonished that the hon. Gentleman did not take the opportunity to wish that very important venture well.

Planning Appeals

5. **Sir Anthony Meyer** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the general principles guiding his decisions on appeals against refusal of planning permission by local authorities in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: It is a statutory requirement on local planning authorities, my right hon. Friend and his inspectors, to consider each case on its merits having regard to all material considerations and the provisions of the relevant development plans.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Is my hon. Friend aware that the apparently growing tendency by Welsh Office inspectors to overturn the decisions of planning authorities is making matters difficult for local authorities, which are trying, first, to limit the seemingly inexorable spread of retirement homes and, secondly, to stop amenity land of high value being encroached upon by speculative building?

Mr. Robinson: I assure my hon. Friend that there has been no change of policy on retirement homes. Planning proposals for residential homes for the elderly are considered against the background of national and local policies. The planning authority has to demonstrate the relevance of those policies in each case and show how interests of acknowledged importance would be harmed. I am confident that inspectors consider the issues thoroughly and fairly.

Mr. John: One such case in which the Secretary of State has overruled the local authority in respect of planning permission is the openair market at Talbot Green. Does the hon. Gentleman accept that that overruling has led to bitter and sustained local opposition? In particular, does he agree that traffic, which is already heavy, will become chaotic when the market is working? Does he agree that the matter was considered insufficiently carefully by the inspector at the appeal? Does the hon. Gentleman feel any responsibility for the dislocation caused to the lives of the inahbitants of that area by this shoddy inquiry?

Mr. Robinson: As I am sure the hon. Gentleman is aware, I cannot comment on individual planning applications. I am not aware of any shortcomings in the procedures which were followed in this case.

Sir Raymond Gower: Can my hon. Friend define any differences in the approaches of local councils and of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his inspectors in respect of planning decisions which, when made by a local authority, tend to reflect social and other pressures which may not fall strictly within the definition of planning? Do the inspectors not have to work solely on the basis of a planning consideration?

Mr. Robinson: Our inspectors are obliged to take account of a variety of policy considerations and circulars when considering planning appeals.

Dr. Marek: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that there is general unease in the Principality about the number of planning permissions granted on appeal against the wishes of the planning authority originally concerned with the matter? This is not restricted to quality homes, but involves all sorts of developments by people who have no connection with the area that they seek to develop. With a view to bearing that point in mind, will the hon. Gentleman review the general principles involved and the instructions which he gives to inspectors on how they should decide appeals? Will he publish the results of any such review?

Mr. Robinson: Inspectors are asked to take into account all relevant considerations and material planning circulars. From time to time we review individual aspects of planning law, and we shall continue to do so.

Mr. Raffan: My question follows on from that of the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek). Is my hon. Friend aware of the concern of many local authorities, including Delyn borough council, that the Welsh Office does not attach sufficient importance to adopted local and structure plans? Will my hon. Friend ensure in future that appeal decisions are founded on those local planning policies which represent the views of the areas that they cover?

Mr. Robinson: I assure my hon. Friend that structure plans are one of the material factors that inspectors are obliged to take into account.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Is it not usually better to leave the decision-making to local people in these matters? For example, in Newport there is concern about the Secretary of State's guidelines, which have been responsible for the vetoing of an enforcement order on a scrapyard near to the new leisure centre, which will have to be relocated. Why is the Welsh Office not assisting Newport borough council in its drive for tourism, especially as the royal national eisteddfod is coming to Newport in 1988?

Mr. Robinson: I welcome the fact that the eisteddfod is coming to Newport in 1988. However, the implication of the hon. Gentleman's question is that we should change the planning laws. We do not have any proposals to do that.

Flood Damage

6. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what response his Department intends making to assist the victims of flood damage in *(a)* the Cynon Valley and *(b)* other parts of Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: County and district councils for the areas concerned have wide discretionary powers to alleviate the impact of emergencies such as flooding and to provide assistance to victims. I understand that the Cynon Valley borough council has already given financial aid to householders most affected by recent flooding in its area.

Mrs. Clwyd: As the Secretary of State knows, the Cynon Valley has been identified as one of the four most deprived areas in the United Kingdom. Is he aware that householders in Cwmamam suffered severe loss through the flooding of their houses, sometimes to a depth of 6 ft? Is he further aware that some householders lost electrical equipment, furniture, carpets and personal possessions? Many of them were not insured for household contents because they were recovering from the miners' strike.

Will the Secretary of State be more sympathetic in his attitude towards those people? The council has given only a token payment of £100 per family. That is obviously not sufficient to compensate them for their loss. Will he be as sympathetic to the people of Cynon Valley as he has, quite rightly, been to the farmers of west Wales? I am not criticising him for that. However, I would expect him to be as sympathetic to the people of Cynon Valley as he has been to the farmers, who also suffered through the flooding.

Mr. Edwards: I have every sympathy with those who were affected by the floods of 18 November. I know that considerable damage was caused. However, the district council has wide powers to provide immediate assistance for the emergency and there are well-established procedures. If the sums involved are substantial, the council can come to the Government for assistance. Indeed, I received a letter today from the council seeking such assistance from us and from the European Community.

The rules are clearly laid down and the responsibility for paying sums of money is within the power of the district council. In the event of a large emergency beyond its normal resources, there are well-established arrangements for the council to come to central Government for assistance.

Mr. Rogers: The Minister referred to the wide powers of local authorities. What is the point of local authorities having powers without the resources to help? Why does he not realise that and get out of that money-grooved frame of mind? It is not money that is required, but alterations to the infrastructure so that flooding does not occur. Is he aware that during the past three years, as a result of considerable flooding in the Rhondda—and it is no good the Under-Secretary of State smirking—hundreds of people have been flooded every time it has rained? What is desperately needed—and I have asked for this time and time again—is for the Welsh Office to convene a meeting of the local authorities, the Forestry Commission and large riparian owners so that they can together solve the problem of flooding in the south Wales valleys. Why does the Secretary of State not chair a conference to deal with the problem and come up with some ideas?

Mr. Edwards: Major work has been undertaken in the valleys since the disastrous floods in 1981, and a great deal of improvement has been achieved. I am glad that on this occasion the flooding in the Rhondda was much less severe. Indeed, the worst floods were in the Cynon Valley. On the matter of resources, the threshold for assistance for the Cynon Valley borough council amounts to about £23,000. We are not dealing with enormous sums of money before the local authority can request central Government assistance. Responsibility lies with the local authority, and it is best qualified to decide whether assistance is required in a particular flooding incident.

Mr. Coleman: Is the Minister aware that the recent heavy rainfall in south Wales has again resulted in movement of the mountain at Godre'r-graig Ystalyfera and the demolition of houses? What assistance can the local authorities expect to receive from the Department to enable them to assist people badly affected by that phenomenon?

Mr. Edwards: As I have said, local authorities have wide powers to provide that kind of assistance and there are well-established rules, laid down by successive Governments, to provide for central Government assistance in major incidents in which the sums involved are very large.

Leasehold Reform

7. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the Government's proposals for leasehold reform following the Nugee report, as they affect Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: We have received six representations concerning these proposals.

Mr. Davies: Perhaps I may make it seven. Does the Under-Secretary of State recall writing to me some 12 months ago saying that he and his colleagues at the Welsh Office fully understood my constituents' concern about the activities of leasehold companies such as Castle Beg and Banana Bliss? Will he confirm that there is nothing in the Government's proposed legislation to tackle the abuses suffered by my constituents and others at the hands of such companies? Why have the Government taken no further action to enfranchise leaseholders and to give people greater rights of choice in nominating their own insurance companies? Is it too late for a change of mind?

Mr. Robinson: I am pleased to inform the hon. Gentleman that the position has not changed since 30 June, when he said that he was grateful for my reply and that it was

"most encouraging to the people of south Wales." [*Official Report*, 30 June 1986; Vol. 100, c. 682.]

I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman will have to wait until the legislation is published. I think that he would be wise not to judge it until then.

Young Children

8. **Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of his Department's expenditure for 1986-87 will be devoted to the needs of children under five years of age.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Direct provision for children under five is made only through voluntary sector grants. In the current year more than £1 million has been allocated to voluntary organisations in Wales concerned with the needs of children.

Mr. Thomas: As the specific initiative for the under-fives through the voluntary sector in Wales was a year and a half behind that of the DHSS in England, as only £300,000 was allocated to the scheme in Wales compared with £6·5 million in England, and as the English scheme is due to taper out next March, what is the future for the Welsh funding?

Mr. Robinson: We are only halfway through the initiative, which has a three-year term. We have allocated £300,000 to 119 projects in addition to the other moneys allocated to the under-fives. We have received no complaints that that is inadequate.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: Will the Minister give an assurance that, in line with the recommendations to the British Paediatric Association from medical committees and other professional organisations, the standard of training in Wales for secondary care doctors in the community will be at least as high as that of hospital consultant paediatricians doing the same work?

Mr. Robinson: That is a matter for the district health authorities concerned. They are aware of the development, which is a fairly new one, of consultant community paediatricians.

Prisoners (Whitchurch Hospital)

9. **Mr. Gwilym Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he is satisfied with the arrangements for the treatment of prisoners in Whitchurch hospital, Cardiff.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I am not aware of any reason to be dissatisfied with the medical and nursing treatment of patients at Whitchurch hospital, including prisoners. Security aspects of the treatment of prisoners are the ministerial responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Mr. Jones: As my hon. Friend knows, I am particularly concerned about the case of Hywel Rowlands, who was sentenced 14 months ago for killing his daughter and who, more recently, is alleged to have made threatening telephone calls to his wife from the hospital. Does my hon. Friend agree that it is not good enough for the Home Office merely to tell me that when Rowlands leaves the hospital during the day he is expected to say what time he will return? Will my hon. Friend, with the Home Office, increase the efforts to find a more appropriate place for Rowlands as quickly as possible?

Mr. Robinson: I can assure my hon. Friend that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary agrees that Rowlands should be transferred. That will be effected as soon as possible.

Heart Surgery and Young Children

10. **Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what facilities are available in south Wales for heart surgery and treatment for young children; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Limited facilities are available for the assessment and treatment of children at the University Hospital of Wales, and a new paediatric cardiac unit is planned. Funds have already been made available to appoint a paediatric cardiologist.

Mr. Terlezki: Does the Minister agree that it is imperative that work starts on the paediatric unit in Cardiff to alleviate the fear, worry and concern of parents whose children require heart operation after-care? Will he please tell me where the matter starts?

Mr. Robinson: I agree with my hon. Friend. Detailed planning is well advanced. I expect work on the site to start in the autumn of 1987, with completion about the end of the following year.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Church Urban Fund

24. **Mr. Greenway** asked the hon. Member for Wokingham, as representing the Church Commissioners, what contributions the commissioners intend to make in grants or loans to the proposed church urban fund set up by the General Synod.

The Second Church Estates Commissioner, Representing Church Commissioners (Sir William van Straubenzee): "Faith in the City" recommended that the commissioners should contribute £1 million per annum for 10 years. The commissioners are giving sympathetic consideration to this proposal. In November, at the commissioners' request, the General Synod considered and gave general approval to the necessary legislation to allow the commissioners to give loans or grants to the fund.

Mr. Greenway: Will my hon. Friend say whether some clergy will have lower stipends and emoluments as a result of this diversion of Church Commissioners' money to the church urban fund? Bearing in mind that, according to a poll published in a newspaper yesterday, 73 per cent. of those questioned said that they believed in God but only 11 per cent. of them said that they went to church, will some of that money go into the Church's own missionary effort in the inner cities to improve on that rather low figure?

Sir William van Straubenzee: In so far as any money that is spent by the Church Commissioners on anything other than pensions and stipends diminishes the funds available for that purpose, clearly this has that effect, but the Church Commissioners see it as a development of their

historic role to help the clergy, especially in the poor parishes. It could perhaps be said, although I have no responsibility for the poll, that it might have an effect in those parts of the country to which this money is directed.

Mr. Frank Field: Do the commissioners accept that the country might pay more attention to the follow-up of "Faith in the City" if the Church moved its staff from one of the plushiest sites in the country to an inner city area?

Sir William van Straubenzee: I would need more notice of that than a supplementary question, but it is always possible that the expense of so doing would be greater than using existing plant, especially if, in the future, it will be possible to use it even more intensively.

Mr. Latham: Is my hon. Friend aware that the defeatist attitude of closing inner city urban churches is hardly the spirit in which the Apostles originally spread the word? Will he take it from me that if the clergy spent rather less time on inane sociology and more time on teaching the scriptures they might fill the churches again?

Sir William van Straubenzee: If I may say so, that is one of those generalities that it is easy to make. Perhaps my hon. Friend and I should say that we laity have a real responsibility in that matter as well.

Family Income Supplement

25. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the hon. Member for Wokingham, as representing the Church Commissioners, what information he has as to the number and proportion of clergy who are in receipt of family income supplement.

Sir William van Straubenzee: The commissioners do not have that information because it is a private matter between the person concerned and the DHSS.

Mr. Bruinvels: In paying tribute to the DHSS, which certainly looks after some of the rather poor-off members of the clergy, may I ask my hon. Friend first to compile a list of those who really are in financial difficulty? I would have thought that that should be easy to do. Secondly, will he look again at the role of expenses and the very worrying fact that many expenses are no longer being met in full by the Church Commissioners? Will he encourage the Church Commissioners to pay those expenses, because all clergymen have an onerous task? They must spend much money on hospitality and on the other duties that they perform as clergymen and they should not have to pick up the tab for it.

Sir William van Straubenzee: Dealing first with expenses, I have already given my hon. Friend the figures in relation to incumbents. In respect of assistant curates, 16 per cent. of the expenses that they incurred overall have not been reimbursed. This is too high. This is essentially a parish matter and it is being followed vigorously by the Church Commissioners by way of precept and example, in the sense of leaflets and so on, of which I will gladly send my hon. Friend an example. On the first part of my hon. Friend's question, one hesitates to interfere in personal matters just because a man is an assistant curate. Since the greater weight and emphasis has been placed on the salaries of the lowest paid, with a 67 per cent. increase during the past five years, as opposed to a 51 per cent. increase for incumbents, it must have moved a considerable number of men out of the lower brackets in which FIS is payable.

Mr. Frank Field: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that no one in the House is asking him to collect information or to name the individuals in the Church who are poorly paid? But since the Government collect and collate FIS data according to industrial classification, will he ask for that information in relation to the Church and publish his findings?

Sir William van Straubenzee: Of course, I shall consider the hon. Gentleman's suggestion. The weighting given to increases for assistant curates in comparison with the better paid must mean that considerably fewer of them are eligible for FIS. He and I will welcome that trend.

WALES

Paddington—South Wales Line

11. **Mr. Coleman** asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has had any recent discussions with British Rail concerning the electrification of the Paddington to south Wales line; and if he will make a statement.

14. **Mr. Anderson** asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the chairman of British Rail to discuss rail operations in south Wales.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Wyn Roberts): My right hon. Friend last met the chairman on 25 November and discussed a number of issues with him, including electrification of the south Wales line.

Mr. Coleman: The Minister, who is a fairly regular traveller on the Inter-City line from Paddington to south Wales, will have seen this magazine, which I have in my hand, issued by British Rail. In that magazine, he will see proposals for the electrification of the line from the north-east by the 1990s. When will we have the same for Wales?

Mr. Roberts: British Rail takes the view—I share it, as will the hon. Gentleman and everyone else who travels on the Cardiff to Paddington line — that the present diesel-powered, high-speed trains provide a fast and effective service. Electrification would not improve line speeds. However, British Rail has planned line and stock improvements, which should reduce journey time still further.

Mr. Anderson: Hon. Members on both sides of the House wish to ensure that the Channel tunnel does not harm Wales. If we are to gain from investment, surely that investment should be made now. I appeal to the Wwlsh Office to initiate discussions with British Rail to ensure that the potential benefits to Wales from the consruction and use of the Channel tunnel are maximised.

Mr. Roberts: I assure the hon. Gentleman that lack of electrification of that line will not affect the use of the Channel tunnel. We expect the Channel tunnel to be of considerable benefit to us in Wales. The Welsh Office has been examining further ways of improving the connections between Wales and the tunnel. British Rail will soon hold a seminar to discuss the matter further.

Teacher Appraisal Scheme

12. **Mr. Raffan** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the Government's pilot teacher appraisal scheme.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has invited six local education authorities in England to form a consortium to pilot teacher appraisal. The findings of the pilot project will be made available to every authority in England and Wales.

Mr. Raffan: Why will Wales not be represented in the pilot teacher appraisal scheme? Two local education authorities, Clwyd and Dyfed, applied to be included. Is it not essential that Wales be represented in view of the unique feature of Welsh education — teaching in the Welsh medium — and so as not to halt the progress already made in Wales into researching the practices and procedures of appraisal?

Mr. Roberts: There is no particular advantage to the Welsh authorities participating in this project, especially when we shall get the results. It would mean diverting education support grant from other uniquely Welsh purposes for the purposes of this project. When we consulted the Welsh Joint Education Committee about the use of the education support grant next year, no request for a teaching appraisal pilot project in Wales was made to us.

Mr. Barry Jones: The Minister has given a waffling reply. Can he tell us why he failed to stand his corner?

Mr. Roberts: I am well aware that two Welsh authorities, on a mistaken assumption, did apply to take part in this pilot project. The hon. Gentleman well knows that, because it was explained to him in a written answer on 17 November. He is well aware that the Welsh authorities would not qualify for education support grant from the Department of Education and Science.

Farm Incomes

13. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on current farm incomes in Wales.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Nicholas Edwards): Total farming income in Wales this year is expected to rise substantially from last year's level, but to remain below the level of 1984.

Mr. Howells: I am sure that the Secretary of State is well aware that he has full responsibility for Welsh agriculture. Will he tell the House and the Welsh nation why he is not in Brussels today defending the rights of the Welsh farming community?

Mr. Edwards: I am quite confident that the agricultural interests of this country, and they include those of Wales, are best defended by having single United Kingdom representation of agricultural interests in Europe. There are already, goodness knows, enough difficulties in arriving at sensible solutions to the problems of CAP when 12 countries are negotiating, without adding to the cacophony of voices sounding off in Brussels.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palace of Westminster (Official Tours)

26. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Lord Privy Seal what information he has as to the number of official tours of the Palace of Westminster by *(a)* school parties and *(b)* others in each of the last five years; and if he has any plans to review the arrangements for such tours.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I will arrange for the figures to be published in the *Official Report*. The arrangements for the line of route were reviewed by the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee in February this year and previously in June 1985, when additional measures to reduce congestion were introduced.

Mr. Bruinvels: I look forward to receiving those figures, but I am already fully aware of the increasing number of visitors to the Palace of Westminster. Does my right hon. Friend consider that the time has now come for perhaps a charge to be levied on all foreign tourist parties? [HON. MEMBERS: "No!"] Alternatively, because this is a place of work, can we not reduce the number of tour tickets issued? We must get on with our work and even our constituents find it difficult to get into the House during the day.

Mr. Biffen: I think that this is something which, in the first instance, should be considered by the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee. I am sure my hon. Friend realises that he has raised some fairly weighty issues of principle.

Mr. Alex Carlile: Will the Leader of the House assure us that none of those visitors have access to the logging equipment that logs hon. Members' telephone calls? Will he come to the House to make a statement about who has access to that logging equipment and in what circumstances?

Mr. Biffen: I think that that is very wide of the question of tours, but I shall write to the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Mr. Latham: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that this is the British Parliament, and that people are entitled to tour it, but at the moment they have great difficulty in doing so because of the very long queues? Will my right hon. Friend consider whether, for example, two sets of checking equipment can be installed to halve the time that constituents spend in queues to see around their own Parliament?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend raises a point that I know is a cause of concern in all parts of the House. The Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee is aware of these factors and my hon. Friend's point will certainly be drawn to its attention. The figures for last year show that 130,000 people went round Parliament with their Members of Parliament. That is a considerable increase over what was true hitherto.

Mr. Williams: Is the Leader of the House aware that most of us hope that he will ignore the ludicrous proposition put forward by his hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels), but hope that he will give serious consideration to the point made by his hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham)? Many of our parties that come a long distance face great difficulties. They often start at 6.30 am and arrive before 11 am, but have to wait outside for long periods, often in the rain, because there is only one piece of screening equipment. Bearing in mind the security problems, will the Leader of the House prevail on the Committee to look at this matter yet again?

Mr. Biffen: I would not disparage the points that have been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels). They are perfectly fair points, but I consider that they raise issues of principle. Of course the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee will look at this matter again. It is perfectly well aware of the difficulties and I would be misleading the House if I said that I thought there was a fairly easy way to overcome them.

Following are the figures:

Parties on the Line of Route

Autumn Visits Programme organised by the Education Officer	**Estimated total number of individuals in Member's Parties*
1981 212 tours from 125 schools	99,917
1982 120 tours from 66 schools	99,905
1983 271 tours from 136 schools	108,222
1984 30 tours from 12 schools (No official programme due to closure of House of Lords Chamber)	144,161
1985 276 Tours from 138 schools	130,774

Welsh Question Time

28. **Mr. Gwilym Jones** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will give consideration to moving Welsh Question Time to a Wednesday for a one-hour duration on a four-weekly cycle.

Mr. Biffen: The rota for oral questions has been agreed through the usual channels. I have no proposal to alter it during this Session.

Mr. Jones: I think that my right hon. Friend, who was in his accustomed place earlier, might agree that today we have had a rather cramped run at Welsh Questions, which lasted for only 35 minutes. Does he accept that hon. Members from north and north-west Wales — most obviously my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Best)—have about the most difficult journey to get to the House for Question Time on a Monday? If he were able to accede to my suggestion, he would only be giving Welsh Question Time deserved parity with Scottish Question Time.

Mr. Biffen: Many hon. Members who live just as far away from Westminster as is the Principality were proud to stand for election on the basis that they would come here and do a day's work on a Monday. I understand the point that my hon. Friend has just made about Welsh Question Time. It has not always been made in its present form, but it is something to be considered through the usual channels when there is an opportunity to reconsider the rota.

Mr. Wigley: May I press the right hon. Gentleman further on extending Welsh Question Time to an hour? Today we managed to get only as far as question 14, and two questions were chopped and not dealt with properly. After all, the Secretary of State for Wales is responsible for education, health, employment, roads and local government in Wales. Given all the issues to which I have referred, we need more than 35 minutes to deal with them adequately.

Mr. Biffen: That is something that might fall to be considered through the usual channels when the rota is being reconsidered.

Mr. Greenway: Before any more time is given to Welsh Questions, and bearing in mind that there are only 36 hon. Members from Wales, will my right hon. Friend note that 84 hon. Members represent London constituencies? Should there not be a London Question Time before any more time is given to Wales?

Mr. Biffen: As the metropolis, I think that London would wish to be more evidently integrated into the United Kingdom than almost any other part of the realm.

Mr. Dixon: As well as considering the request that has just been made, will the right hon. Gentleman also consider allocating the hour that is given to Welsh Members on a Monday to the northern group of Members, who would willingly come along to put questions about their region, which, incidentally, has as many, if not more, problems as Wales?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman merely underlines how wise I was to be so unforthcoming to my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, North (Mr. Jones).

Car Parking

29. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Lord Privy Seal what information he has as to the use of car parking spaces marked for right hon. and hon. Members by others; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Biffen: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave on 17 November to his previous question. If he has any particular point in mind I will draw it to the attention of the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Is he aware that at the Norman Shaw buildings the car parking spaces reserved for hon. Members are frequently used by an assortment of secretaries, research assistants and others and that often the cars do not even display the car parking badge? Does he not think that the white markings on the ground stating "Members only" should mean just that? If that is not the case, should not the markings be altered?

Mr. Biffen: I shall of course draw my hon. Friend's specific points to the attention of the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee.

Mr. Williams: Will the right hon. Gentleman note that only 12 places for the disabled are reserved in Star Chamber Court, although more than 30 Members of the House and its staff are disabled? Will he therefore consider whether more spaces in the court should be reserved for the disabled, and what action can appropriately be taken against those hon. Members who persistently and selfishly insist on parking in the disabled parking spaces, although they suffer from no disability?

Mr. Biffen: I take note of what the right hon. Gentleman says. I suggest that in the first instance he

writes to the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee giving evidence of the inadequacy of the present arrangements for the disabled. I am sure that the Committee will wish to take that up.

Part-time Staff

30. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Lord Privy Seal what steps he has taken to ensure that there are no personnel employed whole-time or part-time by hon. Members who are associated with terrorist organisations.

Mr. Biffen: It is not the practice to give detailed information about security matters.

Mr. Hamilton: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that one of his hon. Friends, the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), employed as a research assistant in the House a Mr. Hoile, the former vice-chairman of the Federation of Conservative Students, who has reportedly been on armed patrol with the American-financed terrorists in Nicaragua? What steps does the right hon. Gentleman intend to take to ensure that there is no repetition of such disreputable practice?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman makes a number of comments that are quite unsubstantiated. They amount to mere innuendo. The sooner that the House moves away from argument by innuendo to argument by evidence, the better it will be for us all.

European Council (London)

3.31 pm

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall make a statement about the European Council held in London on 5 to 6 December. I presided over this Council and was accompanied by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. The conclusions of the Council have been placed in the Library of the House. There were two major themes for the Council: business and jobs, and safeguarding the open society.

On business and jobs, we noted that economic policies of member states had been steadily converging and that inflation in the Community was expected to fall to 3 per cent. in 1987, the lowest for 20 years. The Council unanimously endorsed an action programme for jobs, which stems from an initiative taken by Britain, supported by others earlier in our presidency. The programme puts emphasis on training, including up to two years' vocational education and training for school leavers and greater involvement with industry. It stresses also action to help the long-term unemployed, including schemes for job counselling.

The programme will be carried forward by Social Affairs Ministers at their Council later this week. In future, the employment programme must have priority in the use of moneys allocated by the European Community's social fund.

Linked with the need to create the conditions for a growth of jobs, the Council looked at ways of encouraging small and medium businesses—one of the main sources of new jobs. The Community has agreed to over £1 billion of loans for small businesses. This will be available, among other things, for investment in new technology.

The Council endorsed the principle of the Commission's proposal both to simplify VAT and to make it possible to lift the VAT threshold for small businesses up to about £25,000.

This is in line with our aim to take unnecessary burdens off the back of enterprise.

Completion of a large, single market in Europe has been a major priority of the British presidency. Thirty-two measures have already been adopted or agreed since July. They include: an important step towards complete freedom of capital movement within the Community; action against counterfeit goods; common testing and marketing standards for pharmaceutical products; common standards for television by satellite; and common standards for a pan-European telecommunications system using digital technology. A similar effort will be made on digital cellular radio, a market worth billions of dollars in which Europe has a technological lead. We shall continue to press for easier access to cheap air fares.

The Council recognised the crucial role of an open world trading system in achieving more growth and more jobs. We noted that the Community has already launched an action in the general agreement on tariffs and trade against Japan's barriers to trade. That action may need to be reinforced unless we see early results.

The second main theme of this meeting was concerted action to protect our citizens against terrorism, drugs, illegal immigration and abuse of asylum. Terrorism can strike anywhere, and it is vital that we act together in our common defence, as we did successfully in the case of Syria. We therefore agreed on a policy of no concessions under duress to terrorists or their sponsors, and on solidarity between member states in their efforts to prevent terrorist crimes and to bring the guilty to justice. Free movement for bona fide travellers within the Community must go hand in hand with better controls at the Community's external frontiers.

On drugs, the Heads of Government endorsed a seven-point plan covering: intensified co-operation between police and customs authorities; a decision that illicit drug traffickers' assets will be liable to confiscation throughout the Community; exchanges of drugs liaison officers; and exchanges of information on the treatment of drug addiction and on education about the dangers of drug abuse.

The European Council also decided to launch a sustained information campaign on the prevention, early warning and treatment of cancer and to designate 1989 as European Cancer Information Year. It asked the Council and Commission to ensure Community-wide exchange of information on AIDS, and to consider what further co-operation in research might be taken against the spread of this dreadful disease.

The President of the Commission, Mr. Delors, reported on his review of future Community financing. He will be visiting Community capitals early in 1987 in order to set out his views and discuss options covering future financing, the common agricultural policy and the structural funds. The European Council made it quite clear that in the meantime work must be carried forward and decisions taken on issues already before the Council. The Agriculture Council is now in session with the aim of reaching such decisions on the reform of the arrangements for milk and beef.

The Heads of Government discussed East-West relations and arms control. There was wide support for the points which I agreed recently with President Reagan at Camp David. We issued a statement on the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which is now nearing the end of its seventh year. Foreign Ministers discussed the problems of the middle east and the Iran-Iraq war and stressed the importance of maintaining contact with the Gulf states. They also discussed South Africa and Latin America.

It has been a priority of the British presidency to make the Community work better for the benefit of individual citizens. This was a practical and successful Council relevant to jobs, to our future prosperity within the Community and to the future safety of our citizens.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I welcome and support the initiatives taken to co-ordinate policies to combat terrorism, the spread of AIDS, drug abuse, and the health information campaign. Judgment on the co-ordination of visa policy must await a statement about the rules by which the policy is to be co-ordinated. Does the Prime Minister envisage that the basis will be the generally liberal and humane policies of our European partners, or our own racially discriminatory policies?

Will the Prime Minister accept our congratulations on the support which the summit and the communiqué, although not her statement, gave to the importance of continued dialogue between EC Ministers and trade union leaders in the Community, and the support given by the communiqué to the co-operative strategy for growth? The

[Mr. Roy Hattersley]

Prime Minister's attitude on both these matters is well known. We are delighted that she was either defeated or surrendered on each issue.

The proposals for reducing unemployment within the Community are a pathetic response to what even the Foreign Secretary called the "major challenge" facing the British presidency. They consist of platitudes, such as the expressed desire for lower interest rates. British interest rates are now the highest in Europe and the highest in British history. When does the Prime Minister expect that particularly pious hope of the communiqué to be fulfilled by her Government.

The Prime Minister has run away from all the crucial issues which should have been tackled during the British presidency. The failure to face, even less to attempt, to overcome either the financial crisis or the fiasco of the common agricultural policy was wholly deliberate, and the Community must hope that Belgium will behave more bravely next year.

I should like to ask the Prime Minister specific questions about each of the crises which she attempted to duck. How does she propose to deal with the £2 billion deficit which the Community will face next spring? Does she accept that a supplementary budget is now unavoidable——

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): No.

Mr. Hattersley: We hear the view of the south-east coast, but perhaps the Prime Minister will tell us whether she thinks that a supplementary budget is now unavoidable as Europe is facing backruptcy. When she gives us her judgment on that point, will she tell us what possible advantage, apart from an attempt to save her own face, was gained from her refusal to act now against the financial crisis?

Does the right hon. Lady agree that there must be major reform, a reduction in surpluses and a pricing policy for the CAP which is in the interests of consumers no less than of producers? Is it not shameful that the pursuit of those objectives, which are all in the British interest, should have been sacrificed to help the German Conservatives in their election campaign?

My final question is about relations between Europe and the USA. Why was there no mention of this topic in the communiqué, why was it given so much prominence in the press conference that followed the summit, and why did the Prime Minister deal with it in such detail today? Is it because the Prime Minister no longer has "implicit faith"—her words—in the President's integrity, or is it that she remains an apologist for the deal over Iran, but could not persuade the Heads of the other European Governments to be similarly sycophantic?

The Prime Minister: I note the contempt of the right hon. Gentleman for the 11 other Heads of Government in discussing the results of this conference and his contempt for them on the common agricultural policy and the finances, because, of course, this was a conference of all Heads of Governments.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke about growth. It was noted that the Community is a main component of the engine for growth, and that the Community has been optimistic towards the end of this year and believes that there are reasonable prospects for growth next year.

On jobs, the right hon. Gentleman argued that nothing was achieved, but the Council's approach to jobs contains four practical elements. Towards the completion of the internal market, 32 internal market measures have already been agreed or adopted since July, the most ever registered in a single presidency. They include valuable agreements which will help liberate capital markets, combat counterfeit goods, protect consumers from chemicals in meat, establish standards for direct broadcasting by satellite, and set new standards for things such as fire safety in hotels, which will benefit British holiday makers.

Completion of the internal market is going well and enables us to set standards which British business men will know and which will enable them the better to sell in the Community. It includes positive help for small firms, such as, for example, the £1 billion loan facility, and includes cutting regulatory burdens on small and medium firms and a programme for employment growth—a programme which, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, is set out in full in the Library.

The right hon. Gentleman also asked about the common agricultural policy. In the last few price fixings prices have been stablised or reduced, largely at the instance of the British delegation. The right hon. Gentleman is aware of the quotas, and today there are further discussions on milk and beef quotas. He knows full well the steps that are being taken to reduce the amount that goes to intervention.

I said in my statement that Mr. Delors is considering the report that he has to make under the Fontainebleau settlement. He has to report on three things: the convergence of policies, financial matters of the Community and the reform of the common agricultural policy. Before making his report he will visit each capital to have discussions with each Government, and will take with him a programme of options and the consequences that flow from them. It is good that he will carry out such detailed work and consult before making his report.

Europe and the United States were discussed, especially during the discussion of East-West relationships, as I said. Colleagues at the Council of Europe gave broad support to the programme at Camp David. We also realised the importance of showing solidarity ourselves, and showing the Community as a stable force for democracy, being very practical in the proposals it made, and making them apply to individuals and citizens.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend particularly warmly on the rapid progress that is now being made towards the integration of the European market for capital? Will the British Government seek to follow up this success by obtaining the co-operation of other member states in taking off the regulations and restrictions which are holding back the expansion to the continent of services, such as insurance and building societies and the Stock Exchange, and other financial facilities which are available in London and which the whole Common Market ought to share?

The Prime Minister: Yes. My hon. Friend is aware that that is one of the objectives of getting a single internal market. We are anxious that there should be freer movement of capital. My hon. Friend will be the first to say that we have had free movement of capital from Britain throughout Europe during the lifetime of this Government, but not under the Labour Government.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): While it was probably inevitable that the looming budgetary crisis would be avoided until after the German elections, will the Prime Minister tell the House whether there is any sign that the Federal Republic of Germany is now prepared to take action over surpluses in the CAP? Is it true that, at the Heads of Government discussion on East and West, great anxiety was expressed about President Reagan's decision to break out of the SALT limits? Is the Prime Minister ready to say that she deeply regrets that decision, and that if the United States wants to go ahead with airborne-launched cruise missiles above the limit it should decommission the Poseidon submarine?

The Prime Minister: As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, the 1·4 per cent. VAT limit is now enshrined in the treaty obligations. This House has ratified it, and three other countries have ratified the Single European Act. The rest have indicated their intention to ratify by the end of the year, by which time the 1·4 per cent. will be in the treaty. It can be changed only by the agreement of all Governments and all Parliaments.

As to whether Germany is really prepared to tackle surpluses, we are all prepared to tackle surpluses, but the right hon. Gentleman will be aware that it is one thing to say "tackle surpluses", and quite another to find a method to tackle them without stopping people from buying this year's crop. We feel that the two things must be tackled at the same time—we must not produce surpluses and at the same time have a programme to reduce them.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): As the House was assured that the 1·4 per cent. VAT limit would last for several years, can the Prime Minister give us an assurance that there is no way in which the Government will agree to a supplementary budget in 1987? As every reform in the CAP to date, including milk quotas, has simply resulted in more subsidies and more production, does the Prime Minister agree that the only way to solve the cash crisis and save British agriculture from inevitable disaster is to seek the repatriation of agricultural policy from the Community to member states?

How do the Heads of Government square their statement on terrorism with a directive which is being drafted today by the Commission to remove all controls on the movement of weapons across Community boundaries, which will now be determined by majority vote under the Single European Act?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend knows, the 1·4 per cent. VAT limit is enshrined in treaty and cannot be changed without the agreement of the Heads of Government and of Parliaments. As for the CAP, the President of the Commission will visit capitals, and doubtless one of the things that he will bring with him is a series of options on how best to get rid of surpluses, while ensuring a policy that does not produce more. The general principle is easy to state, but it is not easy to devise a means. If my hon. Friend has any special ways, perhaps he will tell us.

As for repatriation, one has to watch the effect on the budget. It would mean that one could dispose of some of the surpluses at the expense of each individual state and not of the budget. We should need to look at that very carefully before we gave a yea or nay.

My hon. Friend mentioned terrorism and the control of weapons. I believe that there is a question on the Order Paper which is to be answered later today, but we make it quite clear that nothing will prevent us from applying controls to our own borders.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): Can the Prime Minister explain why more progress was not made on the framework programme of research and development in the European Community? Are the Government in favour of an increased proportion of the European budget being devoted to research and development? If so, is it not disappointing that the Government did not make better use of their chairmanship to make progress in that direction?

The Prime Minister: I think that most people are in favour of more being spent on research and development, but it is not possible to say that much more should be spent on research and development and, at the same time, suggest that the budget is already knocking against its ceiling. We cannot say the two things at the same time.

I make it perfectly clear that unless we can get down the amount spent on argiculture, particularly on the storage and disposal of surpluses, it will be very difficult to agree a much larger budget on research and development, although we should like to see one.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): Does my right hon. Friend not think it extraordinary that when the European summit has a quiet, relatively undramatic, workmanlike meeting, with many important decisions being made, the Opposition and some of our hon. Friends criticise it for lacking dramatic decisions? However, will my right hon. Friend confess to being somewhat disappointed by the slow progress being made in the Community, at all levels, on lower air fares and airline competition?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I think that the Community is split about half and half on this matter. We are very anxious to have lower air fares. We believe that they bring more travel and more jobs, and that is the experience the world over. We are on the side of lower air fares and freeing up the airlines. The initial communiqué drafting was objected to very strongly by Socialist Spain.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Is the Prime Minister aware that, given our unemployment statistics, it is impossible to be other than cynical when told that the United Kingdom is taking the initiative on job creation? The Prime Minister referred to the social fund, but surely the impact that the fund can make on training will inevitably be very limited—and probably ineffective—unless we have more own resources and/or a reduction in agricultural expenditure. Having had six months in the presidency of the European Community, does the Prime Minister think that that is a long enough term to have any significant effect on anything?

The Prime Minister: I notice that the hon. Gentleman wants more own resources for the Community. I must say to him that I do not particularly want to have more own resources for the Community, and I shall strain against any increase in the 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling until we are certain that the CAP and the question of surpluses have been resolved. After the Fontainebleau agreement, which gave us a continuing right to rebate, which we had not had before, and given the fact that we are coming to the ceiling, we now have the first chance for many a long year to try to get a true reform of the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): My right hon. Friend has said that she believes that the 1·4 per cent. ceiling which came out of Fontainebleau is the major influence for financial discipline in the Community, but does she not agree that to concede a supplementary budget, giving more money outside the normal budgetary procedures, would remove effective financial discipline? Can my right hon. Friend give us an undertaking that we will not agree to supplementary budgets until we are satisfied that the finances of the Community have been properly and effectively reformed?

The Prime Minister: It is not only the finances of the Community. I agree that there will be very serious difficulties towards the end of next year, particularly as agricultural surpluses are still being built up. It is possible that unless we get reductions through the Agriculture Council fairly soon the money will run out towards the end of next year. We shall strain against a supplementary budget very much indeed, for the very reason that my hon. Friend has mentioned. If one goes in for more intergovernmental arrangements, one fundamentally undermines the discipline. That explains why I replied as I did previously. The fact that we are coming up to the 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling and that we have a good and continuing rebate system for this country give us a better chance than previously of getting a reform of the agricultural policy. Disposing of the surpluses comes on the budget and may mean a heavier demand on the resources of the budget.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): As the free movement of capital usually means that capital goes where it can make a profit, will the Prime Minister explain to the House how the free movement of capital helps people on Merseyside, in the north-east, south Wales and other areas which are suffering from a lack of capital and investment? Can she explain how this, which is obviously in line with her philosophy, helps the British people at this moment, when they need every assistance to get employment?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman expects the free movement of capital inwards to get inward investment, and so do most of the special regions. Indeed, whether Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the north east or the north-west, they tend to send people to countries which can bring investment here so the hon. Gentleman expects inward investment. The reason why he does not get more in Liverpool is the local authority there.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): I welcome my right hon. Friend's commitment to the free movement of goods and capital within the Community, but can she explain to the House why the VAT threshold should not be a matter for the exclusive decision of the House and the Chancellor of the Exchequer? To enlarge on that, should not excise duties on goods sole in this country be a matter exclusively for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not for the Commission?

The Prime Minister: When we talk about tax, most of us in the Community resist any suggestion that we should be compelled to harmonise our tax rates or levels. When I speak about VAT, the option would be to inrease the threshold to £25,000. It would not be mandatory, but it would be an option. That will be important, and it will leave the decision to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On customs and excise, it is a decision for the Chancellor, as my hon. Friend knows. However, the House must bear in mind that we complain bitterly when other countries seem to put on highly selective increases on products which we would normally sell to them. That is a barrier to trade and we must take it into account when considering our action. On other matters —[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer."] I am sorry, but my hon. Friend will ask his question again if he has not received an answer.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On VAT, will the Prime Minister tell us whether the Council discussed the Commission case against the United Kingdom, requiring us to put VAT on building construction, industrial fuels and new services? In respect of the single internal market, of which the Prime Minister seems proud, did the Council discuss the proposal to impose VAT on public transport, which is in the Cockfield package? Does the Prime Minister support that proposal?

The Prime Minister: I have already made it clear that most Heads of Government would resist strongly any approximation of taxation, and obviously, that could come about only by a unanimous vote. There would be no prospect of a unanimous vote. The case on zero rate VAT on housing, which is before the courts, is being fought strenuously on our behalf to continue the zero rate. We want to continue the zero rate VAT for housing.

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): When the Prime Minister talked to Dr. Garrett FitzGerald during the conference, did they discuss ways of reducing or removing the destabilising and adverse economic effects of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The Prime Minister: We agreed that we were both committed to the future of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. I have nothing further to report to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): May I congratulate the Prime Minister on further British triumphs? As agriculture was not mentioned, may we assume that everything in the farming garden is rosy and that all is well with the Community budget? May we assume that the Fontainebleau agreement, as she assured us at the time, is watertight, that there is really effective financial discipline and that there is absolutely no question of a further intergovernmental whip round in the coming year, when we would send even more of our money for them to waste?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the result of the Fontainebleau agreement was put into treaty form before the Single European Act. It is now in treaty form and cannot be raised except with the agreement of the House and all Governments at the same time. The amount spent by the Community is coming up against a ceiling. Indeed, it is said that it is already over the ceiling, or could be, according to what kind of agricultural year we have and the decisions taken this December at the Agriculture Council. One has to remember that part of the budget comes back in rebates. What has concerned us before is whether there was enough room for us to receive the rebates, or whether they would be carried forward for some considerable time.

Mr. Stephen Dorrell (Loughborough): Will my right hon. Friend accept that the progress towards completing the internal market will be remembered as one of the most important achievements of the British presidency? Will she

accept that if we are to regard Europe as a single internal market it does not make much sense for national competition policy authorities to look at individual national markets when making their decisions? Did the European Heads of Government discuss the impact of completing the internal market on national competition policies?

The Prime Minister: No, we did not do that at this meeting. I confirm what my hon. Friend said, that the completion of the large single market was, after all, one of the original objectives of the treaty of Rome, and it is sad that it has not yet been fulfilled.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Can the Prime Minister tell us whether anybody at the summit had the nerve to say that before a communiqué was issued containing high-sounding principles about AIDS and solving terrorism, such as we have had in previous communiqués, perhaps a communiqué should be issued saying how we could resolve some things that can be resolved only within the Common Market, such as getting rid of food surpluses, getting rid of the common agricultural policy and feeding the Third world? Would it not make more sense to the British people if, after two days of dining out, spending taxpayers' money —*[Interruption.]* There is no doubt that it cost a small fortune and Conservative Members like the gravy trains. Surely it would make more sense to the British people if the Common Market, instead of sounding off about other things, would say specifically, "We are going to get rid of the common agricultural policy here and now. That is something that we can do."

The Prime Minister: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman would have found either myself or any of the other 11 Heads of Government, of whatever political complexion, fully on his side.

Mr. Skinner: I guessed that.

The Prime Minister: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman did. They would agree that we need to get rid of surpluses, but there is no point in getting rid of surpluses if, at the same time, more are created to go into the stores that would thus be released. One has to do two things at the same time. That is why the presidency of the Commission is coming round with proposals, because we cannot have reform of the financial position without dealing with the common agricultural policy. If, instead of just sounding off, the hon. Gentleman has some constructive suggestions on how to deal with the problem, we would be pleased to listen to him.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): While it is well known that the Opposition have an open door immigration policy, is it not the case that there are millions of people throughout the poorer parts of the world who would use any means, fair or foul, to gain access to the Community? Is it not the case that that would be against the interests of the Community, and that it would be against the will of the British people to have anything other than the most stringent, effective and fair immigration laws?

The Prime Minister: Yes, particularly as I think that there has been a certain amount of abuse of the ease with which it has been possible to get into the Community through some ways. We all agree that if we are to have free movement within the borders of the Community we must have strong controls at its external borders, such as airports and shipping ports.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): The Prime Minister said that proposals would be coming forward to deal with the common agricultural policy and, therefore, with the food mountain. When are those proposals expected? That is what the country wants to know. It is an obscenity to have such huge amounts of food going into intervention stores when people clearly want to eat that food in this country and overseas. As the Prime Minister has been very good and forthright in the past in banging her shoe on the table and forcing people to do things, why does she not start banging her shoe on the table over the common agricultural policy? We have dumps in Stratford full of beef and butter, and if she wants a constructive proposal, why does she not throw the doors open and let those on supplementary benefit, and pensioners, have that food and butter for Christmas?

The Prime Minister: We have been modifying the common agricultural policy, if the hon. Gentleman had not noticed, by such things as milk quotas and the price mechanism. Indeed, farmers have a rather lower income now than they used to have some time ago. In fact, the yields of both milk and wheat have gone up and that is why we have surpluses. If we were to throw open the doors there would be a tremendous increase on the budget, because, at the moment, the rule is that each country finances the storage of surpluses on its own soil. When those surpluses are disposed of it, it is a charge and duty on the budget. As I have already said, we have to do two things at once. If we were just to throw open the doors we would have enormous increases in storage, as people would not buy this year's crop. We have to deal with two things at the same time.

Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory (Wells): My right hon. Friend's statement that the 1987 European budget must remain within the 1·4 per cent. VAT limit is welcome. Will she confirm a slightly different point, which is that there will be no resort to loans or non-refundable advances or any other devices which might be used by others as a way of breaching that financial limit by covert means?

The Prime Minister: I do not think that the Commission has the right to raise loans to meet a budget deficit. That is why my hon. Friend referred to other devices. If we were to rule those out, I must warn my hon. Friend that it might have a bad impact on the rebates to this country, and we must consider what would be the optimum position for the interests of this country.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): What did the other Heads of State think about the Prime Minister and her Government abandoning a foreign policy commitment which used to be shared by all political parties in this country — the commitment to multilateral nuclear disarmament? What did they think of her going to Camp David to persuade the President of the United States not to reach any multilateral agreement which would reduce nuclear weapons on both sides and which might make the purchase of Trident by Britain unnecessary, or at least not to do it before the next general election? Is it not true that the Prime Minister is in favour of the zero-zero option only

[Mr. Allan Roberts]

after the next election because she does not want her keep-the-bomb campaign to be jeopardised for the election campaign? Is she still committed to multilateral nuclear disarmament?

The Prime Minister: Yes. If the hon. Gentleman had been listening, he would have heard that Heads of State and Government generally endorsed the view put at Camp David, which resulted in the communiqué following.

Mr. John Watts (Slough): Is my right hon. Friend aware that her achievements during the British presidency are very much more substantial than those of the Leader of the Opposition during his humiliating tour of the United States? Is she further aware that agreement on raising the VAT threshold will be particularly welcome to very small businesses as a first step, but that it does not go far enough, and that even if a limit of £50,000 were to be introduced the loss of revenue would be minimal?

The Prime Minister: With regard to the VAT threshold, I think that ours is a turnover of about £20,000, which is higher than some other countries in the Community. If the new proposal goes through, it will give an option to be exerciseable by the Chancellor of each country to take the VAT threshold up to a turnover of £25,000. That does not mean that it will go up automatically, but it gives the Chancellor an option to do so.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): In view of the tragic job losses announced in the Scottish whisky industry at the weekend, will the Prime Minister tell the House why the Council did not find it possible to consider specific proposals to reduce the appalling figure of 16 million unemployed in the Community and why the Government are resisting reflationary measures which could lead to job expansion?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Gentleman looks at the whole programme, including, in detail, at the action programme for jobs, and takes into account what we were doing in connection with the Japanese market and with opening up the internal market, he will see that all those measures are directed towards creating more jobs to alleviate the problem of unemployment throughout the Community.

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the real achievements of the presidency and of the summit. During the six months that she has been in the chair, has she detected any strengthening of the political will that will be necessary to deal with reform of the CAP? Does she accept that many of us fear that as she will no longer, from the new year, be President, there may be a complete absence of that political will?

The Prime Minister: There is obviously more political will to deal with that matter, or we should never have gone through the difficulties of having milk quotas and a fairly strict price settlement on other products. As my hon. Friend knows, various other schemes are being considered, such as the set aside of certain lands, which could reduce the surpluses which are produced each year. I make no bones about it: it will be very difficult to settle this problem, because there are no easy solutions and, therefore, it will not be an easy year.

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): In relation to the discussions on arms control and defence, did my right hon. Friend find any support among her colleagues for the ditch across Europe, as proposed by the Labour party, to defend us from Russian tanks? Did the Socialist President of France say whether France would be likely to follow the barmy Labour policy of one-sided nuclear disarmament?

The Prime Minister: As I said, Heads of State and Government broadly endorsed the stance that we took at Camp David. Eleven of the 12 of us at the meeting are members of NATO. There was a NATO communiqué to that effect last week.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my right hon. Friend accept that some Conservative Members resent the way in which the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) dismissed her statement as being a series of platitudes, especially as the right hon. Gentleman has been given recently to using adjectives rather than policies in his statements? Does my right hon. Friend accept that there are those of us who believe that the improvement of small businesses in the Community, combined with the policies that the Government have been following, will provide an engine of wealth — a point which Labour Members do not seem to understand at all?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Of course, the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) had to say that because he has nothing constructive to offer.

Mr. Colin Shepherd (Hereford): Did my right hon. Friend notice that, in the debate on the Loyal Address, the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) made what seemed to many of us to be a constructive suggestion, in that he argued for the repatriation of the CAP? He did that as a Member who has supported membership of the Community. Is that not a suggestion which the Government should consider carefully and which we could argue forcefully in the Council?

The Prime Minister: Doubtless that will be one of the proposals put forward. Before we launch into putting it forward, or even supporting it, we should look at the considerable financial burdens that it would impose on our Exchequer. That is why I am glad that Mr. Delors is going to each capital with a series of options. The financial and other consequences should be worked out before people rush into their own methods of dealing with the problem.

Mr. Hattersley: In an answer a few minutes ago, which did not suffer from over-precision, the Prime Minister said that she did not believe in a supplementary budget. Will she tell us precisely whether that means that she hopes that there will not be a supplementary budget, or whether it means that she judges that there will not be a supplementary budget? If it means the latter, how does she think the Community can fund the £3 billion deficit which it will face by next spring?

The Prime Minister: I said that the 1·4 per cent. VAT cannot go up without the agreement of all Heads of State and Government and of all Parliaments. I was not going to rule out absolutely a supplementary budget, for the reason that I gave — it could be highly damaging to Britain. *[Interruption.]* So the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook wants us to do something highly damaging to Britain. I see. It might mean that we should not get our rebates or that they would be held up and carried forward. The rebates are of enormous value — they are worth

about £1·1 billion. The Government think that it might be worth while getting them and that we should not take a specific position on that matter right now.

Rosyth Dockyard

4.16 pm

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dumfermline, East): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"decisions threatening 1,300 jobs and future naval work at the Rosyth dockyard."

The matter is specific because, on Friday, without prior consultation and without explanation or justification, the Ministry of Defence announced the transfer of refitting work on the submarine Conqueror from the royal dockyard at Rosyth, thereby depriving the site of vital programmed work and threatening the security of hundreds of jobs. The day before, with equal disregard for their obligations to consult, Ministers announced at a press conference, instead of in the House, that Babcock Thorn was to take over the private running of the Rosyth dockyard, thereby betraying a promise made on 17 November that no further decisions on privatisation would be made until the work force had been consulted.

The matter is important because these announcements, taken together, will, if implemented, unilaterally impose new working conditions on 6,000 civil servants forcibly transferred to the private sector, will threaten up to 1,300 jobs in an area of ever-increasing unemployment and will put at risk the dockyard's service to the nation. The House is entitled to know the secret details of private contracts which are being entered into to transfer work and jobs from Rosyth.

The matter is also important because decisions are being made by the Ministry of Defence which bypass the statutory consultation process imposed by the Dockyard Services Act 1986 and explicitly accepted by the Secretary of State for Defence only a few days ago, when he stated that the next stage of decision-making would not be entered until he was satisfied that consultation with the work force was complete. What sort of consultation is it that begins with the disclosure of the conclusions of that consultation and completely pre-empts it? In approaching a period of open consultation with all the prejudices of a closed mind, and without even reporting to the House, the Ministry of Defence is recklessly imposing franchise arrangements, privatising the running of our royal dockyards, which clearly subordinate the interests of national security to those of commercial gain. The Secretary of State for Defence has acted in a hasty and underhand manner to the detriment of the long-term interests of the Navy and the defence of this country. He should be forced to answer immediately in the House.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"decisions threatening 1,300 jobs and future naval work at the Rosyth dockyard."

I have listened with care to the hon. Member, but I regret that I do not consider that the matter he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House. However, I hope that he will have other opportunities to raise this matter before the Christmas recess.

Buchanan Bottling Plant

4.19 pm

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the closure of the Buchanan Bottling Plant at Stepps and the consequences for the whisky industry and the Scottish economy."

On Friday afternoon, 430 people in Scotland who worked in the whisky industry were given notice that they were about to lose their jobs. That came as a consequence of the Guinness takeover of Distillers Company Ltd, which includes the James Buchanan plant in my constituency, to which I referred earlier. Those of my constituents who might be made aware of the Prime Minister's reply to my question earlier will not only be profoundly disappointed at her reply but will be aware that we have a Prime Minister who does not really understand the problems of manufacturing industry in Scotland.

This morning I met men and women from that plant who had given many years of service to this industry, and they have been greatly disappointed by the decision. They know about the industry, and even in recent weeks were asked to work overtime for exports. They have been working to contribute towards orders for Venezuela and elsewhere.

Incidentally, it will come as no surprise to you, Mr. Speaker, or to the House, to learn that these men and women produce the whisky which, for many years — suitably labelled — has been sold in the Refreshment Department of the House. I, for one, have never heard any complaints about the quality of that whisky.

Like so many others, these men and women are finding themselves forced on the the scrap heap. There are a number of questions that they would like me to ask and which might be raised if we were to have a full debate on the subject. We want to know the role of the Secretary of State for Scotland. Hon. Members will remember that during our debate in the Scottish Grand Committee in July, the Secretary of State encouraged his hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) to make a statement. The right hon. Gentleman rushed in to have discussions with Mr. Saunders on two top executive posts on the board of Guinness. If that intevention was important enough for those two senior posts, why is not the Secretary of State rushing in to save hundreds of jobs in my constituency and elsewhere in Scotland—*[Interruption.]* I am delighted that thee is so much agreement on Tory Benches.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) and I have witnessed a catalogue of closures in our constituencies—Martin and Black, Ladybird, Bedley Colliery, the Gartcosh plant, Cardowan colliery and now this major closure. We must have a debate because the Scottish people in our constituencies are becoming sick and tired of the decline of our manufacturing base and they think that enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the closure of the Buchanan Bottling Plant at Stepps in the Monklands, West constituency."

Here again I have to tell the hon. Gentleman what I told his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith). I listened with care to what the hon. Gentleman said, but I do not consider that the matter he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Ministerial Statements

4.23 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, you deprecate the custom of Ministers giving information outside the House before it is given here. Last Thursday, the Prime Minister stated that she could not comment about Lord Rothschild. She reminded my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), that when he was a Minister, he said:

"It is the long-established practice of this House that the Government do not comment on matters of this kind."—[*Official Report*, 28 July 1976; Vol. 916, c. 626.]

My point of order is that the Prime Minister refused to give information to the House on Thursday and made no statement to the House on Friday, yet a statement was issued to the press — from which we obtained our information. The Prime Minister refused to give information to a number of hon. Members, including Conservative Members, and it is wrong that she should take the opportunity the following day to make a statement outside the House. Either she should have answered on Thursday or she should have made a statement on Friday or today.

I ask you to rule, Mr. Speaker, on the practice followed by the Prime Minister, because it was against your direct wishes and you have deprecated such practices.

Mr. Speaker: I do not have the appropriate *Hansard* before me. My recollection is that the Prime Minister said on Thursday that she was not yet ready to give a reply.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Ordered,

That European Community Document No. 11216/85 on the prevention of environmental pollution by asbestos be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents.

That European Community Document No. 8034/86 on the co-ordination of procedures on the award of public supply contracts be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents.— *[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

Orders of the Day

Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the Secretary of State for Education and Science, I must tell the House that I have selected the reasoned amendment in the name of the leader of the Liberal party.

4.25 pm

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

In what might prove to be a reasonably controversial Bill there will be some agreement at the outset on both sides of the House when I say that the education of our children is critical to the future economic and social well-being of our nation. It is equally important to the personal development of the child. It instils wonder and curiosity about the natural world, it fosters appreciation of great literature, poetry, drama, art and music and it develops a personal sense of values in things moral and ethical. It prepares young people for life in an increasingly complex world, where adaptability, co-operation and communication are vital for personal fulfilment and the progress of our society.

Poor education or time lost to education is a great handicap. Some lost opportunities may be recovered to some extent by determination and hard work in adolescence or young adult life, but for many children an indifferent education or a blighted spell of education is an irrecoverable loss. Those school days have gone and do not return for a second chance, Alas, children have been badly affected by the recent year's discord over teachers' pay and the matching failure to deliver uninterrupted education of the right quality.

I believe that the disruption of education and its impact on our children has been very damaging indeed. It was unjustifiable and I would hold that it was also avoidable, had there been a general willingness to move forward on any reasonable basis. Sadly, that has proved not to be the case. Instead, the machinery that should have provided resolution lurched from crisis to crisis. In the meantime, our children lost out—*[Interruption.]* I will come to the history of that later.

The Government have watched all that with increasing concern, and I have been conscious of my duty to promote the education of our children and

"to secure the effective execution by local authorities, under my

"control and direction, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area."

That is the language of the opening section of the 1944 Education Act—the "Butler Act". The House will note that it speaks not of powers, but of a duty. This Government accepts that duty, without qualification. Today I seek the support of this House for changes that are essential to the effective delivery of school education in the months and years ahead.

We must have resolution of the problems of our schools. We must have that resolution on terms that promise an early return to past standards of commitment and professionalism among all teachers. The terms must

[Mr. Kenneth Baker]

be fair to teachers, many of whom will have had grave private misgivings about the events of the last few years. However, the terms must also be fair to others, to the parents, taxpayers and ratepayers who finance our schools. They will accept a generous settlement for teachers in return for an improved education service. They will not understand special treatment for teachers' pay on any other terms. Nor are the Government willing to give that.

The Bill itself is straightforward. I must, of course, explain the history and present context and the Government's reasons for the main provisions of the Bill.

The first clause repeals the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 under which the two present Burnham committees operate. One deals with school teachers' pay, the other with that of teachers in further education. Neither deals with duties and other conditions of service. It is clearly a major defect that pay and conditions of service are dealt with separately. Clearly, the friendless Burnham committees must go. New arrangements have to be introduced to settle both pay and the job for which that pay is given. A look at recent history makes it clear that the Burnham primary and secondary committee is beset with difficulties. There is a long tradition of internecine warfare amongst the teacher unions, with bitter membership rivalries getting in the way of sensible compromise. There has been a High Court action over the rights of all unions in membership of Burnham to participate fully and equally in the committee's work and there has been repeated failure to reach negotiated settlements.

Present attempts to reform the outdated salary structure have a long and, I regret to say, undistinguished history. In 1981 a Burnham agreement established a joint working party to review the salary structure of the profession. This has been going on for five years and we are still some way from a negotiated settlement. On teachers' duties and conditions there have been genuine attempts over a still longer period by the local authority employers to make headway with the definition of teachers' duties and conditions of work. No real progress was made until this year. The teacher unions continue to claim that many aspects of the teachers' job were voluntary and that those contributions could be withdrawn at any time. We well know the effect on our schools. A High Court judgment—the Scott judgment—this summer began to clear the air. It made it clear that teachers could be required to cover for absent colleagues even though there was no such express provision in their contracts. The employers remain concerned to secure a satisfactory and enforceable contract. I welcome that. A considerable gain — and this I recognise — from the ACAS-led discussions in recent months is the emerging definition of teachers' duties and working time at the direction of the head teacher.

The draft package also has great weaknesses. It proposes a flat and undifferentiated pay structure which provides minimal incentives and gives the biggest increases to the least experienced teachers. We must have proper differentials — to reward good classroom teaching and extra responsibility, to pay for skills in short supply and to give school management enough flexibility to attract good teachers to posts in difficult schools, perhaps in the inner cities. The structure which the employers and some of the unions now seem to favour would cost well beyond the amount that I announced to the House on 30 October. That amount was a very generous sum — £118 million this year and £490 million next year. The excess cost of the ACAS deal would be some £85 million over these two years alone. That is not a small sum — it represents a quarter of our annual expenditure on school books and equipment and it would provide about 100 new primary schools.

The Government therefore have two major difficulties with what is proposed. I have said, and I shall continue to say, that I am willing to discuss the position with the other parties. As regards the settlement, my door remains open. I very much hope that an improved and affordable package can be arrived at quite soon.

I should like briefly to consider the long and rather miserable history of this. As I have said, the Burnham agreement to reform the salary structure was established in 1981, but there was no progress until July 1984 when my predecessor said that if an "affordable, acceptable and negotiable" package could be agreed between local authorities and unions he would take it to Cabinet for consideration. In November 1984, the employers unfolded a package linking pay and duties. The following month the National Union of Teachers walked out of the talks. In July 1985, the employers — Labour-controlled since the May elections — tore up the concordat. In August 1985, my predecessor offered a substantial sum — £1·25 billion over four years — for a new deal defining duties and providing for more promotions. A month later, the employers made an offer consistent with that. It was unanimously backed by all the employers and by the Government, but the teachers turned it down flat in 20 minutes.

In January 1986, there was agreement to call in ACAS after a term of disruption. The NUT — no longer in control of the teachers panel — did not sign, but came into the ACAS-led talks. In July 1986 the Coventry negotiations led to heads of agreement signed by five unions but not by the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers. That was hailed as "historic". On 30 October I made a statement setting out the Government's conditions, promising a huge amount of extra money and outlining the pay structure that we regarded as necessary to reward good teachers. Seven days of negotiations in Nottingham and London followed in November. On 21 November an agreement was signed by four unions. On this occasion, the National Association of Head Teachers as well as the NAS/UWT did not sign. Since then, the Secondary Heads Association and the Professional Association of Teachers have said that they do not support that agreement.

The hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) wrote to me on 17 November urging me to accept the ACAS agreement and advising me that the ACAS deal would stick. Once again, his judgment has been proved wrong. I have been told at almost every stage of the negotiations that the agreement in question was "historic". There was a "historic" agreement in July and another in November. I can only say that there seems to be a long history of historic agreements.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): We might have achieved an agreement if the Secretary of State had not sought to undermine it at every stage.

Mr. Baker: Providing an extra £600 million, an extra £2·4 billion over four years and £3·3 billion over five years, can scarcely be described as undermining. We have provided the necessary sums that should have led to an agreement.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My right hon. Friend has said that he hopes that a new and affordable package will come forward. For the avoidance of ambiguity, will he confirm that that package must be within the financial constraints that he has set out?

Mr. Baker: Yes, I made that clear on 30 October and again on 27 November in statements to the House and I confirm it again today. Any change must be within the cost that I have set out—some £600 million for this year and next year taken together. The teachers have never before been offered such a substantial sum and I believe that it is an entirely reasonable figure when one considers all the other demands on the public purse. General expenditure and budgets for education have been expanded by a huge amount for next year. The unprecedented size of that amount shows the importance that we attach to education and it would be unfair to go back and ask for more.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): The Secretary of State described the long period of difficulties, but he said that the Burnham committee was not concerned with conditions. Does he deny that in 1981 and 1984 his predecessor's insistence on mixing pay increases with conditions of employment, especially assessment, caused difficulties?

Mr. Baker: In 1981 there was a Burnham agreement to reform the salary structure. As soon as one gets into that, one gets into pay and conditions. A very substantial increase was involved for which it would be necessary to define the teachers' jobs. As I have generously recognised, that is one of the benefits to come out of the ACAS deal. It will be a tremendous help because the definition of teachers' jobs will mean that teachers will know what is expected of them and head teachers and parents will know what they can expect of the teachers. I think that there is common agreement that that is a major step forward.

Mr. Radice: So the ACAS agreement was a step forward?

Mr. Baker: Yes, in the matter of definition of teachers' jobs. I have said that many times.

I shall now say what has happened since the signing of the agreement. On 27 November, I clarified the Government's position on the ACAS agreement. It was not acceptable as it stood. On 5 December, last Friday, the Secondary Heads Association council rejected it unanimously so support for the agreement was down to three unions. On 6 December, last Saturday, the Professional Association of Teachers withdrew its support. Support for the ACAS agreement is down to two unions. I am sorry that this information could not have been more accurately described in the advertisement which the NUT placed in some of the national newspapers today. The copy is rather inaccurate as it states that the settlement is acceptble to the employers, the local authorities and also to the majority of teachers' unions. The settlement is clearly not acceptable to the majority of teachers' unions. The only thing that the NUT has got right in the advertisement is the spelling of my name. It is clear from what I have said that the employers are divided and that the unions are divided.

The long dreary history of the negotiations and the attendant disruption to children's education mean that I cannot stand by and trust that all will come right in the end and that peace will return to our schools, as has so often been promised in recent so-called agreements. Sporadic disruption of children's schooling continues. Parents have had enough. The public rightly expect a further 16·4 per cent. on teachers' pay, making 25 per cent. in all for the 18 months to October next, to achieve stability and agreement on a workable contract which will prevent repetition of trouble in the future. Employer-union bargaining — that is effectively what we have been watching at work recently—has failed our schools. The Government are not willing to rely exclusively on that process. That is why the Bill proposes an interim advisory committee to advise me on these matters, and powers for me to act following its advice, subject, of course, to parliamentary approval.

The House will note that the Bill does not propose that the interim advisory committee should also deal with further education matters. That is because there is not a parallel position in that sector. There has been no major disruption; a defined statement of teachers' duties already exists; and the bargaining process has been more successful in striking agreements than has been the equivalent school teachers' machinery. The Government are content that these matters should be settled between employers and unions for further education. Not so for our schools. There, early action is essential.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle (Lincoln): Is my right hon. Friend also aware that many teachers in the profession wish to do a good job and welcome his initiative to bring an end to this damaging dispute? Does he further recognise that they welcome the opportunity to have a proper professional code which they can follow and that they recognise that the money on offer is very generous?

Mr. Baker: I can certainly confirm what my hon. Friend has said. I am sure that many teachers, irrespective of where they stand on this issue, want an end to what has been happening in schools during the past few years. Those who have been dragooned into disruption have done it often with a heavy heart. The definition of a professional code is important. As I said, that is a step forward, as is the money on the table.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): The Minister talks as though only a minority was ready to take some industrial action, but surely he knows that the NUT carried out to the letter no fewer than 17 or 18 ballots, every one of which approached 80 per cent? Therefore, the vast majority of teachers wanted to take industrial action. The Minister does less than justice to what some of us must say later about industrial action by not telling the House the truth.

Mr. Baker: I hope that whatever else the hon. Gentleman may say about industrial action, he will utterly condemn it. I believe that he is a member of the NUT. Let me make it absolutely clear that industrial action can happen in our schools only at the direction of trade union leaders. I very much hope that as the hon. Gentleman is

[Mr. Baker]

a leading member of the NUT, he will lend his voice, if it should ever come to it, to condemning very strongly any further consideration of disruption.

Many working parents in Britain, who will not see an increase of 25 per cent. in wages this year or next year, are very fed up when they see professional people walking out of the schools leaving children to go home and be looked after by their aunts or their grandmothers or their grandfathers. That is unacceptable behaviour. I dare say that if those children are looked after by their grandmothers or grandfathers, those pensioners will reflect that some teachers will receive a weekly increase in wages of £60 or £75 a week, which is higher than their pensions.

The House will note that the Bill does not seek to establish new arrangements on a permanent basis. What should apply beyond the medium term is left for the future. The Bill proposes that the advisory committee should be established on an interim basis only — until 1990 — though with powers for its life to be extended on a year-by-year basis, if Parliament then agrees.

The Bill provides for full consultation with local authorities and teacher unions. Clause 2(4) deals with notice and invitations to both to submit evidence and representations. Clause 3(1) requires the holder of my office to consult local authorities and teacher unions before any action consequent on a report from the advisory committee is taken. The House's concern about these matters is also fully recognised. All orders are to be subject to the negative resolution procedure and any order which materially departs from the advice of the advisory committee must be approved by resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

But the Government must act to ensure that the sort of negotiating brawl which we have all so clearly seen in the last two years is brought to a swift end. We must act to establish a new mechanism for determining these matters, on an interim basis.

If an accommodation with all the parties can be achieved within the financial framework I have already announced and which provides for a proper career structure for all teachers, I shall be delighted to lay the necessary order before the House giving effect to that agreement. But the House must be in no doubt about the Government's determination to act to close this sorry business.

May I come to the central issue of the powers of the Secretary of State. Since 1944, Governments have influenced the teachers' pay structure and contained pay costs. From 1965, a concordat operated in parallel with the legal provisions of the Remuneration of Teachers Act. That gave the Government a weighted vote within the management panel and a power of veto over proposed offers on grounds of total cost. Lord Stewart of Fulham, the then Secretary of State, said in Committee on 1 December 1964, during the passage of the 1965 Act:

"I doubt whether any Government in any set of circumstances could put itself in a position where it could hand over the power on the global sum to someone other than itself." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee B*, 1 December 1964, c. 20.]

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Baker: No.

Just so. But, in 1985, the Labour-led employers unilaterally scrapped the concordat——

Mr. Bennett: Will the Minister give way on that point?

Mr. Baker: I shall not give way. I quoted Lord Stewart of Fulham. I made the point that Lord Stewart was saying that no Government in any circumstances could resign responsibility for the total amount. I have been pressed again and again——

Mr. Bennett: Does the Minister accept that Lord Stewart and the present Lord Chancellor, in dealing with the previous Bill, made it clear that there was the question of national interest, but both categorically stated that they would not interfere with detailed negotiations?

Mr. Baker: That is what I was just saying. The very reason why they said that was to set up the Burnham negotiating committees. For 20 years, and specifically for the past five years, the Burnham negotiating committees have produced no resolution on this matter. They have utterly failed to deal with the details. They cannot do it. That is the tragedy facing the country in the negotiations.

In 1985, the Labour-led employers unilaterally scrapped the concordat, leaving the Government with greatly reduced influence. The Bill re-establishes an appropriate role for the Secretary of State in the determination of teachers' pay and links that with duties and conditions. It does not seek to set a system for all time. Instead, it addresses itself to the immediate crisis facing us, which arises directly from the breakdown in the present negotiating machinery.

I trust that the House will welcome the Bill. It reflects the Government's underlying responsibility and concern for the well-being of the school system on which our children and our future so much depend.

4.50 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): Speaking in the House on 27 November, the day before the Bill was introduced, I made it clear that although the labour party is in favour of reform of the Burnham machinery, we strongly oppose legislation that removes bargaining rights. We also strongly oppose any attempt by the Secretary of State to impose a settlement either now or in the future. Having had the opportunity to study the Bill and to hear what the Secretary of State has had to say about it, our worst fears have been confirmed. The so-called Teachers' pay and Conditions Bill gives the Secretary of State new and sweeping powers to impose a settlement in the period from 1 April 1986 to the end of September 1987 and after the advisory committee is set up, in the first period by negative resolution and in the second period by affirmative resolution. Equally disturbing, it removes the ability of local authorities and teachers' organisations to negotiate at all about teachers' pay and conditions.

After two years of disruption in the schools, I hope that the whole House can agree that our objectives should be, first, an improved service for pupils, secondly, decent pay and conditions for teachers and, above all, long-term peace and stability in our schools. One argument against the Bill is that it will make those objectives far more difficult to achieve—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] Wait for it, and I will tell hon. Members.

Ironically, the immediate background against which this potentially damaging bill is introduced is more promising that it has been for several years. First, the

general public is devoting far more attention to education. This is partly because of the teachers' dispute. Parents are desperately anxious for a long-term settlement of the issue and all of us, including the Secretary of State, have an obligation to ensure that that is achieved.

Secondly, the Government have at last switched policy over teachers' pay. After arguing ad nauseum that the nation simply could not afford significantly improved teachers' pay—we heard that in the House for two years — the Secretary of State came to the House on 30 October and announced that, after all, resources were available. If money on that scale had been offered in the autumn of 1984 — let us not have so much selective quoting of history — there would never have been a teachers' dispute. However, late though it is, the Government's new-found willingness to fund a reasonable settlement creates the possibility of settling the issue.

The third encouraging feature is that the local authority employers and unions representing the majority of teachers have agreed on a far-reaching package covering pay and conditions. Even the Secretary of State, albeit reluctantly, has had to admit that the talks have made useful progress. That must be the understatement of the year. For the first time, there is a clear definition of teachers' duties. For the first time, a minimum number of duties days has been agreed. For the first time, a system of appraisal has been accepted. For the first time, maximum class size has been defined. For the first time, negotiating machinery which links pay and conditions has been agreed.

The Secretary of State made much of the differences between his proposals and the package agreed between the employers and the teachers. But if he is honest with himself and with the House, he knows perfectly well that if the will was there, not least on his part, those differences would be easily surmounted. The Secretary of State talked a great deal about fundamental differences in the pay structure. It is true that the local authority package envisages only two increases above the main professional grade compared with five in the right hon. Gentleman's proposals. His more hierachical solution would appear to produce as many chiefs as it does Indians. He should remember that, as well as providing opportunities for promotion, an effective pay structure must offer career salaries to classroom teachers.

Be that as it may, I remind the Secretary of State that the original claim by the National Union of Teachers envisaged three increments. A Secretary of State who was interested in a settlement should be able to reconcile those relatively small differences.

Mr. Stephen Dorrell (Loughborough): The hon. Gentleman said that it was important that whatever came out of this dispute rewarded classroom teachers. Is he aware that the proposals of the unions and the council employers would produce a 25 per cent. reduction in the number of teachers who receive special incentives to remain on the classroom? It can be seen in the bar graph. How does his stated priority square with his support for the stance of the NUT?

Mr. Radice: It squares because the main professional grade is sufficiently high to encourage teachers to stay in the classroom. That must be part of any effective pay structure. Different groups can argue about how many increments there should be. That is a matter for negotiation and argument. All that I am saying is that it should not be beyond the wit of the Secretary of State and the negotiators—the local authorities and the teachers—to reconcile their positions. I hope that the hon. Gentleman agrees with that.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: If I may refer to my bar charts, of which the hon. Gentleman has a copy——

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: We got them in the Vote Office.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Of course. I always want to spread good information.

How can the hon. Gentleman defend the ACAS proposals, which provide only 80,000 promotion posts, when there are already 105,000 in the system? I want the number to increase to 140,000 or 145,000. The general feeling in the profession at central and local level is that we cannot run the education system with 80,000 promotion posts.

Mr. Radice: As the Secretary of State knows, the attraction of the agreement made between the employers and unions representing the majority of the teachers is that it provides a high basic level. That is very important if we are to attract the right people into teaching. Of course, it is also important to have adequate promotion scales. All that I am saying is that it should have been possible to reconcile the two positions, because that is exactly what a proper pay structure should have.

On cost, again there is no unbridgeable divide. I hope that the Secretary of State will not go on about that. He is well aware that a month's delay in implementation saves at least £40 million. It is not an unbridgeable gap, as the Secretary of State suggests. The truth is that if the right hon. Gentleman wants an agreed package, one is there for the asking. Our fear is that the Bill will scupper the prospect of an agreed solution and will make long-term peace in our schools far harder to achieve.

On 27 November in a reply to my question as to whether the Bill would enable the Secretary of State to impose a settlement he answered that it would give him powers similar to those he already has. On reflection, he would, I am sure, admit that his answer was, at best, "economical with the truth."

Under the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 the Secretary of State has the power not to impose a settlement but only to set an arbitration award, and then only after the affirmative resolution of both Houses of Parliament. If there is an agreement within the Burnham committee the Secretary of State must accept it. I suspect that that is one of the reasons why the Government are so anxious to rush the Bill through the House.

Under section 89 of the Education Act 1944 Ministers could only accept or reject Burnham recommendations. What is being proposed in the Bill are powers for the Secretary of State to impose his solution, without negotiation and irrespective of what his advisory committee suggests.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury) *rose*——

Mr. Radice: No, I will not give way. I must get on. I will give way when I want to. The Secretary of State must admit that the Bill gives him exceptional powers. He has actually said that he is taking Draconian powers.— */Interruption./* That is what the Secretary of State said in an interview. The only precedent is the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 when another Tory education Minister

[Mr. Radice]

took power to impose a settlement. That was only for a single year not for four years. Significantly, that Bill did not seek, as this Bill does, to take away negotiation rights altogether.

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): I put to the hon. Gentleman that the public outside will not understand a situation whereby two groups of people come to an agreement — I use his words rather than mine — that is to be paid for by a third party which is not involved in that so-called agreement. Surely, that is the nub of this problem and it is something that ought to be resolved.

Mr. Radice: It is true that the Secretary of State pays 46 per cent. of the total amount of teachers' pay but the majority is paid for through the rates of local autorities. The hon. Gentleman ought to get his facts correct.

I shall argue that the Secretary of State ought to have a proper position at the negotiating table but that is not a reason for taking away negotiating rights altogether. We are opposed in principle to what the Secretary of State can do under the Bill. I shall return to the issue of principle in a few moments.

I know that the Secretary of State sees himself as a pragmatist. He justifies his legislation in terms of the exigencies of the moment. He claims he must take such powers to restore order to our schools. The truth is that there is already the outline of an agreed solution that could bring peace. The danger is that this imposed settlement could lead to renewed disruption.

The Secretary of State will have seen the letter sent to him, on Friday, by the four main teachers' unions which expressed their total opposition to the Bill and to the imposed settlement. If he will not listen to them he should take the advice of some of his more knowledgable Back Benchers who are alarmed by the consequences of the decision, particularly in a run-up to the General Election — [HON. MEMBERS: "Who are they?"] I will not embarass the hon. Members by saying their names, but I could. Those Back Benchers are aware that a settlement, freely agreed between the education partners, is likely to lead to a long-term peace. They fear that a solution imposed unilaterally by the Secretary of State would almost certainly result in continued disruption. The Secretary of State should think again before he uses his powers.

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North) *rose*——

Mr. Radice: No, I will not give way.

The Bill not only gives the Secretary of State powers to impose a settlement, it takes away the long-established bargaining rights of employers and teachers. The Secretary of State's justification for this——

Mr. Thompson *rose*——

Mr. Radice: No, I will not give way. I have given way just as much as the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State's justification for the unprecedented removal of basic rights is that the Burnham structure has failed. If it is the case that Burnham has failed, the Government who took over two years to come up with a reasonable sum of money to meet the teachers' claim, must bear at least part of the blame. Of course, we accept that reforms are needed. Pay and conditions must be considered together and not separately as in the past. We also believe that the Secretary of State's position at the negotiating table should be secure.

Under this Administration central Government have contributed significantly less to education expenditure. Even so, the Departmemt still pays over 45 per cent of teachers' salaries and therefore it should be properly represented at negotiations. But it is one thing to advocate the reform of Burnham. It is a breath-taking leap in logic to go on to argue that collective bargaining should be abolished altogether and replaced by ministerial diktat.

Mr. Thompson *rose*——

Mr. Radice: Yes, I will give way.

Mr. Thompson: The hon. Gentleman at the beginning of his speech—he has repeated it—said that he wished to reform Burnham. Why does he wish to reform it, and when would he do so?

Mr. Radice: When we get to power we shall certainly set up a negotiating structure that considers both pay and conditions, as has the ACAS agreement. We should also want to see Government properly represented at those negotiations bearing in mind that they pay 46 per cent of teachers' salaries. The whole point of this Bill is different. I ask hon. Members to consider the impact of the Bill as we did not hear anything about it from the Secretary of State. It removes the bargaining rights of employers and teachers except in those situations where the Secretary of State determines otherwise. The advisory body, which will consider teachers' pay and conditions under the Bill, has been appointed by the Secretary of State. It will be paid by the Secretary of State and its agenda will be set by him. He can turn down or modify the advisory committee's conclusions without having to publish them. Provided that the Secretary of State wins the support of Parliament he can impose his own settlement. In short the advisory committee will be the Secretary of State's poodle. The Secretary of State can, by order, — *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members may not like hearing the truth, but it might pay them to listen.

The Secretary of State can, by order, make different provisions for different areas including different provisions for different areas. That does not say much for the idea of professional salaries. The Government also have the power, by order, to oblige local authorities to impose on teachers through their contract of employment, conditions of service which the Secretary of State has unilaterally determined. *[Interruption.]* This is the truth.

It is extraordinary that once the Bill comes into force 400,000 teachers will have fewer rights than any other group of public servants. [HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] Just listen. Civil servants at least have the Whitley council machinery whereas teachers' unions will have no bargaining machinery. The nurses, doctors and armed forces have independent review bodies which regularly publish reports on pay, but the teachers will not have that.

There is at least a prima facie case for saying that the Secretary of State's Bill contravenes articles 7 and 8 of ILO convention No. 151 on the rights of public employees—a convention that was ratified by the Government. It certainly contravenes article 4 of ILO convention No. 98 as well as article 6 of the European Social Charter. Are the Government really saying that they so mistrust teachers

that, uniquely, the teachers are to be deprived of bargaining rights even if to do so contravenes international and European convention law?

I cannot understand why the Government and the Secretary of State will not accept the proposals for the reform of bargaining machinery put forward by the employers and teachers. Contrary to what the Secretary of State told the House on 27 November, these proposals are different from Burnham because, under the new machinery, pay and conditions will be discussed together and the role of the Secretary of State will also be properly recognised. The Government accept that bargaining on these lines works well for teachers in further education. Presumably that is why that arrangement will not be abolished by the Bill.

Mr. Patrick Thompson *rose*——

Mr. Radice: I am sorry, but I will not give way.

If machinery such as that works well for teachers in further education, why should it not work equally well for teachers generally? If the Secretary of State is to carry conviction on this point, he will have to answer the question.

Although the Secretary of State seeks to appear as broad-minded and responsive—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]—his track record casts very serious doubts on the image that he seeks to present. After all, he is the Minister who abolished the GLC and deprived whole communities of their democratic rights. In this Bill he is depriving teachers of bargaining rights and imposing a system of ministerial diktat. These are hardly the actions of a convinced libertarian or of someone who respects the views of others. The truth is that behind the smiling mask lurks an opportunist who is prepared to do No. 10's bidding, even if it means infringing basic human rights.

The Opposition believe that this Bill is dangerously authoritarian. It infringes basic rights. It gives to the Secretary of State an unacceptable power that he does not have in other respects. It will also make a long-term settlement of the teachers' dispute far harder to achieve. It is a thoroughly bad Bill and we shall oppose it every inch of the way.

5.12 pm

Mr. David Evennett (Erith and Crayford): I am pleased to be able to speak in this important debate, but I am sorry that the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) was so vague, emotive and irrelevant about the needs of education today.

Despite the Bill's relative shortness, its importance must not be trivialised, as it has been by the hon. Member for Durham, North. The teachers' dispute over the level and structure of teachers' remuneration has been disrupting our schools for many months. Parents have been inconvenienced, children have missed valuable time from school, and education has suffered both in general and in particular.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is to be commended for introducing the Bill. He is taking decisive action on this vital issue and has shown that he believes in putting pupils and education first. I believe that the Bill will bring about the reforms needed for a sensible settlement to be reached, and I therefore welcome it warmly. I also believe that most parents will welcome it, not only as a means of settling the dispute, but as part of the Government's programme to improve standards in education across the board.

As a former teacher from pre-Houghton days, when teachers really were poorly paid, I know that teachers have some long-standing grievances. As a member of the Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, which recently investigated achievement in primary schools, I know how impressed I and other hon. Members were with the high standard of primary school teachers. I have no doubt that in the main secondary school teachers are just as committed.

Teachers have been undervalued within our society, and their task is difficult because it involves more than just teaching academic skills. It is about fitting our children for their future and developing every individual to the maximum of his or her ability.

This undervaluing of teachers has been apparent in the primary sector because in the past 20 years so much of the education debate and time have been devoted to secondary education. However, from my own experience I believe that in the main teachers are responsible and dedicated professionals. I am sorry that so many have been tarred with the brush of militancy and confrontation — an image which they do not deserve and have gained unfairly, in my opinion because of the lacklustre and ostrich-like approach of many of their union leaders.

In fact, it is probably because there are so many different unions in the teaching profession that negotiations on vital issues such as pay and conditions have been so difficult to conclude in the recent past. I was particularly disappointed by the NUT advertisement in the national press to which the Secretary of State referred. I read that advertisement in the excellent new newspaper, *The Independent*, over my cornflakes this morning and almost choked at the inaccuracies within it. As a former member of the NUT, I was appalled at the advertisement and at the lack of professionalism by the union in putting it in the national press. I am sure that those parents and teachers who also read it will have been distressed and disgusted.

Teachers have been underpaid in the past, and the need to redress that situation is something which the vast majority of parents, electors and everyone else in society will accept.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my hon. Friend accept that professionalism has been overtaken by unionism? Whereas in the past one could have relied upon the fact that professions would be governed by a chartered body which upheld standards of professionalism, the problem is that under the kind of dramatic unionism which we have seen recently, which puts remuneration above all else, the standard of professionalism has declined.

Mr. Evennett: I fully agree with my hon. Friend. Professionalism in the teaching profession has declined in certain areas. I think that, every hon. Member regrets the fact that since the unions have taken over the negotiating, professionalism has to some extent gone out of the window.

I believe that teachers are competent and that they deserve recognition and reward. All Conservative Members want to see teachers paid a decent salary for the important job that they do, but money is not everything.

[Mr. Evennett]

Of course teachers need a certain level of remuneration and a decent rate of pay for the job. They want to be appreciated for what they do. However, the current dispute is not simply about pay levels—it is also about pay differentials and long-term career structure.

We are all aware of the profession's failure to attract new entrants of high calibre in certain key sectors—mathematics, science and computing, to name but a few. Any pay settlement and agreement on conditions of service must not only be fair and balanced, but must ensure that sufficient numbers of high-calibre individuals are recruited as teachers. We must encourage people of a good standard to become teachers, including suitably qualified candidates from industry and commerce. We must also encourage the return of those who have left teaching. We need them back in the classroom.

For any pay settlement to have a satisfactory effect in the short term, sufficient money must be made available to make it clear that this is not simply a "jam tomorrow" exercise, because we all know that people will say, "Tomorrow may never come." I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend's offer, which is on the table, which is not only a substantial amount in percentage terms, but is a substantial amount in real terms, amounting to £600 million.

We must never forget the taxpayers. I regret that the hon. Member for Durham, North always seems to forget them. He said that the taxpayers foot only 45 per cent. of the bill, but 45 per cent. of the teachers' salary bill is a large sum of money by anybody's standards. We must not forget that we are responsible to the taxpayer for the money that is spent.

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): There is also the rate support grant, and the rest.

Mr. Evennett: My hon. Friend rightly mentions the rate support grant and the rest. The figure of 45 per cent. represents only direct money. The indirect money involved is substantially more.

Short-term improvements will be of no avail unless long-term improvements follow. The Government's suggestion is aimed at improving and maintaining standards in our schools by rewarding good classroom teachers. All my right hon. and hon. Friends are aware that at present too many good classroom teachers leave the classroom to get more money and are promoted to administrative jobs. That is the traditional way in which teachers have gone up the pay structure. The improvement in their remuneration has been dependent upon their leaving the classroom to go into administration. Too often, good teachers are promoted out of the classroom to do a job of administration, leaving the less good teachers in the classroom. That is the reverse of what we should like to see.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that the big attraction of the ACAS agreement is that the long and well-paid general professional scale will not only attract teachers, but will keep them in the classroom? In his constituency, teachers will move away to get promotion because they cannot afford to stay on the basic scale that the Secretary of State proposes.

Mr. Evennett: The contrary is true. The Secretary of State's proposal will allow more teachers to remain in the classroom because they will earn more money for good classroom teaching. I regret that the ACAS proposal will mean fewer scale posts and less money for the better teachers, and more money at the introductory stage.

We all know that many good teachers have left the classroom to go into managerial and other posts that are outside the profession. That is because the present pay scales do not take into account our need for good classroom teachers to remain in the classroom. In my experience—as a parent, a teacher, a school governor and a member for the local education authority—there have been too many moves into the City and into other administrative jobs outside education. A wealth of talent has been lost from the schools because there has not been an adequate pay structure. Therefore, we must go back to basics, and I welcome the pay structure that is suggested by the Secretary of State. The obvious way to change the position is to increase the number of scale or incentive posts and to enhance the pay for the teacher in the classroom.

The recent agonising deliberations by the Burnham committee on teachers' conditions of pay and service have looked like a bad soap opera script on television, unfurling every night. I regret that its proposals mean a reduction in scale posts, which is the reverse of what is needed in the classroom at present. Its proposals are ridiculous, not only because about 25 per cent. of teachers would lose a promoted post next September, but because we are really looking for a career structure, and that would require more incentives and more scale posts.

During my time in the House I have been a great advocate of the abolition of the Burnham committee, because it is a relic of the past. What might have been good in the 1920s when society, the teaching profession and education were completely different, is not relevant today. Indeed, the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is seeking to repeal by the Bill, was a measure to amend the constitution and procedures of the Burnham committee following disagreements about teachers' pay in the 1960s. It appears that some things never change, but we need change, and that is why the Bill is so welcome.

Most people recognise the need for the Bill, because it deals with a problem that has dragged on for over two years. Despite the comments of the hon. Member for Durham, North, the problem would never have been solved had the present Secretary of State not been prepared to take decisive action. I regret that already in the debate we have heard that the Burnham committee was working, that eventually it would have got there, and that it would have taken just a little longer or a little more money. That is not so. The whole idea of the Houghton award was not that it should be a one-off pay increase for teachers, but that it was a start towards reappraising all aspects of teachers' pay and, ultimately, their conditions of service. However, for 10 years nothing was forthcoming about changes in conditions of service.

We have waited for far too long and the Burnham committee has achieved far too little. The Bill, which abolishes Burnham and looks to implement a new approach to teachers' pay and conditions, will be welcomed not only by Conservative Members but by a vast number of teachers, by the vast majority of parents, and ultimately by those who have to be educated, the children of today, who will become the adults of tomorrow.

5.27 pm

Mr. Gordon Oakes (Halton): I hope that the hon. Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) will forgive me if I do not take up his points about the general state of the teaching profession or even the recent pay negotiations. I wish instead to discuss the Bill that has been dragged before the House today.

Like you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been a member of the House for over 22 years — we came in on the same day. In all that time I have never read a Bill with such breathtakingly arrogant contents. The arrogance of its contents is matched only by the arrogance of the Government in trying to railroad the Bill from this House to another place in a few days.

In seven short clauses the Bill seeks to overturn all existing negotiating procedures, to abolish teachers' direct representation by trade unions in relation to their pay and conditions of service, and to abolish the rights of local authorities who, after all, are the teachers' employers, to have any effective say in their pay or even conditions of service. A Bill that does that singles out the teaching profession and enslaves teachers. If a profession, an industry or any body of people has no direct representation on its own terms and conditionss and has no direct say on conditions of work with its employers, that is a condition of slavery. Corresponding to that slavery is the tyrannical way in which the Secretary of State has, in the Bill, adopted unto himself absolute powers on pay and conditions.

Mr. Cash: The right hon. Gentleman has made allegations about the tyrannical nature of the Bill. Conservative Members entirely repudiate them. The right hon. Gentleman also said that he is referring to the contents of the Bill. He is clearly referring to clause 3 and to the relationship between the advisory committee and the consultation procedures on the one hand, and to the order-making powers of the Secretary of State on the other. Does he accept that if the Secretary of State disagrees with the advisory committee, the import of clause 3 would be to require that any such arrangements emerging from an order laid by the Secretary of State were dealt with by way of affirmative resolution of both Houses of Parliament?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I should remind the House that hon. Members seeking to take part in the debate cannot have it both ways. They cannot make long interventions and then seek to catch my eye early in the debate.

Mr. Oakes: As often happens, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it serves me right for giving way. I assure the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) that I challenge not only clause 3 but many of the clauses. I assure the hon. Gentleman, in my own time, in my speech, I shall seek to answer his points.

The Bill singles out teachers. I beg other local government trade unions to support teachers in their struggle against the measure, whether it is the National Union of Public Employees, the National and Local Government Officers Association, the General, Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union or my own Transport and General Workers Union. If the measure goes through, I have no doubt that the Government will seek, in other spheres of local government, to introduce similar measures that will deny the right of those trade unions to negotiate with the local authorities which, after all, are their employers.

Let us look at some of the things that the Bill seeks to do. Clause 2 and schedule 1 set up what the Secretary of State calls the interim committee—the Bill refers to the advisory committee. The Secretary of State alone appoints the chairman and the deputy chairman, and every member of that committee. That is his sole discretion and choice. Where in schedule 2 or anywhere else in the Bill is there a reference to the qualifications of those people? Should they be qualified in educational matters? Should they be qualified and experienced in local government procedures? Should they be trade unionists? Should they have knowledge of trade union negotiations? Not a word about that appears in the Bill. Under the Bill, which we are being asked to approve, the Secretary of State, if he so wished, could stuff that committee with his own political cronies. He could appoint members of his private office. He could put his aunts, uncles and cousins on it.

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): And pay them.

Mr. Oakes: Indeed. Nowhere in the Bill is there any limitation on the Secretary of State's powers of appointment. Not only that let us look at the part of the Bill dealing with dismissal powers, schedule 1(4). I know that when one appoints a committee, one always has to make provision for one member going mad, another not turning up at meetings, someone being disabled, or someone going bankrupt. It is customary to see such a provision in schedules to Bills. But what do we have here? After the various conditions, the paragraph states that the Secretary of State may remove from office a member who, in his opinion,

"is . . . otherwise unable or unfit to perform his duties as a member."

If anyone is fool enough to serve on that committee and dares to disagree with the Secretary of State, be he the chairman or any other member, he can be sacked at once, just on the say so of the Secretary of State. Why was that provision added? I can understand the bankruptcy and ill-health provisions. Any fool can understand them. But why give that absolute, overriding power to the Secretary of State, unless he has sought it so that he can use it to intimidate the committee that he has appointed?

I said that it was in the gift of the Secretary of State to put members of his private office or his relations on the committee. I am certain that the Secretary of State will say that he has no intention of doing so. Incidentally, after what has gone on in the past two weeks, I would not put it past him. However, he has no intention of doing so because he has no need. The reason is that the advisory committee is toothless. When the Secretary of State receives its recommendations, he can accept them, vary them or reject them altogether. He can accept the recommendations that he agrees with and vary the others that he does not accept. Alternatively, if he does not like any, having sacked the chairman or any member who dares to disagree with him, he can, as clause 3(1) says, make

"such other provision . . . as he thinks fit."

The right hon. Gentleman has absolute power. The House should never give such power to any Minister in any Department. I would say that whether I was in Government or Opposition.

Clause 3(4)*(a)* provides that the Secretary of State may

[Mr. Oakes]

"make different provision for different cases, including different provision for different areas".

I thought that the Secretary of State was very good on television yesterday. I share some of his ideas on the future of education, particularly on the English language, but it is the way in which he wants to do things to which I object.

Mr. Spearing: That has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. Oakes: It has nothing to do with the Bill at all. It is a very different Secretary of State who appears in the House today from the mild, gentle pleasant man who appeared on television yesterday.

What does

"different provision for different cases"

mean? Does it mean that the Secretary of State can unilaterally carry out his ideas on science or maths teachers, or another provision that he wants? Whether the right hon. Gentleman will or not, he can. We are giving him the power to do so, regardless of what the teaching professions, the local authorities or the House say.

What is the meaning of the word "area"? It is like asking: how long is a piece of string? If, for example, the Secretary of State were seeking powers to have a different pay structure in Surrey from Cheshire, or a different pay structure in North Riding from Avon, he would use the words——

Mr. Spearing: That is what it is about.

Mr. Oakes: It goes further than that. I know that the right hon. Gentleman has aspirations in that direction. If that was what he was seeking to do, he would have used the words "different local education authorities". What is an area? It could mean the south-east of England compared with the north-west. It could mean an inner city area as distinct from an area outside an inner city. In geographical terms, an "area" could even differentiate between one school and another. We are giving the Secretary of State the power to say—the House should not do so — that one local education authority area containing a school that he likes and approves of, and where he approves of the teachers, will have a certain salary structure and conditions of service, but the school next door, because he does not like its practices one little bit, will have a different set of conditions, to be imposed by order. I am not saying that the Secretary of State will do that. I am saying that we should not give him the power to do so. We should not give that power to any Secretary of State.

Mr. Barnett: Another serious difficulty and danger of the part of the Bill to which my right hon. Friend has drawn attention is that the Secretary of State could differentiate between local education authority areas according to who happened to have political control at the time.

Mr. Oakes: I am certain that the Secretary of State will look closely at that power. Another part of the Bill says that if the Secretary of State so desires, he can negotiate with a particular local authority in addition to local authority associations.

Therefore, we are giving unprecedented powers to a Minister. The House should not do that. We are doing so in a roughshod manner, without proper consideration.

In his speech, the Secretary of State made great play of the fact that the Bill was a temporary measure. I noticed that he continually called the advisory committee the interim advisory committee. Nowhere in the Bill is it called that. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Bill is to be in force only until 1990. But look at what we are discussing on Thursday this week. The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 deals with terrorism. Lives are at stake. In 1978, the House was entitled to pass such a Bill in the face of bombings and people being killed—there is nothing like that in this Bill. It is being renewed year by year; it will be renewed again this year. Unless there is more comprehensive legislation—I would not put that past the Government — this Bill will be renewed after 1990. If we have the misfortune of still having the Government in power at that time, it will be renewed year by year. So today is the time to stop it if we want to do so.

I say unequivocally that if I were on the Government Benches and if my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) were Secretary of State, without hesitation I would vote against a Bill such as this. In the last Labour Government, I was a Minister in the Education Department with special responsibility for teachers' pay. I had to sit on all the Cabinet committees at a particularly difficult time, and we were constantly accused by Conservative Members of being centralist and of trying to impose Moscow-like domination on the teaching profession and education. Now where are we? Where is Moscow-like domination with a centralist measure such as this Bill? If my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North introduced a Bill that was half as centralist and half as arrogant as this, I could and would vote against it.

I hope that those Conservative Members who have an interest in education, a local government background—like me, many of them were on councils before coming here—a care and affection for local government and an interest in democracy and in not giving any Minister too many powers, will not be spineless enough to follow the Secretary of State into the Lobby. I fear that many of them will do so. There is one hope. Thank God that there is another place where there is more concern about education and local authorities. It exists only to stop this sort of tyranny occurring in the United Kingdom. I hope that that other place does not acquiesce in the Government's railroading tactics, and that the Minister will not have his Bill at use as a pistol to the heads of teachers and the local authorities when he meets them next, on 19 December.

5.42 pm

Mr. Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden): I do not know whether, in his last few words, the right hon. Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) was speaking with a certain longing and yearning in his voice. I agree with him that this is not a debate in which to re-run the teachers' pay dispute. we should look at the principle of the Bill, what it means and what opportunities it will create. As the right hon. Gentleman acknowledged, it is a Bill about mechanisms. I do not see the scares in it that he has put before the House. I understand that he and other Labour Members may be anxious to whip up such fears as may exist in the teaching profession about the measure, because they would like to maintain maximum hostility among the teachers to the change that this represents. The motive for that may be to put off the possibility of settlement for that much longer.

We are trying to get rid of the Burnham machinery, and the more that one learns about that and some of the ways in which it has performed in the past, the more one realises that it cannot long be mourned. It was inevitable that any unilateral move to end it would be branded as dictatorial, even if there was multilateral dissatisfaction about it, as there is.

What my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has presented today is acknowledged as an interim measure, which means that there is scope for an agreed longer-term answer. Some of my right hon. and hon. Friends have referred with disfavour to the NUT advertisement in the newspapers today. I add my voice in saying that the sentence that I found particulary offensive and misleading was that which reads:

"The Bill will also deny teachers any opportunity to negotiate on their pay or conditions of service ever again."

That is grossly untrue, and it is the clear intention of my right hon. Friend that some other procedure should be found. This is clearing the decks, ready to find such a procedure.

The Bill should not make a settlement of the current dispute more difficult. We are edging towards agreement. People are changing their positions, and my right hon. Friend has been generous enough to say that his door is open and he is prepared to consider all representations. If everyone shares that spirit of give and take, a settlement can be achieved.

I see as an ingredient in that settlement the need to find new machinery for determining teachers' pay. Teachers must have some hope about what they can expect in future. They must have some hope that they will not slip behind in the way that they did following the Houghton settlement and such arrangements in the past. Equally, in asking them to look to their future. I urge them not to try to get everthing settled at once now, as though they have a mission to get everything in education, and their pay, right to the maximum, regardless of other demands on the public purse. There has to be give and take in that sense as well.

I hope that the Bill is seen as a watershed, after which thought might be given to the structure of the profession in a new way. Its divisions into warring factions should not be perpetuated for ever and a day. Parents simply do not understand differences between the unions. Parents do not see teachers as belonging to this or that union. The unions themselves do not seem to understand the differences between themselves.

Parents understand that some union members who they see on television from time to time do not appear to be the personification of dedicated professionalism. They also understand that this sectionalised squabbling of the past few weeks in particular looks light years away from professionalism. Many parents cannot square the image that they have seen portrayed in the newspapers and on television of the teaching profession with the teachers whom they may meet at their children's school. One is tempted to wonder whether the mass of teachers might not wish, if it were possible, to transform themselves into a united professional body setting, maintaining and upholding their standards.

Many practical difficulties cannot be dismissed just by wishing them away. Teachers would give a better account of themselves if they sounded as though they had a tolerance of each other's point of view and if they gave the impression of belonging to the same profession, subscribing to common objectives. I do not imagine that this would produce a toothless champion of its members' rights. A united professional body would give added strength to the teaching profession and probably greater dignity to the cause of teachers and education.

Teachers might reflect on what the dreadful dispute of the past one and a half years has achieved. There may be more pay for them, but I wonder whether they believe that they have conveyed to the public a better understanding of the needs and nature of education. I wonder whether they have created more sympathy for state education among the public. There seems to be evidence that pressure for private education is growing all the time. A united professional body for teachers might be able to do rather better, and I counsel teachers to think about that.

A professional body, whatever it might be called, might attempt to seize for itself a leading role in the more permanent pay determination process that will follow what is being set by the Bill. I may be accused of a certain amount of day dreaming in reflecting upon this possibility, but I wish that it were not. I think that many parents would wish that it were not day dreaming, and I suspect that quite a lot of teachers would wish that. It is up to teachers, not my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, because he would be accused, as he has been today, of being dictatorial if he spoke with favour of any such move or said that he would like to see a teachers council set up.

Teachers and their representatives should not get hysterical and oppose the Bill in the way demonstrated by the NUT. They should recognise the lessons of the past and look to the opportunities that open up before them for a better way for teachers to organise themselves. If the Bill is a trigger for a serious search for that better way to begin, it is doubly welcome.

4.49 pm

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): I beg to move, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof,

"That this House, whilst recognizing the need to replace the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965, declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill which makes no positive contribution to settling the current dispute on teachers' pay and conditions, removes the basic negotiating rights of 400,000 teachers, takes away the direct input of local authorities into negotiations and represents a drastic centralisation of power in the Secretary of State, rather than allowing for direct negotiations between teachers and employers on all aspects of teachers' pay and conditions within the context of a new system of pay comparability for the public services as a whole."

I shall not follow too closely the line taken by the hon. Members for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) and for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) who spoke from the Government side because I want to speak quite specifically to the Bill. The Bill sets out to abolish the Burnham system of negotiating teachers' pay. That system has existed for some 21 years, and the House will know that the alliance has not been enamoured of the Burnham structures, believing that they retained a false and damaging separation of two elements of teachers' employment which should logically and practically be dealt with together, namely pay and conditions. However, if the Secretary of State thinks that I propose to speak in support of his Bill, he should look at the amendment because that shows our total rejection of it.

Even though the Bill does away with Burnham and purports to replace that creaking and outdated machinery

[Mr. Clement Freud]

with what the Bill describes as an advisory committee, the Bill must be opposed. We oppose the Bill not only because, unlike the previous Secretary of State, the bite of the present incumbent is worse than his bark, but because the Bill is conceived as a murder and even then it is flawed in motive and in execution. As a piece of employment legislation it threatens to create for schoolteachers a unique and uniquely discriminatory system of settling pay and conditions.

Other measures introduced by the Government have reduced employees' rights, and here one thinks of the abolition of the wages councils, but this Bill proposes to create a structure by which the pay of a large and important section of society will be determined without reference to the teachers' employers or to their union representatives. I can think of no other group of people to whom this applies. Even confining comparisons to other groups of local authority workers I come up against the fact that firemen negotiate, that the police put in claims which are considered and processed through negotiating machinery, and that the independent machinery for nurses is more independent than what the Bill proposes for teachers.

The Secretary of State is not in his place, but I challenge him or the Minister of State when she replies to give the House examples of other groups of people who are treated in this way, who are subject to an advisory committee filled with the nominees of a Secretary of State who is not their employer, and with terms of reference set by the Secretary of State, which will be told what factors it may take into account and whose report may not even be made public? The findings of the advisory committee can be totally ignored by the Secretary of State, and, under the terms of the Bill, the advisory committee need not even consider things annually. Any changes in the pay and conditions of teachers which happen to get through the minefield of restrictions and reservations held in the hands of the Secretary of State are to be subject to annulment in Parliament in an order the details of which will not even form part of that order but will have to be obtained separately from Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): It would be helpful to the House if the hon. Gentleman could tell us where it says in the Bill that the recommendations of the advisory committee will not be published.

Mr. Freud: That is in clause 3(3). I am glad that the Minister will now read the Bill. The Secretary of State frequently berates teachers for not behaving as a profession. This Bill will make teachers a second-class group and will not take them out of normal industrial relations because they are a special case, like the police, and ought to be treated with extra concern and cossetting, but will punish them because they have exposed this Government's shabby treatment of education. Teachers are to be disadvantaged because their strike action in the last few years has been a factor——

Mrs. Rumbold *rose——*

Mr. Freud: I shall not give way. That strike action in the last few years was a factor that caused a Tory loss of control in many shire counties. Allowing the teachers and their employers to reach a deal and then funding that deal would mean that the Secretary of State would not be able to take the credit for solving the problem of the teachers' dispute. Most of all, the Government know that without a deal their whole approach to education would stand exposed at the next general election.

The Bill has nothing to do with education itself, nothing to do with the rights and wrongs of the teachers' case or with the finding of a long-term solution that will really bring peace to our schools. It has everything to do with the highly charged political question of electoral politics. The Government, having lost much of their influence at local level, are seeking to get it back, not by winning the arguments and defending their case, but by abolishing local government altogether.

The reason why the Secretary of State is so keen on issues such as local financial management — an enlightened step that was taken by my county council in Cambridgeshire—is not because the Government see it as an enlightend step but because it undermines local education authorities.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Bob Dunn): Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that it was started by his county council when that council was under the control of the Conservative party?

Mr. Freud: That is right. It is a united and now balanced county council. The point that I made to the Minister was quite simply that the reason why the Secretary of State was previously against it and is now for it, is because he sees it as yet another device to undermine the local education authorities. Teachers' pay accounts for about half of any shire county's budget and has simply got in the way of those ambitions. The Bill is a way, not a particularly subtle way, of removing another obstruction to a Tory monopoly of power that cannot be gained through the democratic process. He who pays the piper will thus not only call the tune but will write the score and fashion the instrument. It is a dangerous monopoly and I predict that it will backfire badly.

Although the Bill does not repay careful study, I shall take the House through it clause by clause because only then will its true nature become apparent. It is a mixture of farce and nastiness which is uniquely depressing, even from this Government from whom one does not expect uplifting legislation. Clause 1 is the only clause in the Bill that we shall not seek to amend. I suspect it is unintentional that this clause will boost the establishment of tertiary colleges falling under FE regulations and therefore beyond the scope of the rest of the Bill. That clause is welcome.

Clause 2 is extraordinary and one can only marvel that it comes from the man who stood up before his party and said, "I am only the Secretary of State. I have no power." In clause 2 the full monopolistic ambitions of that man are revealed. The clause says that the Secretary of State shall refer matters to the committee and will tell its members what they should consider and the constraints to which they shall subject themselves. I suspect that constraint will prove more accurate than consideration. It will be interesting to know whether the prevailing electoral position will feature publicly as one of those constraints.

The plot thickens in clause 3, because here the Secretary of State asserts another weapon in his armoury. Not

content with both selecting the members of the advisory committee and the terms under which the Committee will consider teachers' pay and conditions, he reserves the right totally to ignore the findings of the Committee or to make, "such other provisions with respect to that matter as he thinks fit."

He compounds the aggrandisement by insulting teachers and their employers in clause 3(4)*(c)*. The Secretary of State cannot do what he proposes to do and then have the arrogance not only to be absent from the House but to say to the teachers——

Mrs. Rumbold *rose*——

Mr. Freud: I shall give way to the hon. Lady when I finish this sentence. He has the arrogance to say to the teachers, "I may leave a few things to you but I shall specify what they will be."

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Gentleman said that clause 3(3) said that the Government and the Secretary of State would not publish the findings of the advisory committee. I do not think it says that in the Bill and I would be grateful if the hon. Gentleman could tell me where that appears, because I understand that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has every intention of publishing the findings.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the hon. Lady guarantee that?

Mr. Freud: I am pleased to hear what the hon. Lady says and I am sorry, if she has every intention of publishing the findings, that there is no mention of that in this rotten little Bill. One normally supposes, with this ungenerous Government, that what is not in a Bill, will not come about.

The Bill enables the Secretary of State to limit the extent of any role for negotiations involving teachers and local education authorities and to set the terms for whatever small, residual, place they are to occupy. We shall attempt to amend that in Committee.

Mr. Cash *rose*——

Mr. Freud: I shall not give way again.

The alliance will not sit back and let the Secretary of State fashion for teachers a wholly unique unsatisfactory system for establishing pay and conditions which is operated along unsatisfactory lines of annulment. At the very least, we would want the orders to be subject to affirmative resolution procedure.

The rest of clause 3 conjures up the unappetising spectacle of the Secretary of State putting on a rather poor imitation of John Wayne cantering in for a post meridian rescue to be in the last scene before the credits roll. Not satisfied with pre-empting discussions about negotiating machinery, clause 3(6) empowers the Secretary of State, by statutory instrument, to impose a pay structure on teachers. It resembles a "Try your Strength" competition at a fairground with a succesSon of more or less hapless and frustrated Secretaries of State confronting the teachers shouting, "Let me have a go at it." The methods may vary but the intention is consistent.

As for clause 5, I ask the Secretary of State to furnish the House with other examples. There are Acts of Parliament which are subject to annual votes such as the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978, which we are to discuss on Thursday and the pools competition legislation about which I seem to speak annually and make the same points year after year. I remain to be convinced that the Government believe that this is the best way in which to deal with important matters or indeed the best method of governing the country.

It seems that we shall soon have so many expediencies in our legislation that everything will be exemptions rather than rules. I cannot believe that the Secretary of State wants to encourage that trend. What makes this one worse is the fact that it is to have an afterlife. Not content with erecting a system of affirmative and annulling orders, we are being given something, the provisions of which live on after the Act expires. It is like the Cheshire cat remaining in situ after the smile has gone.

There is an even more worrying feature of clause 5. We are asked to accept that the Bill meets an emergency, that it is an expedient to get us over some temporary crisis. The precedents are not auspicious — the income tax legislation, the Defence of the Realm Acts, the Official Secrets Act 1911 and the Import, Export and Customs Powers (Defence) Act 1939 were all designed to meet a historically specific need and all were prolonged far beyond their original intention.

In this context, I fear that the Secretary of State is being a trifle disingenuous. It is quite clear to me and my colleagues that the Bill is not the consequence of the failure of the existing machinery and that it does not represent a posture of crisis. Both claims are true only as far as they go, and both represent a partial representation of the facts. The Government are overlooking the fact that reform of the Burnham machinery is already on the agenda after Coventry. It is the existing machinery, albeit supplemented with ACAS and some fresh impetus, which has produced the Nottingham ACAS agreement.

I will not say that the Secretary of State does not want a settlement, but whatever that settlement was, and however it was to be achieved, he wanted to change the machinery to bring total control into his own hands. The Secretary of State often says that he sees the education system as a wheel in which there should be more power at the rim and less at the hub. What he always leaves out of his attractive analogy are the spokes. One cannot run a local education system from either the hub or the rim. All parts of the wheel must work smoothly and together. The Secretary of State will not solve the teachers' dispute by eliminating from his considerations the local education authorities and the teachers' unions.

The Secretary of State, in view of his renowned passion for the English language, should realise that an imposed settlement is a contradiction in terms. The casualties of such a step will be awesome and much of the damage irreparable. We all have reservations about the Nottingham ACAS agreement. I am not convinced that it permits good management in schools, although I appreciate the arguments about collegiality. I accept the case for incentives, but suspect that the problem is rather to reward the majority of good teachers than to produce a sharply tapered scale for the few.

The alliance has severe reservations about Burnham. The deal that teachers and employers have struck abandons Burnham in that it involves a third party— ACAS — and deals with pay and conditions together. The right response to that is not to rubbish what has been achieved or to leap into a largely imaginary fray and rush through premature legislation which, in every respect save its deceptive appearance, is hasty and ill-considered.

[Mr. Freud]

The Government must take very seriously the point that any negotiated deal is better than any imposed deal, however technically deficient the former and however technically perfect the latter. I do not say that because the Government have no role to play, for they clearly have one; I say it because it is simply wrong to deal with teachers as the Bill proposes. The consequences will be worse than a sane Government should be prepared to countenance and I believe that what the Bill proposes will make the education system worse rather than better.

The alliance supports the replacement of Burnham. The Secretary of State said to me the other day that he can see no difference between alliance policy and Labour party policy; we support the role of a third party in an advisory committee and taking pay and conditions together. We cannot support the timing, the details or the motivation behind the Bill.

Mr. Jack Dormand (Easington): Or the principles.

Mr. Freud: Indeed. Or the principles. I ask Conservative Members to stop talking about things which confuse the issue, however important they may be, and to concentrate their minds on the evils of the Bill and the singular powers that it will give a Minister without requiring the consent of this House. Like the right hon. Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes), I am very grateful for the existence of the other place, which will look at the Bill dispassionately and without feeling that it ought to be done in time for a general election.

6.7 pm

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): The speech of the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) confirms that the alliance always wants to be all things to all people. It pursues a policy which enables it to tell parents that it supports them and that it opposes disruption in schools, and to tell teachers' unions that it supports them and opposes what the Government are trying to do. The alliance is never firm about what it wants to achieve. It simply tries to be all things to all people.

We all want to ensure a better education for our children and a system that enables them to acquire the skills that will enable them to go forward into the 21st century with confidence. We want to enable them to continue to write history, not simply to read it.

We have now had about two years of disruption in our schools. The existing machinery has ground on, trying to find a settlement, and Opposition spokesmen have accused the Secretary of State of dithering one day and of acting too quickly the next. They cannot have it both ways. The present machinery gives the Secretary of State, who has to foot the bill, practically no powers, but expects him to take all the responsibility. That has to change. He has to meet the lion's share of the bill, but has by far the smallest opportunity to influence what happens.

Mr. Freud: Does the hon. Gentleman genuinely believe that passing the Bill will make for peace in the classroom?

Mr. Baldry: I genuinely believe that hundreds of thousands of parents and thousands of teachers would be glad to see a resolution to the dispute and that they see within the Bill the seeds of such a resolution.

The simple problem about the Burnham machinery, which was set up in 1919, is that it has outlived its usefulness. It has become increasingly ineffective in producing agreement on teachers' pay and has no power to consider conditions of service. Furthermore, the employers, under the leadership of the Labour groups, have come to to accept a collegiate approach. It seems to be a new expression in the English dictionary, but it means eroding differentials and incentives for better teachers. The result has been a reduction in promotion prospects for teachers, which has been exacerbated by falling pupil numbers, and a prolongation of the dispute, which has been largely cost-free to teachers, because those who have been involved in industrial action over the past two years have lost little of their pay.

There has, alas, been a decline in the regard in which teachers are held by the public. That is sad, because if we are to recruit and retain teachers it is essential that they are rewarded well and are seen to be held in high public esteem. More than any other group, the teachers themselves have undermined that esteem.

Under the existing Burnham machinery there have been constant negotiations, which have produced no settlement, and constant disruptions of our schools. I am sure that every hon. Member believes that the children of our country are entitled to uninterrupted education.

An improvement in the standing and quality of teachers must be a key element in ensuring better schools. There can be no disagreement in the House that ensuring that teachers are properly remunerated must be an essential prerequisite to getting good teachers. The Bill will help, because it will enable the Secretary of State to make decisions to clarify conditions of employment, provide for appraisal, reward teachers properly and create a pay structure that substantially improves career prospects.

The agreement negotiated by the Labour-dominated employers and the teachers' unions does not provide a pay structure which improves career prospects. Fewer teacher posts would be incentive posts that are rewarded according to merit, attainment and capability. At present, about 40 per cent. of posts are incentive posts. The agreement suggested by the employers and unions would reduce that number to about one third, whereas the sensible proposals of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State would increase the number to about 50 per cent., which reflects the position in virtually every other profession.

It is essential that disputes about the extent of teachers' responsibilities should cease. The Bill will help teachers to know what they can be required to do, help heads and parents to know what they can reasonably expect of teachers, and ensure that local authorities can rely on teachers without constantly looking over their shoulders to see whether their decisions will be tested in the courts.

The Bill will help because it will put responsibility on the Secretary of State, whom the whole country thinks of as having responsibility. Day after day the Secretary of State has been berated in the House for not taking powers to settle the dispute. Everyone who knows anything about the matter realises that, because of an Act of Parliament, the Secretary of State does not have those powers. By giving him power we shall allow him to concentrate wonderfully the minds of employers and teachers unions to consider the issues that must be resolved if we are to bring harmony back to our schools, to improve our schools and to compete with countries such as West Germany, the United States and Japan in the 21st century.

Much has been achieved. The 13-point list of teachers' duties proposed by the local authorities and unions

matches closely the 19 points in the Government's package announced on 30 October. As the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) acknowledged, that is good progress, but it has largely come about only because employers and trade union representatives detected that the Secretary of State was determined to ensure that progress would be made. That progress came about as a result of the announcement that more money would be made available if an agreement on duties was reached.

The Opposition present themselves as the friends of the teachers, but we should never forget that under the Labour Government teachers' pay fell 13 per cent. below the value of the Houghton award. That drop resulted from the combination of leapfrogging comparability awards and the high inflation which was a consequence of Labour's economic policies. Since 1979 teachers pay has been restored to, near enough, the value of Houghton, and the new Government package would take their pay 10 per cent. above Houghton by October 1987.

The additional £600 million set aside by the Government can be released if sensible conditions are met and if a clear contract and a satisfactory pay and promotion package are produced. That extra money would provide an average rise for teachers of 16·4 per cent., giving them a pay increase of 24 per cent. over the two years up to October 1987.

Mr. Ken Weetch (Ipswich): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the Secretary of State is intervening because he wants to establish the principle of more differentials in pay in schools? Does the hon. Gentleman realise that posts of responsibility have been a divisive factor in the classroom for a very long time and have given rise to a good deal of ill feeling? Does the hon. Gentleman not agree that if we establish a main professional grade much of the fragmentation will disappear? Under the Government's proposals a teacher will say, "You have the money for the responsibility; you get on with it."

Mr. Baldry: It is extraordinary that the Opposition try to apply to teachers norms that exist in no other profession. In every other profession good people are rewarded and have incentives to do well. We hope that there can be a similar situation in our schools, so that good teachers are paid well for teaching well. The Government and, I believe, every parent want a pay structure that rewards and motivates good classroom teachers and those who accept responsibility outside the classroom. The unions' proposals do not provide incentives for good teachers.

Mr. Patrick Thompson: Does my hon. Friend agree that the whole purpose of the Government's proposals is to introduce more flexibility into the way in which incentive posts are introduced? That is exactly what we want. I hope my hon. Friend agrees that we want to give teachers more chance to stay on in the classrooms to get good salaries for good work.

Mr. Baldry: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We want to see good classroom teachers rewarded, and not a parent in the country would disagree with that.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Baldry: No. We want to encourage teachers to take on extra responsibilities, and I do not believe that any parent in the country would disagree with that. We want to pay for skills that are in short supply — we are constantly berated about the lack of teachers in physics and mathematics—and I do not believe that any parent in the country would disagree with more pay for skills in short supply. We want to attract good teachers to demanding posts which may be difficult to fill, for example, in inner-city schools, and not a parent would disagree with that.

In reality, at present there are about 105,000 promoted posts on scales 2 and 3 and the senior teachers' scale. The Government's package allows for 140,000 promoted posts, which would mean that half the profession would hold such posts and be heads or deputy heads. The local authority proposal would provide only 80,000 promoted posts, which would be enough for only one third of the profession.

The rewards offered to teachers who take on extra responsibilities must be adequate and, clearly, the local authority and union proposals fail in that respect. Indeed, the general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers has described them as "shooting differentials to pieces." Under them, for example, a deputy head who assumed the role of head teacher and took on his responsibilities in his absence would be paid only £5 a week more for doing that. I am not sure whether the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) regards that as being divisive, but it would be lunatic to expect teachers to take on the extra responsibilities of heads and to discharge them decently for only £5 a week more. That is unrealistic. Therefore, we are keen and anxious to ensure that those who are prepared to take on proper responsibilities are properly rewarded.

The Bill will ensure that the remuneration of Teachers Act 1965, which sets out the legislative framework for the Burnham negotiating procedures, is repealed. That Act gives no statutory role to the Government, other than to publish the orders which the Burnham committee proposes and to provide much of the resources to meet its requirements. In short, this Bill will place the responsibility where it should be—on the shoulders of the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

The country looks to the Secretary of State for a lead and expects him to discharge his responsibilities, and he will do that under the Bill. The Bill does not remove negotiating machinery from the trade unions or the teachers, as Opposition Members have sought to suggest. The interim advisory committee, which the Secretary of State will appoint, will consider advice from all quarters, including teachers unions and local authority employers.

That committee will not give the implied veto that the Burnham committee gave to the NUT, until its numbers on that committee were reorganised. Because the NUT had a majority on the employee side of the Burnham committee, it effectively had a veto, so for two years we made no progress because it was in the interests of the NUT that we made none. The NUT had a statutory enablement to ensure that we made no progress. Now we will make progress because we will have a committee to advise the Secretary of State. Its members will be independent, and will be seen to be independent, and their role will be to represent parents' interests, the national interest and community interest. The Secretary of State will be empowered to give effect to its recommendations by order. If he chooses materially to amend the recommendations of that independent committee, he will have to come to the House to argue his case.

[Mr. Baldry]

Hon. Members are responsible to their electorates, and for two years we have been sitting impotent on the teachers' dispute because we have had no influence. Everything has been down to the Burnham committee, over which we have no influence. Parliament gave the power to the committee on which the NUT has had a majority on the employees' side. Under the Bill we shall be answerable to our electorates. If the Secretary of State introduces proposals with which we do not agree, we can tell him that we disagree. That is what will happen, because the Bill is placing responsibility on the House to ensure that teachers' pay and negotiations are properly discharged.

Mr. Patrick Thompson: Does my hon. Friend not find it surprising that Opposition Members should oppose proposals to get rid of the Burnham negotiating procedures when, year after year, as a result of those procedures—I speak as someone who has been in the teaching profession for 23 years — we have had unsatisfactory, badly structured pay settlements? Despite that, the Opposition defend those procedures.

Mr. Baldry: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We have waited far too long to see a settlement of the teachers' pay dispute. No settlement has been forthcoming through the present machinery. It is high time that the House took to itself the powers to ensure a decent pay settlement which properly rewards teachers and ensures no more disruptions in our schools and that our children can compete well into the next century.

6.25 pm

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): I should like to spend some time dealing with the many inaccuracies and misunderstandings in the speech of the hon. Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry), but as many hon. Members wish to speak there is time only to pick up some of them as I go along.

I agree strongly with those who have already pointed out that the introduction of the Bill is an arrogant abuse of our procedures. I agree with those who point to the centralist nature of the legislation. The Government have pursued a centralist policy since they were first elected and it is in sharp contrast to what we always used to hear from the Conservative party in the 1950s, 1960s and, even, the 1970s.

This is a constitutional outrage and I am particularly worried about the type of language used by the Secretary of State and Conservative Members about the trade union leadership in teaching.

Mr. Baldry: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Barnett: No. The hon. Gentleman spoke for long enough.

Some of those leaders are personal friends. The trade unions have been led responsibly in the extremely difficult circumstances of the past five years—that needs to be stressed — despite provocation from the Secretary of State and his predecessor. It is not surprising that as a consequence of their behaviour there has been so much disruption in our schools.

The hon. Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) made an important point when he said that the teaching profession was undervalued by society. I hope that he will listen to what I am saying because I listened to what he said and I may be able to teach him some things which he does not yet understand. The hon. Gentleman said that the teaching profession was undervalued and that is the starting point. In the light of that it is exceedingly dangerous for the Secretary of State to introduce this legislation.

When the Secretary of State was appointed I was hopeful that he would be an improvement on his predecessor and that he would try to work with local education authorities and the profession. Twice in parliamentary questions I encouraged him to do so because it seemed important that he should gain the confidence of the teaching profession. But I am afraid that one of the consequences of introducing the Bill is that he will lose the confidence of the entire profession. We need only see the letters that hon. Members have received from representatives of practically every trade union to see that there is almost complete opposition to the Bill because it removes the negotiating rights of trade unions and devalues teachers and their representative organisations. That is a bad first step for the Secretary of State to take.

In the light of what has happened over the past few days, I can only believe that it was always the Secretary of State's intention to introduce this legislation and that he was hoping that Coventry and Nottingham would fail so that he would have an excuse to do it. He spends his time trying to point out the degree to which there is division within the teaching profession when the profession has made an earnest attempt over the past few months to reach a measure of unity. I think that they have achieved that unity to a remarkable extent. Nevertheless, the Secretary of State has done everything he can to divide the profession. Even in the speech we heard this afternoon, he was trying to point out yet again the areas of difference rather than the areas of agreement which across at Coventry and, later, at Nottingham.

It is important to point out some of the consequences that the Secretary of State's legislation is likely to have. Many Opposition Members have been appalled by the way in which the Secretary of State and other Conservative Members refer to good teachers. If there are good teachers, the implication is that there are also bad teachers. He suggests that 50 per cent. of the profession are good teachers and the rest are moderate, indifferent or bad. That is the implication behind what Conservative Members are saying. They are saying that there are two sorts of teachers, falling roughly into two classes. They say that we should pay half of them over the odds and give them special allowances and the rest have to make do with what they get. That is the way in which it is read by teachers up and down the country.

It is suggested that the good teachers will be given a reward for being good teachers. I want to contest that. Who chooses the good teachers? On what basis is it decided that somebody is a good teacher and somebody is not a good teacher? I have taught on the staff of several schools and, inevitably, I have had my private views about what I believe to be the capacity of other teachers. I have often been proved wrong. I have often come to the wrong conclusion about somebody. Sometimes I realised that someone was not as good as I had thought, and sometimes I discovered that someone was a much better teacher than I had realised. It is an extremely difficult judgment for anybody to make. It cannot be made by the head teachers or inspectors. Who will make the decisions? It is very

dangerous for anyone to attempt, as the Secretary of State's words imply, to separate the sheep from the goats in the teaching profession.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) intervened earlier in the debate. He pointed out that the decision to separate the teaching profession into two halves is about as divisive as one could possible get. I agree that the teaching profession has been undervalued in the past. I also agree with those who say that everything is to be gained by making the profession one profession and getting a measure of agreement. My own union, the National Union of Teachers, has long wanted to see all teachers working together in one union or one association of unions. I believe that that will one day come, but it will not come as long as attempts are made by the Secretary of State and Conservative Members to divide the profession, because that is the way in which they are proceeding.

Mr. Oakes: I agree with my hon. Friend. One never hears the Secretary of State for Defence talking about good soldiers or bad soldiers and one never hears the Home Secretary talking about good policemen or bad policemen. It is only the Secretary of State for Education and Science who has that divisive technique.

Mr. Barnett: I agree with my right hon. Friend. The fact that they talk in that way is indicative of the way in which Conservatives think about education. They do not talk about good doctors or bad doctors or good colonels and bad colonels but they certainly talk about good teachers and bad teachers, and I have heard enough of it. I hope that it will stop.

In his able speech my right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) drew attention to the reference to areas in different parts of the country. We do not know what that means. I hope that when the Minister replies to the debate she will explain what that means. The suggestion is that teachers in different parts of the country will be paid at different rates. The suggestion is that in inner cities people will be paid at different rates. There may be arguments there, I do not know. However, there are costs as well. The cost is divisiveness within the profession. Since I first joined the profession there has been pressure to try to pay teachers in subjects where there are shortages more than those in subjects where there are no shortages. The consequence of that is that teachers of computer studies, science and mathematics will get special responsibility allowances only because they are teachers of those subjects, not because they are good teachers. One of the consequences, I am afraid—I am making a general point, but I believe that there could be some truth in it — is that whenever a job is advertised in history, English, geography or one of the subjects for which a fair number of teachers are available, there is often a long list of applicants. Inevitably, the person appointed, assuming the appointment committee appoints the best person who applies, will be a fairly good teacher because he or she will have had to face a lot of competition. The consequence of that, inevitably, is that there will be many "good" teachers of arts subjects who will not get the responsibility allowance, because only 50 per cent. of teachers will get it, but that all science teachers will get it. That is another divisive consequence of the Secretary of State's proposals.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo *rose*——

Mr. Barnett: I will not give way because I want to give other right hon. and hon. Members the opportunity to speak and I do not want to go on longer than I can help.

I want to draw attention to the effect of the divisiveness which will result from the proposals in a profession that needs to be united nationally and within schools. I can tell the House about the divisiveness that can exist within staff rooms as a consequence of allowances going to one section and not to another. I believe, as I said earlier, that appraisal of teachers is exceedingly difficult. Where special responsibility is called for, that is a different matter. Where extra duties are required, obviously those extra duties have to be paid for. However, I am doubtful about the devaluation that will take place of, the ordinary classroom teacher. In my opinion, that is the most important job done by the profession as a whole. That is why the agreement worked out between the employers and the unions was such a valuable one. It recognised the crucial value of the classroom teacher.

The next point I want to make is about the word "incentive". We are constantly told that teachers will not teach properly or do their job properly and will feel no incentive to be better unless there is the possibility of them earning more as a consequence of some appraisal exercise that demonstrates that they are better than average or at least in the top 50 per cent. I am worried about that. Those who know the history of education will recall the method, "Teaching: payment by results". We were told earlier in the debate that there is no profession where there is not a special allowance for people who do better than others. I am not so sure. Do we have special allowances for good doctors or social workers? A profession in which we give special allowances for the quantity of work done is dentistry. The consequence of that is that the richest dental surgeons are those who fill or pull out the most teeth. Within dentistry much too little time and trouble is spent on dental education and dental health. There is a lesson there. Whatever way one tries to reward teachers or whatever incentives one tries to provide, the danger is that one will distort the job that the teacher is trying to do and that it will have unforeseen consequences. They may do certain things and neglect others in order to get that special responsibility allowance that is being offered.

I am concerned about education. This could be a bad day for education. With my right hon. and hon. Friends, I shall fight the Bill during all its stages. It is damaging constitutionally that the Secretary of State for Education and Science should be granted these powers. The Bill is damaging to the relationship between local education authorities, the Department and the unions. Last, but not least, I believe that the Bill is divisive for the teaching profession as a whole.

6.40 pm

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): I have a long and happy association with the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett). We are parliamentary chairmen of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth. I am, therefore, unhappy to follow him in the debate when he has been so divisive in representing the union for which he is parliamentary adviser, the National Union of Teachers. I am parliamentary adviser to the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association. This exemplifies one of the root problems that have bedevilled us for two years. There is not a united teachers' union. The hon. Member for Greenwich talked of the idea that 50 per cent. of teachers

[Mr. Robert Key]

were bad teachers. I have never heard my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State or any other Conservative Member suggest any such nonsense. That may be a good debating point but it bears no relation to the truth.

Each of the four headmasters under whom I served as a teacher for 16 years encouraged his teaching staff to look outwards from the school in which they served to the community. Because we served in the independent sector, with all its privileges, it was important for us to look outward to see how the maintained sector operated. We were encouraged to become involved in the community, especially in the world of education. That helped us to realise our deficiencies and those of the maintained sector. Working as a governor for five maintained schools, including as an elected parent governor, I saw that head teachers and teachers from the primary sector onward faced great frustration. I was not uncritical of the comparatively easy conditions of employment in the maintained sector. However, I always thought that there would be nothing but trouble when the teaching profession moved down the road of defining its duties too closely. Over the years, the antics of some union leaders severely eroded the status of teachers, and this had exactly the reverse effect to what was intended, reducing the esteem —or otherwise—in which the public held them.

The teachers' associations and the unions have so much good to offer that I am distressed that the seed of what they have contributed to education is all too easily flung away. The teaching unions can contribute a great deal to the future. The Bill is a great challenge to the teacher unions. But, of course, confusion reigns. The system does not work. If anyone was in any doubt about the issue with which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is grappling, he should have listened this morning to the leader of the NUT on BBC Radio's "Today". I do not recall when I last heard so much reactionary obfuscation. There was nothing positive, no suggestions and no mention of children and parents. There were just the pure forces of reaction.

Teachers are very frustrated. I very much agree on that point with my hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst). Many of us have received representations from a small organisation called Teachers for a Common Policy. It said:

"We argue that just as a government is said to be the better for a strong opposition, so an education minister and department need to face a confident and co-ordinated teaching profession, if policies are to be creatively debated and effectively implemented.

It is education's loss as well as our own that at present our six unions cannot provide their side of this equation.

We believe the differences between teachers are insufficient to justify the lack of co-ordination, and the rivalry, between our unions."

How true.

Mr. Radice: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman has seen another letter which was sent to the Secretary of State and which was signed by the general secretaries of the four major teacher unions, including the union to which the hon. Gentleman is a parliamentary consultant. That letter stated:

"We are united in our opposition to your Bill 'Teachers' Pay and Conditions' which removes from teacher organisations the right to direct negotiations. We urge you to reconsider your position and to accept the principle that any new negotiating machinery for teachers' pay and conditions of service should include direct negotiation."

Does the hon. Gentleman agree?

Mr. Key: I shall explain why I will support the Bill. I have told the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association precisely why I shall do so. The NUT, which would not accept last January's ACAS agreement, now recommends boycotting the outcome of those negotiations and opposes the Baker package. The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers rejects the Baker package and condemns the ACAS results, but it played a leading role in mounting the ACAS exercise. The Professional Association of Teachers called on my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to intervene, but then voted for a package which it knew he would reject. The National Association of Head Teachers repudiated the deal, but the Secondary Heads Association supported it. The Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association is balloting members with a recommendation to accept the package.

This bizarre scene is best summed up not by me but by a union leader writing recently in *The Times Educational Supplement*. He said:

"on what terms can the unions bury their various rivalries, if only in a shallow, temporary grave? Can they ever get their act together long enough to present a common front?"

He continued:

"Depressingly however, the unions . . . may well emphasise the issues on which they say they differ irreconcilably rather than the matters on which they can, with enough will, achieve a degree of unity.

There is a perverse sense, of course, in which the unions need to appear in sharp disagreement with each other to justify their continuing separate existences . . . The resulting arcane quarrels have confused teachers, disaffected the public, and given heaven-sent opportunities to those bent on slamming schools and teachers at every opportunity."

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman has sat on committees with me. He is a teacher and he knows as well as I do that the separation of the teachers began because they taught in different sectors. It was not intense rivalry. Members of the AMMA taught in the grammar schools, which became private schools. If the hon. Gentleman would examine the other teaching sectors, he would realise the terrible task of bringing them together. Like Topsy, they grow'd in the sector of education in which they found themselves teaching.

Mr. Key: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the historic roots of the unions have led to many of their disagreements. I agree with the hon. Member for Greenwich that, for a long time, many people in the unions have wanted to come together. But there is more to it than that. The stances of the different organisations are important. In the past 18 months, my organisation has grown from 70,000 to 117,000. The Professional Association of Teachers, with its no-strike faith, has emerged. Teachers' representation is evolving. This means that all unions are faced with a unique opportunity.

Despite the many strengths of the unions, they have shown themselves to be rather bad at collective bargaining. There has not been any collective bargaining under Burnham, if only because he who has partly paid the piper has not even partly called most of the tune. I understand the opposition of the leaders of the teachers' unions to the Bill. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has considered their worries, especially with regard

to International Labour Organisation conventions, including Nos. 91, 113, 151 and 163, which contain points that must be answered. Unions such as the AMMA regard it as rather perverse that, since the NUT veto went, along with its overall majority, and since a range of issues not only have been put on the agenda but have been discussed, my right hon. Friend has, as they see it, taken an axe to the negotiating table and chopped it up. I must say to my friends in the AMMA and to all those teachers who, like me, have loathed what has happened in the past two years and who want the status and effectiveness of the profession to be enhanced, that it is common ground that the existing machinery does not work.

The Bill is time-limited. The teaching unions have more than three years—until 31 March 1990—to get their act together and to work with their traditional partners in the education service to ensure that direct collective bargaining — real collective bargaining — with all the parties involved becomes a central feature of the successor to this Bill. That is why the Bill is time-limited and precisely why it is intended to give a breathing space. Will the unions and employers insist upon raking over the embers of the past two years and seek partisan advantage or will they accept the breathing space offered by the Bill as an opportunity to design a new future for the profession?

6.50 pm

Mr. Jack Dormand (Easington): All the speeches from Tory Members so far have called for the best possible education service, an end to the disruption, the best fiscal provision, and so on. I have no doubt that Tory Members sincerely believe what they have said. We are all in favour of sweetness and light and all against sin. However, Tory Members have not addressed themselves to the Bill, because many of them feel that the Bill is really atrocious and they do not support much of its contents. Perhaps they will join us in the Lobby tonight.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) repeated a point made by many Opposition Members, which has not been answered. It relates to the reasons for the Bill's existence. We want to know why, after 18 months or two years of being unable to get a penny out of the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph), there is suddenly such generosity. The figure of £600 million for teachers' salaries has been repeated ad nauseam, and that is quite apart from any other aspect of the education budget. Had we such a response originally, we would have been saved the trouble and disruption that has been faced by parents, teachers and this House during the past 18 months or two years. I am not suggesting that everything would have been agreed immediately, but at least the major problems would have been settled.

We are today faced with a Draconian Bill. Even considering the kind of legislation introduced over the past seven years, I find the measure quite breathtaking. Since 1979 the Government consistently proclaimed a philosophy of non-intervention in industrial matters. We must now draw the conclusion that they will intervene when it suits them. The Secretary of State's excuse, of course, is that he represents the taxpayer. To that we have to say, "What is new?". That has been the position for many years. If the Government feel that it is such a matter of principle, they should have done something soon after 1979. In fact, the Bill is only an excuse to allow the Secretary of State to adopt dictatorial power in education, where negotiation is probably more important than in most other areas of industrial relations. Apart from anything else, the future of thousands of children is at stake.

In place of negotiations, there is to be an advisory committee. It is abundantly clear that the committee will simply be the tool of the Secretary of State. It can only examine and report to him on such matters as he may refer to it. When it has reported, and there seems to be some doubt whether the reports have to be published — perhaps the Minister can clarify this when he replies— the Secretary of State does not have to accept its recommendations. It is difficult to imagine a more useless body.

The reasons that the Secretary of State has given for opposing the negotiated agreement are a facade — nothing more, nothing less. He may not agree with the cost or structure proposals in the agreement, but his objection is that an agreement has been reached at all and that a new negotiating machinery has been established.

The Bill requires that the Government should consult local authorities and the teachers organisations. Given the provisions, and indeed the philosophy, of the measure— I cannot place too much stress on that — does the Secretary of State really think that anyone will believe it is genuine consultation? It will be token consultation, a mere going through the motions. That has already been said not only by union leaders, but by the rank and file members.

One of the most depressing aspects of the present position is that the Secretary of State simply does not appreciate how far the teachers have moved by reaching agreement with the local authorities. They are now accepting proposals which two or three years ago they would not even have discussed. They are doing that, not because they are entirely convinced of the measures, but because they are genuinely determined to bring about a framework for stability and progress in the education of our children. By failing to recognise that, the Government are sowing the seeds for further disruption.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I am always interested to hear the hon. Gentleman's comments on education, as he has a long and very real experience in this area. However, does he not think that there is room for further negotiation? Although he is strongly backing the local government and ACAS agreement, does he not think that there should be further discussion on some points? On the question of the 13 points—it is admirable that the unions have accepted some of them, and there is no reason why they should not—does he not accept that they have been the basis of the professional lives of most teachers for many years?

Mr. Dormand: I am not sure that I understand the hon. Gentleman's question. However, he referred to consultation, and that was one of the points that I was making. The provisions of the Bill do not permit genuine consultation. That is where the Government will come a cropper.

Mr. Cash: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Dormand: No.

The hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) referred to my experience in education. For seven years before I came to this place I was a chief education officer. We should not overlook chief education officers when we

[Mr. Dormand]

are talking about the merits of classroom teachers. I had my share of problems with teachers—two strikes and so on — but throughout that period there was always a trust between the education committee, the teachers and the Government. I warn the Government that that trust is rapidly disappearing. Indeed, some would say that it has already gone. That is the most important point that I have to make. The Bill could scarcely be better designed to destroy the trust that is crucial for an effective education service.

I am concerned about a matter on which some agreement has been reached by the Government, unions and local authorities. As I believe that on previous occasions I was the only Member to refer to this, I was glad to hear my hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) mention it today, and I echo much of what he said. I refer, of course, to the appraisal of teachers—a matter of considerable importance, not least because the Secretary of State constantly refers to the need to recognise good teachers in monetary terms and, presumably, in promotion terms.

Who is to determine whether a person is a good teacher? Will it be the head teacher, the local education authority adviser or Her Majesty's inspectorate? Or will it be a team of qualified people whose sole function will be to visit schools to appraise teachers ability? I have been associated with all those systems, and there are grave difficulties with all of them. Perhaps I shall be able to dwell at length on that aspect in a later debate this week. I know that there has been agreement by all concerned on six pilot projects, but it is vital that the results of those pilot schemes be scrutinised with the utmost care. I predict that there will be no clear-cut answer, which means that there will be serious problems with the Government's repeated assertions about rewarding what the Secretary of State describes as good teachers.

The Government are not being fair in not recognising how far local authorities and teachers have compromised to reach agreement. I shall identify five new areas which show that free negotiations work. First, a system of appraisal is introduced for the first time. Secondly, there is a detailed agreement on conditions of service where none existed before. Thirdly, new negotiating machinery is established to replace the Burnham system. Conservative Members cannot have been reading their briefs very carefully, as at least two of them seemed not to realise that the unions had agreed that Burnham must go. Fourthly, a new salary structure is created for the profession. I know that there is still disagreement, but that is a move forward. Fifthly, salary levels are increased to reward effective teaching.

I have expressed slight reservations about some parts of that agreement, but they are of little importance compared with the steamrollering that will occur if the Government insist on pushing through the provisions of this pernicious Bill. Removing collective bargaining and telling local education authorities and teachers that they will no longer have the right to negotiate is a step so momentous that it goes far wider even than the important sphere of education. I am sure that the whole trade union movement will have seen the immense danger in it. I urge the Government to make substantial changes when we reach later stages of the Bill on Wednesday.

7.3 pm

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kennilworth): The hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) was somewhat critical of my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph), but my right hon. Friend obtained substantial sums from the Treasury for teachers. Those sums have now been exceeded by my right hon. Friend the present Secretary of State, showing clearly how greatly the present Administration value teachers and appreciate their worth. I remind the hon. Member for Easington that Houghton was eroded under the Labour Government when inflation reached 27·5 per cent., so the hon. Gentleman is in no position to castigate the Conservative party for what happened in the past.

If justification is needed for the present legislation. It is to be found in recent statements by union leaders following the ACAS talks in Nottingham. Four out of six unions, representing between a third and half of the profession, have now come out against last month's deal. It seems that only the National Union of Teachers and the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association remain in favour of that agreement. With the unions in such disarray, there is no possibility of agreement being reached among the unions, let alone between them and the employers or between that lot and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. If progress is to be made on pay and conditions for teachers, and if we are to avoid the disruption that has occurred in the past 18 months to two years, it is necessary for legislation to be in place.

The Bill repeals the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 and sets up an interim committee to advise the Secretary of State on pay and conditions of service. It seems to me in the wake of the Nottingham fiasco, that Burnham has clearly outlived any usefulness that it might once have had, and it is time for a change. The Burnham system has become an unwieldy, ineffective instrument, blunted by long abuse. Its principal function now seems to be to highlight differences between the various teacher unions and between them and the employers and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. What most Conservative Members find extraordinary is that the Burnham system has survived for so long. It is a dinosaur. It is clearly outdated and must go.

The setting up of an advisory committee on teachers' pay is an interim measure. It will ensure that real consultations take place with teachers unions as well as with local education authorities. Those bodies will clearly have the opportunity to make a considerable input into the deliberations of the Secretary of State. I believe that the repeal of the Burnham machinery will make it easier for future negotiations on pay and conditions to be truly constructive. Certainly no one wants a re-run of the past year or so of disruption in schools with so much damage to children's education. Paradoxically, however, some schools in my constituency have achieved the best examination results ever and I congratulate the majority of teachers in my constituency on putting the interests of their pupils first. They are to be commended for that.

Most reasonable people recognise that a teacher's job involves a great deal more than long holidays and free periods, and it is only right that their worth be recognised by adequate remuneration. I very much hope that my right hon. Friend's offer, which amounts to a 25 per cent. increase over 18 months, will be accepted. My right hon. Friend's proposals reflect the fact that teachers' pay had

slipped back and they redress the situation. It is significant that the cry, "Back to Houghton," has been conspicuous by its absence lately. That is because my right hon. Friend's offer increases teachers' pay a fraction beyond Houghton in money terms.

Mr. Weetch: No.

Mr. Pawsey: I appreciate that it does not restore the situation in terms of compatability with other groups, but 25 per cent. over 18 months is a substantial increase and the Government are putting their money where their mouth is. Anyone who doubts that the Burnham system is overdue for dismantling needs only to reflect upon recent events. No one — trade unions, teacher or Minister — has said a word in its favour, and no one argues for its retention. The one thing on which everyone agrees it that Burnham should go, and that it should go speedily.

It has been said that this legislation will not of itself guarantee peace in our schools. My right hon. Friend and Secretary of State has been urged for a considerable period to move closer to the teachers' position as expressed at Nottingham. It is fair to remind the House that although my right hon. Friend is being urged to move closer to the Nottingham position, especially on scales, no reciprocal move has so far been made by the unions. Even if my right hon. Friend were to accept the Nottingham agreement, it would not change matters, since the majority of unions have repudiated that agreement. The unions have abandoned the Nottingham position, so there can be no virtue in my right hon. Friend moving in that direction.

What is now needed to bring peace to our schools is a fair and reasonable contract. If, sadly, the unions cannot agree among themselves on what constitutes a fair and reasonable contract, clearly, in the interests of the nation's children, it is right that my right hon. Friend should take powers to ensure that such an agreement can, if necessary, be imposed.

The principal difference between the Government's offer and that of Nottingham is that the Government believe that a pay structure must be in place which adequately rewards teachers for added responsibility and ensures that they are well motivated towards better teaching. The Government's structure proposes additional incentive posts, which would be available for about half of all teachers. My right hon. Friend proposes five scales, which will provide the appropriate financial motivation to encourage the development and expertise of the effective teacher.

The effective teacher recognised by a fair system of appraisal will do much to improve the quality and standard of education in schools. That must be the principal aim of any education legislation introduced into the House. It is significant that, although Opposition Members have developed various themes, we have not heard much from them on the importance of education to the children of our country. They seem to regard education merely as a vehicle for teachers. Although I acknowledge the importance of the teaching profession, equally they should acknowledge the need to ensure that our children have adequate education. It should be remembered that Nottingham exceeded the Government's package by £85 million, and although the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) sought to denigrate the amount of that increase, none the less it still amounts to more than £80 million. That is substantial funding in anyone's language.

For too long it has been said that our schools have not adequately prepared children for the world of work. It is significant that a discussion paper produced by the "Think British" campaign referred to what it described as "the illiterate generation". It posed the question:

"Is our education and training system failing British industry and, by failing industry, failing the nation?"

Sir John Egan, chairman and chief executive of Jaguar plc, has said that there are evident weaknesses in applicants' abilities, which range from basic mathematics to verbal and written communication.

Even more interestingly, British Rail said:

"The country cannot be getting value for money from the education system when the present number of youngsters leave school ill-equipped to enter the world of work, with low standards of literacy and numeracy, few if any other skills and no qualifications, leaving employers and further education to pick up the pieces. Too many are totally disenchanted with school. The truancy rate is high and they cannot wait to leave. This suggests that the present system is unsuitable and irrelevant."

British Rail is not alone in that opinion. Bass plc—here we reach the nub of the argument—said:

"The quality of education provided depends more on the quality and dedication of the teachers than on the system itself. Regrettably, this quality is variable and the current level of teachers' pay does not encourage the most able applicants. Any improvements in this direction should be related to merit."

We can almost hear the voice of my hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench making that point, which has been made so well and so often by them during this and earlier debates. That is the voice of practical experience. The argument which is being so clearly advanced is that more must be done to improve the quality and standard of teachers so that, in turn, they may improve the quality and standards of school leavers.

I have said before in the House that the overwhelming majority of teachers are dedicated to their profession. They do a splendid job, almost despite the pay, but that is now being remedied and Government should be applauded for the action being taken. This Government have given teachers what they have long asked for — remuneration which adequately reflects their responsibility and their ability.

It is entirely right and just to argue the case for good and effective teachers getting more money. It seems that the only way in which society recognises a professional's worth is by improving the size of the pay packet. If that is a mercenary attitude, it is none the less true. The funds obtained by my right hon. Friend are substantial and will improve teachers' pay by a massive 25 per cent. over 18 months. That can only be described as a hefty increase in anyone's language. Very few of our constituents can claim a similar increase in basic pay over such a short period.

Like most hon. Members, I am under no illusions about the problems that face teachers in many of our schools today. In my view, a good or effective teacher will earn every penny that he will receive under the new proposals on the table. I hope that the interim committee being set up by my right hon. Friend will include representatives of industry, for it is important that we get practical advice from people who are at the sharp end of wealth generation, as shown by my earlier references to Bass plc, Jaguar plc and British Rail. If our young people are not motivated,

[Mr. Pawsey]

trained and educated in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, British industry will always be at a disadvantage vis-à-vis our competitors.

It is significant that the "Think British" campaign has argued that the management role of the head teacher is inescapable, and that since his appointment is the key to a school's success it should be subject to the approval of parent representatives. The campaign also argues that a massive expansion of parent power is necessary and that the present monopoly inherent in our education system must be broken. Those are all points which have been taken on board, certainly by Conservative Members. That is why we have supported the Education Act 1986, which gives parents representation on governing bodies equal to that of the local education authority.

The "Think British" campaign argues a cogent case for more involvement of parents and industry in education. Note the wording which I choose to use. I say "industry" as distinct from "industrialists". It is most important that schools recognise the value of increasingly gearing education to what takes place in factories and offices. Although it may be useful to know about peace studies and sociology, and although history has undoubted attractions, emphasis should be placed in our education system on those subjects which will benefit the pupil when he reaches British Rail, Jaguar plc, Bass plc and all those other companies which exist outside.

I welcome the Bill. It will restore teachers' pay to a reasonable level and ensure good pay for effective teaching.

7.19 pm

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey). His debating style reminds me of a football team which likes to have a few shots at the opposition's goal but which is often weak in defence. The hon. Gentleman committed such a defensive error when he said that he had heard no Opposition Member talk about education——

Mr. Pawsey: About children.

Mr. Fatchett: Children and education. I remind the hon. Gentleman that the debate about standards, about the amount of money spent on books and about the amount of money spent on school buildings has been led by Opposition Members. When the hon. Gentleman associates himself with that campaign it will be for the first time.

The hon. Gentleman slipped into making an error that was common among Government Members during the debate. They tried to talk around the current negotiations and to forget the fundamental nature of the Bill. I do not wish to fall into that trap, but I cannot resist making a few comments about the current round of negotiations and about what the Secretary of State said earlier in the debate. Although hon. Members have not mentioned it, I wonder whether it is appropriate for the House to set itself the task of discussing in detail pay salaries, structures and scales and points for individual teachers. We have almost reached the stage where some hon. Members are setting themselves up as experts on matters which are not appropriate for the House. That should be the job of others. It may be the local authority employers or civil servants from the Department of Education and Science. It will certainly be trade union negotiators and teachers, but it should not be Members of Parliament. We are going down a dangerous road by setting ourselves the task of examining individual pay and scales.

The Secretary of State and some of his colleagues seem to have derived much pleasure from the fact that some of the unions which signed the original ACAS agreement no longer support it. I fear that the Secretary of State, remarkably smugly, is deluding himself about the support for his proposals. He is making a simple mistake. He believes that if people move away from the Nottingham and London agreements, they will move towards his agreement. He seems to derive pleasure from the negative, but he cannot offer a positive in part exchange for it. The Secretary of State is in great danger of running into difficulties, because he is obsessed with undermining an agreement that has been reached voluntarily with the unions.

I can illustrate that point by mentioning a case in my surgery on Saturday. A group of teachers—members of the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association—told me that, at no stage during the dispute, were they prepared to take industrial action. However, on Saturday they said something different. They said clearly and determinedly that if the Secretary of State imposed his settlement,they would for the first time in their teaching lives, consider taking industrial action. There was a seriousness and a determination about those teachers that the Government should recognise. The Secretary of State should think about negotiation and conciliation, not about imposition. He said that the door was still open and that he would still have talks. How far is that logically consistent with the powers that underpin the Bill? The Bill would make talking obsolete and would take the powers into the office of the Secretary of State. I have doubts about his purpose in offering those talks.

I make three points about the abolition of the Burnham machinery. My right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) spoke in great detail and with great conviction about our anxiety over increasing the powers of the Secretary of State. I need not add to that because the point was made with such force and conviction. I simply repeat what my right hon. Friend said: If Conservative Members are worried about centralisation in our state, they should consider the powers that the Secretary of State will assume to himself through the Bill. I hope that at least some of them would have the decency and respect for our constitution not to support the concept of a Secretary of State having such powers and to vote against the Bill.

The Bill, whether it is only for an interim period or whether it is characteristic of most interim legislation and will become almost permanent, will abolish collective bargaining. I have a simple view: That it is a pre-requisite in a pluralistic democracy that people should have a right to belong to a trade union. An essential characteristic of trade union organisation is the right to bargain with an employer over pay and conditions of employment. In other countries, that right has been recognised in legislation — *[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) wishes to show his knowledge of comparative industrial relations, I am perfectly willing to listen to him.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): The hon. Gentleman is correct to say that there is a right to belong to a trade union, but there is also an inherent right not to belong to a trade union.

Mr. Fatchett: Indeed. I had looked forward to greater knowledge than that. However, in view of the hon. Gentleman's record, perhaps my hopes were too high. An obvious corollary of the right to belong to a trade union is the right not to belong to a trade union, and in many industrial relations practices that has been observed. Had the hon. Gentleman listened to my argument, he would have known that my point was that integral to the right to belong to a trade union is the associated right to bargain collectively with an employer. The Bill will remove that right and, in that respect, is a fundamental attack upon democratic rights in a pluralist state.

Mr. Bruinvels *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but he should recognise the reality of that statement. He must also recognise that the rhetoric from the Conservative Benches points in only one direction—to the abolition of collective bargaining for teachers.

My third point is that the Bill changes, at a stroke, the relationship between central and local government. At a stroke, the Secretary of State assumes to himself the power to determine the pay and conditions of many local government employees. The local government employers will not be involved directly in the process. They will be told by central Government how much they should pay teachers and the conditions under which they should employ them, and they will not have a direct say. That is a damaging and worrying change from the traditional relationships between central and local government. If we believe that local government is an institution which must be respected, we must oppose this power. Conservative Members were elected on a mandate of decentralisation. This is a centralising power that will further weaken local autonomy and democracy.

We have three fundamental changes: the power of the Secretary of State, the abolition of the democratic right of collective bargaining and the change in the relationship between central and local government. How have those changes been justified? At no stage during the debate have we heard a valid argument to justify those changes. Quite the opposite. We have had one smokescreen after another. No hon. Member, nor the Secretary of State, has tackled the fundamental question in the debate. Let us consider some of their arguments.

One of the Secretary of State's arguments is that the Burnham machinery creates inter-union rivalry, therefore, we should abolish it and abolish all those fundamental rights. The right hon. Gentleman's knowledge of industrial relations in Britain is none too great if he believes that teachers' pay and teachers' negotiations are the only areas in which inter-union rivalry exists. If we extended his argument it could cover local government, all the Health Service and many other areas. The right of collective bargaining could be taken away from them because of the existence of competing trade unions. That is a specious, weak argument. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will come to regret that argument when he considers the way it can be extended into other sectors.

The second argument which has been put forward today is that Burnham is messy. It is argued that it causes delays and that therefore what we need to do is to abolish fundamental rights. There can be no argument in a democratic society for saying that simply because one piece of machinery is imperfect and inconvenient we should, at a stroke, take away human rights that are an important part of our democracy. There is no justification simply on the basis of bureaucratic inefficiency. There must be another argument.

The third argument is that concerning the taxpayer; the taxpayer funds the bill and therefore the taxpayer should be the person who controls any negotiation through the Secretary of State.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Quite right.

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman in his new trappist position as parliamentary private secretary—a role for which he is characteristically unsuited—said, "Quite right." I would be happy to give way to him because his contributions are always of great value. Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that that principle is appropriate for other sectors of local government where the taxpayer pays less than 50 per cent., or, for example, the Health Service, which receives all its money from the taxpayer? Does the hon. Gentleman wish this principle to be extended to other sectors? I will happily give way to him because I realise that he probably does not speak on behalf of the Government and is clearly a maverick voice.

All the arguments put forward, including the sedentary contribution from the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire, do not carry a logical conviction. The Government have not come forward with a case to justify the Draconian powers in the Bill.

Other aspects of the Bill can be criticised. I criticise the regional variation and the different treatment that will exist between those working in further education and those working in primary and secondary school education. My fundamental criticism though is that this Bill is an attack upon teachers' basic rights and an attack upon democracy in our society.

I hope that some Conservative Members will support us in our opposition to the Bill not just because the imposition of the current proposals put forward by the Secretary of State are dangerous and risky to the security of education in our society but because the Bill is so damaging and has important consequencies in many other respects.

We used to say that we looked forward to the day when the previous incumbent in the position as Secretary of State for Education would retire. We used to criticise the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) but I believe that there are some of us who may start a campaign to bring him back. At least one could say of the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East that he was sensitive to education and sensitive to the nation's constitution. That cannot be said of the present incumbent. That is why we shall vote against the Bill, and I hope that some Conservative Members will join us in the Lobby tonight.

7.33 pm

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): I was not disappointed by the remarks made by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett). He has always specialised in attacking the Government. That is his role as a Back-Bench Member of Parliament. Perhaps he

[Mr. Peter Bruinvels]

aspires to be a private parliamentary secretary to one of the Ministers for Education. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would like to be a trappist. I do not know.

I do not need a lecture on industrial relations because I worked for a former Labour Member of Parliament, Mr. Robert Maxwell, for two and a half years, in charge of personnel. One quickly realised that those people in the union got far better jobs and far better treatment than those who were not. Unless one voted Labour one did not have a cat in hell's chance of keeping a job in the printing industry. I do not need a lecture on that subject.

I cannot understand the surprise which has been expressed on the Opposition Benches regarding this Bill. Hon. Members heard the Loyal Address that made clear that my right hon. Friend would bring in such a Bill. It also made it clear that the provisions of the Bill were temporary. I would have thought that even those hon. Members on the other side who perhaps, unlike myself, did not benefit from a good grammar school education, would understand what was meant by an interim provision. In fact, two public schools are represented on the Opposition Front Bench but I do not need to name the hon. Members as they are known.

Recently, I attended the annual prize-giving at Tiffin boys school in Kingston. I listened to the annual report of the headmaster, John Roberts, who stated that, in the past 18 months, there had been no industrial dispute at the school. That is a great credit to the pupils and teachers of Tiffin school. I also attended St. John's in Leatherhead, which is a public school, and that too had not suffered from any industrial dispute. That does show that there are some caring teachers. I do not understand why hon. Members should say that we have cast aspersions on the profession and that we consider that 50 per cent. of teachers are bad. I do not know where that claim came from and it is certainly not my view nor the view of any other Conservative Members.

We must consider the Bill with some sadness because it was not of our making that the Bill was brought here today. The Bill has been brought here because of inter-union wrangling especially between the assistant Secretaries of the NUT and the NAS/UWT. They were desperate to control the financial and inter-union arrangements. If the unions could have resolved their differences this Bill would not be necessary.

This is not a draconian measure and I am fully confident that my right hon. Friend is a good Secretary of State. He has shown great dedication and in the short time that he has held this position he has taken up the subject lock, stock and barrel. He does not deserve the criticism levelled at him by the Opposition regarding his mental capabilities.

With regard to the financial arrangements, my right hon. Friend has proposed a package that all sides of the unions should accept — £3 billion package over 20 months which will give a 25 per cent. pay rise between April 1986 and September 1987.

It is depressing that, in the meantime, instead of a clear and calm atmosphere, it seems that some schools are still union battlegrounds. That is worrying. What is also worrying is the front page of the *Teacher*. There is an article dated 8 December which states:

> "Union members must, by their votes, make it politically embarrassing for the Government to use this legislation to impose its own settlement and to take away negotiated rights from teachers."

Is such extra-parliamentary activity encouraged by the other side? Some Opposition spokesmen are connected with the NUT and that is significant and worrying.

What of the provisions of the Bill, which will expire on 31 March 1990? There are different rates for inner city teachers and that is to be welcomed. There are difficulties, for instance, in the city of Leicester, where we need more teachers. Why not pay more to get the best quality? What is wrong with that?

If hon. Members value the professional standing of teachers they should welcome better pay for good teachers. One should pay a teacher for doing a good job. We should welcome the five incentive posts which, in our proposals, are available for half of the teachers. Why should we not promote our teachers? It is perfectly correct for local schools to decide for themselves with regard to teacher recruitment. My right hon. Friend has been blamed for everything with regard to the teachers and everything that goes wrong in the schools and perhaps is it right that such problems should now be referred back to him.

In my view the Nottingham talks and those with ACAS have done nothing but foster unrest and produce poor promotional prospects whereby very few people will be rewarded. It is all very well for the NUT to go on about secondary schools, but a number of NUT members in primary schools with whom I have spoken do not see how genuine career development is possible under the proposals that the NUT is propagating at present. We must therefore arrive at a solution that benefits all teachers.

I agree with the view that too many unions are involved in the teaching profession. That has made it terribly difficult to negotiate in the way that the Government have been trying to do. An issue of principle is involved, in that we must reward the profession well enough to keep teachers in these important roles well into the 21st century.

If we were to accept the unions' case, more than 25,000 teachers would immediately lose their scale payments. I want all teachers to be guaranteed proper promotion and incentive prospects, and I look forward to the day when the Opposition accept that incentive posts for all teachers should be encouraged. We must therefore pay good teachers more, even though the unions want more for the good, the bad and the ugly. That is nonsense.

We must look at all the various promotion posts that are available——

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Bruinvels: I know that Opposition Members are worried that the Bill will be enacted at once, but it has no possibility of coming to fruition until February-March of next year at the earliest. Until then we must pay for the existing conditions that have been well negotiated.

The 13 points that have been agreed in the appendix should be particularly encouraged. There is nothing wrong with such an arrangement. Boyle had it in mind in 1963, and we can look at the pilot projects as they come forward and encourage them.

The Bill will repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act. That makes a lot of sense, bearing in mind that the

Burnham machinery for negotiating school teachers' pay had to be replaced. It was not working well, had become outdated and, indeed, had been in operation since 1919.

We want to see an interim advisory committee, and that must look at teachers' pay and conditions of service. All hon. Members must be concerned at the way in which teachers are fulfilling their roles. Most of them do extremely well indeed, but even the Opposition have said that Burnham has outlived its usefulness and has become ineffective because it cannot reach agreement as, up to now, the NUT has always had a majority vote. As a result, there have been no genuine agreements.

We must look to better promotion prospects for all teachers. I appreciate that with falling rolls it will be more difficult as classes will get smaller and some teachers may be surplus to requirements. Some teachers will have to go, anyway, but those coming into the profession want to be paid for the resuls that they achieve. They have agreed to be appraised and that should be encouraged.

The dispute that has now gone on for two years has cost a lot of time, and disruption has been the ultimate result. However, as I have said, there have been excellent results in many schools in spite of the dispute. Most teachers do not reflect the views of the extreme parts of the NUT or the NAS-UWT because they really care about the children. We must talk more about the children and encourage them to get the best possible tuition.

There is no doubt that events over the past two years have led to a drop in teacher esteem among the public. The profession has been brought into disrepute by its petty squabbling and its refusal to undertake certain obligations that some of us want to see encouraged. It is only right to clarify teachers' conditions of employment, given that they will get a very good salary. The appraisal that has been agreed must be carried out, as I am convinced that under it all teachers will be rewarded most generously.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) said, it is remarkable how the Secretary of State has been able to raid the Treasury funds to make so many extra millions of pounds available. That will obviously affect what happens in the next Budget. After all, we are talking about £3 billion.

On looking further at the pay structure, it will be seen that all good classroom teachers will be rewarded. We shall encourage teachers to take on extra responsibility, for which they will be paid. We must also pay extra for maths and science teachers, as at present there is difficulty in recruiting them. We must pay for such skills, because there is no doubt that teachers of that ilk are in short supply.

Burnham will be abolished under the Bill and the interim advisory committee on teachers' pay and conditions of service will be set up. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will have the power by regulation, if necessary — I hope that he will not need it — to determine pay and conditions. Therefore, the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 will go.

The interim advisory committee will not be a negotiating committee but will consider advice given from all quarters, including the teachers' unions. I hope that senior Opposition Members, who have great knowledge from their days as teachers, will also advise on what they see as being wrong with the teaching profession. I should like the Opposition to criticise far more often some of the power-crazy leaders of the NUT, such as Mr. McAvoy, and the NAS-UWT, such as Mr. de Gruchy, who are desperately waiting in the wings to take over from two seasoned politicians with whom I do not always agree as they are not of the same party as me. I want the Opposition to take on real responsibility. I want pay to be determined properly. I look forward very much to the day when we have a happy teaching profession, and as well as the rewarding of good classroom teachers I want to see better results coming from our schools.

My right hon. Friend has made provision for the replacement of Burnham, and that will give him the power to legislate on both pay and conditions through the statutory instrument procedure. It might be necessary for my right hon. Friend to move fast, but I hope that he will not have to do so.

It looks as if between five and nine people will sit on this new committee, and they will make recommendations in the light of financial and other constraints. I sincerely hope that they will not encourage the payment of additional funds over and above those that have already been allocated, which I believe to be the most generous ever. Incidentally, it is clear that my right hon. Friend will be under no obligation to accept that committee's advice. We are therefore looking for peace in place of disharmony in our schools.

As *The Times Educational Supplement* said, the question mark is how long all the participants can be allowed to continue to sort out their own agreement before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State makes his final decision and takes on these "draconian powers". I do not think that they are draconian. I know that the Burnham structure has been proved to be ineffective. I also know that the Bill will ensure that our children are taught in a far better way, and that the teachers will be paid for good and improved results and will be rewarded by genuine promotion opportunities. There must also be flexibility.

The situation at present is ridiculous, as there are no real differentials on promotion. The 140,000 teachers must be encouraged and should be allowed to get on to a good promotion scale. Promotion prospects will be enhanced and flexibility will be assured. Teachers will be paid according to results. There is nothing wrong with the Bill.

Without giving any secrets away, Conservative Members have not even been subjected to a three-line Whip because this darn good legislation is needed as the best way to solve the problem. We very much hope that the teachers' unions will come to a speedy solution and that all children will be remembered and put first. We should never forget the children, and we must have happy people teaching them. Teachers need a professional role and good money for the job. Once that is established, they should never be let down.

7.50 pm

Mr. Sean Hughes (Knowsley, South): I am sure that all Opposition Members share the fears that were expressed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes), who was worried that the Bill was taking us another step down a dangerous road.

I appreciate that hon. Members on both sides of the House have said that we should concentrate on the Bill and not on the industrial dispute that has preceded it, but they all spent some time discussing the dispute.

The Bill should be seen within the timetable and the atmosphere of the recent industrial dispute in our schools. The Government carried out a persistent attack on the integrity of the teachers and on the local education authorities with which they disagreed. That did not work,

[Mr. Sean Hughes]

so they fiddled with the Burnham committee. That did not work, so the Government tried to undermine the negotiations between the teachers and the local education authorities, and that did not work. When the teachers and the local authorities agreed to a package, the Secretary of State announced that he wanted to renegotiate it and that he would wait until mid-February before acting. In the Bill, he is now asking for powers to take away teachers' negotiating rights altogether.

We should not be surprised, because, as my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) reminded us, the Secretary of State learnt his tricks at the Department of the Environment, which abolished a whole tier of local government because it had the temerity to disagree with the Government.

I should like to mention the role, or rather the non-role, of the local education authorities in the Bill. We have become accustomed to the contempt with which the Government view local democracy. The party that now forms the Government—and this has done so for the past seven and a half years—is the party which has paraded itself as the defender of local democracy. Hon. Members will recall the outrage that it expressed when the House debated a national system of comprehensive education.

In the debate on 4 February 1976 there was a veritable howl of protest by Conservative Members in favour of local democracy. The hon. Member for Brent, North (Dr. Boyson), who is now the Minister for Local Government, spoke from his heart when he said:

"Education needs a healing armistice so that people can come together and see what the problems are. Instead, we have this highwayman's gun demanding unconditional surrender."—[*Official Report*, 4 February 1976; Vol. 904, c. 1322.]

I never thought that I would live to see the day when the present Secretary of State would make the hon. Member for Brent, North appear a wet. However, if we are looking for fairly damp statements from unlikely sources, I refer the House to the Second Reading of the Education Bill on 12 February 1970. Referring to the role of local authorities and central Government, the then Opposition spokesman for education, now the Prime Minister, declared that both local and central Government

"are elected bodies, both finance the education system, both should have a say in the decision-making process."—[*Official Report*, 12 February 1970; Vol. 795, c. 1474.]

The right hon. Lady went further and decried the fact that the word "impose" had figured several times in the Bill. However, she now has a taste for imposition, and everybody is to blame except the Government.

The Government justify the Bill by referring to the teachers' dispute. They use the most inflammatory language against the teachers. We have had a taste of that from the Secretary of State today. Part of his speech seemed to come from that which he made to his party conference in October.

Everybody accepts how damaging the dispute in our schools has been, but the blame should be put where it belongs — on the Government's shoulders. At the beginning of the dispute, which, it should be remembered, was concerned with an annual pay award, the Government introduced the issue of teacher appraisal. They tried to pretend that while they were concerned with the quality of education, all that the teachers were interested in was filthy lucre. The fact that the largest teachers union had already committed itself to appraisal was, of course, conveniently ignored.

Even after my hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) had pointed that out, Conservative Members still persisted in not seeming to recognise that the teachers and the LEAs had already agreed that the Burnham Committee should be replaced. The teachers accept that because the Secretary of State picks up about 46 per cent. of the bill, he should have a powerful role. Section 7(1) of the agreement between the teachers and the LEAs provided for a national joint council in which to carry out those negotiations. However, macho politics demand that there must be victory, and above all the Government demand that the teachers must be vanquished.

The Government's conduct of the dispute has proved that they have been involved in a financial rather than an educational exercise. The Prime Minister's paranoia with the public sector borrowing requirement has been the core of the problem. The gaff was blown earlier this year when the former Minister of State, the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Patten) argued in a television programme on 2 March that if there was greater demand for more public spending on education, the money would be found. So, the former Minister of State—whose brief tenure of that office was meant to add style to the Government's case—said that there was more money if only people would demand it. However, the previous Secretary of State for Education and Science, the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph), spent the whole of the teachers' dispute telling us that there was no more money, so it did not matter who demanded it. The present Secretary of State has conveniently found more money.

One of the most insidious aspects of the Bill is the power to allow the Secretary of State to impose what could be a regional, area or even a school-based settlement. That idea was trailed earlier this year in the Audit Commission report. It stated on page 67 that what might be appropriate in, say, Huddersfield as an inducement to mathematics teachers would be inadequate in Newbury, where computer software skills are in particular demand. Depending on the subject, the market price in Newbury might, by the same token, be excessive in Penzance. Hence the fears that have been expressed on that point by my right hon. and hon. Friends. Those comments—not the Government's much-paraded belief in quality—form the truth of the matter.

The greatest travesty of the Bill and, indeed, of the whole education debate during the lifetime of the Government, has been the assertion that the Government are concerned with quality in education. In this country we have always had one of the most divisive and unequal education systems in the Western world. The education system in Britain today is based on postal districts, and the Secretary of State's proposals, including the Bill, will exacerbate that. The effect will be exactly the opposite to that predicted by the Secretary of State.

I have never held that Government should interfere in our every breathing moment, but I do believe that the Government set the tone for society. This Government have certainly done that. They have not shown any urgency in putting right the glaring wrongs in our education system, but they moved quickly enough—with indecent haste—over the Bill, which was published last week, has its Second reading today and its remaining

stages on Wednesday. The Government's arrogance has been breathtaking. The Secretary of State may exude the arrogance of some of his colleagues, but he cannot legislate for good will, and he cannot impose a spirit of co-operation on our schools.

Mr. Flannery: I see the Secretary of State sitting there, and I wonder out loud whether the idea is not merely to rush the Bill through the House of Commons and get it through the House of Lords quickly, but to get Royal Assent by 19 December so that the right hon. Gentleman can go to the meeting and say that it is accomplished. Can the Secretary of State tell us whether that is his plot?

Mr. Hughes: I shall give way if the Secretary of State wishes to reply to my hon. Friend.

The fear expressed by my hon. Friend and by others of my right hon. and hon. Friends is that the Bill represents a sinister move towards the central control that the House should never allow. As my hon. Friends have said, I hope that some Conservative Members will join us in the Division Lobby in voting against the Bill.

8 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): The need for the Bill has become increasingly apparent over the past few years. The recent activities and attempted settlements in Nottingham, Coventry and London have added fuel to the argument that something needed to be done. I commend the Secretary of State and his team on having grasped this extremely difficult nettle.

I have great respect and admiration for the teaching profession. I was a governor of one school for nine years and of another for about four years, and I was always conscious of the difficult role that the teacher had to play. I am also aware of the fact that although much criticism is heaped upon teachers because sometimes people say that they have long holidays and they do not really have to do as much as others in similar occupations, the reality is that the teaching profession has been through a difficult time. That is symptomatic of a much deeper problem that is affecting society.

As with other areas of professional activity, in the teaching profession, self-regulation, the manner in which people respond to their professional duties, and the need to put the public interest first — by which I mean the interests of the children and society as a whole — is something that has been increasingly lost in the welter of argument about pay and remuneration.

I was on the Committee that considered the Financial Services Bill last year and I am just about to go on the Committee dealing with the Banking Bill. I was also on the Committee that considered the Administration of Justice Bill, which dealt with similar matters. I argued consistently and vigorously for tougher and more responsible self-regulation in the City. In the medical and legal professions, in journalism and, indeed, the BBC if one is allowed to mention it, self-regulation — the extent to which the balance is struck between power and responsibility, and the extent to which people regulate the activities of colleagues in the public as well as the private interest — has become increasingly a matter of concern in modern society. I have given several good illustrations of that. It is symptomatic of what is happening today, in a time of significant change. Emphasis must be placed upon what is really being done by the professions in question and what is being given by those providing services in the City, in law, or in journalism. They must understand that the object of what they are doing is every bit as important as the activity in which they are engaged.

As a legal adviser to the College of Preceptors for many years I have been made aware of the intense importance placed by many teachers on the qualifications and standards of excellence that the teaching profession seeks to achieve. This is the point of an intervention that I made earlier. Unfortunately, unlike the chartered bodies, which made quality, excellence and objectives their first priority, the invasion of pure unionism into teachers' activities has meant that the profession has been edged out by the unions. It is particularly interesting to note the increase in the numbers in the Professional Association of Teachers. I repeat that I have the highest regard for many teachers. I have them in my constituency, and I know how dedicated they are. I shall not be told either by Labour Members or even by my hon. Friends that that is not so. They work immensely hard and have a difficult role to play. On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly evident that some teachers are disturbed by what is going on in their own area of activity. Much of that is directed at the activity of the caucus of the teaching profession that has gained control of the unions.

I have to say to the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice), whom I know to be an honourable man, and who is fair-minded, that he knows perfectly well that underneath the welter of confusion and of economy with the truth with which his speech was spattered, the responsibility that his party bears for the fact that we have difficulties today should not be underestimated.

Mr. Radice: An outrageous remark.

Mr. Dunn: Does my hon. Friend accept that the problem is not so much the caucus within the union organisation but sometimes the caucus within the caucus? When one examines the role of the Inner London Teachers Association, in particular, within the National Union of Teachers, it is not surprising to note the developments in Brent, Haringey and other such boroughs.

Mr. Cash: Absolutely. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. He has had the greatest possible experience of teaching and education.

I participated in the passage of the Education Bill when we came back after the summer recess. I voted on sex education. I made no apology for it then, and I make no apology for it now. I believed that it was essential that Parliament should protect parents and children from the activities, not of teachers as a whole, for obvious reasons, but of the perverse, loony Left to which my right hon. Friend——

Mr. Dunn: Honourable Friend.

Mr. Cash: I retract that. My hon. Friend referred to that. It is the caucus within the caucus, that part of the clockwork orange, with which we are primarily concerned, and a rotten orange it is too.

I had the misfortune to take part in a phone-in on local radio a few years ago with Mr. Doug McAvoy, and he and I discussed questions that are germane to the matters raised in the Bill. I was deeply concerned about his attitude and the question that arises——

Mr. Radice: What connection has this with the Bill?

Mr. Cash: I am coming to that point. The need for the Bill has been demonstrated amply by the disarray within which that caucus within a caucus has operated in the past two years. It has done a disservice to education and to teachers as well as to parents and children. Labour Members are misleading themselves if they underestimate the extent to which parents are deeply worried about the way in which this exercise has been conducted by the unions over the past few years.

The criticisms levelled at the Bill by most Labour Members have been tinged with a certain air of unreality, and have been without a sufficient sense of proportion. The Bill provides a window of opportunity for the teaching profession to get its act together in the remaining months before the next general election. We heard much about the imposition of draconian powers and controls by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State through the Bill. However, Labour Members, including the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) have not read the Bill. This came out over and over again as I listened to one version of the Bill after another, from the Opposition Front Bench spokesman, from the Opposition Back Bench Members and from the now, as all too often, absent alliance Members. They come and go, as Bacon once said, like bats that fly in the night.

The Bill provides an opportunity for a negotiated settlement on a sensible basis, building upon the very discussions that have already taken place. The hon. Member for Durham, North is laughing. He must be laughing up his sleeve. He remarked about the good that took place during the course of the discussions, which he must know were a good basis to build upon. Instead, he carps and criticises.

The Bill is a cautionary and provisional measure. It is permissive only. It provides an opportunity for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the unions to come together at this late hour and ensure that there is a reasonable settlement before these powers need to be put into effect. Clause 3 says that where the advisory committee has reported to the Secretary of State on any matter "he may, after consulting". It is worth bearing in mind that the word "may" has not been substituted by the word "shall", which means that the provision is not draconian and does not impose controls. It is permissive only.

Mr. Radice: Come off it.

Mr. Cash: The hon. Gentleman gave us the benefit of his thoughts earlier. I am reading from the Bill. He was reading from the recesses of the prejudiced mind that he has on this subject.

Mr. Flannery: Says the unprejudiced speaker.

Mr. Cash: The hon. Member for Hillsborough pays me a compliment. He is right to say that I am an unprejudiced speaker. He and I both come from Sheffield and he knows that there are no prejudiced people in that part of the world.

The Bill says that the Secretary of State "may, after consultation". The hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) insisted that there would be no consultation and that any reference to consultation was derisory and amounted to nothing. I sought to intervene in his speech, but he decided to leave me to make my own remarks later on, for which I thank him. Consultation is governed by well-understood legal principles, which show that there is a significant difference between "may" and "shall". The Bill does not say "after they may have consulted" but "after consultation" which means after they shall have consulted. Where there is a requirement to consult, there is an obligation to listen, within a judicial and proper framework, to the representations made by the people who are engaged in the consultation. It is not just "take it or leave it." We have to listen to what people say and take it into account. It does not mean that we have to do what the person has said. Therefore, I commend the provision because it will ensure that the views of those who wish to be heard will be heard.

It has been suggested that the advisory committee is a strange body, which will be put together by the Secretary of State simply to get the views that he wants from the committee. I remind Labour Members of what happened in the case of the BBC recently when we appointed Mr. Hussey to the position of Chairman.

Mr. Weetch: We!

Mr. Cash: I should say that whoever was responsible appointed Mr. Hussey. When an appointment is made to a body, be it the BBC, the advisory committee, or, to go back to my earlier reference, to the City, under the Financial Service Act or the Banking Bill, those persons are appointed to what is effectively a statutory body, and they acquire significant independence by virtue of that appointment. Another important point, which I ask hon. Members to remember, is that these people are subject to review, so it follows that what they do acquires independence by virtue of their appointment.

It would be a great mistake for Labour Members to imagine that the members of the advisory committee would be nodding automata. They would be nothing of the kind. They would be significant persons with independence and an opportunity to speak on behalf of the main interests that were represented on the body, including in particular the public interest and the national interest.

The point that I wanted to make earlier, at the beginning of my speech, concerns the vacuum between power and responsibility, which is the consequence of present negotiating machinery. There is the Department of the Environment on the one side, with its connecting links with local education authorities, and the Department of Education and Science on the other, and the unions on the one side and the profession on the other. This has created a vaccuum within which trust has gone out of the window. The Bill and the mechanism that it provides, and the advisory committee that will be set up, will provide an opportunity for that trust to be reintroduced in the teaching profession. That would be a tremendous advance and would provide the mechanism by which this Bill should and could operate.

One of the problems of the procedural arrangements for negotiating teachers' pay was that in the Wilson era there was a breakdown in the concordat between the teaching profession, the Department of Education and Science and the negotiating bodies. This Bill fills the gap created by the breakdown of that concordat. It would be an enormous mistake if the Opposition or people in the teaching profession imagined that there is a draconian objective in the Bill. The Bill is justified precisely because the existing arrangements have broken down.

There is no doubt that the pay offer made to the teaching profession is reasonable. Under the previous Administration, teachers' average pay had fallen in value by 13 per cent. from the level set by the Houghton award. Since 1979—this is directly germane to teachers' pay—it has been restored to the value set by Houghton, and the Government package would take pay 10 per cent. above Houghton by October 1987—if we assume a rate of inflation rising no higher than 3·5 per cent. It is precisely because the negotiating machinery has broken down, even though this extremely good offer has been made, that we need to have the kind of fallback position that the Bill provides.

I should now like to turn to the conditions of contract. I have discussed with the Minister of State the matter of competitive sport. Many things need to be included in the conditions of contract. I hope that they will include not only the need to ensure that there is proper coverage for absent colleagues, that essays are properly marked and that parents have an opportunity to meet the teachers—basic things like that—but also that competitive sport will be covered.

Education is the mainspring of the nation's future and just as in past centuries its importance was recognised, so today, in this modern and complex society when we are going through a time of massive change, it is essential for teachers and the teaching profession to be able to assess themselves by using the appraisal system so that there is a proper relationship between headmasters and the other members of the teaching staff and a proper balance between administrative and teaching staff. That needs to be done on a proper and well-paid basis and the negotiations have not so far provided for that. However, the Government's offer provides it, and that will ensure that we have a good and effective education system, not simply for the benefit of teachers or the Government but for the benefit of the nation as a whole. It must be for the benefit of our children because they are the trustees of the future. They must be given the opportunity to ensure that Britain becomes as great as it was in the past.

The Bill is a good mechanism for ensuring that education and the opportunities it provides for the benefit of the nation will not be destroyed by selfish disputes between caucuses within caucuses — the clockwork orange of which I spoke earlier—in unions that are more interested in remuneration than in the public interest.

8.25 pm

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): As a backcloth to the Bill it is necessary to say something about the beginning of the teachers' struggle. The most charitable thing that I can say about the Bill is not that Conservative Members have not read it, because I think they have, but that they do not understand exactly what it is. Its impact will be tremendous, and Conservative Members do not know that. However, they will learn.

The Minister spoke in his usual unctious, glib manner and had his permanent smile on his face as if he was not doing anything wrong. That made me think that Conservative Members have long forgotten how the dispute began. Almost two years ago the Government made an offer of 4 per cent. to teachers. That was approximately 3 per cent. below the rate of inflation. Of course, the teachers did not accept it, because not only had they lost everything that had ever been awarded by Houghton, but they were desperate. Well-heeled Conservative Members talk about the teachers as though they are greedy. Bearing in mind the money and the shares held by Government Members, it is nauseating to hear them hurl endless abuse at the teachers who, with pitiful wages, were honourably trying to do the best they could to teach our children. That abuse had the effect of driving teachers more deeply into their struggle.

The unseemly and indecent haste with which the Government are pushing the Bill through is a measure of their desperation. When the Minister came in for a few minutes a short time ago and smiled across at us, I utilised the opportunity to make an intervention during the speech of one of my hon. Friends to try to make the Minister say that we were debating the Bill on two days this week and that by 19 December the Bill would receive Royal Assent. The Minister could then go to the powers that be among the teachers and say that he had got it.

The only time that I can remember when such unseemly haste appeared to be somewhat seemly was when war was imminent and the Government had to rush through a Bill. Other instances that come to mind are when the Birmingham bombings took place. When terrorism intervened, the Government had to rush a Bill though and, prior to that, when the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland called for something quick to be done, if I remember rightly a bill was pushed through within a day to enable us to send troops to Northern Ireland. This time there is no need for such haste; it is simply that the Government are frightened.

By a vote of 84 per cent., on a turn out of 89 per cent., the Scottish teachers decided that they were still opposed to the offer. I went out this evening for a short time hoping that I would be called about 8 o'clock, but then there was a long speech from the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash), who seems to have disappeared from the Chamber. When I was out, I saw the headline "Victory" in a newspaper. The story was about Mr. Chirac, who introduced a draconian bill in France. As a result, he and his Government have suffered a major defeat, even though their Bill was not as draconian as this one.

Anybody who does not believe that does not have to accept my opinion. The latest edition of the journal *Education* states:

> "New Bill gives Mr. Baker an awsome armoury of powers. Tyrannical powers, unprecedented in peacetime, are bestowed on the Secretary of State for Education and Science in the Bill which was given its first reading in the Commons last Friday."

The Bill came out last week and had its First, so-called, Reading on Friday. It is being debated today and again on Wednesday, and we are all supposed to be quiet about the Draconian powers that it provides. The only charitable thing that I can say is that Conservative Members do not know what they are doing. The Bill will unite the teaching profession, no matter how disparate it appears to be now. There will be serious trouble as a result.

The whole trades union and Labour movement is watching the Bill with great care, because all unions will be in serious trouble if it goes through. Mr. Willis has said:

> "We deplore the attempt of Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary, to remove teachers' collective bargaining rights . . . Have he and his colleagues really learned nothing from GCHQ? . . . I am sure that they"—

the Trades Union Congress general council—

> "will share my view that unless the Government scrap this ill-conceived legislation, they are risking further industrial unrest in schools, damage to children's education and another major rift with this country's trade union Movement."

[Mr. Martin Flannery]

Far more people than the sparse audience in the Chamber today are watching what happens.

I hear attacks on Burnham, but the Government made it impossible for it to continue to do its work so, finally, everybody had to agree that it must go, but what will the Government put in its place? The Burnham committee was democratically elected. In its place we are to have an advisory council, the members of which are handpicked and appointed by the Secretary of State. He will also appoint the chairman and deputy chairman and lay down what the committee has to do. If that is democracy, I can only say that the Government are drunk with power and dizzy with success. The Bill abandons negotiation. That is why the unions are watching it with great care. It renders unions unnecessary except as groups of people who have discussions but no power. That is why Mr. Willis says that the unions are watching.

The Bill is the most important concerning education since 1944 as it will change the face of British education unless it is thrown out. We should consider what powers the Secretary of State is taking. Clause 3(1) says:

"Where the Advisory Committee has reported to the Secretary of State on any matter, he may, after consulting—

(a) such associations of local education authorities as appear to him to be concerned and any local education authority with whom consultation appears to him to be desirable, and

(b) such organisations representing school teachers as appear to him to be concerned."

Subsection (6) says:

"The Secretary of State may by order made by statutory instrument coming into force before 1st October 1987, without any report of the Advisory Committee but after consulting—

(a) such associations of local education authorities as appear to him to be concerned and any local education authority with whom consultation appears to him to be desirable, and

(b) such organisations representing school teachers as appear to him to be concerned".

The right hon. Gentleman's power reeks. The Bill is so Draconian that if it goes through it will change everything. The schedule empowers the Secretary of State to put in position those whom he wants to put in position.

The secondary school heads have said that they will not put up with a Bill which does not give them the democratic right to be on a committee which discusses their affairs. That is true of all of the unions which are fighting. What the Bill implies for education is quite unbelievable. As I said recently to the Secretary of State, if he had planned disruption in the classroom he could not have done it more brilliantly. It is undoubted that there will be disruption. No matter how provoked we are, the Opposition hope that we can get through this struggle without the disruption which we fear is inevitable.

The Bill abolishes the right of teachers to negotiate on pay and conditions. In place of negotiations, it establishes an appointed advisory committee with an appointed chairman and deputy chairman. The committee would report only on matters which were referred to it by the Secretary of State. Local education authorities, after conducting consultations, would be compelled to implement the Secretay of State's conditions. Different salaries would be paid in different areas if the Secretary of State wanted that. That would produce absolute chaos, but no Conservative Member seems to understand it, no matter how high or low he is.

The Government's approach, and that of the Minister, is one of diktat. It will unleash a new struggle which I believe will unite the teaching profession as never before. It will have Draconian legislation imposed upon it. We talk about the teachers being in loco parentis. The Minister is here in loco Draconis. He is imposing on teachers a situation which they have not experienced before. Conservative Members may smile, but we should face reality. There has been a two-year struggle and we have the Bill because the Government can see no way out by negotiation. They can see a way out only by imposing their will.

The Secretary of State does not seem to have a scintilla of a glimmer of an understanding of what he is unleashing. He and the Government must think again. It is time for wiser counsels, not peremptory diktats, and I hope that the Government will think about the matter more before the Bill goes through.

8.37 pm

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak in support of the Bill. I am also pleased to speak after the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), who was for many years a member of the teaching profession before becoming a Member of Parliament. I also was for many years a member of the profession before becoming a Member of Parliament. That proves, if anything, that no one teacher can stand up and say that he speaks for all members of the teaching profession. I know from my constituency that there are as many views about the Bill and about education as there are teachers. I am sure that the hon. Member for Hillsborough will not disagree if I say that he cannot claim to speak for the whole teaching profession any more than I can.

It has been the habit of the Opposition to try to give the impression that they carry the torch for the entire teaching profession. They represent the views of many teachers, I know, but they do not represent the views of all teachers. The Opposition have tended today to put the view of only the NUT. That is fair enough, but we must not regard that as the general view of the teaching profession.

There is no doubt that the Bill is about the way in which education is run, and it is wrong for anyone to say that it is just a little Bill which will not last long. I am sure that all hon. Members recognise that it is a highly significant measure which sends out signals for the future of education which we should debate thoroughly. Education is too important to be submerged in a bitter political conflict. We must get it right. I support the Bill, but I agree that we must consider its implications outside the immediate party political controversy.

I joined the teaching profession in 1960 after a short spell in engineering. I taught physics in Manchester and my wife was also a teacher. She became a senior mistress in Manchester and between us we have long experience of education in various parts of the system.

I remember my first impressions on joining the profession. I found dedication among teachers and, certainly, low pay, because pay was not good then, just as it is not as good as some would like now. I found a divided profession, because as now, there was a multiplicity of unions. There is no point in teachers pretending that they are united; I know that they are not. It is a sad fact, though

some of the reasons for that state of affairs are good historical reasons. The Government must take that fact into account when arriving at their important decisions.

As a new teacher, I found that there was not enough emphasis on in-service training for new teachers. That is probably still true. I found that there was not enough incentive, leadership or emphasis on career development. As a result, many square pegs ended up in round holes, and that may still be true.

Teaching is a vocation and I agree with what my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) said when he waxed eloquently about the importance of professional standards in teaching. Teaching is more than just another job. It is a vocation and teachers usually choose to go into teaching because of their enthusiasm to help children. Like many hon. Members, I pay tribute to the good work done by teachers, especially in my constituency. That is all part of the good side of what is happening in our schools.

The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) talked of misunderstandings about incentives, but I felt that he misunderstood the Government's aims in the Bill. I agree with him that it is not the slightest good introducing incentives that involve payments by exam results. That sort of thing is superficial nonsense and should be rejected at the outset, but I see nothing of that sort in the Government's proposals. If I did, I should speak against them.

However, the fact that one speaks against ill-advised incentives does not mean that one is against incentives and motivation generally. I was sad to find during my time as a teacher that there was a lack of motivation and incentives. We must find the right motivation, the right incentives and the right leadership to get the best out of our teachers.

Mr. George Park (Coventry, North-East): When the hon. Gentleman and his wife were teachers would they have been content to be told by a Minister, of whatever political colour, what their salary levels were to be and that they could not negotiate through their chosen representatives?

Mr. Thompson: I never took any part in the political activities of teachers' unions and I concentrated entirely on education in the classroom. My impression at the time was that various results of the Burnham procedure were imposed on me. I had no complaints about that, because I did not spend all my time wondering about what the next salary increase would be. The hon. Gentleman misunderstands the Bill.

Mr. Weetch: My hon. Friend understands it very well.

Mr. Thompson: Well, the hon. Gentleman's understanding is different from mine and I do not see the dangers that he sees.

Judging by the results and the effects on the teaching profession, the local education authorities and the Burnham procedures have failed to address the various problems that I have mentioned. We have to find a new way. That is why I support what my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) said about the Bill being a challenge rather than a threat. The Bill introduces a radical change and can be seen as a threat or a challenge. I believe that hon. Members and members of all the teaching unions, whether or not they are involved in union matters, should see the Bill as a challenge and an opportunity for the future. I know that that is the spirit in which the Secretary of State has made his proposals. To suggest otherwise is to do a grave disservice to the serious thought that has gone into the Bill.

The hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) did not explain why, when or how he would reform Burnham.

Mr. Radice: Of course I did. The hon. Gentleman was not listening.

Mr. Thompson: At least the hon. Gentleman concedes that there is a need for change. I favour the abolition of the Burnham procedures.

I think that all hon. Members would agree that if the current negotiations could proceed to a conclusion that was acceptable to the Government and to Parliament, that would be the best outcome. I have heard no one suggest that an imposed settlement would be the best way forward. However, we cannot afford month after month of the sort of uncertainty that our schools have had to put up with during the past few months.

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): I was at the University of Lancaster on Friday evening and I spoke to various new undergraduates. Several said that their prospects had been seriously damaged by the strike and that some of their friends had had to repeat a year. They felt strongly that a conclusion should be reached, and they were very much behind the Government.

Mr. Thompson: I welcome that intervention, because I am trying to make the point that the Government have the responsibility for ensuring that the uncertainty of previous years, and particularly of the past year, comes to an end. I know that the vast majority of professional teachers, who have no axe to grind, will be thankful if the uncertainty and continual wrangling over pay comes to an end. Although the most desirable solution would be a negotiated pay settlement that everyone was happy about, the Secretary of State cannot allow the uncertainty to continue.

The most important point is that pupils suffer from the strikes. As an ex-teacher who would not have thought it right to go on strike in any circumstances, I am sure that we all hope that such action will never take place in our schools again. It has had a deplorable effect on the schools and on the children, and there is nothing good to be said for it.

I am striving for a better teaching profession with a better pay structure and more money, which is already on the table, available. That is not helped when industrial action occurs in our schools. Throughout the country that has reduced respect for teachers and as an ex-teacher I take that seriously.

I look to a future where decision-making is pushed more into the schools. Therefore, I do not see the danger of centralisation, to which Opposition Members have referred. I see an end to too much bureaucracy and too much intervention by the Secretary of State. I see decision-making being moved more towards head teachers. That is Government policy and something which we are keen on. I also see increasing flexibility over pay.

I should like to see head teachers having more influence than they have over the way in which pay is distributed within a school. That is why I agree with the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) that it is unsatisfactory to have an over-rigid pay structure. I went along 100 per cent. with

[Mr. Thompson]

part of what he said. It is not good for the teaching profession to have scales 1, 2, 3 and 4, as we have had for many years. We need a more flexible system. However, I could not agree with the hon. Gentleman's attack on the Government's proposals. He failed to realise that they would be more flexible on promotion posts than the present system.

I look forward to an era when education is free from the political differences and activism which we have seen recently.

Mr. John Powley (Norwich, South): Does my hon. Friend agree that we should view the Bill, not in isolation, but together with the Education Act 1986? The advantages of this Bill should be taken in conjunction with the great responsibilities given to parents, governors, and teachers properly to manage their affairs and the curriculum within a school.

Mr. Thompson: I agree with those remarks. We are looking for responsibility to be taken within schools by school governors and head teachers and for less devolvement to bureaucrats. I support that.

I speak out strongly against the type of political involvement that we have had in schools recently. Would it not be good to turn on the television set, and watch a news programme where those who spoke about education were, not politicians and trade union leaders, but teachers and head teachers? I would not care what their political views were, but it would be good to see educators talking about education. I look forward to that era.

The Bill gives an opportunity for a fresh start. With good will—and there should be good will from all sides of the House because this is too important a matter for party political bickering — it can lead to a brighter future. Indeed, it will lead to a brighter future for our schools, teachers and pupils. Therefore, I hope that everyone will tackle the Bill in that spirit. I support it with enthusiasm.

8.53 pm

Mr. Ken Weetch (Ipswich): In opposing the Bill I must first say that the Government have been completely disingenuous. They have said that the Burnham machinery is defective, but that does not lead logically to the complete demolition of the negotiating machinery. Over the years the teachers' bargaining machinery has certainly creaked at the joints from time to time, but that in no way justifies sweeping aside the whole machinery. That does not follow logically, nor is it justified.

Secondly, if the Government could have chosen one issue which would provide a recipe for continuing discontent in the teaching profession, it is this issue. What group of workers from whatever occupation will stand aside and see their negotiating machinery destroyed? In a democracy, part of one's dignity, wherever one works, is to have a just say in the negotiation of one's conditions of work and salary. By sweeping that aside, the Government have ensured that there will be not stability in our schools.

The Government were right to emphasise the need for stability for the good of education. Unfortunately, in the Bill they have provided the conditions that will determine that the reverse will happen. The Bill effectively tramples across the negotiating machinery for determining teachers' conditions and salaries. It is ill advised and autocratic. It is based on petulance—the Secretary of State has been unable to get his way over the distribution of the money available, so he has taken his football home and dug up the pitch.

The House should vote against the Bill for several reasons. It is dictatorial and contrary to the principles of free collective bargaining. Earlier it was pointed out that teachers have been singled out for tyranical treatment. Indeed, the word "tyranical" was quoted from one of the teachers' employers — the Association of County Councils.

Pay bargaining in the public sector involves a collection of methods, and when one looks at other groups of workers in the public sector one can see a variety of them. It serves large parts of the Civil Service, The National Health Service and many people employed in local government. In some areas there are review bodies and in others there is indexation. But this Bill subverts the collective bargaining machine of one particular group of public service workers.

When the Secretary of State opened the debate I listened carefully because I was waiting for him to say what, if the collective bargaining machinery represented by the Burnham committee had proven defective over the years, he proposed to put in its place. I am glad that he is here to listen because he made no proposals either to identify the weaknesses in the Burnham machinery or for its reform. There was very little that was constructive about collective bargaining in the Secretary of State's speech. It was merely a presentation of the Bill which sweeps the current bargaining machinery aside. That is dictatorial and it is the first reason why the Opposition will vote against the Bill.

The Bill is part of what I would call a sinister syndrome —centralisation. Centralisation is a pretty odd thing to come from a Conservative Government whose political philosophy, I thought, was based on devolved power. It is an odd political argument to be coming from the Conservative Benches. It is not the first example of centralisation that we have had from the Government. We have had it in local authority finance and the proposals for the new technical colleges that the Secretary of State is proposing. The whole approach to local government is now moving towards a quite and increasing power at the centre. That trend is a pretty sorry one for British education because the tradition of British education has been completely different. It has been based on local participation, free collective bargaining and on flexible responses to conditions in localities. In fact, British education's great strength has been the devolved responsibility to the localities. We are now seeing a substantial transfer of power to the centre, and it is sinister.

Let us take one step back from the argument about the machinery and look at the Secretary of State's motion for bringing the Bill before the House. One of the motives is that he has the view that there should be more pay differentials in the structure of teachers' salaries in schools. The argument is not from the point of view of two extremes. It is not an argument about no differentials or a great number of differentials. It is a matter of more or less. My argument is that we should need fewer differentials, not more, in the structure of salaries. I say that for a number of reasons. The editorial of *The Times* on 26 November effectively sums up the argument. It says:

"But whereas the ACAS deal gives most to those who do least well, extending the rewards for grade one and two teachers, the Government wants to introduce incentive posts for good teachers".

Who told the Government that all the good teachers hold posts of responsibility? There are a great many teachers up and down this country who do not hold posts of responsibility and never will because they wish to stay in the classroom where there is a real relationship with the children.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My proposals provide for them.

Mr. Weetch: The Secretary of State should listen because I am making a fair point.

I have been a teacher on the basic scale in my time and I have held posts of responsibility. I can tell the Secretary of State that some posts of responsibility are given for some weird and wonderful things. They have caused more division within the teaching profession over the years than anything else. If there are more of those differentials the teachers who remain on the main professional grade, on the basic scale, will say to the people who hold responsibility, "You get the money, you do it."

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): That is extraordinary.

Mr. Weetch: It is not extraordinary, it is the truth. In fact, we should say that there is a main professional grade which is well paid and then there would be an integration of responsibility, not fragmentation.

Mrs. Rumbold: It is a most remarkable statement to say that professional people will tell others who have responsibilities that it is their job and that they should get on with it and that they will not be teaching in a classroom and doing the job they are employed to do. That is a most extraordinary view of teachers.

Mr. Weetch: I did not say that. I said that if a main professional grade was established which was well-paid, teachers in any school would work together in a co-operative spirit. Once one starts singling out one from another, especially on doubtful criteria of responsibility, the fragmentation will start from then on. I do not know if it is a question of "ought"—whether it ought to be so —but that is precisely what will happen and, indeed, has already happened in many schools.

Even though the results of the negotiations were not quite what the Secretary of State wanted, it would have been far better to let recommendations emerge from the teachers rather than have them imposed from outside. Although the Secretary of State might get away with that in the short run, he is providing a formula for long-term discontent. I appeal to him. Taking away the right of teachers to bargain collectively in a manner than they are entitled to expect in a democracy will send morale even lower.

The Secretary of State has put forward no long-term proposals for collective bargaining reform. I understand that the advisory committee is a temporary expedient. In education, provisions begin by being temporary but end up by being permanent. I am afraid that, having found this new advisory machinery convenient — because it does not answer back — there will be a great temptation to stick to it. Temporary expedients have a way of lasting a very long time. The Government do not understand the psychology of the nation's schools. The Bill, which is mistaken in its purpose and content, is a step down the road of that misunderstanding.

9.7 pm

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): I wonder whether the Secretary of State is finding it a little ironic that, while all his colleagues are seeking to denationalise everything in sight, he is setting out to nationalise our education service. With the Bill and his announcements at the weekend of his curriculum proposals, he seems to be setting out to abolish all local control over education. I should have thought that he would realise that this is a major kick in the teeth for local government and local democracy — increasingly taking away their powers over the curriculum and their powers to work out teachers' pay and conditions. I should have thought that, if the right hon. Gentleman were not concerned for local democracy as a whole, he would have some concern for those loyal servants of his party who for so long have run the education service in many of the shire counties.

I realise that the Secretary of State wants to be the next Conservative Prime Minister, but the Bill suggests that he is increasingly power mad.

Mr. Kenneth Baker *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Bennett: You are not only taking power from local government and making it merely a rubber stamp in education matters, but you are abolishing the concept of collective bargaining. You are riding roughshod over the ILO conventions. Your government signed—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not have a Government.

Mr. Bennett: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Government signed those conventions. The Secretary of State should have listened to the debate. My right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes)—one of my milder colleagues—had some pretty hard things to say about the way in which the Government were enslaving teachers by their tyranical proposals, taking away teachers' rights to collective bargaining, and that point was repeated by many of my colleagues.

The Government and the Secretary of State will claim that the person who pays the piper should call the tune. I agree. However, it is not the Government, but the taxpayers and ratepayers, who pay the piper and pay for teachers' salaries. The taxpayers and ratepayers have as much right to be represented in the negotiations by the local authorities as they have to be represented by the Government. The tradition is that education is a locally provided service. Until the Government receive a mandate for a nationally provided education service, they should leave the negotiations in the hands of the locally elected representatives. In fact, at the last elction the Conservative party manifesto contained references to returning power to local authorities. The Government have no mandate for imposing on local authorities the pay and conditions of the people whom they employ.

It is also ironic that during the three years of negotiations the Secretary of State's predecessor made it clear that the negotiations had nothing to do with him —he washed his hands of the dispute. Time and time again, from the Dispatch Box, he argued that it was for the local authorities and teachers to negotiate a settlement.

[Mr. Bennett]

Now, just as a settlement is within grasp, the Secretary of State decides to intercede in the negotiations. He appears to be following his predecessor's practice in that every time there is a chance of the negotiations reaching a successful conclusion, he makes a statement that wrecks the proposals.

We have a unique opportunity — a window of opportunity—to achieve a pay deal that will satisfy the teachers and local government and produce peace in our schools for the next five years. We need just a little more negotiating and patience and there will be an agreement.

I do not suppose that the agreement will greatly please the teachers. The Secretary of State ought to be aware that in all the discussions over the past two or three weeks some concern has been expressed by the teachers about the ACAS proposals, but there has been absolute, total and united rejection of the Secretary of State's proposal to impose a settlement. The Secretary of State has an opportunity, and if he allowed people to return to negotiations there could be a settlement that would produce co-operation and good will from the teachers. It may be possible to impose a settlement, but it is impossible to impose good will on our schools. That is the real problem facing the Secretary of State.

At present, it appears as though the Secretary of State will delay any settlement by at least a month so that the teachers will not receive their money in January. That will save the Government about £40 million. The Secretary of State may delay it by two months, and thus save £80 million. The longer the Government can delay, the less they will have to put forward. We are really very close to producing a solution, and it is very sad that the Government——

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way. He is implying that in the process of further negotiations it is possible that teachers will not get the money payable to them from 1 January. I want to make it clear that the Government's proposal is that the 16·4 per cent. should be spread in two installments—the first on 1 January, and the other on 1 October. That is still our intention. Whether the teachers can be paid from that particular date depends on the progress of the legislation. I want to make it absolutely clear that it is not our intention to defer entitlement to that beyond 1 January.

Mr. Bennett: I am grateful for that statement. I suggest that the Secretary of State is still making some savings because if the money is put down later, the local authorities will save a considerable amount in interest. If the money is paid a little later, there will obviously be a little more money to put into the proposals.

If the Secretary of State wishes peace to return to our schools, he must achieve that through negotiation. If he achieves it by negotiation, he should not be using this legislation to blackmail the teachers. Blackmailing the teachers will have two results:—the Secretary of State will either gain their sullen acquiescence, which is the best for which he can hope, or the conflict will be continued. Neither will produce high quality education.

The Government seem determined to throw over the ACAS agreement, but what is the real sticking point? It seems to be that the Secretary of State feels that the agreement will pay teachers too much. The Government want to insert an extra scale to stop some teachers getting so much money. That is why the Secretary of State says that the agreement is too expensive.

I agree that bad teachers should not be paid as much as good teachers, but I do not want bad teachers in the schools at all. That is the problem that the Secretary of State must face. When he talks about allowing only 50 per cent. of teachers to reach the higher rates, he implies either that 50 per cent. of teachers are not good enough, or that some good teachers will be underpaid. When pressed as to how many bad teachers there are, most Conservative Members suggest about 2, 3 or 4 per cent. Yet the Government's proposals mean that a substantial number of good quality teachers will never get off the basic scale. The Secretary of State should consider carefully the basic scale proposals in the ACAS agreement, which offer rewards for first-class teachers who never have the chance to advance beyond the basic scale.

If the Secretary of State wishes to weed out the very small number of bad teachers, he should consider two aspects. He should ensure that people who fail the basic probationary year are given a way out of teaching so that they do not have to try to cover their incomptence and continue. He should also continue the provision in the ACAS agreement which makes it clear that if the local auhority is not satisfied with the quality of service in the preceding 12 months there is no need to pay the increment to the teacher concerned. Although that mechanism has rarely been used, it is nevertheless available, harnessed to the appraisal system, to deal with the very small number of bad teachers.

In effect, the Government are proposing a quality bar. Under their proposals, certain teachers will be paid more because they are good teachers. That brings an entirely new concept to the management of schools and will involve considerable difficulty for head teachers and others who have to allocate resources. At present, teachers are paid extra for extra responsibility. Primary schools often have to parallel reception classes and parents may be keen for their child to go into one of those classes because the teacher has a good reputation. At present, the head teacher can point out that both teachers are paid equally and recognised as good class teachers. Under the Secretary of State's proposals, one may have a special allowance for being a good teacher.

The head teacher will need considerable management skill to persuade parents that their child has to go into the class run by the teacher who is recognised to be less good. I should certainly be very resentful if my youngster were pushed into the less good teacher's class. The more one formalises this, the greater the problems caused. The same applies in secondary schools. Under the Secretary of State's proposals, one fourth-year English set may be taught by a teacher recognised as deserving extra pay due to the quality of his or her teaching. Despite the limits on class size, parents will legitimately want their children to be in that teacher's class.

There will also be problems of allocating posts to schools, but there is even worse to come. The Secretary of State is too young to remember the 1920s, but people who worked in the education service in the 1920s and 1930s, member the chaos and resentment caused by different rates of pay in different areas.

Mr. Forth: What about London weighting?

Mr. Bennett: I accept that there is the question of London weighting, and I shall come on to it. Once there is a proliferation of extra scales, a major problem is produced. It is bad enough that the Government are busily creating two or three nations—those parts in the south which are reasonably affluent, and some pretty depressed parts in the north. It is far worse if they start to institutionalise that divide into the rates of pay offered within schools.

Mr. Cash: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Bennett: No, I shall certainly not give way to the hon. Gentleman after his discourtesy in walking out of the Chamber as soon as he had made his speech. There is a concept in the House that hon. Members remain and listen to other people's speeches.

There are considerable problems with the way in which one introduces extra rates of pay. Let us take, for example, a teacher to whom I spoke recently close to the House of Commons. At 55, he considers that the rates of pay that he receives are perfectly reasonable because he bought his house 25 years ago and his extra costs of living in London are very small. He has tremendous sympathy for a teacher in the 25 to 30 age group who wants to try to buy a house in the south of England and to take up a teaching post in that area. He told me that in a short time he can sell his house and retire to a low-cost part of the country. He will take with him a nice capital gain on his house and an enhanced pension because of London weighting. He can see good reasons why there should be some extra assistance for the young teacher in the London area who has housing problems, but he cannot see why there should be a difference in pension because of the London weighting because he will no longer be living in the London area and he will have made a substantial capital gain on a house move. Yet someone else in a different part of the country will not have had problems with house buying.

If the Government are worried about housing costs, there is a simple solution. One solution is to ensure that enough housing is built in areas such as London where it is needed for teachers. The other alternative is to encourage local authorities to come up with housing to solve the problems of young teachers in those areas.

Pay differentials between areas would not be a solution. The Secretary of State talked glibly about paying physics teachers or mathematics teachers extra, but there are considerable practical problems in doing that. Does one pay the physics teacher extra, or the teacher who is teaching physics extra? That is a considerable problem in many schools. It would be difficult to decide whether to pay the first deputy head in a school extra because his degree was in physics and because when he taught in the classroom he taught physics often, or the other deputy head, on the same grade, who was not teaching physics——

Mr. Patrick Thompson: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Bennett: No, not at this point. Would the Secretary of State give the person who is qualified in physics the extra money, or would he give it to the person who is teaching physics? Of course, the problem would then arise of the qualified teacher of physics and the unqualified person who is doing his best to teach it. There are considerable problems in paying out different sums of money to people with different qualifications or who give a proportion of their timetable to subjects were there is a shortage of teachers. There is no easy solution. So far, I have seen no practical proposals.

That brings me to the problems mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett). He said that the House of Commons and the Secretary of State are not in a position to carry out these detailed negotiations. Nor, especially, is an advisory body with a handful of people on it. The people with the expertise in these matters are those in local government who employ teachers and have the day-to-day practical problems and the teacher unions that understand the practical problems. It would be extremely dangerous to take powers in this legislation to pay different rates in different parts of the country and different rates for different subjects.

The Government's proposals for the amount of money that they are putting up are for the gross amount. It is nothing like as much as they say. The Secretary of State knows only too well that a good proportion of the money that the Government are putting up will find its way straight back to the Treasury in national insurance, tax and VAT payments. The Government should spend some time considering the matter.

The Minister of State more or less promised that the advisory committee's reports would be published. I hope that when the hon. Lady replies she will give a categorical assurance that those reports will be published and that, in Committee, she will accept an amendment to place that provision in the legislation. I hope that she will also tell us how she envisages collective bargaining working under the Bill.

We should have an explanation of why further education is not included in the Bill. The Secretary of State said that he was pleased with the conduct of further education negotiations. The only trouble is that, in further education, salaries are slipping behind the Houghton agreement even faster than are teachers' salaries. The Government are satisfied with the proposals in further education because, so far, lecturers have been unable to obtain the same amount of money from the Government, but there will be major problems if lecturers in tertiary colleges and further education colleges generally are paid substantially less than teachers. The Government must find the money to provide a decent settlement in further education.

I hope that the Minister will tell us what is happening with school meals. We are extremely anxious to get peace in our schools, but as the Government would not accept a national rate of pay for school meals supervision, there appears to be simmering unrest in local authorities. Different schemes apply in different areas, and many head teachers are extremely worried about the proposals for lunchtime supervision. If the Government want to return peace to the schools, it is time that they produced a national scheme for midday supervision. I hope that the Minister will tell us whether the Government are satisfied with what is happening on the ground.

Finally, why are the Government trying to rush through the legislation? History shows us that legislation that is rushed through the House is always bad legislation. It is not well discussed in Parliament or outside. All the evidence shows that if we take our time with legislation there is a proper debate in the country and, from that proper debate, Parliament becomes well-informed of the

[Mr. Bennett]

advantages and disadvantages of the legislation. My hon. Friends have quoted many examples of unsatisfactory legislation that has been rushed through the House.

Several of my hon. Friends hope that the other place will slow down the legislation. I hope that it will, but the Government have an alternative. The Secretary of State does not need the legislation. He could obtain a successfully negotiated settlement. The best way to do that is to demonstrate to the teacher unions and the local authorities that he comes to them with good will, not with the blackmail of this legislation. If the Minister announced tonight, or the Secretary of State announced in Committee, that he will delay completion of the parliamentary stages of the Bill to have one last go at negotiations, there would be a good chance——

Mr. Kenneth Baker: It has been five years.

Mr. Bennett: The Secretary of State knows perfectly well that it has not been five years. For three of those years the Government refused even to contemplate providing any money. During the past two years negotiations have progressed each time the Government have shown their willingness to produce some money. The Secretary of State should try to make the negotiations work.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: The hon. Gentleman is speaking for a third of the unions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I will not allow sedentary interventions.

Mr. Bennett: The hon. Lady should consider what is happening in the schools. From the evidence that I have, I would suggest——

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman *rose*——

Mr. Bennett: No, I shall not give way. I have already taken up the hon. Lady's comment from a sedentary position about a third of the unions. [HON MEMBERS: "Give way."] Go on then.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: Will the hon. Gentleman accept that the majority of teachers in my area prefer the Secretary of State's proposals to the other proposals? They want the incentive posts that are being offered. They are dismayed that the one overweening union that has dominated for so long should want to reduce the incentive posts, and they consider that that is wrong. That is what the vast majority of first-class teachers want.

Mr. Bennett: I notice that the hon. Lady qualified her question with final words "first-class teachers". I am sure that that is an insult to a large number of teachers in her area. The hon. Lady should look at the NUT ballot results in her area. She should recognise that the vast majority of teachers in the NAS/UWT are totally opposed to the Secretary of State's proposals and that there are a large number of teachers who are dissatisfied with the Government's proposals.

There is an opportunity for the Government to come up with a small amount of extra money, and a small amount of further negotiation, which will produce a settlement.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: What about incentive posts?

Mr. Bennett: The incentive is not there for 50 per cent. of teachers who cannot get above the basic scale. The big attraction of the ACAS proposals was that they offered a career grade for those teachers which would go up to £15,000 as opposed to the £12,500 proposed by the Secretary of State. That is very attractive to the first-class teachers, who want recognition for the first-class job that they are doing in the schools.

If hon. Members vote for the Bill, they are saying that they have no confidence in the negotiating abilities of the Secretary of State. The right hon. Gentleman should think carefully about that. If the right hon. Gentleman believes that he has negotiating skills, he should delay the introduction of the Bill and say firmly that he is prepared to go out and negotiate. Anybody who is not prepared to negotiate is frightened, and that suggests the Minister's weakness.

9.32 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): This has been an important debate and I have listened with great interest. I listened with the interest of someone who sat on the Burnham committee for four years. Thus, some of the stories that I have heard about the way in which the Burnham committee operates have been interesting, if not accurate.

I listened carefully to the speech of the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) who moved the amendment to the Bill. Unfortunately and sadly for him, the hon. Gentleman was not very well supported by the other signatories to the amendment. Indeed, I do not think that any of them bothered to enter the Chamber.

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): Will the Minister accept that, whereas 390 of her supporters were not in the House when I spoke, only 25 of my hon. Friends were not in the House when I spoke.

Mrs. Rumbold: It would be tempting for me to say that I could understand why there were so few hon. Members present when the hon. Gentleman spoke but that would not be gallant of me and I have no wish to be ungallant. It is rather a pity that so few of his party were bothered to support him. That is such a shame because the hon. Gentleman made a rather good speech although it was somewhat inaccurate.

The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) said two things of particular interest. He said that my right hon. Friend could settle this dispute—it would be simple for him to do so. After all, all that was asked of him was to spend a few more pounds, another £85 million. That extra money could be easily added to the Bill. That is rather a lot of money—a considerable amount—on top of what is already on offer to the teachers. We have put £600 million on the table—a significant sum. Simply to add more just for the convenience of what may or may not be a settlement with the teachers unions——

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: For good will?

Mrs. Rumbold: We have been waiting for that for a very long time.

It was said that the disruption within the teaching profession had lasted for only two years, but I remember the first moves towards trying to get the teacher unions to discuss conditions of service. That was seen by the local authorities—which we are all so keen to support and help—as being absolutely vital so that they could tell the teachers whom they employ that there was something

in their contracts for which they were being paid. That would have solved the problem of telling the teachers, "Here we have a contract for £X but we are not sure what we are paying for." At long last they were trying to negotiate the conditions of service, and it is perfectly true that that is what has emerged from the recent negotiations.

But the Bill is concerned with the pay and conditions of service of teachers—a large and vitally important group of people. We have heard a lot about them from hon. Members on both sides of the House who themselves were former teachers. My hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett), among others, made an excellent speech in support of the honourable profession of which he was a part.

The standards and quality of education in our schools to a large extent depend on the teachers. They are very important people, not only in respect of the quality of their pupils but for the future development of our political and social life. They are also important for the economic development of the country. We are talking about 400,000 highly qualified people and a total pay bill of £5 billion.

It is essential that we recruit and retain suitable people for this service. We must provide for professional development throughout their careers and promote their optimum deployment among the 100 or so local authorities that are responsible for 25,000 schools. It is to this end that the Government have taken appropriate steps to plan and improve the quality of initial teacher training and to strengthen the arrangements for in-service training, underpinned by the systematic appraisal of teachers and their performance.

Teachers' pay levels, pay structure and conditions of service must be set within that context for the maintained sector of education. It is inevitable that there will be strains in trying to meet the aspirations of all the teacher unions. We must try to staff all our schools satisfactorily across the range of local authorities, bearing in mind the number of subjects that have to be taught, and all this must be done within the limits of what can be afforded.

It has become increasingly clear, as some of my hon. Friends, including my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) have said, that in recent years the Burnham framework has not been satisfactory. As I have already explained, my own personal experience is that we tried hard within the Burnham machinery to make it work, but we did not succeed. That is why the Bill is needed, that is why we must have some interim arrangements for involving an advisory committee, and that is why the Bill provides for consultation with the local authorities and the unions and why the Government's conclusion should be referred to Parliament.

One of the points raised by the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) concerned the ILO convention. I do not accept that we shall be breaking ILO convention No. 151. That convention provides that representatives of public employees should participate in the determination of terms and conditions of employment, but that does not have to be by direct negotiation, and the teacher unions will continue to participate. They will submit evidence and representations to the advisory committee, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will certainly be consulting them.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Rumbold: No.

Article 6(2) of the European Social Charter is framed in general terms, requesting Governments to promote voluntary collective bargaining where necessary and appropriate.

The article——

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Rumbold: No.

The article clearly recognises——

Mr. Bennett *rose*——

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall not give way at the moment.

The article clearly recognises that circumstances can occur in which voluntary negotiations are not appropriate. That has happened in the case of Burnham, which has failed to promote settlements that are acceptable to all parties and are achieved without unacceptable disruption. In those circumstances, it would be inappropriate to maintain existing negotiating machinery if it does not work.

Some, indeed, many, Opposition Members said persistently in the debate that we are moving too quickly, but most people have agreed—significantly—that the Burnham machinery must go. They agreed that because it has been agreed by all parties, including the unions, the Burnham machinery must go. It would have been impossible for them to deny that. The final settlement at the end of this long-running saga has always been just around the corner. The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish said, "Wait a little longer. It will be all right at the end of the day. It will happen soon."

Mr. Pawsey: Jam tomorrow, never jam today.

Mrs. Rumbold: Exactly.

Other hon. Members have said that, but we must begin to put in place new machinery that will allow the dispute finally to be brought to a close. I can see no point in perpetuating a negotiating process which has produced never-ending talks, but which, even now, after so long, falls short of delivering a sensible final agreement.

Opposition Members have made other points to us. They have said, "Why doesn't the Secretary of State move towards the unions' point of view and the ACAS point of view?" May I ask another question of the House? Is it possible that the people who negotiated the Nottingham ACAS agreement could move slightly towards my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State? *[Interruption.]* Is there not a possibility that he may be right?

Mr. Barnett: That is what negotiating is.

Mrs Rumbold: Indeed. We are amazed to see that we have not had any sort of movement towards my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. He has been eminently reasonable. Teachers and parents throughout the country and many ordinary professional people have said how right the Secretary of State's proposals are as a structure for a decent profession. It would be impossible for us to do otherwise than continue on this road. It would be most imprudent of my right hon. Friend — or any Government—mindful of the course of the dispute, to sit on his hands.

The Secretary of State, as he reminded the House in his opening remarks, has a final responsibility for the education service. My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth reminded us that the Secretary of State has a duty to ensure that there is a decent public education

[Mrs Rumbold]

service. The Government cannot stand idly by. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made it clear to all the parties that his door remains open, and he is shortly to have meetings with the local authorities, the Secondary Heads Association and the Professional Association of Teachers. But there remains a large gulf of principle and philosophy on the shape of the pay structure. It is our belief that the importance of an efficient management structure is the cornerstone for the effective development of education in our schools. Burnham clearly failed to come up with that.

We cannot risk another period of wrangling, stalemate and disruption. Our children deserve better than that. The parents deserve better than that. The future generations deserve better than that. We must have a machinery that will work for the future, hence this short but important Bill.

Mr. Radice: Is this the peroration?

Mrs. Rumbold: No, it is not. The hon. Gentleman must wait for my peroration.

The Government have been accused by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) of removing the negotiating rights of teachers' unions. Much of the debate centred round that.

The Government have not denied that the teachers' unions have a role in pay determination. I assure the House that there will be no shortage of consultation. Under the Bill, the advisory committee will be required to notify the relevant associations, local education authorities and teacher organisations, of matters being considered by the Committee and will have to give such bodies a reasonable opportunity to submit evidence and representations. When my right hon. Friend has received a report, he will be required to consult the relevant associations, local education authorities and teacher organisations before making an order giving effect to or modifying the recommendations. This process of consultation will be taken seriously.

Mr. Marlow: Would this be a proper stage in my hon. Friend's speech for her to emphasise the generosity of the award that has been made? Perhaps she could make a comparison between, say, a senior teacher and a senior social worker? Is not a senior teacher being offered some £3,000 more than a senior social worker? This happens through all the other professions. It happens in medicine, in hospitals and in a series of other jobs. What the teachers are being offered is real wealth compared to what an awful lot of other people are getting.

Mrs. Rumbold: My hon. Friend is making a valid point. No other group has received such a large pay increase as 25 per cent. within 18 months. Tell the pensioners that that is a miserly amount and see what response one gets. Tell the parents, many of whom will not have had a wage increase of 25 per cent., that that is a miserly amount. My hon. Friend is right, and I thank him.

Why are the Government talking about a new framework for the teachers? We are not confronting a normal situation. I do not know of any history of collective bargaining such as the one we have seen in recent years. I remind Labour Members that my right hon. Friend has a responsibility for the well-being of our schools that goes far beyond the responsibilities of Government for the generosity of local authorities.

Mr. Radice: The hon. Lady has been making a good case for reforming the Burnham committee. She has not been making a case for getting rid of collective bargaining, and that is what she will have to do.

Mrs. Rumbold: If the hon. Gentleman will be patient I shall come to that.

The opening section of the Butler Act has stood for 40 years, and the Government will not shirk their responsibility for fulfilling their duty to education. We had no realistic choice other than to bring forward the proposals in the Bill. What the hon. Member for Leeds, Central has described as a fundamental attack on democratic rights is far from that. It is a measure to restore to children the right to an uninterrupted education.

Over the past few years many negotiating efforts have been made, and I recognise that some have been real. There was the traditional Burnham committee with the concordat, which allowed the Secretary of State to have some say in the total amount of money being discussed. Then we had the traditional Burnham committee without the concordat, which ruled out the Secretary of State having any say in the total amount of money. There have been collective bargaining working parties with local authority, union and Government representatives dealing with both pay and conditions and collective bargaining aided and chaired by ACAS. Not one of these processes has been successful in producing an answer to the problem of teachers' pay. That is why, for an interim period, we need an advisory committee to take evidence from all concerned and to offer advice to my hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who will then need Parliament's agreement to his conclusions.

I can assure the House that there will be no shortage of consultation. The advisory committee will be required to notify the relevant associations and all those bodies will have plenty of opportunity to look carefully at the representations made to my right hon. Friend. When the Secretary of State receives the report he will again consult. There will be endless consultation on these negotiations before he makes any sort of recommendation to the House.

We are told that this Bill is the end of democracy. Whatever the Secretary of State recommends, even if he decides not to make any modification, will be subject to a negative resolution of the House. That is a democratic process because all hon. Members will be able to vote on it. If my right hon. Friend, or the holder of his post, modifies the recommendations, that will be subject to the affirmative resolution of both Houses. What can be more democratic than that? As elected representatives we shall vote on those proposals and that must be the ultimate in democracy. It is not the denial, as we have been told, of democratic processes, nor is it the end of civilisation for the teachers and it is quite ridiculous to suggest that it is.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Does my hon. Friend accept that many members of the NUT, the people at the chalk face, want good jobs and do not feel that the NUT genuinely represents their wishes? They look forward to the additional promotion posts that my right hon. Friend is

offering. That is surely the way forward because it will ensure that the best teachers are those who are devoted to their pupils.

Mrs. Rumbold: That is true. My right hon. Friend is anxious to see that all those within the teaching profession are keen to serve the schools and the pupils to the best of their ability. We shall look at the results of the ballot to see how the teachers have voted. We shall see whether they vote in favour of the teachers' unions or for my right hon. Friend's proposals.

Let us be clear about the proposals that the Opposition advocate. Whether they like it or not, the teachers' unions are in disarray. One of the biggest unions, the NAS/UWT, was not prepared seriously to contemplate signing the ACAS agreement. The National Association of Head Teachers dismissed the ACAS agreement by saying that the differentials were shot to pieces and this meant that it would be impossible for head teachers to run their schools effectively and efficiently on the basis of the proposals in the ACAS agreement.

This so-called agreement originally covered four of the six unions. Five of them signed the so-called Coventry heads of agreement in July. On Friday, the council of the Secondary Heads Association unanimously voted to reject the agreement, which meant that the six had suddenly become three. On Saturday, the Professional Association of Teachers made it clear that it rejected the so-called ACAS agreement. The six had shrunk to two. The Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association ballot result will be known towards the end of this week and it remains to be seen which way that vote will go.

Mr. Barnett: The hon. Lady is doing much damage.

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Gentleman says that I am doing damage.

Mr. Barnett: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Rumbold: No, I will not. He makes a serious mistake in suggesting that those of us who stand for the profession of teachers working in the classrooms are causing damage. My hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) made a telling point when he spoke about the experiences of himself and his wife. He was invited by the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch) to say what would have happened if he had disagreed with Burnham. My hon. Friend said what most teachers are saying, that they were glad when conditions of service and pay were improved, but were not concerned about the mechanism by which that was done. They were anxious to deliver good education in the classrooms. That was their major preoccupation.

It is quite obvious that the NUT is rapidly becoming isolated. Its full-page advertisement in today's national press was alarmist and unhelpful. Its headline talks about the agreement made with ACAS but two teachers' unions withdrew from that agreement over the weekend. It was dangerously inaccurate. The so-called agreement is falling apart before our eyes. The NUT advertisement says that the Bill will give my right hon. Friend the right to scrap the ACAS deal and to deny teachers any opportunity to negotiate on their pay and conditions of service ever again. What absolute nonsense. It says nothing of the sort, as anybody who reads the Bill knows.

The chaos of the past few weeks is evidence enough that the Government have to take a firm lead. I am afraid that it is the NUT which has been persistently inflexible. For years, local authority associations have tried to negotiate on conditions of service with teacher unions, and for years the NUT has dismissed serious discussions abour linking pay and conditions. In the early 1980s, I tried to chair a committee with teacher unions about conditions of service. Progress has been painfully slow.

Mr. Radice: But you have got it now.

Mrs. Rumbold: We have got absolutely nothing.

Mr. Radice: Not enough?

Mrs. Rumbold: Indeed. It is not enough. In the autumn of last year, proposals which linked pay and conditions were put to the teachers and they walked out.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: It is in the agreement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The teachers' unions walked out of those discussions in 1985. It is true that, this year, there has been an ACAS agreement which puts together pay and conditions of service. My right hon. Friend has said that that is progress, and he is quite right. I have to remind Opposition Members, however, that the ACAS agreement also asks for a further £85 million. It is tremendously convenient to them to forget that.

We should consider just what Opposition Members have said. They have said that the Government are taking away the negotiating rights of unions and giving themselves carte blanche to impose a settlement. We have already said, clearly and categorically, that that is not the case. There will be plenty of adequate consultation. A greater nonsense would be the proposition that teacher unions and local authorities could sit down without the Government and decide the size of the pay bill without reference to the Government, or those who must pay the remaining 46·4 per cent. of the pay bill. It is very easy to discuss pay when one does not have to find the money. The Government do not intend to do that, and I am convinced that no Government in their right mind would be prepared to accept a pay bill that had been decided by parties other than themselves.

Opposition Members say that there is a possibility of my right hon. Friend being represented in some way under the ACAS agreement, but they have not been specific. My right hon. Friend is accused of being a tyrant and of taking unprecedented powers to tell teacher unions and local education authorities what teachers should be paid and how the money should be distributed. That is rubbish. He has already said that he will consult at all stages. Nobody seems to want to talk about how Opposition Members imagine that my right hon. Friend can discard his duty to provide education for our children while unions and local authorities continue to argue and wrangle.

Opposition Members have said that we should settle on this agreement and it will all be over. They have said that peace will return to our schools. My reply is "Until the next time they decide to have a wrangle." No thank you, Mr. Speaker, we do not want that. My right hon. Friend has a duty to the children of this country, to parents, to the nation's future and to our most precious asset. What other country in the world would allow its education system to be disrupted in this way? Is anyone really suggesting that we should take seriously the proposals of some of the unions to cede the power that they have

[Mrs. Rumbold]

wielded over our public education system in the past weeks? I ask the House to reject the amendment and to pass the Bill.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 193, Noes 251.

Division No. 22] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Hefler, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Alton and
Mr. John Cartwright.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gorst, John
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*

Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irving, Charles
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:

Mr. Michael Neubert and Mr. Francis Maude.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 60 (Amendment on Second or Third Reading):

The House divided: Ayes 250, Noes 195.

Division No. 23] **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gorst, John
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irving, Charles
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey

Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Peter Lloyd.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes: Mr. Derek Fatchett and Mr. Ron Davies.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House.—[Mr. Portillo.]

Committee tomorrow.

TEACHERS' PAY AND CONDITIONS BILL
[MONEY]

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any expenses of the Secretary of State under the Act and any increase attributable to the Act in the sums so payable under any other Act.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Shipbuilding (European Community Directive)

Mr. Speaker: I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

10.28 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry (Mr. Giles Shaw): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 9470/86 and 9470/1/86 on aid to shipbuilding, and supports the Government's intention to press for early adoption of the Directive in a form which will provide a fairer and more transparent aid regime in Europe and enhance the ability of European yards to compete in world markets.

I am conscious of the fact that this is the first occasion on which I have had the responsibility of addressing the House on shipbuilding matters; and it is only reasonable for me to say with some humility that the position, the problems and the world scene for shipbuilding make the context of this debate a truly traumatic and difficult one.

In 1986, the rate of new ordering for merchant ships has continued to decline. Order intake in 1985 world trade was 10·3 million compensated gross tonnes, but only 4·4 million in the first half of 1986. World building capacity is about 18 million CGT, and too much capacity chasing limited new orders keeps ship prices depressed. There was a flurry of interest in crude oil carriers in the early autumn which produced some orders for South Korea and Yugoslavia, although it seems that some of those orders are by no means secure. Owners are already cancelling as the demand for crude oil is falling again. The Japanese industry now depends heavily on domestic orders, because the appreciation of the yen against the dollar is pricing Japan out of the world market. All the major Japanese yards have announced, and in some cases begun to implement, substantial restructuring with a view to cutting capacity by about 30 per cent. Japan has more than 40 per cent. of the world market, so cuts of that size are substantial.

The Koreans are not cutting capacity. They have about 15 per cent. of the world market. The European Community yards combined are about as significant in the world market as is South Korea, and the United Kingdom alone has less than 1 per cent. of the world market.

The problems were made no easier by the recent fall in the price of oil. There has been some activity, but it has been short-lived. Meanwhile, there remains substantial spare capacity in many sorts of shipping, with second-hand vessels available at low prices. That has had the effect of narrowing the range of available orders to specialised markets. In short, circumstances are no easier, and may even be worse, than when the House previously debated such matters, which was not very long ago.

Before I discuss the directive, may I say how helpful it is to be able to consult the House at this stage when the negotiations on the directive are sufficiently advanced for us to have a strong sense of its final shape but when there is still plenty of scope for improvement. As the House will recall from the memorandum that I circulated on 10 October, the present fifth directive runs out at the end of this year. The new draft directive has been discussed at Industry Councils on 20 October and 18 November, and substantial progress has been made. I very much hope that it will be possible to achieve agreement on the new directive at a further Council, now arranged for 22 December, so that the new arrangements can be in place at the end of the year.

That is especially important because the Commission has made it clear that, in the absence of agreement on a new directive, it will use its existing powers under articles 92 and 93 of the treaty as though the directive was in force, exactly as it had proposed it without any of the advantages which we and others might have hoped to achieve in the current negotiations. As the House will know, help for shipbuilding is a matter essentially for the Governments of each member state in the Community, within a framework set down in the current EC directive on state assistance. The member states provide the money; none of it comes from the EC. Therefore, the aid regime in each member state is notified to and authorised by the Commission within the framework of the Council directive.

The approach in the draft sixth directive is in many ways a considerable improvement on that of the fifth directive and its predecessors. There are two fundamental improvements. First, the fifth directive concentrates on direct production aids and does not adequately bring under control indirect aids to shipowners and ship investors, who also affect decisions to build new ships. I am glad to tell the House that we have successfully persuaded the Commission to change this approach so that all subventions that affect shipbuilding decisions will be brought out into the open and treated together on a common basis under the new system. The House will be pleased to know that, on 18 November, the Industry Council affirmed its commitment to such a regime which, backed by thorough policing, which the Commission has proposed and which we support, will ensure that there is fair competition between Community yards. No member state can bend the rules in its favour.

I see this as a considerable advance over the present position. It will have an important bearing on the ability of our yards to compete.

The second fundamental improvement is that the new approach aims to allow yards to compete in a period when all ship prices are distorted, particularly because of aggressive price leadership from the far east. The Commission has decided to set a common maximum ceiling—I quote the draft directive—

"with reference to the prevailing difference between the cost structures of the most competitive Community yards and the prices charged by its main international competitors with particular regard to the market segments in which the Community yards remain the most competitive."

The advantage of this is not only the setting of a market-related ceiling because, under the fifth directive, subventions in support of production could be given only if the industry was being adapted — in other words, slimming down. Under the sixth directive, restructuring will no longer be required in return for direct contract support. Under the new proposals, the Commission will be interested in restructuring only where investment is being supported, or support is being given to reduce capacity itself.

As for the level of the ceiling, against the background of a consultant's report on comparative costs and prices in the second quarter of this year, the Commission has

proposed a support ceiling set at 26 per cent. of what it calls contract value before aid, which is 26 per cent. of cost. This is to be applied both under article 4 in the draft directive to individual orders, and under article 5 to the total amount of operating support made available to shipyards each year in relation to their turnover on a cost-and-sale basis.

Although the Government strongly maintain that that proposed ceiling is too low to satisfy the declared objective on the draft directive, the House will wish to be aware that even a level of 26 per cent. of cost is considerably higher than what is permitted under the existing fifth directive. Though the arithmetic is somewhat bewildering, the present limit on intervention fund and shipbuilders' relief is normally 22·5 per cent. of the subsidised contract price, or 18·4 per cent. of the cost of building a ship attracting the maximum level of aid.

As a result of negotiations we already have a cost limit of 26 per cent. This will surely help our yards——

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): Will the Minister tell us how the 26 per cent. proposal is better than the existing system after taking account of losses suffered by British Shipbuilders, under-utilisation, indirect subsidies and everything else? Will he tell us what British Shipbuilders told him would be the effect of imposing a 26 per cent. ceiling?

Mr. Shaw: The hon. Gentleman knows full well that British Shipbuilders is far from happy with the 26 per cent. ceiling, and I am far from happy with it. He will know also that the recent meeting of the European Shipbuilders Association has made it clear that it would prefer to see a higher ceiling. There will be substantial pressure—there is reasonable time between now and 22 December—brought to bear on lifting the ceiling. I pledge to the House that through the United Kingdom's representative we shall do our utmost to ensure that we lift the 26 per cent. ceiling substantially.

On the arithmetic in question, the two comparatives that the hon. Gentleman is seeking turn on the fact that 18·4 per cent. of the cost is under the present regime, whereas it will be 26 per cent. That is a significant lift. That has to be borne in mind as an improvement in relation to the directive.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Will the Minister take into account under-utilisation, the losses suffered by British Shipbuilders and indirect subsidies, and will he help the British case by ceasing to say that the present system is worse than the system that will be imposed by the Commission if it gets its way?

Mr. Shaw: There is no question of a system being imposed by the Commission if it gets its way. I hope sincerely that that will not happen. I trust that a system will be endorsed by the Council on the understanding that it represents member states' interests. The system that is proposed in the directive will be significantly better than the present one, which is 18·4 per cent. on cost. Where the system differs is in relation to what the ceiling contains. There is the question of over-capacity, and there are other conditions as well. Even on that basis, the view is that the proposed regime would be a better one than that which currently prevails. We must negotiate further improvements to the conditions by which the ceiling will operate.

We firmly believe that the limit is too low. Indeed, so does the Committee of European Shipbuilders, on which British Shipbuilders represents the United Kingdom, which saw Commissioner Sutherland last week, as reported in the *Financial Times* today. The Committee said then that the level that would meet the Commission's objectives was at least 30 per cent., which it based on the same report as the Commission had used in drawing up its own figure.

The Committee had recognised that in types of ships in which European yards might specialise, the consultants had pointed to a gap of some 36 per cent. between European costs and Far East prices last spring, but the shipbuilders also took note of a hardening of ship prices since and of the effect of non-price factors, particularly quality, which in its experience influenced owners towards European yards. Nevertheless, I give the assurance that I gave a moment ago that we shall press hard for a significant rise above the 26 per cent. level currently proposed.

Our position on aid domestically is that the amount of aid given should remain the minimum that is necessary to secure the contract within the rules laid down by the directive. We will need to examine the details of our own aid regime to see whether changes are necessary in the light of the final negotiations, but, at whatever level it is eventually set, the ceiling on subventions in total will be most relevant to the yards competing worldwide. It should not be taken for granted that the maximum level will be available for all yards, especially those concentrating on small ships where competition from the far east is weakest.

There are still, of course, a number of aspects of the draft directive to be agreed by Council other than the level of the common aid ceiling. That said, I am sure that it will be helpful in the final negotiations in Brussels later this month to know that the House will support the efforts to get the Commission to agree to set a higher aid ceiling than the 26 per cent. of cost which it has proposed.

We face a position in which the market for new ships remains very tight. We have the prospect of a new regime which will allow our yards a better opportunity to compete. As we believe it can be agreed at the next Council, the new directive will allow our builders to compete more fairly, and to do so with an overall level of subvention that is significantly greater than present arrangements permit. There is still much work to be done, especially on the ceiling, but good reason to be pleased with what has been achieved so far, and I commend the motion to the House.

10.42 pm

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): I beg to move, to leave out from "shipbuilding" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof,

"but calls for the Government to increase its efforts in Europe to secure the maximum support possible for the shipbuilding industry in line with the conclusions of the independent report prepared for the European Economic Community.".

I welcome the Minister to his first shipbuilding debate, particularly as his appointment to the Department of Trade and Industry appears to break the recent pattern of recruitment to that Department. As I understand it, the hon. Member for Pudsey (Mr. Shaw) is unique because he is one of the few Ministers who is not a millionaire, at least by inheritance, and he has no ambition, unlike the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) and the hon. Member for City of Chester (Mr. Morrison), to use his period in that Department as a stepping stone to a position in the Conservative party hierarchy.

[Mr. Gordon Brown]

I also welcome the Minister because he is not the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher), who began the negotiations in Europe on the intervention fund and the new directive—which must lead to a far better subsidy for Britain—by pronouncing that he wanted to see an end to the nonsense of worldwide subsidies. It is remarkable that a Minister should start negotiations—where only the highest support scheme can stave off further redundancies in the British shipbuilding industry—by objecting in principle to the one European lifeline that is available to the industry. That is typical of some Ministers, who prefer experimenting with monetarist theory to trying to save the shipbuilding industry and the jobs within it.

If there was one central concern missing from the Minister's speech, it was recognition of the scale of the measures that are needed, the urgency of the action that is required, the severity of the crisis facing the industry and the immediacy of the response that Ministers need to make.

Already, British Shipbuilders, which employed more than 80,000 workers in 1977, now employs fewer than 8,000 as we enter 1987. Already, 50,000 jobs have been lost in the shipbuilding and ship repair industries since 1979. Already, about 25,000 jobs have gone or are to go in the merchant shipbuilding industry. Already, as the Minister readily conceded, our share of world orders has fallen substantially from 25 per cent. 30 years ago to just over 1 per cent. today. Already, many famous shipbuilding yards have disappeared for good. Yards such as Smith's of Middlesbrough will go in the next few weeks. By the end of the debate the Minister must give us an unconditional assurance that he will take whatever measures are necessary to protect the jobs, to save the yards and to win orders so that we can stave off the collapse of the merchant shipbuilding industry. I hope that he will be able to tell us before the end of the debate that when we have European intervention fund support and other measures, no other country in the world will be allowed to undercut us in the packages that we can offer to secure the orders that we need.

Govan had a work force of more than 5,000 in 1979, and now has only just over 2,000 workers. It will have only 1,850 workers in April next year, but it has no orders to take it beyond that date, as things stand. We are having to fight also for orders for North-East Shipbuilders, which had more than 7,000 workers in 1979 and today has only 2,800. My colleague the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) will speak on that matter. The yard faces the prospect of only 2,000 jobs in April 1987, with only the Danish orders to take it beyond 1987, and even then just until 1989.

The Minister will be aware not only of the report that has been put before the House tonight by the European Commission, but of a later one by the Commission on the prospect for jobs in the shipbuilding industry throughout Europe in 1987 and beyond. He will be aware that that report said that the European industry as a whole, having lost nearly 50,000 jobs in the past seven years, faces the loss of another 35,000 jobs in the next two years. It faces a 30 per cent. cut in capacity in the next two years and an even bigger cut in the work force. Perhaps most frightening of all in the report is the fact that the Commission expects that 30,000 jobs will be at risk in 1987 alone.

I have to tell the Minister that his negotiations in Europe for Britain must not lead to any further rationalisation or reductions by Britain, and that he must repeat to Europe that we must end the situation where this country, with most to lose, has done most in making sacrifices in our industry, while other countries with the least to lose have made the fewest sacrifices over the past seven years. He must remind Europe of the yards that have closed in the past 10 years throughout Europe, almost half in Britain, and say that we cannot tolerate any further closures. He must also remind Europe that almost half the 50,000 jobs that have been lost in the merchant shipbuilding industry in Europe have been lost in Britain, with more jobs to be lost before April 1987.

Other countries may have lost 30, 40, or 50 per cent. of their work force in the past seven years, but we have suffered a 300 per cent. cut in our merchant yards and cannot be expected to make any further sacrifices in any European rationalisation. Denmark has lost about 3,000 jobs in the past seven years, Belgium about 4,000, the Netherlands about 5,000, Germany about 6,000, Italy about 7,000 and France about 8,000, but we alone of the shipbuilding nations of Europe, and we the largest island nation in Europe, have lost more than 20,000 jobs in our merchant shipbuilding yards. We will have lost 26,000 in total by April next year.

In the past few weeks the Germans have taken extraordinary measures, using money from the defence and regional funds to secure the American President line orders with subsidies amounting to 42 per cent. of costs. The Danes, as we have found in the last few weeks, have increased their packages on offer, with the result that they have not only increased their share of world orders but are seeing a rise in orders while the world market is declining. If these countries can take extraordinary measures, and if France can offer three times as much subsidy per worker as Britain does, we must take the necessary measures, with or without the support of the intervention fund.

We find it difficult to understand a number of aspects of the new directive, and we hope that the Minister will push for changes when he is at the meeting on 22 December. We do not accept the fatalism and defeatism that is explicit in the document. While we accept that there is a shortage of world orders, the Minister must bear in mind that if the industry is to benefit from the increase in world orders that is expected at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s, our shipbuilding industry must survive.

We do not accept the failure in the document to recognise the strategic importance of the shipbuilding industry to individual countries and to Europe. This country, with the merchant fleet as our fourth arm of defence, has more to gain than most from emphasising the strategic importance of the industry and the necessity to support it. We do not accept the omission from the directive and the document of the recognition of the need for the Government, in cases of emergency, when regional issues and requirements are at stake, to step in to give special support to the industry.

Most of all, we do not accept, as I understand from the Minister that he does not accept, the Commission's proposal that the ceiling of aid should be set at 26 per cent. As the Minister said, an independent report was prepared for the Commission by Appledore, which told us that the

gap between European and far eastern prices is 36 per cent. of cost, which is 50 per cent. of price. That is the level of support that is necessary for us to be able to compete fairly with far eastern countries, especially Korea, whose prices are being set at 20 per cent. below the prices of raw materials.

The Commission suggests that the cost margin for tankers is up to 41 per cent., for bulk carriers, 38 per cent., and for container ships as high as 46 per cent. Even in those sectors where we might expect to do best, in the higher technology and specialised vessels, the report's conclusions are that the gap is about 35 to 36 per cent. The report has the support of British Shipbuilders, and has been endorsed as a method of proceeding by the European shipbuilding companies. It has the enthusiastic support of at least one other European shipbuilding nation, but for reasons which the Labour party does not properly understand, the Commission has started its negotiations by proposing a support system, not at the required level of 36 per cent., recommended by the report that it commissioned, but at 26 per cent. Even Britain, which has most to gain from the new system, and most to lose if it is not enforced, does not appear to be fighting for the full 36 per cent.

What will be the effect on our industry if only 26 per cent. is achieved? I understand from comments in the press over the past few weeks that British Shipbuilders has told the Minister that Govan, under a regime of 26 per cent., would not be able to find orders and would be closed, that North-East Shipbuilders could not be expected to survive under a 26 per cent. regime, and that all the large shipbuilding yards in British Shipbuilders would be forced to close. The best hope that British Shipbuilders would be able to offer the Government under a 26 per cent. regime is that it might be able to retain in being Ferguson and Appledore, the two small yards, at work force levels of around 500. Did British Shipbuilders tell the Minister that the work force would be cut from 8,000 to about 800 if these proposals went ahead in their present form, or that our merchant shipbuilding industry would collapse if the Commission's proposals went ahead?

The Secretary of State kindly wrote to me a few days ago about negotiations taking place in Europe. He went a long way towards accepting my suggestion that a 26 per cent. regime would be wholly unsatisfactory, but he said, and the Minister has repeated it tonight, that the 26 per cent. of cost of building a ship is already a considerable improvement on the present position.

The present regime is cumulatively about 22·5 per cent. of price—about 17 per cent. of cost. Loss financing was about £40 million last year for British Shipbuilders, and under-utilisation was costed at about £40 million. When these factors are taken into account—they form about 12 to 13 per cent. of price—and when we take into account British credit terms, OECD credit terms and all the other indirect supports available to the shipbuilding industry, we find that the present level of support must, by definition, be higher than the level of support proposed by the Commission. I shall be happy to give way to the Minister if he is able to clarify that matter. We understand from the information available to us that the present regime is superior to the regime put forward by the Commission. This is an additional reason why the Minister should be able to say in Brussels to the Commission that its proposals are wholly unacceptable.

If, of course, the Government's objective is simply to save money, the Minister will make the ceiling as low as possible and will know that no money need be paid out because no orders will be won and nobody will need to draw upon the intervention fund. If the Government want to save the industry, they must go for the highest possible ceiling in the intervention fund. I should like an assurance from the Minister that he will fight for the 36 per cent. and will try his best to achieve it. Certainly at the end of the day no other country should be allowed to beat Britain in the fight for orders on the world market.

We are the biggest island trading nation in Europe. We live by our seagoing trade, and 90 per cent. of our imports and exports arrive and depart by sea. As I have said, our merchant fleet is the fourth arm of our defences. We have made more sacrifices in our shipbuilding capacity than any other European country, yet we have most to gain from a strong shipbuilding industry and a strong regime of support. Shipbuilding in Britain is a traditional inudstry, but it is now also a high technology industry. It is an old industry, but it is no longer old-fashioned. The work force has made every sarifice demanded of it by the Government and in the last few weeks has concluded an agreement which guarantees that our shipbuilding industry can survive if only the Government will take the measures that will enable it to do so.

To fail to fight for the industry, to betray the communities in the shipbuilding areas, or to abuse the efforts made by the work force would be quite incomprehensible. The Government must fight, not only for the new regime for which they say they are fighting, but for the highest possible level of support. They must build on that, not only by enabling us to have the best packages on offer in the world to save the industry, but by taking the measures which the Opposition have been suggesting for months. They must form a task force within the Department of Trade and Industry and advance public sector orders so that our yards can stay at work. They must persuade British ship owners and ensure that they buy British. These measures will save the industry. We support the industry, and I hope the Government will say that they will support it to the hilt.

10.59 pm

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): So difficult is the situation in the industry that one is bound to have some sympathy with the Opposition spokesman and the rather dramatised way in which he set out the Opposition's demands and described the continuing parlous state of the industry. I shall be brief because, as a Member of Parliament from a southern constituency, I run the risk of annoying hon. Members on both sides of the House if I go on too long, especially as there are several experts present.

I should like to say something about the directive and to exhort my hon. Friend the Minister to press for a sensible outcome to the Council of Ministers meeting on 22 December. It was disappointing to hear the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) when he referred to a European Community-wide problem which needs Community-wide solutions. He described a built-in them and us conflict and spoke of Britain and Europe. We are part of Europe and the European Community. The only solution must be one based on a Community-wide approach.

[Mr. Hugh Dykes]

The smaller EC nations have made greater sacrifices in percentage terms than Britain. We must remember that all states have made considerable sacrifices. Our industry was larger than others, so the decline has been that much more painful, but we are in this together. One can imagine what would have happened if member states had tried to undercut each other rather than make a concerted effort. Italy, France and Germany are shipbuilders of size.

The malaise in Europe is special. As the memorandum to the directive says, this is not just a prolonged cyclical weakness, which has gone on much longer than we expected, but a major structural problem, combined with manifestly unfair competition from the far east. Only by acting in concert can the EC compete. Even then it will find life difficult. Only as one body, negotiating correct conditions in the general agreement on tariffs and trade, can the EC compete against the unfair hidden subsidies which are to be found in Korea and elsewhere. Doing that on our own would be constitutionally impossible as the Commission is responsible for such matters. It would also render us vulnerable.

I welcome the directive, which is a substantial improvement on the previous one. I welcome the recognition of reality, which is that the European approach, and therefore the British one, must be to continue the trend to build specialised high-tech vessels on a bespoke basis rather than production line type ships. We cannot hope to compete with the far east in the latter category, but we can offer the much more sophisticated ships of the future. They may be smaller in number, but they will be significant in terms of tonnage. There is at least a glimmer of hope that, by the end of the decade, as the figures in the consultancy report suggest, matters will be much better. The outlook could be better still if the world economy enjoys a stronger upturn than is expected by most economic commentators.

It is ridiculous of the Opposition to ask for an absolute guarantee against all undercutting on whatever orders might be presented to British yards. No Government can give such an undertaking. Nevertheless, if the ceiling of support can be increased on 22 December, there will be much support for that. It may be too late, but if such agreement can be reached, the Commission might be prepared to reconsider. I wholeheartedly support this improved directive.

11.4 pm

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): The hon. Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) mentioned the dramatic way in which my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermiline, East (Mr. Brown) opened the debate for the Opposition. Unfortunately, it is impossible to overdramatise the condition of our shipbuilding industry because we are in danger of witnessing the extinction of the merchant industry as we have known it. We face a critical situation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East dealt comprehensively with various matters and I do not intend to repeat what he said. He asked a number of pertinent questions which I hope that the Minister will answer. I was particularly interested in what he said about the comparison between the 18·4 per cent. of costs which the Minister said was the present level of subsidy and the 26 per cent. that is under discussion in the Community. My hon. Friend suggested that that was not a direct comparison and that the present level of subsidy is higher, for one reason or another, so that 26 per cent. would be a reduction.

The industry has been bedevilled for years by the fact that intervention fund money has ostensibly been made available, but the support has not enabled British shipbuilders to obtain the orders that were available. We have had the worst of all worlds; money has apparently been available, but it has not been enough to allow orders to be obtained. It is no use having support available, at whatever level, unless orders can be obtained at that level. I am glad to hear that the Government share our doubts about whether the 26 per cent. would produce any significant orders for us or other countries in the Community facing similar critical problems.

The Minister said that the 26 per cent. was not enough, but he did not say what he thought that the level should be. My hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East mentioned the study commissioned by the Community and conducted by Appledore and Deloittes. That suggests that the subsidy ought to be considerably higher than 26 per cent. I hope that the Minister will tell us what is in the Government's mind. The next ministerial discussions take place a fortnight today and there must be agreement then or there will be no new regime in force on 1 January 1987. There is no reason, in terms of the Government's negotiating position, for the Minister to be coy about telling us what is in the Government's mind. Unless the subsidy is substantially higher than 26 per cent. we shall not get a new directive that will be of benefit to British shipbuilding.

The Minister said that the Government were thinking about having more than one ceiling or common maximum. He said that in certain circumstances the common maximum would not apply. As the directive is drafted that is certainly true, because it is a common maximum. We are not talking about 26 per cent. which will apply across the board. That is the maximum that would apply. I hope that the Government are not thinking of having a second ceiling which would be less than 26 per cent. because that would be even worse than the Commission's proposals.

We know from recent ministerial answers that certain member states want more than one ceiling, and at least two ceilings, to be applicable. We are entitled to know what the Government think about that. That passage in the Minister's speech was obscure and I am not clear what the Government have in mind for the further negotiations.

Apart from the directive and the possible level of subsidy, we need to approach the problems of merchant shipbuilding in the United Kingdom with a much wider perspective. For example we need to get British shipowners to place orders in British yards. That does not happen here as it does in Japan and elsewhere. It is rather ironic that in the directive there are special derogations for Spain and Portugal when the latest figures I have seen show that Spain has a larger shipbuilding industry than the United Kingdom. It certainly employs far more people and has a much healthier order book.

There may be reasons for making that derogation in favour of Spain, but Spain has built up its shipbuilding industry in recent years. For a long time we have seen, not merely a gradual, but a catastrophic decline in our merchant shipbuilding industry. Therefore, we need a wider approach and provisions which will ensure that British shipowners place orders with British yards and we

need to reconsider fiscal incentives for a scrap and build programme. In particular, we should like to see the orders in the direct gift of the Government being brought forward as soon as possible.

Govan Shipbuilders is acknowledged to be one of the best yards in the United Kingdom. It is technically efficient and builds advanced technological ships. Indeed, at present it is building a P and O ferry. But that is all it is building. The ship has been launched and is due for delivery in the spring and there is nothing to follow.

At present Govan Shipbuilders is attempting to obtain a further order from Brittany Ferries and is actively involved in trying to obtain orders from China for container ships. Negotiations are continuing and the orders are difficult to achieve in the present circumstances, but I am confident that if Govan obtains the orders, it will do as excellent a job, as it has done on all the recent ships built there.

The order for the replacement of the ferry to St. Helena would be particularly helpful. The Minister for Overseas Development announced that on 21 May 1986, but the details of the order have not yet been put out to prospective tenderers. They may come from the private sector as well as British Shipbuilders. It is now six months since the decision was made to place that order. It is a substantial ship and it would be of considerable advantage, if the order came to Govan, as I am confident it will because Govan can put in the best tender for it.

I wrote to the Minister for Overseas Development in October about this and on 22 October I received a letter in which he acknowledged that the Government hope to be in a position to make a decision shortly. I know that the Minister acknowledged at that time that it was important that the decision should be reached as quickly as possible and the order should be placed as quickly as possible. I repeat that this has gone on from May to December and nothing has happened so far.

If there is a critical situation in the industry, which there is, one would have though that the first thing any caring Government would have done would have been to place the orders, which do not depend on what happens in other parts of the world such as Japan, South Korea and so on. I am talking about orders that can be placed directly by the Government.

The Minister for Overseas Development was present earlier in the debate. I thought, optimistically, that his presence might have meant that the Minister of State was going to announce that the order was to be placed very soon. However, the Minister for Overseas Development has since disappeared and the Minister of State did not mention the order in his opening speech. I ask the Minister to deal with that question in his closing remarks. The order is very important. It can be placed soon. It is in the direct gift of the Government. That sort of action would demonstrate some commitment on the part of the Government towards this important industry. That is a commitment which, unfortunately, has been all too lacking in many circumstances over the past seven years.

11.16 pm

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): No one who believes that there is a strategic need to keep shipyards operating in this country, both merchant and warship yards, could have anything but considerable sympathy for the speeches made by the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Milan) and the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown). However, I was rather disappointed that, although both of them complained about the level of the intervention fund, neither of them seemed to discuss the scale of the problem. The problem is fairly obvious. In most classes and types of merchant ship there are nearly twice as many modern ships as one needs to carry the current amount of goods around the world.

Mr. Michael Hancock (Portsmouth, South): A substantial proportion of that number are falling apart at the seams and need to be replaced.

Mr. Sayeed: The hon. Gentleman is wrong. He will see that if he looks at the books of reference. I was talking about the types of modern ships. In most classes and types of merchant ship there are twice as many as are necessary.

The other problem is that, sometimes assisted by this country, Korea has managed to dump ships on the market at costs that are far less than even the steel cost. I find it extraordinary that the European Community is unable to effect an anti-dumping policy for ships. The European Community and its members are having to pay out of their own coffers to subsidise a shipbuilding industry that is competing unfairly with far eastern yards. The European Community seems incapable of stopping far eastern ships from coming to European ports and being operated by owners whose ship cost is far less than that of any ship owner who builds his ships in this country or elsewhere in Europe. I regret that we in Europe have done nothing about that.

Having said that, I am particularly delighted that there will be much greater transparency in the types of subsidy being given. Like other hon. Members, I regret the fact that the upper limit that has been agreed so far is only 26 per cent. It should certainly be closer to 35 or 36 per cent., in order to win orders. We would all like to have a perfectly fair industry worldwide which meant that there was no need for subsidy. However, subsidy is essential if we are to keep our yards open, and we certainly need a higher subsidy than 26 per cent.

I should like the Minister to let me know one thing that has been worrying me, having read the papers. Will the directive stop all speculative building? *[Interruption.]* I am thinking about the speculative building of warships in this country. If hon. Members will wait, they will understand what I am saying. There is still the possibility of merchant shipbuilding yards being able to build simple warships for sale abroad. I wonder whether the directive will stop those yards from being able to put forward plans for the building of simple offshore patrol vessels, including, in certain cases, an enlarged OPV, which would be almost frigate size, which could be of interest to other countries. Those ships could be leased to the Royal Navy on a purely cost basis. The Navy would operate and demonstrate them around the world.

Those simple ships can be built not just by warship yards but by merchant shipyards. Because Britain's warship yard building industry is far too sophisticated for most countries' requirements, there may be an opportunity for merchant and warship yards in Britain to build hulls and machinery which other countries may be interested in purchasing. Will that be permitted under this directive?

The Government's proposal is a step in the right direction. I regret the fact that the Opposition have not at times recognised the scale of the problem. They have not

[Mr. Sayeed]

stated that the level of subsidy per employee is one of the highest in the industry. I am delighted that we have had this opportunity to remind my hon. Friend the Minister — he has accepted this — that the level of subsidy necessary to keep the shipyards open in this country is higher than the 26 per cent. proposed.

11.21 pm

Mr. Michael Hancock (Portsmouth, South): This afternoon, I came from a meeting in Portsmouth where I was party to a decision to deal with what happens when a shipyard closes. The shipyard in my constituency at Vosper Thornycroft closed some six months ago and I was party to the decision on what would replace it. Every day what I see in my constituency bears witness to the fact that there is a major decline in the shipbuilding industry. I fully understand the size of the problem. Every week, people who have worked all their lives in the shipyards in my area come to see me. They know only too well the price that they have had to pay and the size of the problem.

We have to welcome at least the Minister's statement that the level of subsidy is hopelessly inadequate. Several hon. Members from both sides of the House have expressed concern about the future limit of subsidy. I feel that there is a common belief in the House that a subsidy of less than 30 per cent. is ludicrous and that a more realistic figure of about 36 per cent. would give hope that the problems that our shipyards face not only in Europe but elsewhere will be redressed. The announcement is a major step forward. At long last, there is general recognition of the problem.

The hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) talked about the number of people who have been put on the scrap heap. In the past 10 years, 61 yards in Europe have closed, 25 of them in the United Kingdom, including two in my area. Already shipbuilders are trying to find ways around the problem — not by the speculative building about which the hon. Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) talked but by putting deals together. They are paying interest over a long period so that the customer picks up the final tab rather than the initial costs. Companies in my area are pushing that idea.

The directive recognises that we must increase subsidies even to the efficient yards in the EEC if they are ever to compete with the far east. I hope that, at long last, the Commission has recognised that, if Europe is to have a future as a shipbuilding entity, there must be a greater subsidy and the industry must be made more productive and made more effective at selling.

The Government must take a decision about what kind of future they want for the shipbuilding industry. Do they want to follow the example set in Sweden where, of all nations, Sweden has been forced to the conclusion that there is no foreseeable return to viability for the Swedish merchant yards and it has allowed those yards to shut down without any assistance from national resources? Alternatively, will the Government adopt the line taken by Italy and Germany who have decided to go against market logic and, through direct and indirect incentives and by transparent and other means, have managed to keep a substantial industry on its feet?

We have already heard about the achievements made by Denmark over the past two years. Denmark has turned its industry around and is, for the first time in a decade, witnessing growth in the industry. The United Kingdom and the Government are, I fear, following a similar track to that taken by Sweden. The Government have fought shy of a policy that would force the industry to extinction. They have adopted a far worse policy. They are keeping the industry hanging on and are dangling it over an abyss without taking the decision as to whether they want a viable shipbuilding industry or whether they should let it decline in the way it has declined in Sweden.

The Government must make a decision and come clean. They owe that much to the many people whose livelihoods depend on the industry. They must decide whether they want the long term survival of the shipbuilding industry in this country or whether they would be happy to see the decline increase.

We must recognise what is happening elsewhere. Anyone who would try to deny what is happening in the far east would be a fool. We know that ships are being built in Korea below the cost of the raw materials. That is a ludicrous position for us to compete with. It is also nonsense that we and the rest of Europe do not encourage each other by buying from each other and so try to maintain the stability of the industry in one area.

I would like to speak for a few minutes about——

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): For a few minutes.

Mr. Hancock: I am aware that other hon. Members wish to speak and I will bear that in mind. However, I have a distinct constituency interest in the matter——

Dr. Godman: So have I.

Mr. Hancock: More than 2,000 jobs in my constituency depend directly on shipbuilding, but there will be only 1,000 if the Government do not come off the fence over a specific deal that involves Vosper Thornycroft. Vospers has put a proposition to the Government over the building of a single purpose mine hunter. In doing so, it has calculated that if it has to remove 1,000 people from its work force, that will cost the company about £2 million in redundancy payments. The company is prepared to pay the interest on that ship for the Royal Navy, is prepared to build it in the coming 12 months, and accept payment in 1989 if necessary. All that the company needs to keep 1,000 people in work over the next 18 months is an order from the Government. Once again the carrot has been dangled before the company and that has been pulled away so often during the past 12 months that the company is in grave danger now of having to start laying people off early in the new year. That would be an absolute disgrace. If the company does not receive the order, undoubtedly by this time next year, there will be another 1,000 workers in south Hampshire signing on for unemployment benefit.

There is a need for the Government to recognise the specific crisis faced in certain yards. As we have heard in relation to the replacement ship for St. Helena, the Government have the power to save some of the yards from going further and further adrift. Europe must join forces with the United States in forcing cuts on far eastern yards as has been suggested by hon. Members this evening and as is suggested in the documents. We should find a way of funding shipowners to get rid of old ships. The hon. Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) said that I did not recognise the need. I saw ships in the harbour in Portsmouth today which had brought fruit from the

middle east and which were literally falling apart at the seams. Those ships need replacing. Many of them fly the flags of European countries and they should be replaced urgently.

Many of the coasters that ply around our shores need urgent replacement; they literally stagger from port to port. They undergo major repairs and maintenance after dropping off their cargoes especially at the south coast ports. They can be replaced only if there is a greater will to give subsidies to the yards, and we must do that.

The Government must be more vigorous in selling our ships, our shipbuilding capacity, our technology and our skills abroad. We must not fall into the trap, as we have in the past, of losing ships. There is only one way to save the shipbuilding industry—to build ships. It needs new orders and we must find ways to provide them. I regret that that will not happen.

It is ironic that we are in danger of losing that expertise. One hon. Member mentioned a new ferry for Brittany Ferries. In my harbour are ferries that ply back and forth to Ryde on the Isle of Wight, a distance of four miles. Where were the two replacement ferries for Sealink bought? It was not at Vosper Thornycroft, not at a British yard, not at a European yard. They were not built in Korea or Japan—they were built in Australia. It was cheaper for Sealink to sail those ships from Australia, taking almost two months, so that they could then ply a four-mile strip of water. We could not obtain the orders. It is a disgrace that more was not done to encourage British companies to buy British ships. We must recognise that the British shipbuilding industry is on its last legs.

I shall support the Opposition amendment because it undoubtedly recognises that more has to be done. Words are no longer enough. Nice things said in this House about what we have done and what we might be able to do, do not offer hope to those whom I represent. They want orders and a vigorous, robust attack by the Government on the world shipbuilding industry, and the British shipbuilding industry will undoubtedly respond.

11.32 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The proposed directive is an improvement on the current directive, but it should be altered in one important respect. My hon. Friends have referred to the 26 per cent. regime, which is far too low and must be set at a higher level. If the Government are genuinely concerned about retaining a shipbuilding capability, that is the argument that the Minister must put forward in Brussels.

As the Minister knows, Scott Lithgow in my constituency just a few days ago announced 1,500 redundancies. The male unemployment rate in my constituency already stands at 25 per cent. These redundancies will take it above 30 per cent. I suspect that there are few Tory Members who have that sort of social and economic problem in their constituencies.

I am pleased to note that conversion work is to be treated in the same way as shipbuilding. I would have thought that the recent contract signed by Scott Lithgow with ACL falls directly within the definition of ship conversion work in article 1 of the proposed directive. Where does Scott Lithgow stand? Will the Minister abide by a designation made several years ago when that yard was still owned by British Shipbuilders? Or is it the case that yards privatised by this Government are to be denied EEC support? That, to say the least, would be a savage irony. Or will a shipyard—either privatised or still part of British Shipbuilders—be considered eligible if the criteria outlined in article 1 are met?

Perhaps the Minister will also tell us why there is no mention of marine engine builders in the document. Clark Kincaid, for example, is well able to work positively and closely with, say, Govan and yards in the north-east of England. Why is marine engineering not included?

Finally, I sincerely hope that assistance to shipbuilding communities such as mine will emerge under the provisions regarding aid for closures. Article 7 refers to

"payment to workers for vocational retraining"

and to

"expenditure incurred for the redevelopment of the yard, its buildings, installations and infrastructure for industrial use other than that specified in article 1"

In my constituency there is a belief that highly skilled welders and other shipyard workers will end up as rope catchers for yachtsmen coming into marinas on the Clyde.

I should like to know how the Government intend to define yards eligible for assistance and specifically whether Scott Lithgow and other privatised yards will be encouraged to seek that kind of support from the directive.

11.36 pm

Mr. Bob Clay (Sunderland, North): I was disturbed at the Minister's complacent introduction. He seemed not to appreciate the effect of a 26 per cent. limit under the sixth directive, which includes various things not covered by the present limit and the fifth directive. There seems to be some muddle on the Government's part. In the past when we argued that more should be done than straight intervention the Government claimed that that was not possible because of the fifth directive. We are now told that those things were not excluded by the fifth directive but that they may be excluded by the sixth directive.

It has already been made clear that what is left of British merchant shipbuilding will simply disappear unless the Minister makes it plain that we cannot accept the kind of limit envisaged. Authoritative sources in British Shipbuilders have suggested that the present level of subsidy, with all the things that may now be costed into the proposed new regime, is around 42 per cent. and that is hardly enough to keep us afloat. It is vital, therefore, that the Minister should be far more dynamic in making it clear that we cannot accept the limit proposed.

Like my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan),. I was also disturbed at the Minister's reference to a possible differential with lower limits for small ships. How would he define that? The Danish ferry order on which North-East Shipbuilders Ltd., in my constituency is working is a large order, but it is for a large number of small ships. Had there been a differential and an even lower level of assistance than is now proposed, would that have affected an order which saved shipyards in my constituency from extinction but attracted only the basic intervention money with no other Government help whatever?

With one exception, to which I shall return, the points made by the Minister were sadly familiar. We heard all about the depressing state of affairs throughout the world and the crisis in the shipbuilding industry without any recognition that the decline in capacity and in the merchant fleet has been twice as bad here as it has been even for European neighbours such as Italy and West Germany. There was no recognition of the fact that that

[Mr. Bob Clay]

has happened because other countries, even in this recession, have taken measures which the Government were not prepared to take.

All that we need do is to consider the point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Govan about the order for St. Helena. We could argue about all the other things that the Government could do, but that ship is in their gift. We have been talking about the order for St. Helena for about two years. I recall the Secretary of State being reported as saying in May that an order would be placed by the end of the year. The order could have been announced tonight. It would have brought some relief to some hon. Members. Yet the Government have nothing to say about it. The distinctive feature of the Minister's speech tonight, as compared with previous ones, is that there was no discussion of any chance of orders. Usually, there would be a quick rundown of orders. Earlier this year, we were told that orders for China and Cuba might be in place by June or September, but nothing definite has happened.

I am highly suspicious that, if the Government have not given up altogether on merchant shipbuilding, they seem to be deliberately encouraging or allowing British Shipbuilders to run down the work force and to continue the programme of redundancies until it reaches the point where most people in British Shipbuilders, and most people who understand the industry will believe that it can no longer be viable. It is disgraceful that, in my constituency, we have what is effectively a lock-out. At Austin and Pickersgill, the management claim that there is a labour surplus of 450. So there is a shortfall on the 925 redundancies that British Shipbuilders wants. Nevertheless, 50 men were taken off the clock for refusing to work overtime, at a time when 450 men are facing compulsory redundancy and when management is bringing sub-contractors into the yard and putting them into departments in which they claim they have a labour surplus. They have taken people off pay, thereby provoking an all-out strike, in blatant breach of all agreements with the trade unions. That looks like deliberate pre-Christmas provocation to try to sicken even more people and force more into redundancy. Presumably, the company will then blame the work force, if it dares, for the fact that no more orders are on the horizon.

I hope that the Minister will take note of my remarks and will tell British Shipbuilders that this behaviour is disgraceful. The company should be making more effort to obtain the few orders that are around. It should be asking itself why there should be the order for the American President line, when earlier in the year we were told that there were no orders to be had anywhere in the world. By 1990, Bangladesh will have ordered 30 ships, and it has already placed a contract in China for a substantial multi-purpose carrier.

There are other examples of orders this year. After all, last year, Japan managed to get 2·8 million gross tonnes of orders from foreign owners. Why could not British Shipbuilders attempt to obtain at least one tenth of that? With the number of orders that Japan obtains from overseas in one month, British Shipbuilders could not only withdraw the redundancy notices but could begin to take back people with skills. My constituency has 27 per cent. unemployment, according to the Unemployment Unit and based on the non-fiddled figures. That will increase to more than 30 per cent. if the redundancy programme continues. My hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) made that point about his constituency. Goodness knows what level it will be if the yards close completely.

It is time for the Minister to say that he will fight for a better deal than is suggested in the sixth directive. He should make it clear that, whatever the other members of the EEC say, we shall not allow our membership of the EEC to sound the final death knell of British shipbuilding and that we will subsidise the industry to the level that is required to save it, whether the EEC likes it or not. With that sort of fighting talk, he might get some sense out of the other members.

11.44 pm

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay). Unfortunately, the management at Austin Pickersgill is typical of the management in the shipbuilding industry. After years of co-operation from the work force, management is definitely provoking the men.

The Minister said that the new regime would be an improvement on the present one. That would not be difficult, because the fifth directive was a disaster for British shipbuilding. Indeed, until now, the Government have never fought the corner of British shipbuilding. Instead of giving support during a period of decline in world shipbuilding, the Government have merely used their energy on privatisation. My right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) mentioned scrap and build, but there is nothing in this document about that.

Everyone knows—the hon. Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) has mentioned this on several occasions—that our merchant fleet is fast disappearing. Not only has there been a decline in the size and tonnage of the British merchant fleet, but it has also aged. In fact, 42·7 per cent. of the fleet is more than 10 years old, 13.7 per cent. is more than 15 years old and 5·1 per cent. is more than 20 years old.

That point was made in a letter by Jim McFaull, chairman of the shipbuilding negotiating committee, to the Secretary of State on 4 December, in which he said:

"Fiscal incentives must be given to shipowners to scrap old ships and replace them with new ships. This will not add to overcapacity in shipping, but will upgrade the fleet."

That is urgently needed. What has happened to merchant shipbuilding in the years since nationalisation is well illustrated by British Shipbuilders' own corporate plan, which states:

"In July 1977, British Shipbuilders had 38,700 employees engaged in merchant shipbuilding. By mid-1985 this had been reduced to 8,349, a reduction of 79 per cent.,"

and more redundancies are to come, as has been pointed out by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown). It is almost as though prizes were being given to those who could run the British shipbuilding industry down faster than any other industry. That may be so, because the salary of the chairman of the corporation increased from £36,447 in 1981 to £101,298 in 1985—the smaller the industry became, the higher the salary of the chairman.

The north-east has been devastated by redundancies and yard closures. In 1977 British Shipbuilders' subsidiaries employed more than 30,000 men in the north-east. That is now well below 10,000. For the first time in

living memory no ships are being built on the south side of the River Tyne. Indeed, one of the most modern fabrication sheds, Palmers Hebburn, will be used for the storage of surplus EEC grain. Instead of building ships to take that grain to the starving millions of Africa, this Government are now storing it in modern fabrication sheds which were originally meant to build ships.

What happens to the money designated by the EEC. Article 7 refers to

"payment to workers for vocational retraining . . . expenditure incurred for the redevelopment of the yard, its buildings, installations and infrastructure for industrial use other than that specified in article 1 (a)".

I wrote to the Secretary of State on 17 November and said:

"I was alarmed to read that the EC Commissioners acting on a report of the Court of Auditors 'Official Journal C262 20 October 1986' had stopped the part of the Non Quota Section of the European Development Fund which was designated for Shipbuilding Areas because the United Kingdom Government had not spent the money allocated in the correct manner".

Not only have areas such as ours been run down and devastated by shipyard closures, but money that has been allocated under the EEC non-quota section has been misappropriated by the Government. Instead of going to the areas to which it was designated, it has been used elswhere for other purposes.

I hope that the Minister will respond to the issues which have been raised by my hon. Friends, those which were set out in a letter to him from the chairman of the SNC about the intervention fund, or subsidy, and a co-ordinated policy to bring forward orders for public sector corporations. Trade and aid provisions should be orchestrated to allow Third world countries to acquire much needed ferries and barges for their inland waterway transport systems. The trade unions have referred a number of matters to the Secretary of State, and I hope that they will be taken on board.

11.50 pm

Mr. Giles Shaw: With the leave of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall reply.

First, in response to the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), I have received Mr. McFaull's letter, and there will be a full response. I shall examine his constituency interest about a stoppage of the intervention fund and write to him.

I shall refer briefly to some of the major issues which have been raised, while recognising that time may not permit a full response. The hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), who spoke from the Opposition Front Bench, talked about the benefits of the 26 per cent. regime that is proposed by the Commission as against those of the existing regime. There is much difficulty in relating the two regimes, because they measure different things. On the plus side, all aids come within an aid ceiling now. That was not the position hitherto. The House will recall that British Shipbuilders and others have long complained that aids go to other European shipyards that are not available to them and that they are declaring more for the benefit of the intervention fund while other European yards are declaring less. That anomaly has been removed under the new proposals and the benefit will be unquantifiable.

There are problems about loss financing. It is a mistake to believe that we enjoy a free ride with the loss financing of British Shipbuilders. Under the fifth directive that was related to restructuring. The sixth directive is not so related. That is a major benefit that is presently unquantifiable.

I omitted to stress previously that the new regime under the sixth directive is not the same as that of the fifth, which is that intervention funds are available only where restructuring has taken place. Hon. Members have rightly said that the British yards have suffered more than their fair share of construction, and that is a view that I fully accept. With the prospect of being able to win more orders, with the benefits that we hope will accrue by the end of the negotiations, we hope that we shall not be in the same position as that in which other countries may find themselves—engaging in substantial restructuring in the light of the proposed directive.

The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) spoke about the shipyard in his constituency and the problems that it faces. I shall respond to him in proper manner. The Government have decided what type of ship to recommend to the Government of St. Helena. As soon as that Government's agreement has been received, the ODA will set in motion the competitive tendering arrangements for design and construction of the new vessel in a United Kingdom yard. That is what the right hon. Gentleman wants to see done, and I am happy to make this announcement in response to his speech this evening.

Opposition Members have spoken about ordering, and it is right that there are some prospective orders. So far this year British Shipbuilders has secured orders for 27 ships. The large majority comprises ferries that will be built in the north-east. There are 25 ferries to be built there. There are also the ferry for Caledonian MacBrayne at Ferguson and the dredging vessel that is being built at Appledore. There are prospective orders, and the container ship for China is one of them. The hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) will know that a Chinese delegation visited the United Kingdom recently and that I saw it before it travelled to Scotland. The Government are making a major effort through British Shipbuilders to try to secure that order. There are some important orders available and some important prospects, but the general climate is one in which there is infinitely more capacity than demand for new ships.

I heard the point made by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) about Vosper Thornycroft. That is essentially a matter for the Ministry of Defence, and not for me, but I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to it.

The hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow asked me specifically about the intervention fund being made available to help Scott Lithgow. I explained to him the other day that the intervention fund was not available to Scott Lithgow because that yard was designated as an oil rig builder, and only merchant ships benefit from the intervention fund arrangements. I made it clear to him that the home credit scheme was still available and loan guarantees would be available to that yard.

Dr. Godman: I do not deny that that designation took place, but Scott Lithgow at this very moment has an order for a ship conversion, to the Atlantic Conveyor, which means that it is not specifically an offshore oil structure building yard. It is, in every sense of the word, a shipyard.

Mr. Shaw: But, as I explained to the hon. Gentleman the other day, the yard was so designated when it was

[Mr. Shaw]

privatised as part of the restructuring of British Shipbuilders. That designation remains in relation to the position of the yard under the intervention fund. Conversion costs relate to the sixth directive, which is not in force. So the position is not as easy as the hon. Gentleman wishes. I agreed with him that I would examine what else can be done within the area in which it is located, to see whether assistance can be brought.

The hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) rightly was concerned about the Danish ferries. It is suggested that there might be a difficulty with small ships primarily because of the 26 per cent. ceiling. I trust that a higher ceiling will be negotiated. I am not prepared to disclose what the objective might be, but I take note of the fact that the shipbuilders in Europe are committed to a requirement of 30 per cent. or more. At least that is a firm statement. Now 35 per cent. appears to have dropped out of the shipbuilders' view as a desirable objective.

With regard to small ships versus large, the real comparison to be made is with the larger ships in the international market, which is why the ceiling has been placed at at least 25 per cent., and we hope that it will be higher. The possibility of that applying to all ships at all stages and all sizes still has to be debated in the Council. There have been some discussions — the right hon. Member for Govan might know of them — of a twin ceiling arrangement. Certain member states would prefer it that way. I would prefer to see a single ceiling at a level that would be conducive to the future development of British Shipbuilders. I am sure that that is the right thing to propose.

Those are the views that I take from the House. I am grateful for the comments that hon. Members have made, and I trust that they will approve the motion——

Mr. Gordon Brown: Does the Minister accept that the Committee of European Shipbuilders said that the support should be at least 30 per cent.? It did not set the limit at 30 per cent. in the discussions this weekend. Will the hon. Gentleman answer the central point of the debate? If the independent report recommended 36 per cent. of cost support and Britain has most to gain from that, why are we not pushing 36 per cent. in Europe?

Mr. Shaw: On the latter question, the hon. Gentleman will see that the report uses a selective method of comparing certain types of vessel with certain prices and costs. He will know that the market for ships in the United Kingdom is orientated much more towards the high quality sophisticated merchant vessel. So it is not entirely fair to say that the figure in the report is relevant for the United Kingdom. What is relevant is that we should obtain a ceiling for the sixth directive that will allow us to compete effectively internationally as well as within Europe. We mean to achieve that because the new directive is much more precise as to what aids must be included in the aid ceiling, and it will be monitored to ensure that that takes place. That gives advantage to our yards and more confidence to British Shipbuilders in its competitive tendering overseas. I accept the view expressed by Opposition Members, and indeed, by my hon. Friends, that we must do our utmost to see that we lift that 26 per cent. ceiling significantly in the negotiations on 22 December. I intend to do just that.

Amendment negatived.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 9470/86 and 9470/1/86 on aid to shipbuilding, and supports the Government's intention to press for early adoption of the Directive in a form which will provide a fairer and more transparent aid regime in Europe and enhance the ability of European yards to compete in world markets.

British Shipbuilders (Borrowing Powers)

11.59 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry (Mr. Giles Shaw): I beg to move,

That the draft British Shipbuilders Borrowing Powers (Increase of Limit) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 21st November, be approved.

The order concerns British Shipbuilders' borrowing limit. This is the statutory ceiling on the funds which the corporation may acquire in the form of public dividend capital from the Government, and loans from the commercial market. The limit presently stands at £1,300 million, as a result of the British Shipbuilders (Borrowing Powers) Act, which received the Royal Assent as recently as June of this year. The terms of the 1986 Act enable the limit to be raised by a further £100 million to £1,400 million, subject to affirmative resolution of this House. I now propose that the borrowing limit should be so raised to £1,400 million. The order, of course, merely gives BS the power to receive the money. It will always be for the House to decide what should actually be made available through the Estimates procedure.

When my hon. Friend the former Minister of State introduced the British Shipbuilders (Borrowing Powers) Bill earlier this year, he spoke at length about the severe difficulties facing the shipbuilding industry from which none of the shipbuilding nations had been immune. We have just gone over that ground. Notwithstanding the problems of the market, when the House debated the borrowing powers Bill no one anticipated that the corporation's finances would deteriorate as rapidly as they have. The most important single event which has put pressure on the corporation's borrowing position is the receivership of International Transport Management (Offshore) Ltd. British Shipbuilders had almost finished building a most sophisticated craneship — the "Challenger" — at Sunderland Shipbuilders, when the company fell into the hands of the receiver. At the time of the receivership, ITM had paid only a small deposit on the vessel, with the result that British Shipbuilders has been obliged to finance construction costs totalling not just millions but tens of millions of pounds. Indeed, almost half the increase in borrowing that the House sanctioned in May has been required to cover, at least temporarily, the costs of this vessel. However, BS advises me that it expects to be able to recover some of these costs in due course to minimise the cost of the receivership.

Another significant source of pressure on the Corporation's cash position results from difficulties in delays it has experienced in securing new orders. Nevertheless, it has had some significant successes and is continuing to make major efforts to improve its efficiency in support of its marketing strategy. This is already beginning to pay off. North-East Shipbuilders on the Wear won an important order for 24 Danish ferries this summer, which will provide work for the yard until the end of 1989. A few days ago as the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) will know, it won a further order from the same source worth £4 million for a 25th ferry. The yard won the order because the Danes judged the offer from British Shipbuilders to be a better bargain compared with the alternatives that their own yards could offer. I am sure the hon. Gentleman and the House would agree this is a most encouraging development.

In total so far this year, BS has won around 90,000 compensated gross tonnes of orders — over three times the level won last year. The Danish order predominates, but each of the smaller yards has also won a contract: Appledore has a further dredger, and Ferguson on the Clyde has the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry. BS is also actively pursuing a number of other orders, but for reasons outside its control, each of them is taking longer to secure than had been hoped. This has had an adverse effect on cash flow and thus on borrowing, and it can no longer remain within its external financing limit for reasons outside its control. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary and I are, however, determined to ensure that there should be an effective limit on areas that it can control. The EFL will be revised formally once we are clearer about how some of the major uncertainties arising from the corporation's clients, notably ITM, are to be resolved. The amounts involved are peculiarly large for an organisation of that size, and are clearly outside BS's capacity to control. In the meantime, we have introduced a firm limit of £155 million on the financing needs of the continuing businesses within BS.

To help the Corporation's cash position, which has unavoidably deteriorated in recent months, we need to proceed with this measure to raise British Shipbuilders' borrowing limit by £100 million. I commend the Order to the House.

12.4 am

Mr. Nicholas Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): The Minister may be new to these debates, but I can assure him that I and my hon. Friends on the Opposition Benches are not. In July 1983 I and my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) made our maiden speeches on the British Shipbuilders Borrowing Powers (Increase of Limit) Order 1983. At that time we both condemned the Government's callous indifference to Britain's shipbuilding industry and here we are, several British Shipbuilders Borrowing Powers (Increase of Limit) Orders later — because there has been a succession of these things since I have been in the House — again condemning the Government's callous indifference to Britain's shipbuilding industry.

In my latest contribution to these ongoing debates, I welcome the opportunity to update my list of grievances and the grievances of those who live in shipbuilding communities. All Opposition Members who sought to speak represent shipbuilding constituencies and we have seen privatisation, appeasement of European interests and surrender to unfair far eastern competition, smash and ruin the lives of thousands of our constituents. The increase in borrowing powers that we are discussing is not to keep the industry going, to help the industry keep a share of an admittedly declining world market or to sustain the livelihoods of the people in those communities which rely upon the industry. It is to help the Government make a measured retreat from their commitments to the shipbuilding industry and its communities. In short, it is not to prop up the industry, but to close it down.

The Euro-frauds that we have been discussing give the game away. The preamble to the document says:

"Whereas, the recovery in demand envisaged in the Fifth Directive has not taken place,"

I do not think Britain even put up a fight. All hon. Members could list orders that were obtainable for our shipbuilding industry but which were not obtained

[Mr. Nicholas Brown]

because our Government would not fight for them. I should like to quote an example from the yard in my constituency, Swan Hunter. I have a letter from the Minister's predecessor. I shall not read it all, but it concludes:

"I can see no prospect of Intervention Fund being made available either to Swan Hunter or to any other UK yard."

That is in the context of the Santa Rosa vessel. The letter goes on:

"I will certainly ensure that my officials watch very carefully to see where the order is placed. If another Community country is involved I will ensure that the terms of any government assistance are examined very carefully to see that it is playing by the rules."

It will please redundant shipyard workers on Tyneside and Wearside to know that, if somebody else has cheated and has gone against the rules to get a ship that we might otherwise have been able to build, our Government will rap that country's European knuckles for not playing cricket "like what we are".

It is not just the Santa Rosa, because the nuclear fuel vessel which was wholly under Government control, because the Government were the majority shareholder among those who placed the order, is being built in Japan. What do our Government say about that? They say, "We think there might have been foul play, and we will sue them in the courts." That is not much good to the people who could have been building that ship in Britain.

In case any hon. Member thinks that these are isolated instances, we had the scandal of the Trinity House vessel. Again, that vessel was wholly in the Government's gift and they had the say about where the order would be placed, but it was not placed in a British yard because it was cheaper to place the order abroad. That is not a commitment to British industry and British shipyards. That is not a recognition of world trading conditions and the need to intervene to protect domestic industry. It is a surrender to the practices of other nations, practices that we are not prepared to go along with. The Government would rather see the industry go down and not be a drain on the public purse than sustain it as an essential part of our industrial infrastructure.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): Can the hon. Gentleman say how the Trinity House vessel was totally in the Government's gift? I am quite mystified by that statement.

Mr. Brown: The hon. Gentleman should find out who is paying for it because he who pays the piper normally calls the tune. That is why it was in the Government's gift. The Government are indirectly paying for it. I think that is an ample and sufficient answer. All that is left of British Shipbuilders on Tyneside is the headquarters building in my constituency. The last bit of British Shipbuilders to go was Kincaid. I share the engine works with my hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett). The convenor, Mr. Sam Lee, who is my constituent, had written to me to voice his fears and concerns, which are shared by the work force, about recent developments. He put some questions to me which I should like to put to the Minister. He asked:

"Why did BS prefer the bidder chosen rather than the management team who also bid? Management appeared to have the interests of the works at heart and would have attempted to re-employ a large number of ex-workers, the management proposals being to keep the works intact and to try and build up business.

The preferred bidders appear to offer no direct jobs other than the small number already employed. The only other prospect appears to be an attempt to let off parts of the factory to interested parties.

On the facts given up till the present it is inconceivable that British Shipbuilders have preferred this bid rather than the one from management, especially in view of the government's alleged preference for managements in Nationalised Industries to be given the chance to run their own business. The only thing that the preferred bidder offered was more money. Some questions arise:

1. How much was the final bid?
2. What are the details of the proposals in the bid?
3. On what basis was the sale agreed? i.e. was there anything which could be construed as unfair practice, such as a guarantee by BS to buy back certain parts of the Plant such as Machine Tools?"

The questions that my constituent asks reflect the genuine concerns of the work force, and especially the former work force, at Kincaid and show recognition of the fact that the Government are rapidly abandoning any commitment to an independent marine engineering industry in the country. Perhaps most of all, those questions reflect bitterness, and a willingness to doubt the Government's integrity in these matters, which is prevalent in all shipbuilding communities.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Clark-Kincaid is to be found in my constituency. It is a first-class marine engine builder which is desperately short of orders. Worries such as have been expressed to my hon. Friend have been expressed to me by members of the work force at Clark-Kincaid—the last marine engine builder on the Clyde.

Mr. Brown: The last engine builder in the country. My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North could tell of the retreat from Sunderland to consolidate on Tyneside, and then the closure on Tyneside to consolidate in Scotland. The history of the industrial sector has been one of contraction, consolidation, reassurances to the work force, further redundancies and closures. I hope that the industry survives, as do all Labour Members, but without commitment and support from the Government, it will not. The precedents are pretty ominous.

The blow to the community on Tyneside has been bitter, and the Government offer no hope. Few people on Tyneside doubt that the Government intend to collapse the shipbuilding industry further. With the privatisation of the warship building yards, curtailment of the naval programme and these proposals, the industry face an impossible future.

Not all yards are to be treated the same. Mainland Britain's merchant yards are to be starved of funds and the warship yards are to be starved of work, but the Northern Ireland Office is to be free to underwrite Harland and Wolff's costs with vast subventions that are provided by the British taxpayer. If Harland and Wolff had been on mainland Britain, it would have been closed by now, but because it is in Northern Ireland it will not be.

The latest report of the Committee of Public Accounts, "Assistance to British Shipbuilders", contains an interesting passage on page 7 paragraph 9. It says:

"The NAO found that on 16 contracts with a combined turnover of £209 million, losses of £89 million had been incurred after support of £40 million. DTI accountants had reviewed the original estimates and had expressed reservations in some cases, particularly as to the reasonableness of productivity assumptions. The Department did not consider that they had sufficient expertise to challenge the estimates in

depth but reviewed the completed orders and found that the losses were mainly due to overruns on labour costs and associated overheads."

That explanation does not sit well with the intention of keeping Harland and Wolff on a tight financial rein on the AOR contract, which was stolen from Swan Hunter in one of the most unfair and deceitful bits of Government chicanery that it has been my misfortune to witness. A cynic might say that the Public Accounts Committee backs up Swan Hunter's fears that the only effective monitoring of the contract will be after the event, when all the costs are in and judgment can be made whether the productivity assumptions were valid. That fits in with what has happened in merchant shipbuilding. After the event the Government have been able to say, "Gosh, we were wrong. Oh dear, some of you chaps have lost your jobs." They have shed crocodile tears and brought forward futher statutory instruments which we debate late at night. The Opposition voice their grievances and the Government say, "It is a difficult time internationally, but we are trying to stabilise the situation and there is some hope on the horizon." We have had that year after year, but the industry has contracted and contracted and is probably below the viability level in some areas. The number of employees is very small. Many of us who take an interest in these matters fear that the order is designed to put the final boot in, rather than to help to sustain and help the fightback of a vital national interest.

On the subject of vital national interests, merchant ships taken up from trade to supplement the Royal Navy's role are an important part of our requirements, yet our capacity to build the ships, to sail them under the British flag and to crew them with British seamen has been fatally undermined by the Government.

I hope that I have adequately reflected our latest list of grievances and that they will be added to all our previous lists of grievances, but I am certain that there is one feeling that I have not conveyed. Given that I am in employment and have a job that I enjoy, I do not think that I could ever properly convey the bitterness and sense of grievance in the community that I represent and in all the shipbuilding communities in the north of England.

12.17 am

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): If the Minister thought in the previous debate that we were ungenerous in our support of his efforts in Europe, I assure him that we support the order and will not divide the House.

While we did not anticipate the financial problems that arose from the ITM deal, we predicted in the last borrowing powers debate that Ministers would have to come back to the House at an early stage. We pointed out that the policy of privatising the warship yards, which depended on the more profitable public sector orders, was bound to increase pressure on British Shipbuilders, and that is exactly what happened.

These debates have traditionally been opportunities for wide-ranging discussions on a number of issues. My hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) put a number of points to the Minister. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be able to answer some tonight, and he may wish to write to my hon. Friend on other matters.

I wish to ask a number of questions about expenditure that has been, and is being, authorised. I hope that the Minister will not fall into the trap, into which other Ministers and Government spokesmen have fallen, of suggesting that the Government have supported the merchant shipbuilding industry to the tune of £1·4 billion. I hope that the Minister will agree that much of the money that has gone into BS has been spent on capital expenditure in the warship yards which are now in private hands, on losses sustained by companies which have been moved into the private sector, on redundancy costs, which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East pointed out, are funds which are being used, not to increase employment in the industry, but to secure a reduction in employment, and on substantial restructuring costs paid out for businesses of BS which are no longer in existence. Therefore, I hope that the Minister will answer this evening, or will write to me, about the genuine level of the Government's commitment to the merchant shipbuilding industry.

Is it not the case that new investment in the merchant shipbuilding yards during the Government's period of office has totalled £69 million, that the losses sustained by the merchant shipbuilding yards have been about £500 million since 1977, and that if we take on top of that the intervention fund support of about £235 million, we find that the maximum provided by the Government is probably less than half the sum that is covered in the order?

I hope that the Minister will accept those figures. If he does not, I hope that he will at least agree to write to me. It is important that the people know the level of support and are not deluded by a figure produced by Ministers, as happened to me in a television interview last weekend, when the Minister responsible for Scottish industry insisted that £1·4 billion had been spent on the merchant yards.

I also hope that the Minister will take on board the concerns expressed by my hon. Friend, which reflect the views of all my colleagues, about the continuing loss of jobs in the shipbuilding communities, the demoralisation resulting from that process and the sense that much of what is happening is avoidable and can be averted by the Government pursuing proper policies.

The shipbuilding industry in the merchant yards is at the point of collapse, and urgent measures are necessary. I hope that the Minister can answer our questions, not only on the St. Helena and Chinese orders, but on the Cuban orders, which the industry is seeking, and that he can give some indication of public sector orders which his and others Departments could advance to the merchant shipbuilding yards.

Dr. Godman: May I give another example of public sector orders which could be advanced? Recently, I suggested to both the Prime Minister and the Minister that if the Government seriously intended to police effectively the Falkland Islands fisheries protection zone they would have to acknowledge that the aging stone trawlers that are being sent to the south Atlantic would prove inadequate, despite the excellence of their crews. What is needed are three custom-built fisheries protection vessels. Naturally, I asked that if such an order was placed, or was even envisaged, it should be placed in my constituency, at Ferguson-Ailsa.

Mr. Brown: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for pointing out an area where public sector orders should be considered and may be advanced. He makes the case for

[Mr. Brown]

what we have suggested to the Government over several months, which is that a task force with the powers to scour the various Departments, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Ministry of Defence, should be appointed by the Department of Trade and Industry. That would be one way of averting the crisis in the industry.

The Transport Select Committee is now looking at the future of the merchant shipping industry, and again there are means by which orders can be secured from British shipowners as well as from abroad, which could help to secure the future of the industry.

At the end of this debate, and having heard the previous debate, the Minister should be aware of the concern felt by Opposition Members and, I believe, by hon. Members on both sides of the House, about the state of the merchant shipbuilding industry. He should be aware that the past chairman of British Shipbuilders, Mr. Graham Day, said that there was a real danger that the industry could go the same way as the motor cycle industry and that merchant shipbuilding was fighting a bare knuckle battle for survival. He should also be aware that the previous chairman of British Shipbuilders, Sir Robert Atkinson, said that the industry was being brought to the point of destruction. Perhaps he has also noticed that the retiring directors of Smiths of Middlesborough has said that in his view British Shipbuilders is already too small to survive.

I hope that the Minister will take on board what has been said in this debate and what has been said by some of the employees of British Shipbuilders. We have had the possibility of a new European directive and we will have a new intervention. Tonight we have a new borrowing limit. What the shipbuilding industry needs is new orders, and I hope that the Minister will make it his business to get them for the industry before it is too late.

12.26 am

Mr. Giles Shaw: I shall first comment on the admirable speech by the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown), who took a wide-ranging review and gripped his opportunity with both hands. I thought that he was just a little bit sceptical about the activities of British Shipbuilders in seeking to promote the sale and construction of merchant ships. That is its task and it has no other.

I will not quote £1·4 billion to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), but I am prepared to quote £1·575 billion. It has gone up since he spoke about it last. That is the figure that British Shipbuilders has had out of public funds since 1979. It breaks down in many ways, as the hon. Gentleman knows. There is £1·2 billion of public dividend capital there, £191 million of redundancy pay and £186 million in the home credit scheme. All those things are part of the total expenditure of British Shipbuilders. I shall certainly write to the hon. Gentleman to set out the record in relation to how the money is spent and how it goes into the yards and so on. The fact remains that British Shipbuilders is the oganisation which seeks to obtain and place orders within British yards. That was the crucial point to which the hon. Gentleman referred.

In relation to the question posed to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East rather than to me by the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman), I take note of his view that the fisheries protection zone in the Falkland Islands may require to be protected by vessels built in the United Kingdom. I guarantee that I shall endeavour to find an answer on that point.

The hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East also raised the question of Clark Kincaid. British Shipbuilders made a careful assessment of the employment and commercial aspects of the bids before it made its decision. It made its decision in favour of the bid to which the hon. Gentleman drew the attention of the House. It gave my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State the opportunity to comment on the assessment but he was not responsible for the assessment it had made. He concurred with British Shipbuilders judgment. The bid has been assessed and agreed by British Shipbuilders in relation to the commercial aspects and the assessment of employment opportunities.

Let me make it clear that, although this is my first debate on shipbuilding, I do understand the extremely severe consequences of the major restructuring that has gone on in past years. In many cases yards in the north and in Scotland have borne the brunt of the consequences. I fully understand the trauma that that brings to communities in that part of the world. The fact remains that British Shipbuilders, should the House approve the borrowing powers extension, will continue to do everything in its power to achieve more orders for the yards in the United Kingdom. Certainly, as I said in the previous debate, a number of orders have been won. In relation to public service orders, I mentioned the vessel for Tuvalu. I expect an announcement on the award of that contract shortly. As the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow would know, the Caledonian MacBrayne order was one that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland brought forward for Ferguson-Ailsa. A fisheries protection vessel has also been brought forward.

I have to inform the House that the order for Cuba has changed in quantity and in specification. Virtually an entirely new bid would have to be made if British Shipbuilders was to seek to compete for it. That is certainly no longer in the forefront of its mind.

Everything possible is being done in relation to the China order. Delegations have been to China two or three times and a Chinese delegation has been to Britain.

Mr. Bob Clay (Sunderland, North): Before the hon. Gentleman leaves the Cuban order, he should elaborate on it. The people left in the merchant shipbuilding industry in Sunderland have been anxious to learn about the order. They and many journalists have asked questions about it. This is the first time that anyone has been told that, apparently, the requirements have changed. As I understand it, the Minister just said that if British Shipbuilders was still interested it would have to submit a different tender. Will there be a different tender? Is British Shipbuilders still interested?

Not that long ago, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the chairman of British Shipbuilders told deputations from Sunderland and other parts of the north-east that that order was the great hope for the salvation of those yards. From the sound of it, if the Danish order had not come out of the blue, the comments that were being made in the summer that the British Government were not doing enough and the illusions that were being spread would have proved to be accurate. The Minister

owes the House, and especially shipbuilding workers on Wearside and those who have been made redundant at Smith's dock, a much better explanation of what is happening with the Cuban order than the one that we have just heard.

Mr. Shaw: The hon. Gentleman should be somewhat gratified that a statement was made about the order at all. Negotiations on these matters are for British Shipbuilders and its potential purchasers and customers. I was asked about the orders for Cuba. It will be some months before they take new shape, because a completely different specification is required. I assure the hon. Gentleman that British Shipbuilders will still be extremely keen to try to obtain the orders, but it is not on the same time scale now as it may have been some months ago.

I assure the House that maximum effort is being applied in relation to the China order. There have been British delegations to China and Chinese delegations to this country. British Shipbuilders will certainly do everything possible to follow up the prospects discussed in the debate.

Mr. Gordon Brown: On the Cuban order, will the hon. Gentleman explain what he means by saying that the specifications have changed? Is it anything to do with the financial packages that could be put on offer? Will he explain at what point British Shipbuilders and the Government became aware that the Cuban order and its specifications had changed?

Mr. Shaw: No, I shall not give the hon. Gentleman any further detail on those matters. That is information which he can obtain from British Shipbuilders in due course, as it will no doubt be able to discuss the matter with him.

We are asking the House to agree to vote an additional £100 million in the borrowing order to enable British Shipbuilders to continue not only to run the enterprises for which it is responsible but to seek to obtain new orders for British yards for the year ahead.

Resolved,

That the draft British Shipbuilders Borrowing Powers (Increase of Limit) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 21st November, be approved.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Restrictive Trade Practices

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.)

That the draft Restrictive Trade Practices (Services) (Amendment) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 18th November, be approved.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

Question agreed to.

Representation of the People

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.)

That the draft European Assembly Elections (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 19th November, be approved.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

Question agreed to.

Human Organs (Transplants)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

12.33 am

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I think that everyone is aware of the incredible strides that have been made in recent years by medical science with the transplantation of human organs. Today, heart, lungs, kidneys, livers and corneas are regularly taken from donor bodies and used as replacement organs for defective ones in living people. As the science develops, so the success rate improves, in terms of successful transplants and in the length of time that the transplant continues to function effectively. I should like to stress those last words, because I think that many people imagine that a transplant is a once-and-for-all operation whereas, in fact, it is usually for a limited time, depending on the effectiveness of the means used to prevent rejection. Leaving aside cornea grafting, of all the transplants that are carried out kidney transplants far outnumber the rest and show the highest success rate. Currently in this country nearly 6,000 people are enjoying the benefits of transplanted kidneys. That puts the United Kingdom at the top of the transplant league in western Europe and makes up for some of our shortcomings in dialysis.

I would like to outline some suggestions for making the transplant programme still more effective. However, before I do that, I must comment upon some of the reports that appeared in a Sunday newspaper and in some national daily newspapers to the effect that organs are being taken from brain dead people when those people cannot be described as dead. In effect, it is claimed that their lives are being shortened by the removal of their organs. I do not know how such an allegation can be sustained against the criteria for brain death agreed by the medical profession five or six years ago, and re-examined earlier this year by the General Medical Council, not just on the basis of potential transplant donors, but designed to cover the time when a medical team can switch off a ventilator or some other life support equipment.

If Dr. Evans who made the allegations has some new evidence, we must ask whether he has made that available to the General Medical Council. He must know that his allegations are bound to create doubts in the minds of those who will be asked to allow the organs of a brain dead relation to be taken for transplantation, to the detriment of the whole transplant programme. It behoves Dr. Evans and the General Medical Council to clarify the position as a matter of utmost urgency. If, as I am led to believe, his allegations will not be sustained, the question arises: how can more organs be made available from brain dead donors than is currently the case to meet the real demand?

At one time I think that we all believed that the kidney donor card was the right approach. It was a small, easily carried card that stated the wishes of its owners about the use of his or her kidneys in the event of death. Although the idea and implementation appeared simple, the fact is that it has had a negligible impact on the provision of organs. There is no one reason for that. In a letter to me in March, Mr. Michael Bewick, the consultant renal surgeon at Dulwich hospital said:

"Over the last 5-6 years, 20 per cent. of the population have carried donor cards, yet surveys show that 75-80 per cent. wish their organs to be used. Thus, the donor card scheme has outlived its usefulness. The reason why the card

[Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson]

scheme has not been more effective is because it relies on the hospital authorities finding the card either on admission or soon after. As these patients are so desperately ill, the responsibility of the medical and nursing staff is to get the patient better, not to find out what should happen if they die. Thus, no effort is made to look for the donor card and the patient's belongings have been returned to the next of kin and they by now have left the hospital."

Mr. Bewick's comments were supported in a letter written by the chief medical officer at the Department of Health and Social Security, Sir Donald Acheson, to a member of the renal transplant unit at the Charing Cross hospital in May 1985. Sir Donald wrote:

"It is now just over a year since the Government launched its campaign to promote the organ donor card scheme, and the number of kidney transplant operations performed in the UK, according to the UKTS provisional figures, has risen to 1,415, for the year March 1984 to February 1985, an encouraging increase of 30 per cent over the previous 12 month period.

However, more needs to be done to improve the availability of donor organs yet further. The evidence suggests that about three quarters of the population are willing for their organs to be used for transplantation, and that about 4,000 people die each year in circumstances where organ donation is possible. This implies that about 6,000 donor kidneys should become available annually, which is more than enough to meet estimated needs. It would seem, however, that one of the constraints on increasing the actual supply is the reluctance of some doctors in, for example, intensive therapy units and neurology departments, to initiate organ donation procedures."

I shall enlarge on the last words of that passage later.

One of the problems faced by those involved in obtaining organs is gaining the consent of next of kin to remove them. The kidney donor card should have overcome that problem because the Human Tissue Act 1961 makes it clear that no second consent is required. However, as Professor Peter Morris, the distinguished renal transplant surgeon in Oxford told me,

"Most of us feel that there must be permission from the relatives if the relatives are available."

I recognise the humanity of that statement, but I wonder whether the emotionalism of the moment may discourage some hospitals from asking relatives for the right to transplant. If so, what can be done to encourage the supply of organs? At this time there are about 26 transplant units in the United Kingdom, about 3,500 people requiring kidneys and an unspecified number needing hearts, lungs, livers and corneas. In terms of kidneys, the present demand could be satisfied by 2,000 donors, as each donor provides two kidneys and only one is transplanted into a patient. Two successful transplants not only give a renewed normality to the recipients but free two dialysis machines for two more kidney sufferers. Thus one donor assists four people.

As I have said, the kidney donor card does not appear to be the best way of obtaining the additional organs, although I admit that it does keep the subject of transplants alive. Where parents carry them, I think that they are making a statement about themselves and their families' willingness to become donors.

More publicity could be given to the whole subject. I suggest that transplanting be written into more television drama — such as East Enders or serials relating to hospitals, which would acclimatise people to the idea that transplants are a natural part of modern living.

When all that has been said, however, the fact remains that there is a shortfall in the number of donors needed. It is estimated that 4,000 donors could become available every year—people of between 20 and 65 years of age with absolutely healthy organs which would more than satisfy the current demand, but we are not obtaining that supply.

In the October-November edition of "Economic Affairs", an article by Mr. Marvin Brams of the university of Delaware suggests that one way to obtain that supply would be to allow people to sell organs. I must say that I do not like the idea. The gift of an organ is an act of altruism. As one who may benefit from a transplant at some future date, I would like to believe that the organ I received was given by someone who wished to give it, not that it had been bought.

The financial argument does have some validity in a different context. When a donor's organs are to be removed, an operating theatre has to be made available, as well as ancillary services, at the hospital where the operation is to be carried out. Currently hospitals providing both the donor and the facilities benefit not at all from the trouble to which they have gone to make the donor's presence known to the local transplant unit. It does not seem unreasonable to me to suggest that the hospitals might be much more willing to help if they were to receive some remuneration for the facilities that they provide.

In simple financial terms, every kidney patient on dialysis costs the Health Service £10,000 a year, while a transplant operation costs about £7,000. If it is successful, the patient costs the Health Service virtually nothing while the transplant works. Clearly, the financial saving to the Health Service of a successfully transplanted kidney is quite enormous.

If financial remuneration of the kind that I have outlined seems difficult to introduce, I believe that we should consider legislation, or perhaps a ruling from the General Medical Council, to produce the necessary effect and make hospitals more forthcoming about potential donors. Such an approach can be encapsulated in the phrase, "required request". It would place a statutory responsibility on every hospital where there is a potential donor—that is, someone suffering from brain death—to request the relatives' permission to remove the organs and when permission is forthcoming to inform the nearest transplant unit that a donor exists. The beauty of required request is that the hospital would be obliged to ask for the organs and would not have to apologise for doing so.

Whether we choose required request or whether we consider financial remuneration, both suggestions seem worthy of careful consideration. Neither forces a potential donor's relatives to do anything against their principles or beliefs and each seems to offer the possibility of a better supply of organs for those whose lives can be restored to normality only through a transplant. I commend both suggestions to my hon. Friend the Minister and look forward to her comments.

12.45 am

The Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) on his success in the Speaker's ballot and on raising once again this important subject on which I have heard him speak in the House before. I acknowledge his personal interest in the subject as a dialysis patient, although I know that he is not currently awaiting an organ transplant. He

is continuing his important campaign with the distinction, courtesy and detail that he has shown previously and thus, I am sure, helping many people.

I assure my hon. Friend of the Government's commitment to the transplant programmes and we share his objective in seeking to increase the supply of donor organs. Perhaps I could just challenge him slightly on one or two points. As he probably knows, the survival rates of grafted kidneys have improved dramatically in recent times. The cadaver kidney will be alive and kicking in 62 per cent. of patients after one year compared with a best rate, achieved with a sibling live donor, of 81 per cent. That is a 10-year average. The current rate for anyone receiving a cadaver kidney this year is likely to be much better, as the rates are improving all the time and offer real and genuine hope to patients. In other words, the transplant programme is no longer experimental but is a standard procedure and a genuine life saver for those concerned.

I agree with my hon. Friend that the factor limiting the expansion of the programme is the supply of suitable kidneys. The supply of cadaver kidneys has been expanding steadily, from 842 in 1979 to 1,334 last year. For the first 10 months of this year the figure was already 1,363—more than in the whole of last year—suggesting that we are on course for a record total of more than 1,600 and a 22 per cent. improvement on last year. That is hardly a negligible improvement. My hon. Friend will also realise that many of the thousands of kidneys that may become available might not be suitable in the particular circumstances. There is therefore a limit, although I believe that the figures in the chief medical officer's letter are important and should be more widely known.

More kidney transplants are carried out in this country than in any other Europan country. The figures that I have given compare with about 300 in the Netherlands, 140 in Finland and less than 300 in Belgium. Our closest rivals are West Germany, with about 1,200, and France with about 1,100, so we are well ahead in terms of numbers, although in terms of rate per million population some of the Scandinavian countries are a little ahead. Those figures include live and cadaver donor transplants, so they are slightly higher than the figures that I gave earlier.

We have also seen a welcome increase in multi-organ donation, which has enabled the supply of donor hearts and livers to keep pace with the expansion of the heart and liver transplant programme. Here we have some real success stories to tell, especially—I do not wish to make a party political point—under this Government. In 1979 there were only three heart transplants, last year there were 169. In 1979 there were 12 liver transplants, last year there were 88. The figures for this year show that more than 200 heart transplants and more than 100 liver transplants will be carried out. The shortage of donor organs is a serious problem only in paediatric cases, where very close matching is needed. Perhaps I may add the least glamorous of all transplantations—that of corneas. In 1983 there were only 33, in 1985 there were 530. So far this year there have been nearly 600, which gives us an annual rate of nearly 800. The fact that the sight of 800 people has been saved is an amazing statistic, and I congratulate all the staff concerned.

As my hon. Friend said, the waiting list for a kidney transplant is currently more than 3,000. It is estimated that once the list has been cleared about 2,500 donor kidneys will be needed each year, so we are talking about thousands of people and their families. It is not a minority interest, in any sense. As the heart and liver transplant programmes convince us of their success and are expanded, a shortage of those organs could become more of a problem than it is at present.

What have we done? My hon. Friend referred to one or two items. In 1984 the Government launched a major campaign to increase public awareness of the benefits of organ transplantation and to promote the donor card scheme. The results were very encouraging and public opinion polls taken at the time showed that more than 70 per cent. of the population had switched to become in favour of organ donation. That was a major achievement. The campaign coincided with the publicity being given on the "That's Life" programme to the story of Ben Hardwick and his liver transplant. I acknowledge the importance of media coverage in this area, and pay special tribute to the very positive contribution made by Esther Rantzen and all the team involved in "That's Life".

Since 1984 we have encouraged and supported many local initiatives, and I thank all the companies, groups and individuals who put much effort into encouraging people to carry the card. We have taken several initiatives centrally, for example, through the Confederation of British Industry and the Institute of Directors. Some examples of the national initiatives being taken to promote the donor card include Esso agreeing to distribute cards at filling stations, Barclaycard agreeing to send out cards with its bills, the clearing banks and major building societies agreeing to dispense cards and the National Union of Students agreeing to include a card in the welcome package for each student. I have written to the Post Office about getting a set of commemorative stamps, which might serve to remind millions of people using the Post Office of the importance of this service.

I strongly agree with my hon. Friend about the dangers of the sale of organs. I do not think that that is on, either now or later, in the United Kingdom. I listened carefully to and took note of his point about financial encouragement to the hospitals. The fact that, as his figures showed, the cost to the hospital drops dramatically as soon as the patient has a successful transplant should in itself be an encouragement. We take into account the points that he made when deciding on funding for kidney units and, increasingly, on the other units, which are currently supra-regional for livers and hearts.

My hon. Friend mentioned the required request legislation that was recently introduced in several American states. He may know that in March this year my predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney), visited New York — one of the first states to introduce such a law — and found that the arrangements were working well. The Department's chief medical officer wrote to the medical profession's representative bodies about required requests earlier this year, and the replies were very encouraging. I am pleased to say that the Royal College of Physicians is setting up a working party to examine how the medical profession can contribute to increasing the supply of donor organs. It will be meeting in January, and we look forward to hearing its recommendations and conclusions. I hope that it will look carefully at required requests and will consider whether they can make a useful contribution and, if so, whether the better results could come from a voluntary code of practice or from a change in the law.

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

We have seen the establishment of computerised registers in Glasgow and Manchester, and this year Lifeline Wales was launched, which aims to cover the entire Welsh population. The idea of some of these schemes is that the names of all those who are willing to be organ donors should be recorded on a computer and that all intensive care units should have access to it, so that whenever a potential organ donor dies, doctors can ascertain whether his or her name is on the register. I am sure my hon. Friend will recognise that such a system is expensive to initiate and maintain. We are being kept informed of how the Welsh scheme is progressing, which is more comprehensive than the others. If the increase in donations is significant, we would consider extending the scheme to cover the whole of England. We would need to be sure, however, that there was a genuine improvement in the number of donor kidneys coming forward, or we would be spending money and not improving the service.

We have taken some initiatives with the Health Service professions. The Government are supporting a study which is now in the pilot stage and which aims to improve our understanding of the numbers of those who die in circumstances which make them suitable as organ donors and of the reasons why a number of potential donations are missed. Refusal of consent by bereaved relatives is only one possible reason among many and this is an issue which the royal college is considering for us and on which it will be advising us.

I turn to the important and serious issues which my hon. Friend raised about the articles which appeared in yesterday's newspapers and in today's, which seemed to cast doubt on the concept of brain death. I have discussed these articles and the issues which they have been raising with the Department's medical advisers and with Professor Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, president of the Royal College of Physicians, and chairman of the conference of the medical royal colleges and their faculties, whom I know from many years during my time at Birmingham. Sir Raymond has long been associated with the Queen Elizabeth hospital, Birmingham.

I am able to confirm yet again that the conference of medical royal colleges remains completely satisfied with the concept of brain death and with the criteria for establishing it. My hon. Friend may know that the criteria are set out in the code of practice on the removal of cadaveric organs for transplantation drawn up by a working party chaired by Lord Smith of Marlow and circulated to all hospital doctors in 1980. This code of practice requires that tests to establish death are carried out by two doctors, not one, who are both independent of the transplant team—they have nothing to do with that team. Tests are carried out on two separate occasions even if the first results appear to be conclusive. The tests include checking for pupil reaction to light, for corneal reflex and eye movement, for motor responses in the cranial nerve distribution in response to stimulation of the face and limbs, for gag reflex and cough reflex, and for respiratory movement.

The idea of including EEG testing, as Dr. Evans has suggested in the past, and again yesterday, as requirement has been considered on several occasions and rejected as superfluous and on occasion unreliable. Apparently the machine will "jump" if someone walks past the bed. It would seem that it might produce the wrong results entirely. There is nothing to stop doctors from carrying out EEG tests, however, in addition to all the other tests if they so choose.

Professor Hoffenberg told me this evening that no case of recovery by a patient in whom brain death had been established, using these criteria, has ever been recorded.

I shall put that another way. There is no evidence that anyone showing brain scan death, according to the criteria, has ever survived. That is the position throughout the world. Dr. Evans was challenged to produce some evidence of his case five years ago and he has failed totally to do so.

Perhaps I may add—I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree — that we deplore the emotional and unfounded remarks that are reported in yesterday's press, medical and otherwise, of those who have been attacking the transplant programme. They have been challenged repeatedly to produce evidence and they have failed repeatedly to do so. If they wish, they are entitled to challenge transplantation, especially of hearts, on other grounds, such as ethical grounds or religious objections. They are entitled to raise difficult questions, especially when the work first starts and so many failures occur. They are entitled also to challenge us, if they wish, on the allocation of resources. I can quite understand a cardiologist disapproving of a transplant programme in his own hospital which is costly and which may drain funds from his own work. That is quite legitimate, but we do not accept the remarks of someone who is flying in the face of the overwhelming body of medical opinion, which has considered his representations over and over again, including several times this year. I am therefore satisfied that what we are doing is not evil or reprehensible—indeed, far from it. This is good work that saves lives, and it is worth pursuing. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving me this opportunity to say so.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at one minute to One o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 9 December 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (CITY EXTENSION) BILL
Lords amendments agreed to.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (STANSTED) BILL
To be considered on Thursday.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BILL *[Lords]*

RIVER HUMBER (BURCOM OUTFALL) BILL *[LORDS]*
Considered; to be read the Third time.

GAIRLOCH HARBOUR ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL (HAM VOE, FOULA) ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL
Considered; to be read the Third time tomorrow.

Oral Answers to Questions

DEFENCE

Nimrod

1. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from trades unions about his impending decision on the Nimrod airborne early warning project; and if he will make a statement.

10. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his assessment of the number of jobs which would be secured in the United Kingdom by the purchase of the General Electric Company Avionics Nimrod airborne early warning system.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton): The only recent representatives that we have received have been from the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. My noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement met a delegation from that body on 28 November. It is for the companies concerned to decide how many people to employ on Nimrod AEW work.

Mr. Flannery: I understand that we want the very best that we can get for the Royal Air Force, but will the Minister take into account the fact that many skilled British jobs are in jeopardy and that our defence system throughout the world will be watched very closely as a result of this decision? British electronics exports are also involved. It is an important problem, we are all watching it closely, and I hope that Ministers are doing much the same.

Mr. Hamilton: I very much take on board what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I point out to him that we are in the final stages of this competition and I should prefer not to comment today upon the relative merits of the two remaining contenders.

Mr. Dykes: I understand my hon. Friend's reticence, but does he not agree that Nimrod is overwhelmingly better for British jobs, better on cost, and better for British exports and that it is also better for European procurement? Does he not realise the gravity of the decision that is being taken?

Mr. Hamilton: I think that my hon. Friend is trying to draw me on my original comments. All I would say is that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence hopes to make an announcement before the House rises for the Christmas recess.

Mr. Wallace: I appreciate that the Minister does not wish to comment on the merits of the systems, but I wish to elicit some factual information from him. It is said that Boeing has offered a 130 per cent. offset. What would be the quality of those jobs? Would they be involved in high technology?

Mr. Hamilton: The quality of the offset that is being offered by Boeing is something into which we are looking very closely.

Mr. Colvin: Is my hon. Friend able to reassure the House that the 130 per cent. offset that has been offered by Boeing is more than just opportunities to tender and represents real contracts, and that the work involved would be high technology work, not just tin bashing?

Mr. Hamilton: I have already said that we are looking very much into the quality of what has been offered by Boeing. This is part of our consideration.

Mr. Hoyle: Will the Minister take into account the fact that many press reports have said that the Government have already made up their mind to buy Boeing? Will he bear in mind that the Boeing system is old-fashioned, and that if we buy Nimrod we will be buying not only British jobs but a system for the future which has export potential as well?

Mr. Hamilton: I beg the hon. Gentleman not to believe what he reads in the papers. No final decision on this has yet been made.

Mr. Sackville: Does my hon. Friend agree that unless there are some clear and insoluable operational problems with the Nimrod system, it would be madness to give away British industry's lead in this important defence technology, and crazy to give the Boeing Aircraft Company a monopoly in yet another sector of aerospace?

Mr. Hamilton: We have to take into account the requirements of the RAF and value for money, and, as I say, no final decision has yet been made.

Mr. Carter-Jones: Outside the publicity and propaganda, will the Minister take it from me that the

problem of clutter in receiving by this aircraft has now gone and that it can now clearly identify each target? Will he ask his right hon. Friend to make a statement to the House about the success of the mission that he went on in Nimrod?

Mr. Hamilton: I am sure that my right hon. Friend will refer to these matters when he makes an announcement to the House before the Christmas recess.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Is my hon. Friend aware that many of his right hon. and hon. Friends very much support Nimrod and GEC Avionics? Before a final decision is made will he ensure that his right hon. Friend is aware of the high technology of the latest GEC mark Nimrod, that many jobs are involved, and that the future of British technology in aerospace and in avionics is very much at stake and is based on the decision which he and his colleagues are to take?

Mr. Hamilton: I am sure that my right hon. Friend has heard every word that my hon. Friend has said and will take these matters into account before making a final decision.

Mr. Denzil Davies: We appreciate that the Under-Secretary dare not comment on the merits of the two systems, but will he confirm that his right hon. Friend has commented, because on 5 December, on the "News at Ten" programme, he said that both systems, that is the British Nimrod and the American AWACs, now work? Does it not follow from that that there is no case for buying American, and every good and valid case for buying British?

Mr. Hamilton: That does not follow. What does follow is that we still have many different assessments to make of the different tenders, and no final decision has yet been made.

Falklands War Play

2. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions are recorded between Mr. Ian Curteis and his Department concerning the factual accuracy of his Falklands war play.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. John Stanley): Mr. Ian Curteis visited the Ministry of Defence on 5 March and discussed the commission that he had from the BBC to write a play on the Falklands war. On 3 April he visited the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, Fleet at Northwood, where he was shown around the headquarters and the operations room used during the war.

Mr. Holt: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer. Does he agree, or will he confirm, that the BBC made no efforts to ascertain the accuracy or lack of it of Mr. Curteis's play, and that in banning it the BBC has shown itself to be hypocritical, in that it allows various things to go out which are true or untrue, and has said that if Mr. Curteis had been accurate and gone to the Ministry of Defence and checked the facts it would not have banned the play? The BBC would would have allowed the play to go out if he had altered and falsified the facts. In those circumstances, will my right hon. Friend say whether he will still make available to the BBC all the facts appertaining to Mr. Curteis's play, so that it can go out on schedule?

Mr. Stanley: There were two very limited contacts between Mr. Ian Curteis and my Department. I am not privy to the totality of what passed between Mr. Curteis and the BBC, and for that reason I am not able to comment further on that.

Mr. Lilley: Can my right hon. Friend say whether any of the authors or producers of the innumberable other plays and programmes which have been produced denigrating the British performance in the Falklands took the trouble to visit the Ministry of Defence and check their facts? Will he also comment on the fact that they were not banned?

Mr. Stanley: I note what my hon. Friend has said. I think that there were other occasions on which people writing about the Falklands war consulted my Department. I also note that other producers of television material, and that sort of thing, have found a way of getting access to the television media. My hon. Friend will be aware that although the BBC has apparently banned this play, Anglia Television has expressed interest in it and many of us will be happy to see that play being made public on Anglia Television.

Royal Dockyards

3. **Mr. Hicks** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the present position regarding his proposals to introduce commercial management into the royal dockyards; and if he will make a statement.

8. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consultations have taken place with the relevant trade unions concerning the Government's plan for commercial management of the dockyards.

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): As I announced on 4 December, we have begun the final stages of consultation over the future management arrangements for the royal dockyards. To this end, we have released details for the contract which could be signed with our preferred contractor, Babcock Thorn, and responded in full to the trade union paper which I received on 24 November. I have placed a copy of my paper in the Library.

I have asked the unions to let me have their views on the way ahead for Rosyth before Christmas so that I can come to a final judgment early in the new year, if necessary after another meeting with the trade unions. Contract negotiations are continuing with the three bidders for Devonport, and I hope to be able to announce the preferred contractor there shortly to enable consultation for that dockyard to be completed early in the new year.

Mr. Hicks: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that he is prepared genuinely to consider the possibility of the alternative options for Devonport, such as either a trading fund or a Government-owned plc, in his consultations with the trade unions, so that the consulations will not be confined to details relating to his predecessor's preferred option of agency management?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate what my hon. Friend has said. I assure him that I intend the consultation process to be as full as it possibly can be. Of course, it is open to the unions to raise with me any aspect of the matter at any point in the consultations.

Mr. Wallace: Does the Secretary of State not accept that, by making an announcement with regard to Babcock

Thorn, he has acted with the utmost insensitivity and doubtful legality? If, by doing that, he has excluded some of the options for Rosyth, which the hon. Member for Cornwall, South-East (Mr. Hicks) has mentioned, what substance does he think will be given to any future consulations that he has with trade unionists from Rosyth?

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman has got this matter wrong. The other side of the coin, when we have maximum consultation, is that all those concerned require maximum information in order to give their views and to be properly consulted. I would rightly have been criticised if I had seen the consultation process as continuing without giving the unions an opportunity to comment on what is, I think, our preferred solution. I have made it clear to them that I have not taken a final decision and that all their views will be taken into account before I do.

Mr. Gordon Brown: What is the point of promising to consult the work force of Rosyth when Babcock Thorn, the preferred contractor, says that it has already agreed what amounts to a 1,000-page contract with the Ministry of Defence? Will the Secretary of State tell us the truth? How many compulsory redundancies have been discussed with Babcok Thorn? Will he deny the extraordinary statement by Babcok Thorn this morning that not just HMS Conqueror but all hunter-killer work is to be moved from Rosyth, with hundreds more jobs at risk?

Mr. Younger: Again, I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman has properly read the statements that have been made. He expects his friends in the trade unions concerned to consult me. If I do not give them information as to what the preferred course might be, I do not know how they could consult about somthing when they would not know what they were consulting about. The hon. Gentleman would be the first to take me to task if I had not done that. He would have accused me of keeping them in the dark.

Redundancies are common to any solution, including no change. Redundancies are caused by the fact that the work load that is in prospect for the dockyards, and indeed the possible contractorisation of these yards, offer a new prospect for these yards by getting outside civilian work to add to their work load. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that.

Dr. Owen: Is the Secretary of State, by saying that he hopes to announce the third contractor shortly for Devonport dockyard, merely saying that he is no longer open to persuasion about a Government-owned plc or a trading fund, that there is no genuine consultation and that the consultation has been a sham throughout the last few years?

Mr. Younger: I am surprised at the right hon. Gentleman's question, because what he and his hon. Friends are now suggesting is that the consultation process would be better if I were to withold some of the relevant information from the trade unions before I consult them. That is not a sensible proposition. It surprises me that the right hon. Gentleman should espouse that idea.

Mr. O'Neill: The House is aware that the Secretary of State has not denied the substance of the Babcock Thorn statement. What is more, it is now common knowledge that the man who is to run the dockyard for Babcock and Thorn has been replaced by Babcock Power in Scotland. Is not this whole strategy and the failure to make any honest commitment to the House or confirm the numbers of redundancies evidence that the contractorisation strategy is in ruins and that the Navy is once again being made to pay for defence cuts?

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman is going a bit over the top. I have not seen the statement that was made by Babcock today, so I cannot comment upon whatever it is. With regard to the submarine refit programme, I assure the hon. Gentleman that there is nothing new and nothing surprising in the announcement about HMS Conqueror. It was a perfectly normal adjustment of programme to make sure that the work goes to the most appropriate place in the dockyard system where there is the capacity to deal with it. The question of jobs, one way or another, is not affected plus or minus by the contractorisation process. What it is affected by is the work load, and that is common to all solutions.

Ethnic Monitoring

5. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress with the introduction of ethnic monitoring in the Army.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): Arrangements are well in hand for the Army, in common with the other services, to introduce ethnic monitoring as outlined in the answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Bexhill and Battle (Mr. Wardle) on 5 November, at column 434.

Mr. Dubs: I welcome the decision to introduce monitoring next April, but how does the Minister answer the criticism that it will not cover possible discrimination against black soldiers as regards promotion? Secondly, will it cover instances when potential soldiers apply, for example, to the Brigade of Guards, and are diverted by the Army recruiting office to another regiment? Under which regiment will they then be recorded?

Mr. Freeman: Promotion of those in the armed services is, as the hon. Gentleman knows, on the basis of merit, aptitude and motivation. There are two reasons why monitoring is not to be introduced for those in service. First, it is considered unnecessary, because no examples are known to the Ministry of Defence of racial discrimination. If there are, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will draw them to our attention. Secondly, we consider it inappropriate, because the introduction of monitoring in the armed services for those in service would be divisive.

Mr. Conway: Does my hon. Friend accept that the basis for promotion in the armed forces must continue to be ability, success rate on military courses, and so on, and that in no way should the armed forces be seen to discriminate in favour of black people against those who are most able and worthy of promotion?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I agree very much with him. Indeed, I believe that black members of the armed forces would very much resent any implication that their promotion was other than by merit alone.

Mr. Ron Brown: Some members of the ethnic minorities serving in the SAS helped to organise the shipment of submarine lifting gear from Scotland to Libya. Will the

Minister explain their role? Was that to make amends for the bombing of Libyan cities, or will the hon. Gentleman say simply that it is a state secret?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is a bit wide of ethnic monitoring.

Mr. Wilkinson: Will my hon. Friend monitor carefully the excellent performance of the Gurkha Rifles and assure the House that there will be no reduction in the number of Gurkha battalions, which have provided such an excellent service to the Crown over the years?

Mr. Freeman: I agree very much with my hon. Friend in paying tribute to the Gurkha forces currently serving in Hong Kong and elsewhere. I assure him that the Gurkhas have a long-term and secure future in the British Army.

Mr. McNamara: Can the Under-Secretary inform the House how many commissioned officers in the forces are of African, Caribbean or Asian origin? Why are people of that origin in the British Army assumed to lack merit, aptitude and motivation, because there are so few of them in the commissiond ranks? Does the hon. Gentleman accept that many people in the minority communities will not feel that they are fully accepted as British citizens until they are given a commensurate place in the protection of these islands, on merit, aptitude and motivation, and not on the ground of discrimination, from which many feel they suffer?

Mr. Freeman: I am sure the hon. Gentleman is aware that the Commission for Racial Equality has recommended that the only correct way to monitor those of different ethnic backgrounds in the armed services is on the basis of self-classification, and not by myself or anyone else in the Ministry of Defence going out and counting members of individual units. I have said that we have no intention of introducing ethnic monitoring for those in service.

Falkland Islands

6. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost of maintaining a military presence in the south Atlantic; and if he anticipates further reducing forces on the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Stanley: In the last financial year, the additional cost to the defence budget of establishing and maintaining the Falklands garrison is estimated to have been £397 million. The planned provision for 1986-87 amounts to £234 million and that for 1987-88 is £140 million. Force levels in the Falklands, now and in the future, reflect the continuing need for a military presence sufficient to deter aggression and to defend the islands against attack.

Mr. McCrindle: I accept in particular the second point to which my right hon. Friend drew attention, but does he agree that the recent development of the air strip, with its attendant possibility of reinforcing the garrison from the United Kingdom rather more quickly than was the case before, might lead to the possibility of our having to maintain a smaller garrison? Does he have any thoughts on whether that is likely in the near future, and if so, can he tell us whether there is the possibility of a reduction in costs?

Mr. Stanley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. We have always said that giving ourselves a very much greater ability to reinforce the Falkland Islands quickly enabled us to take a more flexible view of the garrison levels. We do not, for reasons which I am sure he and the rest of the House will understand, go into details about the garrison levels, but my hon. Friend will agree that the figures that I mentioned in my answer to him make it clear that we will achieve the discharge of our defence responsibilities to the Falklands during the next few years at significantly less cost than hitherto.

Mr. Dalyell: Will the Ministry of Defence participate in preparations for a royal visit to the Falklands in the spring of 1987?

Mr. Stanley: I have no comment to make on any royal visit to the Falklands.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Does my right hon. Friend's reply not show that there will be a rapid, progressive and gratifying fall in costs, and does the Ministry of Defence know of any better all-services training area than the Falkland Islands?

Mr. Stanley: My hon. Friend is entirely right. The Falkland Islands provide some very good training opportunities. I am sure that he and the rest of the House will welcome the fact that the additional financial cost of the Falklands will halve over the next three years.

Mr. Foulkes: Will the Minister say what assessment has been made, and what plans have been laid, for the reported Argentine nuclear capability?

Mr. Stanley: I have no comments to make on that.

Sir John Farr: Is my right hon. Friend aware that, whatever the costs may be, they are well worth it, because there is an important point of principle at stake?

Mr. Stanley: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The construction of the airfield has been a very cost-effective use of taxpayers' money for defence purposes.

Frigates

7. **Mr. Duffy** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to arrive at a decision on the size and timing of further orders for follow-on type 23 frigates.

9. **Mr. O'Neill** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on future frigate orders.

Mr. Younger: Orders for three follow-on type 23 frigates were placed earlier this year. Decisions on orders for further follow-on type 23 frigates will be taken when appropriate.

Mr. Duffy: The Secretary of State must be aware that the orders that he has mentioned relate to last year rather than to this. Is he not aware that if further orders await priorities and availability of resources, Conservative Members will need to know, as my colleagues certainly know, that if the Nott tendency still lingers in the Ministry of Defence, the Secretary of State will not fulfil his objective of a proper age structure for a 50-ship surface fleet by the 1990s, which is only three years away?

Mr. Younger: As the hon. Gentleman knows, this year we have already placed three orders for frigates. It remains my intention to maintain a force level of about 50 frigates and destroyers, but the number of frigates to be ordered in any one year will continue to depend upon the resources available.

Mr. O'Neill: Does the Secretary of State recognise that the appropriate time is now? We need those orders now to go into the 1990s with a 50-warship Navy. The constant procrastination by the Ministry of Defence is not good enough when workers are ready to build the ships and seamen are waiting for the opportunity to sail in them. The time is now.

Mr. Younger: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would be more grateful than that for the three large orders that we have placed this year. The hon. Gentleman welcomed them when they were placed. As for keeping the 50-frigate Navy going and the new orders required to do that, we must weigh up the life of the frigates and the refit cycle and all the rest of it. That must be done in the context of the availability of resources at the time.

Mr. Hill: My right hon. Friend will realise that Vosper Thornycroft in Southampton, which for many years has been a loyal servant to the Government in warship construction, is in desperate plight. As it has recently been privatised, can my right hon. Friend say whether any orders may come to Vosper Thornycroft in the dim and distant future? I am thinking not only of type 23 but of the single role minehunter.

Mr. Younger: Some time ago I met some of the management of Vosper Thornycroft to discuss the company's problems. I assure my hon. Friend that this is an important defence contractor. It is the lead yard for single-role minehunters, and we shall watch its problems carefully.

Mr. Holt: Will my right hon. Friend take on board the fact that Harland and Wolff will be given additional subsidies which Swan Hunter will not receive and that this must be borne in mind when making decisions to place orders for type 23s?

Mr. Younger: I very much take my hon. Friend's point. I assure him that the extra auditing and monitoring procedures which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced when the order for the first AOR was placed at Harland and Wolff will be carefully adhered to, so that when comparisons are made between Harland and Wolff or any other nationalised concern and the private sector it can be done on a fair basis.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: Will the Secretary of State admit to being economical with the truth? Would not a more candid reply be that the order for the type 23 02 has been placed with Swan Hunter, that 03 and 05 have been placed with Yarrow, that type 23 04, 06 and 07 have been dropped from the programme altogether, and that there will be no frigate orders next year?

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman of all people should be more pleased than he appears to be—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] —because Swan Hunter in his constituency has been given a special non-competitive order for type 23 02 and has also been given the offer of bidding for the second AOR ship when that comes along. Many other shipyards in the United Kingdom would like to be as well treated as Swan Hunter has been, and the hon. Gentleman should have said that.

Mr. Hirst: Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the fact that Yarrow on Clydeside, where much of the type 23 frigate development work has been undertaken, is one of the most modern and efficient yards in the world? Will he take this opportunity to remind the House that, following his announcement in the summer of two frigates for Yarrow, it has engaged in a multi-million pound covered development at the yard to build frigates on a more competitive and productive basis?

Mr. Younger: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. Yarrow is a very important defence contractor. It is the lead yard for type 23 frigates, which will be the backbone of the 50-frigate Navy that we intend to keep.

Dr. Godman: What is the likelihood of one type 23 frigate being deployed in support of the two fishing vessels which will police the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone? Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that those two aging stern trawlers will have to be replaced by fisheries protection vessels of the sort employed in United Kingdom waters?

Mr. Younger: We do not normally comment on operational matters, but I can safely say that whatever tasks the Royal Navy is asked to perform in the Falklands, we shall try to use the most suitable ships available for the task. The hon. Gentleman will realise that, as tasks develop, we may have to change the equipment available to deal with them, but we are ready to do that if necessary.

Helicopters

11. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his assessment of the effectiveness of helicopters as tank-killers in the 1990s.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We believe that the attack helicopter will continue to constitute an essential component of a balanced anti-armour capability in the 1990s.

Mr. Marlow: Given the speed of concentration of helicopters, their ability to operate over their own territory, modern techniques of surveillance and the power and accuracy of modern missiles, is not the concept of the use of the tank in the offensive role really a romantic reject that should go out with the concept of using horses?

Mr. Hamilton: There are many different weapons systems that can be used in an anti-tank capability and the helicopter is merely one of them.

Mr. Ashdown: Has the Minister seen the study that states that British forces on the central front in Europe are about 100 helicopters light of their requirements in terms of attack tank killing and the deployment of reserves? Is he aware of the special role that the helicopter has to play in terms of a force multiplier, given the disposal of forces on the central front? Does he realise that further delay or fudging of the decision on helicopter procurement will not only cause terrible damage to Westland but will weaken our forces?

Mr. Hamilton: The Ministry is giving serious consideration to our future requirements for helicopters and will be making an announcement on that in the new year.

Mr. Wiggin: Is my hon. Friend aware that the Army —and it is the Army that is mainly at issue here—has revised its view about helicopters within the past 18

months? As helicopters have been in service since the last world war, will Ministers oversee any advice that they receive with good common sense?

Mr. Hamilton: The Army very properly wanted to be sure that the requirements stated would satisfy its needs in the light of an emerging threat. It would have been improper to proceed with the old requirements when new information had come to light.

Trident

12. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimated total cost of Trident; and what progress is being made in Scotland in the provision of facilities for this weapons system.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said on 11 March 1986, the latest estimate for Trident is £9,869 million at average 1985-86 prices. Satisfactory progress is being maintained by all elements of the Trident programme for its introduction into service in the mid-1990s.

Mr. Hamilton: Is the Minister aware that there is an enormous amount of opposition to the programme, particularly in Scotland? How can the Minister or his right hon. Friend claim that Trident is an independent British nuclear deterrent when the Prime Minister has to go crawling to America to ask a doddering President whether he will promise to deliver — and that lame duck President can deliver nothing?

Mr. Hamilton: I am surprised to hear from the hon. Gentleman that there is so much opposition to the Trident programme in Scotland, because it is providing a large number of jobs. Our independent deterrent is providing, at present, about 4,500 jobs in maintenance, and construction work on the Clyde involves 2,000 to 2,500 jobs, half of which are filled by residents from the Dumbarton district. If we consider the whole of north England and Scotland, the effect of the programme on employment is very dramatic. I have the feeling that the Opposition are rather cavalier in their attitude to employment in those areas, yet we are always being told about the high unemployment levels there.

Mr. Franks: When does my hon. Friend expect to be able to sign the contract for Trident 2? Can he also give us some idea of the number of jobs that that will secure?

Mr. Hamilton: The manufacture of HMS Vanguard is securing 4,000 jobs at Barrow and 5,000 jobs elsewhere. We envisage that that employment level will rise considerably. In response to my hon. Friend's question about placing the contract for the next Trident, I can say that we will do that some time early next year.

Mr. Strang: Will the Minister spare us the hypocrisy about Trident jobs and recognise that every £1 million spent on Trident facilities on Clydeside would create many more jobs if it was invested in socially useful jobs in the construction industry, the Health Service or education? Will he also recognise that thousands of millions of pounds are being spent on American technology and American jobs, instead of being spent in this country?

Mr. Hamilton: There is no doubt that the prime purpose of the Trident programme is not to create jobs. On the other hand, I wonder whether the people who are in jobs affected by the Trident programme have been consulted by Opposition Members, who are so keen to abolish their jobs.

Mr. Spencer: Will my hon. Friend confirm the simple truth that, without Trident, there is no effective defence of the nation?

Mr. Hamilton: There is no doubt whatever in my mind that our independent nuclear deterrent must form the backbone of our defence, and it is critical that we have it.

Mr. Denzil Davies: A Government who have trebled unemployment since 1979 have no business to talk about other people being cavalier about jobs—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. These are defence questions.

Mr. Davies: I thank the House for that reception. It is deeply gratifying. As for the estimate of the cost of Trident, can the Under-Secretary of State confirm again that about £4·5 billion out of the £9·8 billion will be spent in the United States and, no doubt, create jobs in the American armaments industry? Can he also confirm that for every 1 cent that the pound falls against the dollar, another £25 million goes on the cost of Trident?

Mr. Dickens: And the other way around.

Mr. Davies: It will not be the other way around.

Mr. Dicks: The right hon. Gentleman is just as daft as his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This takes a lot of time out of questions.

Mr. Davies: Does the arrangement with the United States Government contain an exchange rate protection clause, or is it an open-ended commitment in respect of the value of the pound and the dollar?

Mr. Hamilton: I am sure the hon. Gentleman knows that the exchange rate that is applicable to calculating the cost of Trident is taken at the end of June of the previous year, so we are operating on an exchange rate of $1·28 to the pound. When it is revalued, as we expect in the new year, it will be $1·50, which was the rate at the end of June this year.

Mr. Neale: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is carrying naiveté to the point of gross irresponsibility for the Leader of the Opposition to try to square his commitment to the cancellation of Trident and removal of American bases from Britain with his assertion that that need not affect the Americans' commitment to NATO?

Mr. Hamilton: Like my hon. Friend, I believe that the right hon. Gentleman is threatening the cornerstone of the NATO Alliance by getting rid of our independent deterrent. That stance holds great dangers for the future of the country's defence.

Iran

13. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what contacts his Department has had with Iranian officials in the past three years concerning infrastructure contracts and military spare parts.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A number of meetings took place in 1984. There have been none since then.

Mr. Alton: As meetings took place on 20 and 31 October this year between representatives of International Military Sales, a company which is wholly owned by the

Ministry of Defence, and Iranian officials, how does that fact square with the Minister's answer and the Prime Minister's statement that a no arms sales policy had been pursued scrupulously and consistently? Will the Minister say what took place during those meetings on 20 and 31 October?

Mr. Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman's question asked about contacts that my Department had with Iranian officials. IMS is controlled by the Department, but it operates independently. It has been concerned merely with contracts that existed before the revolution. It has been negotiating about them. It has conducted no arms sales since the revolution.

Mr. Latham: Can my hon. Friend confirm—I hope he can—that the contacts have not led to any arms sales to Iran in contravention of our policies, especially if we are not prepared to sell to the Israelis defensive clothing against chemical weapons?

Mr. Hamilton: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There have been no new sales of equipment by IMS. It has been concerned only with existing contracts and deliveries in respect of them.

Mr. McNamara: What has been delivered, even in retrospective contracts? Does it not break the spirit of what the Prime Minister said, if not the facts of the situation? We should have stopped all deliveries, whether or not the contracts were pre-Shah.

Mr. Hamilton: Under the existing contracts, anything sold has been of a non-lethal nature.

Royal Military School of Music

14. **Mr. Jessel** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will indicate when he expects to be in a position to make a statement on the long-term future of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, Twickenham.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. Friend expects to make a decision soon.

Mr. Jessel: Is my hon. Friend aware that the finest Army bands, whose high standards of excellence are the envy of the world, are trained at the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, Twickenham? Will my hon. Friend confirm that the Government intend to take fully into account not only the views of the 164 right hon. and hon. Friends who have signed the early-day motion, but the opinion of the other place, the Army, the arts world and the 18,679 people who have signed petitions?

Mr. Freeman: Yes, I can confirm that the Government will take those into account.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I call upon the Lord Privy seal to answer Prime Minister's Questons, may I remind the House that the questions must be related to the Prime Minister's responsibilities.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend is today reporting to the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Dr. Clark: During the course of his busy day will my right hon. Friend convey to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy our congratulations on the successful privatisation of British Gas, which has brought about a most welcome extension of share ownership in Britain? I also ask my right hon. Friend to ask my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to reflect upon the fact that the percentage of people in this country who now own British Gas shares is considerably higher than the percentage of people in America who know the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Biffen: I will certainly convey the second point raised by my hon. Friend. With regard to his point of substance, I shall certainly convey that to my right hon. Friend. I agree with him that the remarkably successful flotation of British Gas and the premium it has secured demonstrates not only the confidence of the British people in the future of gas but their belief that British Gas has an assured future within private ownership.

Mr. Kinnock: May I first invite the right hon. Gentleman to join me in condemning the attempt in the European Parliament this morning to impair free speech, especially as the individual concerned has ample opportunity to make his case in two Parliaments?

May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in the light of the European Community agreement on anti-terrorism policies, and in view of common necessity, the Government are now taking measures to insure against London being used as a location for making arms deals similar to those made between the United States Administration and Iran?

Mr. Biffen: I have no reason to believe that the right hon. Gentleman, whose return I very much welcome, is aware of a situation that validates his anxieties. On his first point, I am sure he will speak for the entire House in regretting the way in which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was treated at Strasbourg this morning.

Mr. Kinnock: I am grateful for that reply. In view of the frequency of meetings apparently required for the arms deal with the Iranians, does the right hon. Gentleman find it strange that no measure was taken by the Government or knowledge received by them from any source that such a deal was being made?

Mr. Biffen: I have no reason to believe that there was any laxity on the part of the Government, but I take note of what the right hon. Gentleman has said.

Sir William Clark: Given that this is a period of goodwill, will my right hon. Friend congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on commanding an audience that did not come in from out of the rain?

Mr. Biffen: I think that we might have just an interlude of good-natured exchanges on these matters, and to that extent I agree with my hon. Friend, but the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) will know perfectly well that he comes back from the United States to fairly well-charged political situations. I could not — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is just that sort of question that causes difficulties.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell: When the Prime Minister is back, will the Leader of the House find out from her whether she knows why the Anglo-Irish Conference yesterday was attended by representatives of the United States Government?

Mr. Biffen: I cannot comment authoritively on that point, but I shall certainly convey it to my right hon. Friend.

Q2. **Mr. Amess** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Amess: Will my right hon. Friend ask the Prime Minister to restate the Government's policy of multilateral, rather than unilateral, disarmament? Will he also ask her quickly to repair the damage done by statements made in America giving the impression that we will abandon our allies and renege on our NATO commitments?

Mr. Biffen: I shall most certainly convey the first point to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. On the second point, it must be a matter of judgment for the House to assess just how influential was the visit of the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock). These are fair points in the political debate that commences now and will continue until the general election. We are happy that the Labour party set out its non-nuclear defence policies in the United States, as it has done in this country, because we believe that the popular judgment will lie with us.

Mr. Winnick: Does the Leader of the House accept that if it is true that some officials within MI5 mounted a political operation against Lord Wilson when he was Prime Minister, a full parliamentary inquiry is certainly needed? Does he further accept that if there remains within the MI5 service some criminal and subversive elements who were responsible for what happened in 1974, they should no longer be in the service?

Mr. Biffen: Those points all relate to matters which are being argued directly or indirectly in a court in New South Wales and it would not be appropriate for me to make any further comment.

Mr. Nicholas Baker: Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is a world of difference between a decision whether to take proceedings in respect of a book by an independent journalist, such as Chapman Pincher, which some of us believe to be the code name of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), and a decision concerning ex-employees of the service, who propose to tell their all for money, in breach of their undertaking and contract? Does he further agree that the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock), who manages to do down the country over defence policy while he is in America—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. One question at a time.

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend will find that there was an answer yesterday from my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General which relates to his first point. I am afraid that I could not hear the second point.

Mr. Steel: Will the Leader of the House give the House an assurance that the decision whether to order AWACs or Nimrod for the Royal Air Force will be made by the Cabinet as a whole? Does he recognise that failure to proceed with Nimrod would be seen as an act of industrial surrender and would undermine Britain's efforts to remain at the forefront of high technology?

Mr. Biffen: The right hon. Gentleman will not expect me to comment on the second part of his question. On the first part, the Liberal party is some distance from Cabinet Government, but I assure him that a decision of this magnitude would necessitate the proper consideration of the Government.

Dr. Hampson: Will my right hon. Friend convey to the Prime Minister that there would be deep concern on both sides of the House should a decision be made not to buy Nimrod, because already £800 million has been spent and through its design it is doing a wider job than the AWAC, which will cost £1 billion more and will lose the country core technology for ever?

Mr. Biffen: I shall certainly comply with that request, but I suspect that my hon. Friend has already made it on his own behalf.

Q3. **Mr. Hoyle** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hoyle: On Nimrod, did the Leader of the House see in *The Observer* last Sunday the report that the Prime Minister is firmly in the Boeing camp? As a decision is shortly to be made on the airborne early warning system, and as many jobs and the future of the high-tech industry are at risk, will the right hon. Gentleman ask the Prime Minister, when she finally returns, whether she will make a statement making it clear whether she is batting for Britain or for Boeing?

Mr. Biffen: That is an allegation of partiality which I completely reject. This is a major decision affecting the defence and industrial consequence for the United Kingdom, and it will be taken in the appropriate detached fashion.

Q4. **Mr. Adley** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Adley: Contrary to the view being propagated in some quarters, will my right hon. Friend confirm that Her Majesty's Government are more than happy for the House and the country to spend as much time as they like debating defence and the nation's security? Are the public not right to be wary about the possibility of a party which wants to leave NATO having anything to do with Britain's defence? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Lord Privy Seal.

Mr. Biffen: I do not wish to deny the pleasures of my hon. Friend or the House, but I must say that there can be no question of there being as much time as would be liked in the debating of such matters, given all the other commitments in the Queen's Speech. None the less, I agree with my hon. Friend that defence will be a central feature

at the forthcoming election. We know perfectly well what a non-nuclear policy in the hands of Labour Members implies. We know perfectly well the extent to which it is a retreat from the Socialism of Aneurin Bevan, and we know perfectly well that the defendable alternative that we offer will be decisive in the outcome of that election.

Q5. **Mr. James Hamilton** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hamilton: Will the Leader of the House find time today to inform the Prime Minister that thousands of people are now finding it difficult to purchase their house on mortgage because of high interest charges and redundancy? Is he aware that many of those people who go to their local authorities are now finding themselves homeless because of the Government's policy on public sector housebuilding? What do the Government intend to do about that?

Mr. Biffen: I do not deny for one moment the significance of high interest rates mentioned by the hon. Gentleman, but the most important thing that the Government can undertake in that context is to ensure fiscal and budgetary policies which avoid heavy borrowing.

Q6. **Mr. Cash** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Cash: Has my right hon. Friend noticed that the latest nuclear-free missile which the Leader of the Opposition is about to launch on the nation tommorrow —[HON. MEMBERS: "Order."]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question must be related to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Cash: Has my right hon. Friend noticed that the Leader of the Opposition—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. One more try.

Mr. Cash: Has my right hon. Friend noticed that the Government have a policy of ensuring that Britain is properly protected, unlike the sort of policies that the Leader of the Opposition has been propagating in Australia and the United States and from the Opposition Front Bench?

Mr. Biffen: I am sure that the Government have such a policy, and I am sure that it is one that commends itself to their formal treaty allies. In my busy day, I have not yet had the chance to open all incoming mail to see whether I have an invitation to the launch of the Labour defence policy tomorrow, but I shall be interested to see whether there is a single senior United States figure there to endorse it

Mr. Madden: Why has it taken the Attorney-General six years to contemplate prosecuting Mr. Chapman Pincher under the Official Secrets Act, whereas he has taken much less time to charge Mr. John Lee, a reporter on the *Croydon Midweek Post*, your local newspaper, Mr. Speaker, under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not know anything about this case, but I hope that it is not sub judice.

Mr. Biffen: I was about to say that I do not think that it would be appropriate for me to comment.

Amphibious Capability

The following Question stood upon the Order Paper:

38. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's future military amphibious capability.

3.31 pm

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): I am very pleased to inform the House that the Government have decided to retain an amphibious capability in the longer term.

At present, the Royal Navy's amphibious lift is centred on the assault ships HMS Fearless and HMS Intrepid. As a first procurement step, we have today placed a contract with Swan Hunter for a feasibility study into extending the life of these ships. At the same time, we are inviting industry to participate in feasibility studies for a new design option for their replacement by building new ships. In parallel with this work, we shall address the means of providing helicopter lift, including the concept of an aviation support ship.

I know that this decision will be very well received both in the House and by our NATO partners, who attach considerable importance to the contribution of our amphibious capability. The steps that I am announcing today will secure its future.

Mr. Townsend: The House will be grateful to my right hon. Friend, as will those who have responsibilities for the northern flank. I hope that the study that my right hon. Friend mentioned will take place as speedily as possible. Will he confirm that the landing at San Carlos in 1982 would never have taken place if we had not had assault landing ships? Does my right hon. Friend agree that if Britain is to have a strong conventional capability it must include a proper assault ship capacity?

Mr. Younger: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend and I share his appreciation of the great importance of amphibious capability for our defence posture and our NATO contributions. This step will be a major reassurance that we intend to continue this capability.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): I warmly welcome this decision. For how long is it possible to extend the life of Fearless and Intrepid? On the new ship designs, is this to be a much cheaper ship, will it have an amphibious lift capacity, with a flat top? What design is envisaged?

Mr. Younger: The study into the life of Intrepid and Fearless will be looking into the economics and feasibility of extending their life, should that be the preferred option. Calculations of the cost and feasibility will be relevant in making that decision. As to the alternative of possible new vessels, the feasibility study will be looking into the most effective way of making a new vessel to fulfil this role.

Sir Antony Buck (Colchester, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that many on both sides of the House are devoted to the concept of our maintaining a substantial

amphibious capability? Will he assure us that the life of the old ships will be retained until the new ships are ready to take their place?

Mr. Younger: Yes, I can give my hon. and learned Friend that assurance. The expected life of Intrepid and Fearless stretches into the mid-1990s. This should give us ample time, following today's decision, to work out the best method of replacing them.

Mr. Ted Garrett (Wallsend): The decision will be welcomed nowhere more than on Tyneside. I would like to ask the Minister to ensure that, when the feasibility study is completed, Swan Hunter will be paid, because in the past, when it has done feasibility studies, there has been grave doubt as to whether it got full value for the money, time and effort spent on such studies.

I should like to extend an invitation to the Secretary of State to come to Wallsend on Saturday when, for the first time in 100 years, he will see the launch of one of Her Majesty's ships, HMS Galahad. It is an amphibious craft. It has been redesigned and has a new structure, and its launch will be watched with immense interest.

There is a tremendous amount of work to be undertaken on the feasibility study. I should like to see, not the extension of the life of the two vessels, but completely new ones built. I think that when the study is completed two new modern ships will be ordered. Will the Secretary of State give consideration to those orders being brought to Tyneside?

Mr. Younger: I note the hon. Gentleman's last point. He will appreciate that I will not want to make a determination on that until I have had the results of the study. I am as pleased as he is that Swan Hunter competed for the feasibility study contract and that it now has the contract. I can assure him that it will be paid for its work in accordance with the contract terms.

Sir Patrick Wall (Beverley): Is my right hon. Friend aware that these matters have been under discussion for some time and, therefore, feasibility studies are not very satisfactory? Is he also aware that the Royal Marines have lost the use of HMS Centaur and HMS Bulwark? It is essential to have two aircraft support ships in this package. How long will the study take? The ships are aging very rapidly and modern assaults are carried out by helicopter and not by landing craft?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate my hon. and gallant Friend's concern about the time scale. I assure him that this is a case in which the Ministry of Defence is taking the appropriate step to decide how best the capability should be continued in plenty of time to ensure that whatever replacement is decided upon will be ready when Intrepid and Fearless, as they are at present in service, come to the end of their useful lives. I agree entirely with the views expressed about the need for helicopter platforms in addition and I have made it clear in my statement that that too remains under consideration.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): May I follow the remarks of the Secretary of State and his hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Sir P. Wall) and stress the importance of preserving this package? When does the Secretary of State expect to be in a position to place an order?

Mr. Younger: Obviously I shall make a decision on placing an order when I have the results of the feasibility study, which I hope will be available some time towards the end of next year. We will then be able to make a decision in good time, so that the resulting new ships or extended life ships will be available and ready when Intrepid and Fearless reach the end of their lives.

Miss Janet Fookes (Plymouth, Drake): I welcome the statement—which, I might add, is long overdue—and its importance for the future of the Royal Marines. May I press the Secretary of State a little more closely on the time scale? When we have stripped it of all the nice language, in what year can we expect the new ships?

Mr. Younger: It is our intention that the new ships or refurbished present ships, according to the decision, will be ready by the mid-1990s, when the present ships will reach the end of their useful lives. That is sensible planning and the House will applaud it.

Mr. Nicholas Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): Since

"consience doth made cowards of us all",

I welcome the placement of the feasibility study at Swan Hunter. Swan Hunter, as the Secretary of State will recall, had the feasibility study for the auxiliary oiler replenishment vessel and was treated pretty shabbily by his Department afterwards. What guarantee does Tyneside have that history will not repeat itself and that expediency will not cut across rational decision-making in the Ministry of Defence?

Mr. Younger: It is a refreshing change for the hon. Gentleman to welcome something for Swan Hunter. He has not done that for a long time. I take some exception to his suggestion that Swan Hunter of all yards, has not been well treated over the auxiliary oiler replenishment vessel. May I remind him that, although Swan Hunter was not successful in the competition for AOR 1, it was given special preferential treatment in being offered an inside track for AOR 2. I hope that he will not cavil at that or be ungrateful for it, because he will not be in tune with the workers at Swan Hunter if he does.

Mr. John Ward (Poole): My right hon. Friend has gauged the welcome given to his announcement by both sides of the House, especially in so far as it affects the Royal Marines. However, he will understand the nervousness that some of us feel lest, judging from experience, this becomes a discussion exercise. Will my right hon. Friend undertake to do two things? First, will he report to the House from time to time on the progress of the replacements? Secondly, and more important, will he personally impose a programme on the feasibility studies and on any subsequent work? It is vital that this amphibious capability is kept in train all the time.

Mr. Younger: I appreciate what my hon. Friend says. The announcement ensures that there will be a long-term continuation of the amphibious capability. That is good news for those who are concerned about the future of the Royal Marines as well as of the Royal Navy. I assure the House again—this point needs to be explained—that this is intended to be a process that will end in a replacement of the two ships, Intrepid and Fearless, in time following the end of their useful life. There cannot be better planning than that. If the process works out that way, today's announcement will be seen to have been very timely.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): The announcement by the Secretary of State of the continuing commitment to an amphibious capability is very much welcomed by the alliance, but many hon. Members have made it clear that there is considerable concern about the delay in making the announcement and about the further delay that is implicit in the right hon. Gentleman's statement. Should the right hon. Gentleman not have grasped the nettle now in respect of ordering new ships? Is it not the case that, stripped of the florid language and the right hon. Gentleman's accustomed sweet reason, this is a delayed decision which is directly due to the impact of Trident expenditure on the defence budget?

Mr. Younger: I very much appreciate the hon. Gentleman's first remarks, which were sensible and balanced. In the second part of his question, he suggested that we should build a replacement for Intrepid and Fearless before the useful lives of those vessels was over. That would be profligate and very unwise. This plan should ensure that a replacement will be ready just at the end of the useful lives of the present vessels. If the Liberal party thinks that that is unwise, it surprises me.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden): Can my right hon. Friend assure the House that the Government intend to ensure that our amphibious capability will continue to be able to operate efficiently within the NATO area and worldwide?

Mr. Younger: Yes, it is intended that this amphibious capability will continue, as now, to be primarily dedicated to NATO tasks, especially on the northern flank, and to be available in the normal way for any other out-of-area activities that require an amphibious capability.

Mr. Churchill (Davyhulme): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his commitment, on the Government's behalf, to maintaining the amphibious assault capability of the Royal Marines. Will he confirm that Exercise Saifsareea, which took place two weeks ago in Oman and involved an assault landing by members of 44 Royal Marine Commando from Intrepid, would not have been possible if that commitment had been done away with, nor would maintenance of the Royal Marines' commitment to the defence of the northern flank?

Mr. Younger: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who is absolutely correct. My announcement shows that the Government believe that we need to maintain this type of amphibious capability. I hope that we can proceed from that base to decide precisely how this capability should be carried on.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I welcome today's announcement, but what is the likelihood of one of the orders coming to the lower Clyde?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's concern. No doubt, when the time comes to put contracts out to tender, the hon. Gentleman's constituents will tender, if they wish to do so. I hope that if they get the order the hon. Gentleman will be a little more grateful for that than the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown), who represents Swan Hunter, is for all the extra help that we give him.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his welcome decisions. In relation to the replacement vessels, will he ask his advisers to look at the design procedures to ascertain whether costs can be saved in the long term, perhaps by getting away from the traditional design of these types of vessels and using some form of innovation?

Mr. Younger: I welcome very much what my hon. Friend has said. In the case of all new ship design, we are looking very much for innovation in everything that we do. An example of that would be the immense changes in the Royal Navy's capabilities and its commitment to refits, and so on, for the new type 23 frigate, which is an immense improvement on its predecessors.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): May I commend my right hon. Friend for including in his statement a study into the use of helicopters for amphibious purposes? Will he record the fact that helicopters and more general purpose ships can provide much greater flexibility both for amphibious landings and for any other unforeseen possibilities that might arise?

Mr. Younger: I agree with my hon. Friend. The ability to use helicopters is a central part of the amphibious capability.

Mr. Martin J. O'Neill (Clackmannan): May I first thank you, Mr. Speaker, for extending Question Time in the way that you have? Initially, we intended to complain about the use of this device, but when we heard the Minister's answer we realised why he used this device instead of making a statement. As for gratitude, the Opposition can raise only a small cheer, because this is a wholly unsatisfactory statement. It extends only to the promise of a feasibility study, the terms of which we hope the Minster will be prepared to put into the Library so that they can be studied more closely. We are not sure about the exact nature of this type of craft, or about its timing. Will it appear in the 1988-89 Estimates, or in those of 1989-90 or 1990-91? We need to know the answer to this question so that shipbuilding jobs can be protected. We also need to know how long these people will have to wait before they get the kind of jobs that they are so well equipped to fill.

Mr. Younger: It seems to be extraordinarily easy to muddle the hon. Gentleman. It is a clear and welcome statement. It provides a firm future for the amphibious capability. The time scale that we are offering should enable that capability to be continued at precisely the moment when it will be needed. I have already said several times that the present ships, Intrepid and Fearless, will come to the end of their useful lives in about the middle 1990s. We hope to have replacements of one sort or another ready for them then. I hope that the hon. Gentleman feels that that is a satisfactory outcome. As for his first remark, it is somewhat unparliamentary of him to object to a device unless the content of the wording used is favourable. As a parliamentarian, I should have thought that he would be glad to have additional information, whether or not he approves of it.

Points of Order

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

3.48 pm

Mr. Richard Alexander (Newark): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it a point of order arising out of questions?

Mr. Alexander: Yes, Sir. During the questions which were answered this afternoon by the Leader of the House, almost all hon. Members heard two Opposition Members refer to my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) as telling lies——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must pre-empt the hon. Member. I heard all kinds of noise at that point, but I did not hear any specific Member being called a liar. We should moderate our language in this place. What was said did not, I believe, touch upon the integrity of the hon. Member concerned. I do not know who it was, anyway.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Could we know whether you have been able to make any progress in your inquiries into the allegations of interference with Members' phones?

Mr. Speaker: I have written to the hon. Member about that matter. I am surprised that he has not received my letter.

Public Expenditure (Scotland)

3.49 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the allocation of my public expenditure provision in the next three years.

Total expenditure on the programmes within my responsibility will be £7,957 million in 1987-88, which is £390 million or 5·1 per cent. above provision for this year, and some £540 million higher than the plans for 1987-88, published in the public expenditure White Paper last January. An annotated table giving the allocations for each service is available in the Vote Office and I am arranging for it to be published in the *Official Report*.

I have given high priority to the Health Service to enable it to meet growing demand for health care over the next three years. Spending on the health programme will be increased by £130 million, which is 2·5 per cent. more than forecast inflation, to £2,216 million in 1987-88. For hospital and community health services next year there will be £1,540 million, some £87 million or 6 per cent. more than for this year. I propose to hold a small amount of this extra cash in hand for specific service developments. Allocations to health boards will allow a further movement towards parity under the SHARE formula. In addition, boards will be able to retain resources released within their budgets through efficiency and economy measures.

Capital investment in the Health Service will be about £370 million over the next three years, and will maintain the programme of major hospital projects, continue the upgrading of the NHS estate, and allow for spending on new technology and computer hardware. Provision for local authority capital spending on social work has also been increased.

To meet fully the needs of law and order services, my plans provide £625 million in 1987-88. This includes sufficient for a modest increase over the present police establishment, and for increased costs of the prison service, including recruitment of an additional 126 prison officers next year. Capital expenditure within this programme over the three years will be nearly £150 million and will provide for a new prison at Peterhead and for new or improved courthouses.

There will be a total increase in education in 1987-88 of £214 million, which is 12 per cent. over provision for the current year. This includes the extra resources that we have said we will make available for an acceptable deal on pay and conditions of service for schoolteachers; and the £50 million unallocated education margin which I have already announced, as well as £6 million for additional non-teaching costs associated with standard grade and action plan. Capital expenditure on local authority education projects is planned to rise by £5 milion in 1987-88 to cover priority building work and equipment for science and technology subjects.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): When is this election?

Mr. Rifkind: The latter will be of special help in meeting the needs of standard grade. Centrally funded work on curricular reform in schools and further education is to be maintained and Scottish PICKUP extended. The importance of higher education has also been fully

recognised. An additional £6·1 million is being provided for the central institutions and the colleges of education. *[Interruption.]*

Central Government expenditure on the arts is being increased by £1·1 million or 5·5 per cent. I have authorised a start to the planning of the second phase of the new building for the National Library of Scotland and Causewayside; I am providing maintenance for the buildings of the three Scottish national institutions; and I am continuing to back staffing improvements at the Royal Museum of Scotland.

There will be an increase of £25 million or 10·8 per cent. in our provision for industry in 1987-99 compared with the plans published last year. The increase will go almost entirely to direct grants to industry to meet a continued upsurge in demand which brings valuable jobs and investment to Scotland. This follows a recent increase of £40 million in the amount available this year for such grants, mainly to provide for higher than expected investment during the transitional period for payment of old regional development grant.

My plans will permit consolidation of our policy of developing cost-effective agriculture and fishing industries with particular regard to supporting the rural economy. In response to representations from the agricultural community, I have made available an additional sum of £750,000 in each of 1987-88 and 1988-89 for the advisory services in Scotland.

For housing in 1987-88, total net provision will be £696 million, an increase of £51 million over provision for the current year, and £23 million higher than the previously planned provision for 1987-88. It remains my intention to concentrate resources on investment in particular, to meet the needs identified in local authorities' own stock and to accelerate the payment of private sector improvement grant claims which have already been approved. I have therefore increased net capital provision by 20 per cent., which is £90 million, to £548 million. for 1987-88 compared with 1986-87. I expect this to take up some 79 per cent. of the total housing programme compared to 72 per cent. this year.

When investment financed by net capital receipts is taken into account, the programme will allow for gross capital investment next year of £720 million, which is an increase of £82 million over the planned level of £638 million in 1986-87. I have made significant extra provision available for the Housing Corporation, the Scottish Special Housing Association and the new towns. I am also pleased to be able to recognise in a tangible way the importance of preserving our heritage by increasing the resources available for historic building grants by 80 per cent. next year and by even more thereafter. *[Interruption.]*

The fact that the Government have been able to announce these substantial increases while continuing to reduce public spending as a proportion of national income is a tribute to the success of our control of the economy since we came to office.

Following are the allocations:

£ million

	1986-87		*1987-88*		*1988-89*[3]		*1989-90*[3]
	Cmnd. 9702-II[1] *Provision*	*Estimated Outturn*	*Cmnd. 9702-II*[1] *Provision*	*Revised Provision*[2]	*Cmnd. 9702-II*[1] *Provision*	*Revised Provision*[2]	*Provision*[2]
Agriculture	188	189	183	186	190	190	190
Industry	304	344	232	257	240	240	250
Tourism	13	13	13	13	10	10	10
Transport	587	582	595	601	600	620	630
Housing	645	637	673	696	700	700	730
Other environmental services	588	616	596	609	600	630	650
Law, order and protective services	563	566	577	625	580	650	660
Education	1,792	1,945	1,796	1,956	1,800	2,040	2,090
Arts and Libraries	75	75	75	82	70	80	90
Health and Social Work	2,443	2,464	2,535	2,605	2,620	2,710	2,830
Other public services	112	112	114	118	120	120	120
All current expenditure not allocated to services	19	0	19	124	20	130	130
Nationalised Industries external financing	239	239	1	87	−120	−20	−170
	7,567	7,783	7,409	7,957	7,430	8,110	8,220

[1] White Paper (Cmnd. 9702-II) figures adjusted for pre-survey changes.
[2] Figures reflect survey changes. Some figures may be subject to detailed technical amendment.
[3] Figures for 1988-89 and 1989-90 are rounded to the nearest £10 million. Due to rounding, individual figures may not sum to totals.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has produced his statement with pride, but it is not a pride that can be justified. I fear that my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) was characteristically too generous with his interventions during the past few minutes.

The Secretary of State said that there is to be an increase of £390 million, or 5·1 per cent., over planned provision for this year. Of course, if we consider the outturn, the Government expect to spend £7,783 million in 1986-87. If we apply the inflation factor, we need £8,079 million to stand still. We are getting £7,957 million. The shortfall in real terms is £122 million *[Interruption.]* Hon. Gentlemen opposite mock. I ask whether it is not perfectly reasonable to look at what the Government say will be spent in 1986-87. If we look at what they offer for 1987-88, we will see, applying the Government's own inflation factor, that there is to be a cut of £122 million.

Does the Secretary of State accept that we have done very badly compared with certain other Departments,

[Mr. Donald Dewar]

particularly territorial Departments? According to the autumn statement figures, Wales got plus £15 million in real terms. Northern Ireland got plus £110 million, and we have this shortfall. I ask the Secretary of State to confirm to me what I think he said on television in my presence, that the reason for that is that he deliberately underclaimed on local authority expenditure in the coming year and that he regards the differential in the figures in favour of Wales as justifiable, because he supports it as a means of closing the gap between public spending in Wales and in Scotland. That is what he said. I should like him to confirm it in the House.

I shall briefly refer to the mixed news on individual spending totals. Some is not so good, some is bad and some is downright awful. In regard to the Health Service, the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that there is a 2·5 per cent. increase over inflation. It is difficult for me to comment on that statement because, in the annotated figures that he produced, he has put health and social work together. He has not given separate figures. That is unfortunate. In any event, the increase in real terms in the health and social work budget is £47 million, according to my calculations. Although I welcome that increase, it is less than 2 per cent. I predict that it will be inadequate in Health Service terms when we consider what happened to the hospital prices index over the past few years.

The Secretary of State said that there will be an increase of £214 million on education. I repeat the calculation I made. If we take the expected outturn figure for 1986-87, it is £1,945 million. Next year, he will give £1,956 million, a cash increase of only £11 million. To stand still, he would have had to give another £63 million.

Of course, there is an additional complicating factor. If the rejected teachers' pay package offered by the Secretary of State is implemented, it will involve another £60 million of local authority expenditure in 1987-88. The shortfall is £123 million. There is certainly no comfort for parents, who properly are worried and anxious about the decline in educational standards under this Government.

One important area is industry. It is brave to talk about a £25 million increase or an increase of 10·8 per cent. My heart rose when I saw that figure. Then I looked at the actual figures. We must use a translation code. We have an estimated outturn figure for 1986-87 of £344 million, and the 10·8 per cent. increase means that the Government will spend £257 million, a drop in cash terms from £344 million.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that the increase is merely a reduction in an expenditure cut that he previously predicted? It is little consolation to be told that it was planned to cut industry to £232 million. There has been some remission. The new total of £257 million is still well below what was spent for this year — £344 million. Applying the inflator, that is a reduction of £100 million in real terms. That shows how much special pleading and presentation has gone into the matter.

Will the Secretary of State comment on housing? I welcome an increase in real terms of £38 million but, as the statement itself says, some of it—I am told about £23 million—is going towards meeting the home improvement backlog, which is already a legal commitment of local authorities. This is the important point. The commentary that the Secretary of State's own Department produced in February this year shows, from 1980-81 to 1986-87, a decline in housing expenditure from £1,005 million in real terms to £588 million. Today's announcement, when measured against the scale of the crisis created by the right hon. and learned Gentleman's own Government, is totally and hopelessly inadequate.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman compares unfavourably with Oliver Twist. Oliver Twist asked only for more. The hon. Gentleman implies that today he has not even heard about the substantial increases in expenditure in the areas to which I referred. The hon. Gentleman has sought to give one of the most misleading presentations that I have heard from him for a long time. He began by implying that the figures announced represented £122 million less than would have been required to maintain public expenditure——

Mr. Dewar: On outturn.

Mr. Rifkind: Indeed. I refer the hon. Gentleman to outturn figures, which are not necessarily the correct base, because we do not know what the outturn for 1987-88 will be. But, even on outturn figures, the Scottish block will be 6 per cent. higher next year than on outturn for 1986-87, and in real terms that is still an increase of 2·3 per cent. What the hon. Gentleman was trying to do was mislead, because he did not take into account, or was wilfully unaware of, the fact that one of the reductions in the figures announced today is a reduction in the external financing limit for the electricity boards because Torness is completed. It may surprise the hon. Gentleman, but we shall not need to spend a further £150 million on Torness when the matter has been dealt with already.

The hon. Gentleman tried to compare Scottish expenditure with that of other territorial Departments. The figures that I announced today should confirm, if any confirmation is required, that the provision made available for Scotland is fully in line with the formula that has been applied over the years, with one qualification, which has been announced already, and the hon. Gentleman is well aware of it. I deliberately did not seek to apply the full local authority current expenditure provision because, if I had done so, not only would that have enabled local authorities to spend far more in Scotland than in England but it would have been an additional burden on Scottish ratepayers. Therefore, in no way do I wish to apologise for that. However, in every other respect the announcement made today follows the full formula entitlement.

The hon. Gentleman made a comparison with Wales, which gave us an astonishing example of the new egalitarian Socialist spirit in the Labour party. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the fact is that public expenditure in Scotland now is £2,210 per head, compared with £1,927 per head in Wales. If the hon. Gentleman is objecting to the fact that the Welsh are seeking to move towards a level of public expenditure comparable with that in Scotland, he shows a meanness of spirit of which I did not believe him capable.

On health expenditure, the hon. Gentleman again was carping and critical in his comments. I have to say to him that, irrespective of the social work aspect, the health programme will have resources that are 2·5 per cent. above inflation. That represents real growth in the health budget, which the hon. Gentleman should welcome rather than comment on as he did.

Likewise on education and housing, there are major increases in expenditure, which I announced. The hon.

Gentleman knows that the increase in capital that I announced for housing expenditure next year — which, indeed, follows similar increases last year — compares favourably with the massive cuts in housing capital that the Labour Government announced in their latter term in office.

One of the saddest comments by the hon. Gentleman was about the industry programme, because he is approximately one year out of date. He chooses to forget the fact that the industry programme resources were announced a year ago, for the likely level of expenditure in 1987-88. Today I haye announced an increase of some £25 million compared with what was previously planned for industry expenditure in 1987-88. That will be used for regional development grants. Once again, the hon. Gentleman finds himself unable to accept or welcome increases, and chooses to misrepresent what the announcements will achieve in Scotland in the next 12 months.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): May I ask my right hon. and learned Friend to buy the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) a box of matches to help him with his calculations? May I warmly congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on the additional expenditure, particularly in health, education and local authority capital expenditure? Will he confirm that, within the expenditure announced today, there are adequate resources to complete the scheduled improvements to the A75 from Gretna to Stranraer?

Mr. Rifkind: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments. I can confirm that the improvements to the A75 remain a high priority for the Government. Those projects will be going ahead.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Is the Secretary of State aware that more is certainly better than less, but also definitely not enough? May I specifically ask him whether he considered meeting the Main proposals on teachers' salaries within his budget, as there appears to have been enough money to do so, or was that decision not within his responsibility, but made in the Department of Education and Science? Does the extra cash for service development in the Health Service mean that there will be more provision to meet the AIDS crisis, despite the Victorian—or perhaps it should be described as pre-Christian — morality of the former Minister responsible for health, the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay)? What is the logic in the Secretary of State providing extra money to produce more jobs and simultaneously cutting the budget of the Highlands and Islands Development Board?

Mr. Rifkind: On the last point, I am not sure what the hon. Gentleman refers to. No announcements have been made today about the budget of the HIDB. Those discussions are continuing at present. However, I expect that the gross spending ability of the HIDB next year will be greater than this year, so the hon. Gentleman should not jump to conclusions.

The Government's position on the Main committee is well known. I took the view, as did my colleagues, that it would be inappropriate, when an increase of 16·4 per cent. was being offered — given that it was four times the current rate of inflation — that the increase should be other than phased, comparable to phasing that has been accepted by other groups in the community, which are receiving smaller increases in their salaries.

Discussions on AIDS are taking place at present. It is not possible to identify what expenditure may be appropriate in either the social work or health spheres, but the hon. Gentleman can be assured that the Government attach considerable priority to dealing with that problem. That will be borne in mind when conclusions are reached.

Mr. Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on this positive contribution to public services in Scotland. Is he aware that, among other things, my constituents will warmly welcome the increased housing allocation, but will he bear it in mind that Edinburgh district council does not give top priority to clearing the backlog of housing improvement grants — a matter raised by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar)? Will my right hon. and learned Friend use every power available to him to direct Edinburgh district council to use the money to clear up the backlog of housing improvement grants?

Mr. Rifkind: I appreciate the point made by my hon. Friend. In determining a very substantial increase in non-RHA allocation for housing expenditure, the Government have been conscious of the need to deal with the serious backlog of improvement grants that exists in Edinburgh and elsewhere. My hon. Friend can be assured that when individual allocations are determined for specific local authorities, we shall give consideration to ensuring that the resources provided will be used for the purposes intended.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): The Secretary of State said that the figure for public expenditure total for 1987-88 would be £7,957 million. He made a comparison between that and the figure for 1986-87 which was in the original public expenditure White Paper. Is not the real comparison with the estimated outturn for 1986-87? According to the Government's autumn statement, published only about a fortnight ago, the figure for 1986-87 will be £7,810 million. That gives an increase next year on these figures of £147 million, which is less than 2 per cent. in cash terms and therefore a reduction in real terms. Those are the Government's figures. I am quoting from today's statement and from the autumn statement. Are those figures accurate?

Mr. Rifkind: The right hon. Gentleman makes the same mistake as the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). He is not dealing with a real basis of comparison. I must repeat what I said to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden: if one wishes to compare outturn, the provision I announced today for the Scottish block is 6 per cent. higher in cash terms and 2·3 per cent. higher in real terms. If we make a comparison with the Scottish block provision announced last year, it is an 8·7 per cent. increase in cash and a 5 per cent. increase in real terms. Those are the figures and the House should be aware of them.

Mr. John Corrie (Cunninghame, North): I warmly congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on his statement. I welcome especially the extra expenditure for the National Health Service. Will it cover the refurbishing of older hospitals as well as new build? I also welcome the £750,000 for the agricultural advisory services, which will

[Mr. John Corrie]

be extremely welcome in agricultural areas. How does my right hon. and learned Friend see his statement helping in the rural areas?

Mr. Rifkind: I thank my hon. Friend. On capital investment in the National Health Service, we have seen the completion of 44 major new hospital developments since 1979. In future, I intend to keep capital spending at about the same cash level as this year. That should enable us to complete a further 36 major developments now under construction or in the course of being commissioned. They will provide more than 6,000 new beds. That will be a major impact of the sort that my hon. Friend has called for.

On the agricultural advisory services, my hon. Friend will be aware that there was anxiety that the transitional arrangements were placing too high a burden on them. The Government have responded to representations from the agricultural community by making available in each of the next three years an additional £750,000 for that purpose.

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Does the Secretary of State appreciate that the additional allocations for housebuilding in the new towns is woefully inadequate and represents about 1,400 houses spread over five new towns in the next three years? Those figures fall far short of the figures which were supplied to the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), by the Scottish Local Authorities with New Towns Forum? Will he pay attention to the people who run the new towns and act on the proper information he gets from them and not listen to his civil servants, who seem to be filling his head with nonsense?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is usually an Opposition Member who is slightly more courteous and responsive when he hears good news. He will be aware that the new towns have been asking for a lift on the moratorium on general needs housebuilding. I have announced such an ending to the moratorium and I have also made provision for the new towns that will enable them to complete a proportion of the general needs housing that they require. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman might at least have thanked me for that.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): Does my right hon. and learned Friend appreciate the gratitude expressed by myself on behalf of the people of Scotland for this munificent enlargement of the budget of Scotland for the coming year? Does he also appreciate that when the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), who never stops asking for bread, is given cake, he describes it as stone? Does he appreciate that at this time of Christmas the Labour party would describe the birth of Christ as a breach of the Licensed Inn Holders Act? Does he accept that the huge funds that he obtained, especially for agriculture and for the increase in the restoration of our buildings and heritage, will do much to enhance what the Government have already done for Scotland in that direction?

Mr. Rifkind: I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend. The increase for the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland represents a substantial improvement of approximately £2·7 million in the resources that will be available to it. We wish to make a major contribution towards ensuring that Scotland's built heritage is properly maintained and restored, as it is clearly in the interests of the Scottish community as a whole that that should be achieved.

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): Surely the Secretary of State is aware that the Scottish people will not be deceived by his latest piece of creative accounting? Is it not the usual Scottish Office statement — long on figures but short on cash? Will the Secretary of State tell the House why he was beaten in Cabinet once more and was unable to get the same amount of money in broad terms as is available to the Secretaries of State for Wales and for Northern Ireland? On independence, which is the only solution for Scotland, will he say that unemployment is now so serious that the amount of money produced by the Secretary of State under the statement is insufficient to deal with the problem?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman must make up his mind. He knows perfectly well that expenditure per head of the Scottish population is substantially higher than expenditure in England or Wales. Yet at the same time he chooses to carp and complain at the amount that is provided. What I have announced today is not cosmetic or playing with figures. It will allow the housing associations, the Health Service and educational provision in Scotland to improve in a real and substantive form. The hon. Gentleman can comment if he likes on whether the increases are large enough or insufficiently large. What he cannot question, if he wishes to be honest to the House, is that what I have announced today represents substantial improvements in each of the areas on which I have commented.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on rejecting the desperate and despairing criticisms — the scrabbling around for criticisms — that we have heard from Opposition Members. What he said in relation to police establishments will be warmly welcomed by law-abiding citizens in Eastwood and no doubt elsewhere. Is he aware that in the past the Labour group on Strathclyde regional council has pursued a policy of keeping police establishments below authorised establishments? Would it not be an outrage if the new provision that he has announced was not used for law and order in Strathclyde?

Mr. Rifkind: Yes, indeed. I agree with my hon. Friend. If the new provision is not used for law and order in Strathclyde, the regional council, as the police authority, would have to take responsibility for it. With regard to the attitude of the Opposition on overall public expenditure, I say to my hon. Friend that if I had announced a doubling of public expenditure, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) would have described it as a concealed cut.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): I almost greeted those figures with joy. I was about to congratulate the Minister until his figures were exposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan). However, that does not stop me from congratulating the Secretary of State for

Scotland on taking a step in the right direction. I congratulate him on taking some of the advice that I have been offering him during the past few years.

I understand that six local authorities will receive additional rate funds. I do not know which six, but I know that Kilmarnock and Loudoun is not among them. I wonder why, when one considers its genuine efforts to keep its expenditure to a reasonable level while at the same time maintaining necessary services. Will the Secretary of State reconsider the plight of Kilmarnock and Loudoun and perhaps add it to the six?

Mr. Rifkind: We examined carefully the representations from each of the local authorities. Naturally, if any new matters are put before us that we have not previously considered; they will be taken into account. I welcome very much the hon. Gentleman's opening comments and look forward to the day when he will be shadow Secretary of State for Scotland.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that we have an important Scottish Bill after this statement and that many of the hon. Members who wish to speak now will also wish to take part in that debate. I ask for brief questions.

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Banff and Buchan): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on the extra £750,000 that will be given to the advisory services in 1987, 1988 and 1989. It will certainly be welcomed in rural areas. Is it his intention to encourage local authorities in rural areas to give some of the extra money to the sheltered installation projects for the elderly and infirm? There are many such projects in my constituency and others which should be developed.

Finally, may I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend's statement that 126 new prison officers will be recruited next year, and about the provision of the new prison at Peterhead? Is it still his intention to ensure that work on the new Peterhead prison commences in March 1987, which would be greatly welcomed by the prison officers in my constituency?

Mr. Rifkind: We certainly hope to make maximum progress with the improvements at Peterhead. The resources that I announced today will help us to achieve that. I thank my hon. Friend for his other comments. On housing, I greatly appreciate the strong welcome that was given to our proposal by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, which acknowledges that the increases being given to housing associations in Scotland meet the requirements that they have identified.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): I listened to what the Secretary of State said about AIDS. Does he recognise that Edinburgh has a tragic and unique problem and that within a year we shall be confronted with up to 100 cases? Will he assure the House that we shall have an early announcement of an additional allocation for Lothian health board to deal with the problem?

Mr. Rifkind: Naturally, the provision that I have announced today represents a substantial increase in the overall resources for health boards in Scotland. The individual allocations will be determined subsequently and the SHARE formula will be applied as it has been applied in the past. I have no doubt that Lothian health board will receive a full proportion of the increased resources available.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Will my right hon. and learned Friend put into perspective the gripes of Labour Members? The Labour Government who claimed to care cut the hospital building programme in Scotland by 30 per cent. when they were in office. Will he accept my congratulations on introducing proposals that will benefit several areas of Scottish life, especially health, education and housing? Does he recognise that perhaps the most valuable encouragement lies in the figures which he gave for support for industry? They suggest that investment in Scottish private industry is extremely buoyant. That is where the money will come from to pay for all these good things.

Mr. Rifkind: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. During the next three years, capital expenditure in the Health Service will total about £370 million. That will enable us to maintain a full progammme of improvements.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): Will the Secretary of State give us his working estimate of how many new jobs will be created in the Scottish economy by the effects of his statement? In which areas of employment will those jobs appear?

Mr. Rifkind: It is impossible to give a precise calculation, but the substantial increases in housing and health expenditure are bound to have some implications for employment. We do not believe that expenditure by itself can solve the problems of unemployment. They will be resolved in other ways. We have tried to identify areas of the Scottish economy where improvements must be made. They can be identified in the Health Service, housing and the other areas that I mentioned. The general growth in the economy has enabled us to increase public expenditure while the overall proportion of the national income that goes towards public expenditure nevertheless continues to decline. That is a satisfactory outcome, which would not have been possible without a robust economic policy during the past few years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that average incomes in Scotland are the highest in the United Kingdom, with the exception of the south-east of England, and that public expenditure on roads, housing and health is 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. more per head than the United Kingdom average? Does that not nail the lie from Labour Members that the Government do not give priority to Scotland? Will he confirm that this arises from a formula? How does he think the formula for funding would be affected if we had a Scottish Assembly?

Mr. Rifkind: There is no doubt that a Scottish Assembly with additional tax-raising powers, as proposed by the Opposition, would mean that Scotland was the most heavily taxed part of the United Kingdom. That would be an enormous disincentive to industry contemplating investment in Scotland.

I agree with my hon. Friend that Scotland has received a higher proportion of public expenditure. We should realise that there are powerful arguments as to why that is appropriate. Although Scotland has only 10 per cent. of the population, it has about 40 per cent. of the land area, so the provision of roads, transport, schools, hospitals and

[Mr. Rifkind]

other facilities must take into account those major geographical problems as well as the island communities and sparsley populated rural communities. Scotland has substantially greater needs, but my hon. Friend is correct to say that the Government have fully identified and responded to those needs.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Does the Secretary of State recollect the representations that he received from me, my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), West Lothian district health council and Lothian health board on the difficult problems of phase 2 of the new general hospital at Livingston? When he refers to 36 projects, does this mean that phase 2 is on time? When he talks about the upgrading of the NHS estate, can he say whether some of those funds will be made available for the existing Bangour hospital, which is likely to be used for many years but where repairs are creating great problems?

Mr. Rifkind: I understand that we have just approved phase 2 of the project. The hon. Gentleman's other points are more detailed matters with which the health board will deal.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): My right hon. and learned Friend confirmed several times that public expenditure per head in Scotland is far in excess of that in England. He will also confirm that the increases announced today will widen the gap even further? He has tried to explain the reasons for it, but will he give me an undertaking that he will fight in Cabinet to bring the expenditure figures in the west midlands close to those in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: The increased provision that I announced today follows directly from the application of the formula that has been used for many years in determining the Scottish proportion of expenditure as compared with that of England. There will be no widening of any gap. The formula has not been changed in either direction. Some parts of the United Kingdom clearly have needs which are greater than those of other parts. It must be for my hon. Friend to argue the case for the west midlands, which I am sure he will do eloquently.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): In the light of the huge number of redundancies announced a few days ago by Scott Lithgow, will the Secretary of State sanction increased financial support to the Inverclyde initiative, which is proceeding slowly? Will he give assistance to solve the serious housing needs in Inverclyde? Will he meet Sir Simpson Stevenson, the provost of Inverclyde, in the next few days?

Mr. Rifkind: At present, I am not likely to meet Sir Simpson Stevenson. The allocations to housing authorities are yet to be determined, but the overall resources available for housing have been increased significantly. The Government strongly support the Inverclyde initiative. The increased jobs which it is seeking to identify are likely to be achieved on the basis of the programme that it has put forward. It has already identified projects that would meet about half the target number of jobs that was identified when the project began.

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that his announcement of extra public spending, without associated extra taxation and borrowing, arises because of the success of the Government's economic policy in recent years? Will he confirm that the most welcome increase in industrial investment reflects expected higher industrial investment and that there will be no compensating adjustment in industrial support to the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board?

Mr. Rifkind: These matters are still under consideration but I would not expect any problems of the kind to which my hon. Friend referred.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): How many Scots will still be waiting for houses and how many Scots will still be out of work during the period covered by the statement? Has the Secretary of State paid any heed to the exhortation of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland last week, when he called on the Government to make Scotland into one nation again?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman must be aware that, as his political party's whole ideology is based on a class concept of society, he should not be lecturing others about the need to achieve one nation.

Mr. Alexander Pollock (Moray): I would like to give a particular welcome to the extra funding that is being made available to the work of the Housing Corporation in Scotland. Can my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that the corporation makes a significant contribution to resolving the problem of Scotland's homeless, in many cases giving 100 per cent. funding to the work of local housing associations in my constituency? Does he agree that today's news will be of particular benefit and help to the elderly and single homeless, for whom the housing association work offers the only realistic prospect, in the foreseeable future, of rehousing?

Mr. Rifkind: I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. Ever since we came into office in 1979, the Government have given an enormous priority to the housing association movement. The figures announced by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State on Friday reveal a provision for the housing association movement in Scotland of £123 million, and the federation itself has paid a glowing tribute to my hon. Friend's announcement.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Will not the Secretary of State confess that he let the cat out of the bag at the end of his statement, when he claimed that on the one hand he was increasing money spent on public services and at the same time cutting public expenditure? Was not the whole of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's presentation today a conjuring trick and an illusion?

Let us test the Secretary of State. Will the urban aid cuts be restored? Will the cuts in provision to the children's panels be restored? Will the staff at Auchincruive college, currently being laid off, be given their jobs back? Will the factories that the people in Cumnock and Doon Valley wish to be built in the area actually be built? That will be the test of who is telling the truth.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman's grasp of economics is almost as profound as his grasp of international relations.

Mr. Foulkes: Thank you. I take that as a compliment.

Mr. Rifkind: It is precisely because the economy is growing under this Government that we are able to increase public expenditure while seeing public expenditure represent a smaller proportion of national income.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will call the hon. Member for Darlington if he was present at the beginning of the statement.

Mr. Fallon *indicated dissent.*

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Welfare of Livestock (Prohibited Operations) (Amendment) Regulations 1986 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Ordered,

That the draft proposal by the Commission of the European Communities for a Council Regulation on the granting of financial support to transport infrastructure projects set out in the Department of Transport's unnumbered Explanatory Memorandum of 1st December 1986 be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

State Security

4.32 pm

Mr. D. M. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want to raise a point of order about questions, and this is a legitimate point of order.

During the course of the proceedings in New South Wales about the Wright case, Sir Robert Armstrong, in the course of giving evidence, said that there were aspects of Mr. Chapman Pincher's book that breached security. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that there were a number of comments from either side of the House about whether it was in the national interest that those inclusions should be in the book.

During an interview this morning on Radio 4, Mr. Chapman Pincher said——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have no connection with Radio 4. I must have a question that I can answer.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. During the course of the interview, Mr. Pincher said that he had been authorised to write his book——

Mr. Speaker: Order. These are legitimate questions to ask of a Minister or of the Prime Minister, but not to ask of me. I have no knowledge of these matters. I am here to ensure that Standing Orders are complied with. I do not think that this point of order has anything to do with Standing Orders.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: May I say, Mr. Speaker, that as a Member of this House, one must be allowed in all fairness, very briefly, to develop a point of order. If you were to say that I was wrong to do so before I had even reached the point of order itself——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member knows the rules as well as I. I can rule only on matters for which I have responsibility. I have no responsibility for the case that is going on, or for what is said on Radio 4.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: There is a question that has been answered today. I tabled a question to the Attorney-General, asking——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry, but I cannot deal with a point of order on that matter.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a legitimate matter for debate, but it is not a legitimate matter of order. I am sorry, but I cannot hear the hon. Gentleman any further on this matter.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No, I am not taking it.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Surely the question is——

Mr. Speaker: Order. *[Interruption.]* Order.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask for the protection of the Chair. It may be withi.. your recollection, Mr. Speaker, that I was the late Dick Crossman's Parliamentary Private Secretary. It is a matter of great concern as to why on earth everything should be

[Mr. Dalyell]

made public in that court other than the points referring to the actions against the late Dick Crossman and the Prime Minister whom I served. How is it——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Again, I must tell the hon. Gentleman that I have no responsibility for what is happening in that court. I am responsible only for matters of order in this House. These are perfectly legitimate points to raise in debate. There are plenty of opportunities to do that, but the matter should not be raised through me.

The Clerk will now proceed to read the Orders of the Day.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind) *rose——*

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry to pursue a matter that I raised at Prime Minister's questions concerning the case of Mr. John Lee, a reporter on the *Croydon Midweek Post*, who has been charged under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman cannot pursue that now. First, it is a continuation of Question Time and not a matter for me. Even if the gentleman in question were a constituent of mine, it would not be a matter for me.

Mr. Madden: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. No, I cannot take it. It is unfair on those waiting to take part in the debate.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: You do not know what the point of order is, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: It is unfair to seek to continue Question Time through the Chair. There is no conceivable point of order for me on this matter. The hon. Gentleman raised the matter at Question Time and received an answer from the Lord Privy Seal. That, as far as I am concerned, is the end of it.

Mr. Madden: Further to my point of order——

Mr. Speaker: I will give the hon. Gentleman one final chance to raise a point of order for me; otherwise he must desist.

Mr. Madden: I am seeking your guidance, Mr. Speaker, and I make it clear that the Gentleman in question is not a constituent of yours. When I put my question at Prime Minister's Question Time, you interjected, Mr. Speaker, and asked whether the matter was sub judice. I am seeking your guidance now on whether the matter is sub judice. I understand that Mr. Lee has been charged, so the matter is not sub judice. However, I would appreciate it if you could make inquiries and give guidance to the House, as I am sure that many hon. Members may wish to pursue the matter by question and other means and we would appreciate your advice on whether that is permissible.

Mr. Speaker: That is hypothetical at the moment. If the matter is raised, I shall judge whether it is sub judice. *[Interruption.]* Mr. Rifkind.

Orders of the Day

Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

4.39 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The Bill is a radical and reforming measure which will abolish a discredited and unpopular local tax. It is well known why the domestic rating system has become completely discredited, and I shall not go into that in detail. One can sum up by saying that the unpopularity and unacceptability of domestic rates in Scotland stems from their unfairness and unaccountability, and the arbitrary and capricious way in which they apply.

One needs only a short time to see the force of such an argument. The unfairness of the rating sustem has existed for years, but it has become more profound as the size of rates bills has increased, and one sees the illogicality of a system of local taxation which excludes such a substantial proportion of the adult population.

If we exclude spouses of ratepayers, who can be said to be influenced by local authorities' rates decisions, Scotland is left with an estimated three quarters of a million adults who, because they are neither the owners nor the tenants of residential property, are not liable under the system of local taxation. That figure represents some 20 per cent. of all adults in Scotland. I have yet to hear from the Opposition, or any other quarter, a logical or rational reason why such a substantial proportion of the adult population should be excluded from the sole system of local taxation in Scotland.

We should imagine the likely reaction of the Opposition to my introducing a Bill which would set in place a tax in Scotland which excluded ab initio 20 per cent. of the adult population, not because they are unable to pay, not because they do not benefit from the services for which the tax is being raised or for any other rational or logical reason, but simply because they happen not to own or rent domestic residential property. I would be accused on all sides of introducing a system which is grossly unfair, totally unacceptable, does not relate to ability to pay and arbitrarily excludes large numbers of the adult community.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): If that is so, why did the Government twice back rates so clearly, and why did the Secretary of State subscribe rates?

Mr. Rifkind: Like many others, we have spent several years looking for an ideal alternative which would command the enthusiastic support of the whole population, including the hon. Gentleman. He should be aware that in the real world the question to ask is whether the existing system is tolerable. If it is not, it is necessary to replace it.

My criticism of domestic rates — that it excludes a substantial proportion of the adult community — also applies to the alliance's preference of a local income tax. It, too, would exclude a large section of the adult community and be equally as unacceptable as the present system for that reason.

I have to tell the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) in particular that if, as he doubtless will, he criticises the Government's proposals, he will have to do slightly better than he has in the past when defending his support for the existing rating system—a system which continues to exclude some 20 per cent. of the adult population on no rational or logical basis.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): For the sake of the record, will the Secretary of State tell us what proportion of the adult population in Scotland do not pay income tax?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman anticipates what I was about to say next. I have demonstrated why I believe that the existing system is unfair, but there is a second consideration, and that is its profound lack of accountability with regard to the relationship between the adult population and local authorities.

The hon. Member for Garscadden made a comparison with income tax. I shall answer that point explicitly and specifically. He is aware that the whole of the adult population pay through their taxes to meet the requirements of central Government. The whole population pay value added tax and other indirect taxes, and a substantial proportion pay income tax. There is no adult in the land who is exempt from both direct and indirect taxes, and the Government's decisions on expenditure have to be financed through the taxation system by direct and indirect taxes.

A system of accountability exists with regard to central Government because the whole of the adult population, by direct or indirect means, or, in many cases, by both, fund the Government's expenditure requirements. With local taxation, however, because rates are the sole source of local authority taxation, a substantial proportion of the adult population make no contribution at all, so there is a profound lack of accountability.

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton (Fife, Central): The right hon. and learned Gentleman is contradicting himself. The people who are not paying rates now pay direct or indirect taxes which go to the local authority, so they all pay, directly or indirectly, to the local council.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman has made a profound but entirely irrelevant observation. We are trying to identify whether, when a local authority reaches its decisions on expenditure, those whom it asks for a democratic mandate or the introduction of those expenditure measures are those who will fund the measures, either in part or in whole. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that, while such a principle applies with regard to central Government expenditure, it does not apply with regard to a substantial proportion of the adult population and the decisions of local authorities.

The present system is profoundly unfair, lacks accountability and applies arbitrarily and capriciously. I say that not simply because of the well documented evidence of individuals in one property who pay the same as many adults who live in a comparable property, which is a well-known anomaly and injustice which the Opposition seem happy to tolerate indefinitely, but because there are other ways in which the system is arbitrary and capricious.

The system is a profound disincentive to the improvement of homes. Even relatively modest improvements incur an increase in tax. It is extraordinary that whereas when a growing family needs larger accommodation the rest of the tax system provides tax advantages to help cope with the additional expenditure, the rating system imposes an additional tax burden if people move to larger accommodation.

Mr. John Mark Taylor (Solihull): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that there are many of us in England who would very much like his colleagues to be prevailed upon to provide for England a system similar to that which he is proposing for Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: I am happy to tell my hon. Friend that his wish will be granted, because my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and the rest of the Government are as enthusiastic about the proposals for England and Wales as they are about those for Scotland.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): I am stunned into intervening by the comment of my hon. Friend the Member for Solihull (Mr. Taylor). Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that it is precisely because these proposals are being trailed as a pilot for England and Wales that some of us are most unhappy and cannot find ourselves able to support the Bill?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is misinformed. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has made clear, similar legislation in respect of Wales and Scotland is to be proposed. It will not depend on the implementation of the Scottish proposals, because the Scottish proposals will come into effect only from 1989, by which time English legislation will have been put to the House for its approval.

Mr. Jim Craigen (Glasgow, Maryhill): One feature of income tax and VAT is that they apply equally in Scotland, England and Wales. How can the Secretary of State justify introducing a half-baked scheme which does not in any way guarantee that Scottish ratepayers will be better off, and doing nothing about the non-domestic sector in Scotland, England or Wales?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman has not read our proposals. That criticism is pretty rich coming from a Scottish Labour Member of Parliament who subscribes to the proposal that a Scottish Assembly should have the power to levy an additional tax on top of income tax and other taxes paid by the Scottish public.

We have an existing system that is unfair, unaccountable, capricious and arbitrary in its application. Therefore, on that basis we are entitled to compare the existing structure with what the Government propose. I do not believe that it can seriously be doubted that a universal community charge of the kind proposed by the Government will ensure a level of accountability that is fundamental to any democratic system.

From a very early stage we have made it clear that we have accepted as right and proper that those who are on the lowest incomes should be protected from the full effect of the community charge. The Bill makes it clear that a rebate system will apply, and that will ensure that those who are on the lowest incomes will not be expected to pay the full community charge. I shall come to the detail later in my comments, and I simply wish to put forward the basic points now.

[Mr. Rifkind]

The Opposition's argument that under our proposals all will pay the same is not only profoundly wrong, but entirely misleading about their effect on those who listen to such observations. The hon. Member for Garscadden knows perfectly well that all will not pay the same and that those on the lowest incomes will be protected from the full effects of the community charge. In many cases a large proportion of the community charge will not be paid by those whose incomes do not justify its payment.

I wish to go through the details of the Bill and discuss its main proposals.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): The right hon. and learned Gentleman will recall that in the Green Paper, "Paying for Local Government", he said that special consideration would be given to the two island councils in my constituency with regard to the new proposals. I have gone through the Bill, and I cannot see where the special considerations are catered for. Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman will say what they are and, when he goes through the Bill, give some indication of them?

Mr. Rifkind: I understand that one of the main concerns of the island councils is the implication of a national non-domestic rate of the kind proposed as the ultimate objective of the Government. If the hon. Gentleman has studied the Bill, he will be aware that it simply proposes the indexing of the non-domestic sector. That does not in any way produce the kind of difficulty which the island councils have identified. Therefore, for the reasons that I have stated, the Bill ought to be acceptable to them.

The first three clauses of part I provide for the abolition of domestic rates. A firm and clear timetable is set out. The process will begin on 1 April 1989, by which time all domestic subjects will have been identified in the valuation roll. The Bill provides a mechanism for sharply reducing the rate poundage to be applied to these subjects in the three years beginning on 1 April 1989, and domestic rates will have gone entirely by 1 April 1992. That, above all, is what the Bill offers the people of Scotland, and the Opposition will challenge it at their peril.

Clause 4 provides important safeguards for non-domestic ratepayers. No longer will they be subject to sudden sharp increases in their rate bills — something which has been very damaging to business of all sizes in Scotland. Instead, the Bill provides a ceiling to be calculated each year from 1989-90 onwards, pegged to the rate of inflation, within which local authorities must set their non-domestic rate. This provision has been widely welcomed by representatives of industry and commerce in Scotland. Indeed, only yesterday the Scottish chambers of commerce, representing many thousands of small businesses, repeated their total support for the Government's proposals.

Concern has been expressed that local authorities might take action to raise artificially the starting point for the process of determing the non-domestic ceiling as set out in clause 4. There would be no purpose in this. Under the provisions of the clause the Secretary of State would be empowered to prescribe the base rate rather than using the actual 1988-89 figure, and this would be done in circumstances where it was clear that a distortion had been made for example, through the abnormal use of balances. In view of the existence of this provision, I doubt whether local authorities in Scotland will act in the manner suggested. In the long term we will be aiming to seek harmonisation of the valuation systems north and south of the border, as a preliminary to moving to a uniform business rate.

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): I wonder whether my right hon. and learned Friend can explain to the House why, given the extent of the distortions that have been caused in the commercial sector, and also for organisations such as sports clubs and other bodies, it is necessary to wait before going ahead with ensuring that the valuation methods used in Scotland broadly reflect those in England?

Mr. Rifkind: Talks are already taking place at a professional level among those involved in valuation matters north and south of the border. It is clearly desirable to achieve progress towards a common valuation, for the reasons identified by my hon. Friend. The Government are committed to it, and I know that my hon. Friend will welcome that commitment.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): Will the uniform business rate be uniform within Scotland, or uniform within Great Britain?

Mr. Rifkind: These matters are not covered in the Bill because, at this stage, we are simply introducing the index of non-domestic rates. They are matters that must be identified and dealt with when proposals of that kind are put before the House.

Part II creates the new system of community charges and the associated arrangements for registration and collection. Clause 9 introduces the charges, which are to replace rates as the means of meeting local authority expenses net of other sources of income. The focal point of the new system is the personal community charge, imposed under clause 10. This is the means by which the new system will provide its essential element of accountability, since the personal community charge is to be payable by everyone aged 18 or over with their sole or main residence in each local authority area. There will be only very limited exemptions — those who are still receiving child benefit, and those who are resident in prisons or hospitals. Otherwise, it is intended that the charge should be for practical purposes a universal obligation on the adult population, although there will of course be a rebate scheme to protect those for whom payment of the full amount would be too heavy a burden. I shall return to this when I deal with the provisions of part IV.

Clause 10 does not attempt to provide a statutory definition of what is meant by the concept of sole or main residence. Much has been heard from critics of our proposals about the difficulty of defining this. We should not lose sight of the fact that for the vast bulk of people who live in one place at one time there will be no room for any reasonable doubts. For many others, for example with second homes or pieds-a-terre, there would similarly be no doubt about what constitutes their main residence. All the examples of the difficult cases which have been quoted show that no simple rule, such as a minimum period for residence or counting the number of days in a year spent in each place, would always give the right answer. Quite

simply, a body of case law will have to be allowed to build up, just as has happened for electoral registration and mortgage tax relief.

There is one case, however, where a simple rule does seem sensible. It is our intention that students should be liable for the community charge and that they should be registered throughout their course of study at their term-time address. The alternative would be that they should register and de-register several times a year, which would be an unnecessary complication.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Does the Secretary of State acknowledge that the consequence of what he has just said is that students who are normally resident in England but are pursuing a course at a Scottish university will be required to pay the community charge? The consequence of that will be that Scottish universities will find it difficult to compete in attracting students, because English local authorities will not provide the difference for the community charge. As rector of Dundee university, I can say that the Scottish universities are concerned about the Bill's implications.

Mr. Rifkind: There are a good number of students who pay rates at the moment. They are not exempt because they come from south of the border. We have made it clear that students eligible for grant will receive a flat rate increase to help them to meet their community charge liability. That will be available to all those who are eligible for grant, even where the present parental contribution means that they receive no payment. That helps to meet the point made by the hon. Gentleman.

Clause 12 provides for a standard community charge which is payable on houses which cease to be liable for domestic rates, but where there is no registered resident paying the personal community charge. The charge will thus be payable in respect of second homes, as proposed in the Green Paper. The owners of these will thereby continue to make a contribution towards the costs of local services in the area of their second home. The standard community charge will also be payable on other empty houses, although we envisage using the powers of the clause to provide exemption for empty houses which are uninhabitable and to provide a period of grace after a house becomes empty before the charge is liable to be paid in respect of it. The amount of the charge will be determined by each local authority, as a multiplier set for the whole of its area of between one and two units of the personal community charge.

As I have explained, the personal community charge will be as near as possible to a universal obligation on all adult residents. We have to recognise, however, that some individuals may be very mobile and that it would be unreasonable to seek to keep track of them through the registration system. The large majority of individuals in this category live in various forms of communal establishment, such as hostels. Clause 13, therefore, makes provision for a collective community charge to be imposed in such circumstances. This will be payable by the landlord, who will be empowered to recover contributions from individual residents, limited to the amount they would have been due to pay in any period had they been liable for the personal community charge. I stress that I do not envisage widespread use being made of the collective community charge in Scotland, and in the guidance to be given to registration officers I intend that the importance of achieving individual registration wherever possible should be stressed.

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): Does the Secretary of State accept that we have hostels for working men and women in Glasgow and all our major cities? As I understand it, he is suggesting that the owners of those buildings will be required daily to calculate what a resident owes. Will that not mean that increased burdens will be imposed on the single adult homeless in our cities?

Mr. Rifkind: It does not mean anything of the sort. I notice that the Scottish Council for the Single Homeless has said that it would prefer a personal community charge to a collective one. Naturally, my hon. Friends and I will wish to give detailed consideration to that point to see whether it would be administratively preferable. The objective is to ensure that the individuals concerned pay the equivalent sum irrespective of whether it is calculated on a personal basis or through a collective system. There will be no opportunity for an additional burden, such as the hon. Gentleman appears to fear.

The rest of part II deals with procedures for registration and collection of the community charge. Clause 14 provides that the assessor should be the community charge registration officer. This will be a statutory post, with the same degree of statutory independence as the assessor enjoys at present. Clause 14 requires local authorities to provide sufficient resources to enable the task of registration to be carried out properly. The reason for giving these duties to the assessor is that they relate closely to his existing work in a number of respects. There will be an important interface between the valuation system and the provisions which govern liability for the community charge, and assessors have considerable experience of the operation of the electoral registration system, the techniques of which are in some respects similar to community charge registration, although the two systems will be entirely distinct.

Clause 16 provides for the initial establishment of the register. The timetable we have in mind is that by early summer 1988 the registration officer should be in a position to start the first canvass. He will then prepare the register, which will come into force at a date to be prescribed in the autumn of 1988. Clause 16 provides that at that stage every individual who is registered should receive a personal notification which will include details of the contents of his entry and of his rights of appeal. We have decided to have a rolling register, kept continuously up to date, and the provisions designed to achieve this will come into force at this stage. Clause 17 provides for amendments to be made to the register and for those affected to be notified, once again with information about their rights of appeal.

Clause 18 confers rights of appeal in relation to registration. Initially, as with electoral registration, appeals may be made to the registration officer and rules will be prescribed governing how he is to deal with these. Anyone dissatisfied with this decision can appeal to the sheriff. Detailed provisions are made to deal with cases where someone is appealing simultaneously about registration in two difference areas. I am satisfied that, overall, these provisions will ensure prompt and fair treatment for those in dispute about their registration and

[Mr. Rifkind]

that, as I have explained ealier, a body of case law to enable difficult questions to be decided will swiftly build up.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): As the Secretary of State knows, the electoral register is 7 per cent. wrong when it is printed and the person responsible for filling in the form is the head of the household. Will the head of the household be responsible for filling in the new form? How will the Secretary of State attempt to overcome the 7 per cent. fault in the system at present?

Mr. Rifkind: That is a perfectly fair question. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that the electoral register is filled in only once a year, so anything in it that is incorrect because of the movement of population cannot be corrected until 12 months later. It is intended that the community charge register should be a rolling register, precisely to deal with the type of problem that the hon. Gentleman has identified. I shall deal directly with the question of the individual who will be responsible for filling in the register.

Adequate flows of information will be the key to establishing and maintaining a satisfactory register, and clauses 19 and 20 provide for this. The registration officer will have access to information about those, using other local authority services to check whether they are registered, though the Bill contains power to place certain information "off limits". I envisage that this will be used to ensure that police records and certain information in the social work domain is not used in the registration process.

One of the most important sources of information will be canvassing, and clause 19 introduces the concept of a responsible person at each address who will be under a duty to provide information to the registration officer, either in response to general canvasses or particular inquiries. The concept of a responsible person, simply defined as the owner or tenant in the majority of cases, has been introduced in response to criticisms that the earlier concept of a "head of household" was outmoded and might prove to be undefinable. There will be a system of civil penalties, imposed by the registration officer, on responsible persons who fail to provide information or who give false information. We have adopted this approach in preference to the earlier proposal that failure to provide information or the provision of false inforation should be a criminal offence. The provisions now contained in the Bill have been generally welcomed. [HON. MEMBERS: "By whom?"] I am referring to the proposals in the clauses with which I am dealing.

As I have explained, the community charge will be for practical purposes a universal liability, and I therefore consider it reasonable that individuals should be under an obligation to take steps to ensure that they meet that liability. Clause 20 therefore requires individuals who become liable to pay the personal or standard community charge or whose circumstances change to notify the registration officer. No specific offence is associated with failure to comply with this duty, but the clause provides that any individual who is identified as having avoided registration shall be liable to pay the amount of the charge due from the date when his residence began, together with interest. If he has avoided liability for three months or more he will also be subject to a surcharge of 30 per cent. of the amount due, subject to a minimum of £50. These provisions are similar to the civil penalties associated with other forms of tax evasion, for example in relation to VAT. Overall, I am satisfied that the provisions that we now propose for setting up and maintaining the register and for enforcing registration are capable of operating satisfactorily, producing good coverage, without imposing undue burdens on individuals.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): What will happen if an individual persists in non-payment?

Mr. Rifkind: Exactly the same will happen as happens at present. We are told that there have been 25,000 applications for debt recovery of non-payment of rates in Strathclyde alone. Therefore, the non-payment of one's local tax will not be a new problem. There are well recognised debt recovery procedures for those who do not pay their community charge.

Mr. Martin: What about 18-year-olds?

Mr. Rifkind: Many such individuals are at present ratepayers. If they fail to pay their rates, they are subject to exactly the same debt recovery measures as will be appropriate in future for non-payment of community charge.

Mr. Martin: This legislation will cover a great many people under the age of 21. What property will debt collectors be able to get back from them if they evade tax? Guitars? Hi-Fi? Various other pieces of equipment? In houses which I know of with teenagers, those are their only belongings.

Mr. Rifkind: We should be clear about what we are discussing. If we are discussing an 18 or 19-year-old who is in employment——

Mr. Martin: Most of them are out of work.

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman will contain himself for a moment, I shall answer him. If he is referring to young adults who are in employment, he knows perfectly well that they should not be treated any differently from anyone else who is in employment. If he is referring to young adults who are unemployed, why should the rules that apply to a single unemployed person aged 19 be different from those that apply to a single unemployed person aged 35, 45 or 55? The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that a person who is unemployed may be entitled to a significant rebate, which will depend on his total income at any given moment. However, the hon. Gentleman also knows that an 18-year-old is likely to have far fewer commitments than a person several years older. If the hon. Gentleman is really concerned about such matters, he will be aware that people in that age group expect to be treated as adults in every other respect. Therefore, to suggest that they should somehow be exempted from local taxation to which the rest of the community are liable is not only profoundly illogical, but entirely meaningless.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I listened carefully to the Secretary of State when he spoke about the enforcement procedures for non-payment of rates or the community charge. Does he accept that when he brings in the new 20 per cent. contribution for those who claim benefit, he will be asking local authorities to pursue much smaller sums of money? At present local authorities may find it worth while to pursue somebody

for non-payment of a year's annual rate, but they will not find it economic to pursue somebody through the courts for sums of less than £50.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is referring to the social security legislation which the House has already approved. It is not appropriate for me to comment further on that at present.

Clause 21 provides that every individual will be able to inspect all the register entries relating to him at any time. Otherwise, only a list of addresses and names, like the electoral register, will be available for public inspection. That will safeguard private information—for example, whether a particular address is somebody's second home.

Clause 23 and schedule 2 make provision for the levying and collection of community charges which in many respects will be similar to the present arrangements for rates, although the Bill envisages a pattern of 12 monthly instalments rather than 10. District councils, new town development corporations and the Scottish Special Housing Association will collect community charges from people living in houses which they let, on a similar basis to their involvement in rate collection at present. This will ensure that the administrative burden is spread and that the maximum advantage is taken of existing resources and expertise in operating the new system.

Clause 26 makes provision for a community charge rebate scheme. Rate rebates will, of course, also be payable during the three-year transitional period.

The community charge rebate scheme will be based on the reformed scheme of housing benefit for rates, to be introduced on 1 April 1988. Under this scheme, each individual will be required to make a minimum contribution, and, as the Green Paper made clear, the illustrations of the overall effects of such a scheme in annex J of the Green Paper were based on a minimum figure of 20 per cent. The limited sample size of the data on which the figures are based means that a fully detailed analysis such as that contained in annex J can be provided only at the Great Britain level.

As I have made clear, however, we are confident that the Great Britain figures present an accurate pictue of the situation in Scotland, and an analysis that we have recently been able to carry out on the limited Scottish data available confirms this. For example, it is estimated that 90 per cent. of single pensioner households and 85 per cent. of other single adult households, including one-parent families, would gain in Scotland. The numbers of gainers and losers overall would be approximately equal.

A rebate scheme in this form will provide protection for those most in need of it, including many on whom the present rating system places particularly unfair burdens. The pattern of gainers and losers which the analysis shows gives the lie to Opposition claims that it is a measure which is simply aimed at helping the rich at the expense of the poor. What we seek is a fairer deal for all sectors of society.

I make no apology for the fact that the Bill does not contain details of the rebate scheme. It would be totally unrealistic to set out the necessary level of detail in primary legislation, and no detailed social security scheme is set out in that way. It would also be impossible, as the precise details of the scheme can only be settled once the reformed housing benefit scheme has been worked out in detail by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services. That is still the subject of extensive consultations with the local authority associations and others.

Mr. Dewar: I am grateful to the Secretary of State for giving way. I understand what he said about the details, but will he confirm that it is the Government's intention that everybody should pay at least 20 per cent. of whatever form of local taxation is in being in April 1988? There have been rumours that that is being reconsidered. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell us where the authority for that will appear? Will it be in the form of regulations, or will there be further primary legislation? As yet, that authority does not appear anywhere.

Mr. Rifkind: The provision is permissible under the social security legislation which the House recently approved. Under that legislation, it will be appropriate for orders to be presented to the House to define the specific levels of rebate, either under the existing rating system or with regard to any future system of community charge. The precise figures that will apply will be announced when such an order is presented to the House. For illustrative purposes we have used the figure of 20 per cent. to suggest the likely level of minimum payment that would be expected from those liable for the community charge.

Mr. Hugh Brown (Glasgow, Provan): The Secretary of State has been very generous in giving way, and I appreciate that, as I am sure does the whole House. However, he must be more specific. His example was not simply illustrative. Many people now pay no rent or rates, but the assumption is that they will pay at least 20 per cent. of the community charge. As that will be added expenditure for them, the Secretary of State must clarify his point.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that the provision in the Social Security Act 1986 will come into effect in 1988 under the existing rating system in Scotland and in England and Wales. Therefore, the matter is neither directly nor indirectly dependent on the legislation that I am introducing to the House. It will come into effect in Scotland while the rating system applies 100 per cent. for existing ratepayers. Questions on that are perfectly understandable, but they do not relate to the Bill that I am introducing. Therefore, I must ask the hon. Gentleman to raise his perfectly legitimate point in a different forum.

We intend—and we have made it clear—to introduce a rebate system comparable to that which is available under the domestic rating structure. Precise details of that will be announced at the appropriate time.

Let me deal now with the water and sewerage provisions of the Bill—clause 27 and schedule 5. I know that the House has been awaiting them for some time. We shall discuss them thoroughly at the appropriate stage of the Bill, and I shall not take up the time of the House now in going through them in detail. However, there are three points that I would emphasise.

First, we have aimed not to change the present system of charging except where that is necessary to meet the principles of the Bill. As at present, domestic consumers and occupiers of industrial and commercial premises who do not get their water by meter will pay an identifiable charge in respect of their water supply. Therefore, the difference is that, whereas at present the charge relates only to the premises—so that, no matter how many people live in a house, the water rate is the same—in future there will be a community water charge payable by every adult living in a house connected to a public water supply.

Mr. Dewar: I wish to raise a matter of detail, but one that is also of general interest. Traditionally, in Scotland, the water rate has been part of the overall rate poundage in terms of payment. Why is there to be a separate water community charge?

Mr. Rifkind: I advise the hon. Gentleman to look at his rates demand when he gets home. If he does so, he will see that the sum that he pays for water is specifically identified. We propose no substantive change in that arrangement, other than what is essential as a result of the community charge principle.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): I do not know what is happening in Garscadden, but I can assure my right hon. and learned Friend that in Fife one is charged for water on a separate bill, even if one has one's own supply, which is thoroughly unfair. What my right hon. and learned Friend is introducing in the community charge is the standard charge that we pay for telephones, cars, television and everything else, and that is fair.

Mr. Rifkind: I thank my hon. and learned Friend. Under our new proposals he may consume as much water as he chooses without his water charge increasing, so in that respect it is not exactly comparable to electricity and telephone charges. Our proposals will be a better reflection of water use than the present system, because, clearly a household which has several persons living in it is likely to consume far more water than one with a single person living in it. That is a valid proposition. At present prices, it is estimated that the community charge will average about £17 a year for each qualifying adult.

A second way in which the new system of charges will be fairer than that which applies at present is in the sewerage charges for non-domestic premises. This will be payable only for those premises which are connected to public sewers, whereas at present non-domestic ratepayers are liable to pay this charge whether or not they are connected.

Thirdly, we are taking steps to require local authorities to charge fair rates to all categories of those who use water and sewerage services and to make it clear to all those paying for the services how the rates are arrived at.

This legislation is, of course, primarily about the local taxpayers' contribution to local authority expenditure, but under the new arrangements the Government will continue to pay their share of the cost of local services, from national tax revenues. The arrangements for paying a revenue support grant, set out in schedule 4, are similar to, but simpler than, the present arrangements for distributing rate support grant. The greater accountability that will arise from the introduction of community charges allows us to dispense with grant penalties, and I am sure that all hon. Members will welcome this. It is, however, essential that we continue to protect the community charge payer from the vagaries of the few extreme and irresponsible councils, and we are therefore proposing a reserve power to secure reductions in personal community charge where that may be necessary. The detail of that is in schedule 3.

I have dealt with the details of the Bill at some length——

Mr. Millan: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has said nothing about the safety net arrangement.

Mr. Rifkind: I am happy to confirm that we propose a safety net arrangement to ensure that the system of revenue support grant that will be paid to the local authorities will not place undue burdens upon those local authorities with regard to the level of community charge that they will have to impose upon their local community. It is desirable to ensure a degree of stability and predictability for local authorities, and that is why there will be the safety net arrangements.

Hon. Members who wish a fuller explanation of any particular points in the Bill may find helpful the commentary that I have made available in the Library.

I have described the Bill and the Government's proposals for the abolition of domestic rates at some length. I think that the hon. Member for Garscadden will concede that, far from the Bill being the framework measure which he prophesied some weeks ago, it is a substantial piece of legislation which illustrates the enormous amount of work and careful thought that has gone into the Government's basic proposals.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman will have some opportunity today to give us the Opposition's views on the necessary improvements that they would wish to make in the present system. We know that at the moment the Labour party is the only political party in Scotland which wishes to keep domestic rates. However, it has made it clear in the past that it does not believe that the present domestic rating system is perfect.

The hon. Gentleman has said that he wishes to see improvements. Councillor Fagan, the president of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, has said that he wishes to see improvements, as do other Labour local authorities, but there has been complete silence over exactly what improvements they wish to propose. We have spent the last year preparing detailed proposals which are now put forward in legislative form so that the Scottish public are aware of the alternative to domestic rates that the Government propose. There have been no proposals from the Labour party on what it would do about the present system.

I should, perhaps, make one qualification. The hon. Member for Garscadden has put forward one change to the rating system, and that is to impose, for the first time, a rating on agricultural land and holdings. That appears to be the sole act of creativity that the past few months have produced in the thinking of the Labour party. He must know perfectly well that that is simply not good enough. If he wants the public to believe that the Labour party accepts that domestic rates need to be changed, the public will expect him today, from the Dispatch Box, to explain and to expand on the reforms which the Labour party, if it ever had the opportunity, would wish to implement. I await with interest, but without any great expectation, what the hon. Gentleman has to say.

The Government have put forward proposals which will at long last abolish a descredited system and replace it with a system which is not only fairer, more accountable, less capricious and arbitrary than domestic rates, but a system which will ensure that the public in Scotland have a system of local finance which will be suitable for the years to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I should inform the House that Mr. Speaker has not selected the amendment in the name of the leader of the Liberal party.

5.25 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): The Government are bravely living down their reputation for

consistency and principle. These days they are showing a remarkable flexibility. The new pragmatism is rampant. They will jump through almost any hoop if they have to.

We know that the Conservative party has been flirting with reform of the rating system since the early 1970s, but in recent years it set in hand, properly and fairly, an inquiry and an investigation which came, as the House knows, to a measured and considered conclusion that was announced in a White Paper in August 1983.

The House also knows that that White Paper specifically dismissed the preferred solution that we are now being asked to consider. It came to the conclusion that it wanted to defend the rating system which is now so reviled. Therefore, it is a remarkable conversion — almost a revolution — that we find ourselves now confronted with that rejected proposal in the form of the Bill that we are discussing. That conversion has nothing to do with social justice or democracy and it has everything to do with imagined political advantage.

What is being offered is a poll-tax — so much per skull across the board. According to the Green Paper, 52 per cent. of Scottish households will lose and 48 per cent. gain. I stress the word "households" because a Scottish Office press release, with which the Secretary of State will be familiar, said:

"How many people will be liable to pay the community charge? About 3·85 million adults aged 18 and over will be liable to pay the charge. What percentage would gain and what percentage would lose? The Green Paper indicated that in broad terms about half would be better off."

It actually said that 52 per cent. of households would be worse off, but I suppose that that might be defended as about half, although that is a rather odd way of putting it. However, as almost all—a large proportion—of those households will contain an above-average number of adults, I suspect that a much larger percentage of the electorate will be faced with a debit balance. That is a hard and unpalatable fact with which some of the enthusiasts behind the Secretary of State will have to live in the months and years that lie ahead.

The essence of our case is equity and who are the losers and who are the gainers. It is brutally clear that the areas that will lose are the deprived housing schemes on the limits of cities and the battered inner-city areas — the areas that are already disadvantaged. This is essentially regressive legislation — regressive even when it is compared with the present rating system. The reason for that is self-evident. There is, I concede, a rough and imperfect correlation between what is paid under the rates and one's personal income. By and large, wealthy people live in up-market housing with high rateable values and pay more.

I see the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mrs. McCurley) expressing her dissent. Let me give her a quotation which she may find of interest, because it puts my case fairly and succinctly. It says:

"A poll tax is assumed to be levied on all adults in the household irrespective of income . . . the lower-income households would pay a higer proportion of their income in tax than the higher-income households. Moreover, since domestic rate payments tend to increase with income — though less than proportionately—replacing rates by a poll tax will mean that higher-income households gain more or lose less . . . than the lower-income households of the same type."

That is exactly what I have been saying, and it is a quotation from the Government's Green Paper on the alternatives to the rating system. On that occasion they were right, and now they are wrong.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Gentleman to figure 11 in the Green Paper, which shows clearly that households on net incomes of less than £75 a week will pay a smaller proportion of their income in community charge than in rates.

Mr. Dewar: I am delighted to deal with that point because it illustrates the hypocrisy of the exercise. For a start, we have been unable to discover how many households have such a low household income. I suspect that it is comparatively few. Moreover, under the present rating system, almost all of them would be paying nothing. That figure is based on the assumption that for many, particularly single people, 20 per cent. of community charge is less than 20 per cent. of the rates. However, if it were not for the so-called Fowler review and the recent Social Security Act, those people would be in a neutral state because they would be paying nothing. That illustrates the sham of the statistics produced in the Green Paper.

Let me develop the point about equity and who will lose. The hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde is a Glaswegian by birth and is familiar with the city. If she takes the Glasgow wards and, using the Government's figures, examines the present rates income from the areas, and considers what would result from a community charge on a like-with-like basis, she will discover that there will be enormous shifts between wards within the city of Glasgow.

Let me take the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton). Using the Government's figures, the take for Castlemilk under the community charge will increase by 25 per cent. The take for Newlands, down the road, will fall by 24 per cent. Who will tell me that that has anything to do with equity or justice? The take for Kelvindale, where I live, will drop by 29 per cent. and for Drumchapel, a deprived scheme in my constituency, by 25 per cent. Anderston, a battered inner-city area, will pay 48 per cent. more. These figures show the indefensible shape of things to come.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): What about rebates?

Mr. Dewar: The figures may be altered to some extent by the rebate situation.

Mr. Rifkind *rose*——

Mr. Dewar: The Secretary of State would be in a better position if he had produced the rebate figures, which would have allowed us to make the calculations. We would then have listened to him with more patience.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is suggesting — it was clear from his remarks — that additional hardship would be imposed on certain areas of his constituency, or elsewhere in Glasgow, to the benefit of other areas. He did not point out, nor admit until it was dragged out of him, that he was not taking account of rebates and the fact that people living in these areas, if they are as deprived as the hon. Gentleman has suggested, will be unlikely to pay the community charge. The rebate will not be paid by them and the amount of revenue raised from these areas will be infinitely less than the hon. Gentleman has suggested.

Mr. Dewar: The proof of the pudding, as the Secretary of State will recognise, will come if we get to the point where, unfortunately, the system is introduced. I understand, and am advised by people more expert in municipal finance than I am, that such shifts will appear.

Let me give another example, one that is perhaps more limited but might be of interest to the Secretary of State. I admit that it is extreme to make the point, but my calculations show that in the West Granton area of Pilton, with the switch to community charge, each household will be paying about £105 a year more and in Spylow Park, Colinton, £1,052 less. That is the key to this matter.

I am sure that the Secretary of State will not suggest and maintain, because I believe that he has some honesty about these matters, that the effect of the introduction of the community charge will be a substantial shift between areas. He may argue about the scale but he will not admit that there will be a substantial shift of the kind that I have described. If he looks at the areas in Edinburgh which will do badly out of the shift—wards such as Haymarket, Harbour, Lorne, Dalry or St. Giles—he will find that there is an extraordinary correlation between the level of unemployment and the areas that will do badly in the switch to the poll tax. The case is there for anybody to see. What I am saying fairly and honestly represents the shifts with which we shall be faced.

Mr. Rifkind: Will the hon. Gentleman acknowledge that the Government's illustrations in their Green Paper are based on illustrations taking account of the housing benefit system? If he wishes to make alternative comparisons, he should also take into account the implications if rebates are paid on a basis comparable to that described by the Green Paper. He knows that he has not done that, but sought simply to make an emotional contribution.

Mr. Dewar: I asked some parliamentary questions intended to obtain these figures, but the Secretary of State said that he could not answer them. He is not making a convincing charge. There is no doubt that there will be the shift that I have described. The Secretary of State is not able to, and will not, deny that. This is a charter for prosperous suburbia and the only end product will be a thin and ragged cheer from the beleaguered Scottish Conservative party.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Is the hon. Gentleman not arguing against the existing system of domestic rates? He is postulating the idea of two people living in the same kind of house in different parts of the city who, although they have substantially different means, pay substantially different amounts for identical services, so that the better off pays less and the poorer pays more.

Mr. Dewar: I recognise that point and I recognise that there is a case which no doubt the hon. Gentleman will deploy. As I understand it, the defence for this measure is that certain categories of people will do well, particularly single people of modest means living alone. It is pointed out that it tackles the problem of multiple incomes next door to somebody with a single salary coming into the household. I recognise that that case can be made, but if we are worried about the person on low income who is suffering, we must examine the adequacy of our rebate system. Surely the hon. Gentleman understands that one should not say that there are problems about the existing system and then introduce another system that creates inequalities and injustices on a far wider scale. There is no doubt about that.

The other day, I got a letter from someone in the city of Perth living in a basement flat with low rateable value, because of low amenity. Two large flats above him, each occupied by a single person, have high rateable values because of the value of the house and its amenity. Suddenly, as a result of the community charge, the person in the basement flat will be paying twice as much. The equity of that is not clear to that individual, and I can understand his feelings.

This is not just an inner-city problem. I am interested in rural areas as well, as the Secretary of State knows. There is no doubt, as COSLA has pointed out, that there is little point in paying the same community charge in Tiree as in Oban, or the same regional community charge in Mull as in Bearsden. When I put this to the Under-Secretary in a radio programme the other day, he said that it costs more to deliver services in remote areas, so that was fair. I found that answer a litle lacking in sympathy.

It seems that the already disadvantaged will be further oppressed and, if I can use the terminology of popular capitalism, areas which already have cash flow problems will be asked to bear a greater burden. I shall give the House an example. I shall name my source immediately. The quotation comes from the Child Poverty Action Group, but it makes the case from an impartial source. It asks the Government to reconsider their proposals which "owe more to a perceived need to be seen to be doing something about rates than to clarity of vision. We find it difficult to believe that a proposal which so blatantly favours the rich over the poor can be given serious consideration in a Green Paper which purports to be concerned about fairness."

The other major point that has been made by the Secretary of State is accountability. That features prominently in the case for the defence.

Mr. Rifkind: Does the hon. Gentleman mean prosecution?

Mr. Dewar: No, in the right hon. and learned Gentleman's case it features in the defence of the measure.

I have been reading what has been said by Conservative Members up and down the country. Many of the speeches pay tribute to their loyal endeavour but not necessarily to their understanding of what has been happening. A quotation from the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Corrie) appeared in the *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald* of Friday 5 December. He gave us a succinct and no doubt well-thought-out defence of the community charge. He said, all in one sentence:

"On the domestic front the community charge will not only give councillors the right to determine their own levels of spending, it will remove the unfairness and illogicality of the present system of demand whilst injecting into the democratic process a real degree of interest come district and regional election time with financial accountability becoming a live issue."

It is deathless prose. All I can say is that if the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North, believes that the measure gives councillors the right to determine their own levels of spending, he has not read schedule 3 where the whole excessive and unreasonable expenditure provision is imported by the back door.

The strengthening of local democracy is a nonsense of an argument. What will happen—I am sure that the

House appreciates this—is that the buoyancy in local revenue will be confined entirely to the domestic sector. Perhaps 20 per cent. will be subject to local control, but all the rest will be frozen by central Government or will be controlled directly by central Government in terms of the grant system. It does not seem that reducing local initiative to 20 per cent. of the spend is a great leap forward for local control and local democracy.

I shall not spend a lot of time on this, but I recognise the attraction of the freeze for the non-domestic ratepayer in terms of industrial problems. However, I must say to the Secretary of State that there will be much debate in Committee about the indicator he has chosen for the retail price index. We shall want to know a great deal more about what is in store in terms of the revaluation in 1990.

There is no doubt that if the entire Government package is implemented, not just in this Bill but ultimately with the standard national business rate distributed per capita, it will be an enormous blow to local democracy. I assume that the Secretary of State has read the memorandum of the Confederation of British Industry. It says that the uniform business rate

"will remove the element of local accountability inherent in the present system."

The CBI is right. It will be the death of local accountability and local democracy, although that is something the Secretary of State is praying in aid in defence of this measure.

What is even more worrying is that if only the domestic sector will bear the burden of any increased expenditure, clearly one is building in an escalator that will have serious consequences. Let us assume that in future years the revenue support grant is cut and that we get, for example, a settlement comparable to the teachers' settlement—there will be other settlements in other years. A large proportion of that has to be raised by an increase in local income. All of that will now fall upon the people paying the community charge, the old domestic ratepaying sector. It will not be spread across the board, because all the rest is frozen or controlled by central Government. The result is that, on COSLA's figures, if one has to find another 6 per cent. of income, there will be an 18 per cent. increase in the community charge. It is an extraordinary argument to say that one is doing that to defend and protect the equivalent of the ratepayer, that is the person in the domestic sector, when one is building that sort of escalator into the system.

Mr. Steve Norris (Oxford, East): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that one of the great virtues of the system will be that if a Government choose to reduce the proportion of total expenditure provided by grant, it will be perfectly obvious to all that that is what has been done? Local authorities will not be able to hide behind a cloud of obfuscation, spending money as if it is going out of fashion and then blaming the Government's complex grant system for the conclusion. Surely, that is the effect of the proposals.

Mr. Dewar: The hon. Gentleman may be talking about confusion and difficulties in England. In Scotland most people know—this explains the local election results over the past year or two—where the fault lies in that respect.

Another remarkable argument—I paraphrase but I think that I do it fairly—is that the Secretary of State is saying that if one does not contribute to local taxation one should not be allowed to vote in local elections, or, alternatively—I put the best complexion on it from his point of view—if one does not contribute in that way one cannot be trusted to exercise a vote responsibly. That means that one cannot be trusted to vote in the way the Secretary of State would like. That is extraordinary.

Admittedly, the Secretary of State has a problem. He has to find some explanation for the fact that of all the district councils in Scotland, the Tories now control only one, Eastwood. No doubt that has driven him to this rather cynical assumption about family life in Scotland. Apparently he assumes that a wife has no concern about how the rates are paid. Presumably adult children do not contribute under the present system in the normal Scottish household. I would have thought that they did. The argument advanced by the Secretary of State is totally undermined by the fact that in his Green Paper he assumes that husband and wife spouses will be jointly and severally liable for the payment of their respective poll taxes.

Mr. Rifkind: Leaving spouses aside, I think that the House is entitled to know the Labour party's position. Does it defend the fact and wish to continue the system under which 20 per cent. of adults in Scotland make no contribution through local tax finance to the cost of local government? Will the hon. Gentleman clarify that?

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton: They all contribute.

Mr. Dewar: I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Fife, Central (Mr. Hamilton) that all those people through taxation, direct or indirect, are making a contribution. I am told that only 50 per cent. of people do not pay income tax in this country and that does not raise the ire or fluster the calm of the Secretary of State. The truth, and he knows it, is that at the back of this whole thing there is a rather unpleasant political aim to build into the system an incentive for people to vote for low-spending authorities. As I said earlier, local government results and the opinion polls have shown that people are not interested in that sort of local government parsimony.

Mr. Fairbairn *rose*——

Mr. Dewar: I shall not give way at the moment.

There is anger in Scotland about that. I know that there is anger on Conservative Benches when we refer to a poll tax. It is perfectly fair to refer to it as a poll tax because a poll tax is so much per head. Anyone who has a respect for the English language knows that that is fair.

Another point involved in the argument of accountability is that the Green Paper and operational documents all assume, as the House knows, that one way in which we shall decide whether the register for community charge purposes is accurate is by cross-referencing and cross-checking with the electoral register. If people wish to avoid paying their poll tax, clearly there is an incentive not to register their vote. It may be an indirect link, but it is one that the House should not take lightly.

I accept that many right hon. and hon. Members want to speak in the debate, but I must spend some time on the administrative problems, because they can soberly be described as enormous.

Mr. Fairbairn: The hon. Gentleman suggests that this is a system in which one can vote only for a low-spending authority. Surely the abominable nature of the present

[Mr. Fairbairn]

system is that people can vote for a high-spending authority without having to contribute to that high expenditure.

Mr. Dewar: The hon. Gentleman is overstating what I said. I said that there was a political attempt to build in an incentive to support low-spending policies. I do not think that that will work because I know what has happened in local elections in almost every part of Scotland because I have looked at the poll evidence. I take the rather simple view that the system should be neutral in that respect and that people should vote acording to their principles and what they want. The Government are looking for political advantage from these reforms.

Enormous administrative problems will arise. The Scottish Consumers Council has issued a carefully researched substantial paper which has been on the desk of the Secretary of State for some time. It states:

"The problems of the community charge proposals are insuperable. The Government should think again."

The right hon. and learned Gentleman should heed that short comment.

We are told that there is to be a register—a bargain at an estimated cost of £9 million. But people move about. As we know from parliamentary answers, the turnover of names on an electoral register can be as high as 20 or 25 per cent. a year. There will be formidable problems in tracing people, in apportioning poll tax liability, perhaps between different electoral areas, and in collecting the tax. I know that mobility is common because there is a great deal of passage between Garscadden and Clydebank. A young man may live at Drumchapel in Garscadden, move to Clydebank to live with grandparents and move back to Garscadden, all within a year. The 12 monthly payments —they will all be equal, except for the first—will have to be apportioned. A person may have to be pursued in more than one electoral area if he has not paid. It is a nightmare. The problems of enforcement will be baffling.

Another Scottish Office press notice on the enforcement of payments and penalties seems to fall into the head-in-the-sand school of politics. It states:

"In the relatively rare cases where arrears are built up the tried and tested procedures for rates recovery will be adapted for community charge recovery".

I do not know what that means but no doubt we shall find out in Committee. The Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers reckons that in Strathclyde alone, excluding the sheriffdom of Glasgow and Strathkelvin, 25,000 summary warrants were issued for arrears of rates in one rating year. It is not a new problem. The sheriffs' society believes—this is only its professional judgment, but it must be taken seriously — that the enormous increase in the number of people coming into the net with the introduction of the community charge and the possible increase in the number of people at the bottom end of the income scale who may find it difficult to meet their liabilities may result in a fourfold minimum increase in the number of warrants issued. We should think about that. In the society's view, the system is unworkable, despite the buttressing mass of civil penalties and surcharges which is being introduced.

I shall cite some examples, to which, no doubt, we shall return in Committee. The Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers says that it will not have a right to enter premises when the debtor is not the householder. To recover from people who are not householders, the society believes that it must have that right. Will it get that right from the Government? The society says that there are no means of identifying the goods of a young, perhaps single, man living in his father's house. What will be the means of identifying those goods so that they can be pinded and sold? The society says that it will be impossible to arrest wages because it will not be possible to trace the pay packet position of young single men living perhaps in their parents' house. It suggests seriously that the register should contain the national insurance number of everyone who is liable to pay the community charge so that it can trace where people work in order to arrest their wages and recover arrears. I presume that that is not a reasonable proposition in the minds of Ministers. If it is not, they must answer the practical question: how will the system work? It is no exaggeration to say that the system is a nightmare. Cool assessment suggests that it is inadequate and impractical. The answer is simple—we would not introduce a system with so many obvious faults.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Peter Fraser): What would the Labour party do?

Mr. Dewar: We shall come to that.

What about the problem of rebates? The region will collect and calculate the rebate on the community charge. The district will collect and calculate the rebate on the rent. During the transitional period, another system will be running in tandem. This is a recipe for an appalling problem. I have been told that, once the Bill is implemented, there will be no fewer than 13 different charges.

There will be chaos in respect of students and communal establishments. The Scottish Assessors Association—not a body that we would normally pray in aid — said, in respect of the arrangements for communal establishments, that it has

"a multitude of problems and in our opinion major, continuing and difficult litigation seems inevitable."

I see no point in introducing a system that inevitably brings in its wake continuing and difficult litigation. I am in favour of people paying any form of taxation that they are due and liable to pay, and I do not want any mistake to be made about that. But in a recent radio programme the Under-Secretary of State advanced the view that there was no need to worry because we were a law-abiding race. That is an optimistic assumption which is illustrated by our experience of vehicle excise licences and television licences which provides depressing precedents.

Our fears are widely shared. The Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers stated:

"The net effect of this unenforceability against a large section of the population will produce the opposite effect envisaged by the Scottish Law Commission in their Report on Diligence . . . as it becomes common knowledge that more and more defaulters are not being forced to pay their Community Charge, greater numbers will try to avoid payment."

The Scottish Consumers Council said:

"In the absence of effective methods of collection and enforcement, default will be widespread."

If that is not impartial, perhaps the Secretary of State will listen to the Law Society of Scotland, which has commented not specifically on the principle of the Bill but on the operational issues raised by the right hon. and learned Gentleman. Its working party concluded:

"The Working Party therefore doubts whether the proposed system meets the 3 main tests which, according to . . . the Green Paper, a local tax should satisfy — i.e.

technical adequacy, fairness and the encouragement of local democratic accountability."

The working party went on to say that the proposed system did not meet those tests. That is the Law Society's view, having looked at the problems that will be thrown up.

I recognise the fact that the Secretary of State has said in the past that we are devoted to the rating system, this led to what he is pleased to call a "corrupt" system, largely because of political advantage. That is a ludicrous charge, and I think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman knows it. It is a desperate counter-attack to divert attention from his difficulties and, given those difficulties, I am not surprised. He has said consistently that the rating system is in trouble, but he has not drawn attention to the fact that it is in trouble because it is bearing a burden for which it was never designed and because the central Government contribution has been ruthlessly cut as the Treasury has shifted responsibility for funding local services to the ratepayer. If we could do something about that, we would be in a much better position.

This debate is on the Government's specific proposals. The Secretary of State has not convinced me that there is a case for abandoning a system, which in August 1983 his predecessor—the right hon. and learned Gentleman as a member of the Government assented to it—described as basically sound, for something infinitely worse. The attack on the poll tax is well founded and formidable and has been mounted on almost every front. Local government north and south of the border has united on this issue. Even the Association of District Councils which, as the Secretary of State knows, is under Tory control, has asked for this measure to be stopped so that there can be further consideration of the options.

Mr. Ancram: This is an important point. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman is saying that there is nothing wrong with the rating system at the moment and that the Labour party would not tamper with it. In that case, I put this point to him. On 17 November, the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) said:

"we shall certainly reform the rating system, but we shall keep a property-based tax."

Will the hon. Gentleman explain precisely what is meant by that totally incomprehensible statement?

Mr. Dewar: It is totally comprehensible. The hon. Gentleman's comment does not prove very much. I repeat that in 1983 the Government described the rating system, which they now revile, as basically sound. To abandon that system and in its place to put the nightmarish capacity for chaos that is built into the Government's plans would be imprudent and not in the public interest.

Of course the Secretary of State is right that all taxes are unpopular, but the Government are encouraging criticism of the rating system for very obvious and cynical reasons. They are banking on the fact that nobody will appreciate the consequences of their proposals. They are telling just half the story. What is even more disreputable is that they are backing up just half the story, the story of abolition, by half-truths, which they know are half-truths. Their tactics are legislation without implementation.

It is a curious and unique experiment. No other country in western Europe or anywhere else has introduced a poll tax. They know that it is inherently weak and that it breeds injustice and inequality. Therefore, they have all rejected it. Only the Secretary of State who, to be fair, inherited it from his predecessor believes that it is necessary to defend the poll tax.

Mr. Rifkind: I must repeat to the hon. Gentleman the question that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland asked him, because he has not answered it. His hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) said:

"we shall certainly reform the rating system." — [*Official Report*, 17 November 1986; Vol. 105, c. 350.]

Will the hon. Gentleman explain what the Labour party proposes to do about reforming the rating system?

Mr. Dewar: The right hon. and learned Gentleman is, understandably, not anxious to discuss his own Bill. However, if he is interested, we shall do something about the shift in resources to which I have already referred. Furthermore, suggestions about capital values and a number of other matters are being canvassed. When the Labour party forms the next Government after the general election, no doubt the right hon. and learned Gentleman and his motley crew will have an opportunity, from these Benches, of commenting on them.

We are being asked to introduce a local taxation system which, according to the explanatory and financial memorandum, will cost between £17 million and £22 million a year in additional administrative costs. For what purpose are we being asked to bear those additional administrative costs? We are being asked to bear them because the Government are determined to lumber us with and penalise us by a scheme that is without friends or supporters in Scotland. It is misconceived in principle, regressive in impact and unworkable in practice. None of us wants anything to do with it.

6.2 pm

Mr. Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State upon introducing the Bill. I congratulate also my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Ancram) who worked hard during the last few months on preparing this legislation. I hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) will catch your eye, because he campaigned effectively earlier this year for a tax of this kind.

My right hon. and learned Friend made a clear and unanswerable case for the Bill. I say "unanswerable", having listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). I mean in no way to insult the hon. Gentleman. If anybody could have found an answer to my right hon. and learned Friend's proposition, I believe that the hon. Member for Garscadden would have found it. One of his difficulties is that he is not sure whether he is speaking for the prosecution or for the defence. However, he is very much on the defensive about the Scottish rating system.

I start from the premise that there is no such thing as a good tax or an absolutely fair tax. This Bill, which provides for a community charge, is no exception to that premise. However, there is such a thing as a bad tax—indeed, a penal tax, as anyone who pays domestic rates in Scotland knows. That is how most people would describe the present Scottish domestic rating system. Only the Labour party believes that a tax on people's homes—which is increased when they improve the quality of their

[Mr. Alex Fletcher]

homes by using their savings, or by borrowing, or by do-it-yourself — should not be abolished. However, a Labour Government would have maintained the ancient tax on windows and then would have complained bitterly about the number of unemployed window cleaners.

The Labour party clings to the view that domestic rates redistribute wealth and that the rich should be soaked to help the poor. If that is so, the rich in my constituency are pensioners on fixed incomes, teachers, tradesmen, bank and insurance clerks, secretaries and civil servants. Those are the people whom I represent in Edinburgh, Central. Those are the people who have to pay the bills for the increased spending by Lothian regional council and Edinburgh district council.

That applies also to the Labour party's plans for a Scottish Assembly with so-called full economic powers. How I welcome that commitment in the Labour party's election programme. As has already been said, one of the apparent attractions of the proposed Assembly is the power to adjust the rate of income tax in Scotland. That is bound to lead to people dancing with joy in the streets of Edinburgh, Glasgow and elsewhere. But we note the word "adjust". It means that the Labour party's As[illegible]y would do to income tax what Labour local authorities do to the rates. It would keep putting them up. What an exciting prospect for Scotland after the next general election. Clearly, the Labour party's policy is to make Scotland the highest rated and the highest taxed country in Europe. That is its programme and its policy after the next general election. With opposition of that kind, I relish the prospect of the next general election campaign.

The Labour party has made it known that my constituency, Edinburgh, Central, is one of the seats that they will target at the next election. The man on the Tynecastle omnibus could be excused for believing that if the Labour party is successful this will be good for Edinburgh. However, the only good thing about being the holder of a targeted seat is that I and my constituents in both the Old Town and the New Town, and in places like Shandon, Tollcross and Stockbridge, will have the benefit of Labour activists from all over Scotland telling us why we should pay higher rates and taxes than ever before—and why we should pay more for the 4,500 empty council houses and the half-empty schools in Edinburgh.

The Liberal party—very much depleted at present on the Liberal Bench—has as big a problem with this Bill as it has with its defence policy. The more it studies the problem, the more it realises that the Government have got it about right. It cannot possibly justify the bureaucracy of a local taxation system to collect just 13 per cent. of local authority income, the contribution made by domestic rates. The best advice that I can give the Liberal and the Social Democratic parties is that they should hold another special conference—this time, I suggest, at the East Kilbride centre 1 tax office, where they would learn about just the kind of bureaucracy that would be needed if they were ever given the opportunity to implement their local income tax plans in Scotland.

I listened to what was said by the hon. Member for Garscadden about schedule 3 to the Bill. However, after all that the Government have said about ensuring that this legislation will provide better local accountability and better local democracy, I am surprised to find that the Bill introduces another kind of rate-capping procedure. I do not see the need for it. If people vote with a sense of responsibility for the taxes that are to be levied on them, and if those who elect a spendthrift Labour authority then find that the community charge is £500 or £600, so be it. That is what they have voted for. I suggest to my hon. Friends that there is no way in which they should intervene with any kind of rate-capping procedure. I hope that that will be reconsidered. Perhaps my hon. Friend who will reply to the debate might reconsider it now and tell us at 9 o'clock that he takes my point.

This Bill has consequences for the rest of the United Kingdom. I hope that the Government and the Opposition will not be too parochial or narrow about this debate or about the Committee stage. I hope that some English hon. Members in all parts of the House will have an opportunity to speak in the debate and an opportunity to serve on the Committee. I am perfectly willing to give my place in the Committee to my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris). I have served with him on Committees before and I highly recommend him to any Minister who is looking for a chap who will scrutinise carefully and participate well in a Committee debate. This is not just an important piece of Scottish legislation: it is a breakthrough in the whole system of local taxation in the United Kingdom. That is the way it should be debated in the House and in Committee and that is the way that it will be judged.

6.10 pm

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): The hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher) says that there is no such thing as a good tax. If by that he means that no tax can be devised that will not cause howls of anguish from somebody, the House would agree with him, but on this side of the House there is little agreement on much else of what the hon. Gentleman said.

In Scotland the Bill is recognised as a panic measure. The revolt of the Government's own supporters at the idea of a second revaluation in Scotland when England has not had one since 1973 frightened the Government into instant solutions. Like many ill-thought-out solutions, the remedy looks like being worse than the disease. I do not defend the system of domestic rates. My party has argued for many years that they should be entirely abolished and that major changes should be made to commercial and industrial ratings. However, unfair as it is and riddled as it is with anomalies, the present system of property values bears some relationship to the ability to pay, crude rule of thumb though it is.

The per capita poll tax that we are discussing is even worse than the existing system. It hits hardest the low paid, even if there are rebates or exemptions for the unemployed. It is also highly impractical. How do the Government plan to take care of exemptions for periodic unemployment? How will registration be enforced without an army of officials, and how will payment be recovered from non-payers? The Scottish Council for Voluntary Services says:

> "The new charge will be more regressive than rates, with those on low to moderate incomes losing most. Those on high incomes will be the biggest gainers."

The council says that the illustrative example of a single pensioner compared to a family of four adults is true but untypical. Only 9 per cent. of households are headed by single pensioners and only 8 per cent. of households have more than three working adults in them.

My party's option is for a local income tax because this appears to us to be the best way to raise local revenue. It is progressive, spreads the burden more widely and fairly and is the only option that varies according to the ability to pay. I gather that the Government or Scottish Office supporters pretend that this is not practical because of restrictions on computerisation in the Inland Revenue. I have checked with the Inland Revenue and I have found that the system will be ready in time. It is already prepared for schedule E and is under way for schedule D, where there is no problem. The bulk of computerisation of pay-as-you-earn will be finished in 1988 and the last office will be finished in April 1989. Any argument on that basis against a local income tax falls to the ground.

Mr. Ancram: I should like to understand the proposals by the hon. Gentleman's party. What does he propose to do about those who do not pay tax through PAYE?

Mr. Stewart: Those people will be covered by schedule D. In any case, the Government will bring in exemptions for people who do not pay under PAYE.

Mr. Norris: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way on this specific point?

Mr. Stewart: No.

I mentioned the number of revaluations in Scotland compared to the number in England. I should like to draw attention to the enormous discrepancies between rates paid on similar properties in both countries. There are glaring amomalies and injustices in the rating of similar properties in Scotland and England. Richard Shops, in Sauchiehall street, Glasgow, has a rateable value of £67,000. The same company's shop in Birmingham city centre is rated at £17,263. For obvious reasons, the Glasgow shop is now closed. The Albany hotel in Glasgow has a rateable value of £413,500 but its sister hotel in Birmingham is rated at £56,638.

The story of sports clubs is similar. The Ardrossan indoor bowling club pays £18,000 in rates, but the same type of club in Darlington pays £5,500. Scottish chemical plants, rated on what is called the contractor's principle, pay on average 2·5 times the amount paid by similar English and Welsh plants. Stirling university's rates for 1984-85 were £13·58 per sq m compared to £3·96 per sq m for the university of East Anglia. Both universities are about the same age and the same size.

Mr. Craigen: The Bill will not redress that disparity. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the Secretary of State made it clear that the Government have not begun to think about the implications of the uniform business rate in sorting out these disparities?

Mr. Stewart: The hon. Gentleman's point is totally valid and it is one that I was proposing to develop. I have numerous other examples but I shall not take up the time of the House by relating them. In short, the gross injustice should worry the Government. This Bill will bring no relief on that point.

I should now like to draw attention to a matter arising from the Bill which will affect the crofting counties. The Valuation and Rating (Scotland) Act 1956 gave crofters a 50 per cent. reduction from gross to net in the valuation of their housing. Neither the local authority nor other ratepayers lost anything by this reduction. The reasons which induced the Government of the day to make this concession were higher unemployment, higher prices, higher transport costs and lower wages. Generally, those reasons are still valid in the crofting areas.

The concession has been agreed and accepted by all Governments for 30 years and if it was a fair and reasonable benefit for deprived areas during that time, it must be maintained in some form under this legislation. Apart from the financial implications, the social implications are serious. There will be an exodus from the remoter parts to the nearest towns because crofters will lose not only the reduction in valuation but the reduction in rating that they got for the remoteness of their dwelling houses.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Can the right hon. Gentleman explain how those crofters will be helped by his party's proposal for a local income tax? They live in an area where the income base is small and where the level of local income tax would be extremely high. For those reasons, they would be much worse off under his proposals—unless he destroyed accountability by redistributing income.

Mr. Stewart: Our point about the tax is that it would be based on an ability to pay. If people have the ability to pay they will do so, and if they do not have that ability they will not pay. That is quite simple.

Another matter about which I should like to speak is commercial and industrial rating. My party believes that this should continue as a contribution to the services from which commercial firms benefit. It has been suggested that company turnovers should be taken into account. There is a need for major reform to avoid repeating the recent scandal when thousands of small businesses were in danger of closure due to the massive overnight increase in rates which brought about the Bill.

The rates crisis has been exacerbated by cuts in rate support grant. Over the years, functions and services have been foisted on to local authorities by decisions made by various Governments. There was no question about it. They were accepted while they were adequately funded. There was no problem. The Government have been reducing the rate support grant. As a proportion of council budgets, it was 75 per cent. in 1975-76, and is 56·6 per cent. in the current financial year. These grants should be restored to local authorities. Education takes 41 per cent. of total council spending. Surely this matter ought to be a national responsibility. My constituency sends more students to university per head of population than any other part of the United Kingdom. In other words, a poor community is footing the bill for the benefit of wealthier societies and, often, other countries.

The Scottish Office pretends that the legislation will give some kind of gift to Scotland which is denied to our friends south of the border. Everyone knows that we are laboratory guinea pigs. Even the English Association of Metropolitan Authorities has taken the unusual step of issuing a brief on a purely Scottish Bill. That association knows what is coming. It knows that the Bill lacks fairness and democratic accountability and that it is technically inadequate. It takes Scotland's finance out of the frying pan and puts it into the fire.

6.21 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): The speeches made by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar)

[Sir Hector Monro]

and the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Donald Stewart), for the Scottish National party, were singularly disappointing. They did not give one idea about the direction in which they wished to go regarding rates in the future. The right hon. Gentleman talked about local income tax and about panic measures. It has been a mighty long panic for the past 25 years. Every political party in the House has been trying to find an alternative. The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right: at long last, the Government have decided to take action about domestic rates. Today no one in his senses would try to introduce the present system of rating from scratch. The subject has grown like Topsy for about 100 years. It is high time that we had something that was not only fairer but easier to understand.

Conservative Members, despite the prompting from the Government Front Bench, have noted that the Labour party has been singularly coy about saying anything about agricultural ratings. Rating agricultural land is a serious issue in the countryside, which the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden attempted to represent at the end of his speech. He dodged the issue of rating agricultural land and buildings. It would have a catastrophic effect on agriculture in Scotland and, indeed, throughout the United Kingdom.

There have been endless inquiries and discussions about how to improve the rating system. There have been debates, the Layfield report, White Papers and Green Papers. It is right that, with this legislation we should come to a conclusion on domestic rates. We note that other political parties have failed to come forward with any concrete suggestions that could satisfactorily be implemented in future.

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): Local income tax.

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Gentleman is scoffing about wanting to bring in local income tax. Of course, it often boils down to the crucial question whether it is to be a local income tax or a community charge. In Scotland alone, a local income tax can be astonishingly difficult to implement. There are 56 rating authorities.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): Fifty-six different community charges.

Sir Hector Monro: Not necessarily: a register of where people work as well as where they are to be paid. In Scotland, where many districts are relatively small, people may live and work in different districts. Where will the Government charge their local income tax—where they live or where they work? This includes the Border when it comes to working in south Scotland or the north of England. A local income tax will make only about 60 per cent. of residents liable to pay locally, and that will reduce accountability. It is an important part of the policy of the Bill.

Mr. Maxton: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that it is equally true that, at a national level, only 50 per cent. of adults who are eligible to vote pay income tax? Why is that not considered to be a lack of accountability?

Sir Hector Monro: There is VAT.

Mr. Maxton: On the point of VAT, since the hon. Gentleman wishes to raise it at the same time, the poorest in our community do not pay income tax or rates and pay little in VAT because, quite rightly, no Government has been prepared to put VAT on basic commodities.

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Gentleman made an intervention and answered it himself. Everyone in the country pays indirect taxes one way or another. I do not think the hon. Gentleman's point is valid. It has been right to adopt the community charge as the best option. It is disappointing that the Labour party in particular has not been able to put forward any alternative. *[Interruption.]* If Opposition Members think that the present system is so wonderful, why is there such an outcry in Scotland about the rating system generally and the wish for change?

There is a host of reasons why we should proceed towards a community charge. It will get rid of the great issue of revaluation of domestic properties. One will be able to improve or extend one's house without having to have it revalued and without paying any further towards rates. It will certainly help single householders, and particularly pensioners who live alone. That will be welcomed.

Certainly, it will be much fairer for households in which more than one wage packet come in. Some households have three or four wage packets coming in. I am glad that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has brought in systems for rebates for the less well off and, I hope, the unemployed. That is to be through the housing benfit system and will be advantageous. Arrangements will be brought in especially for students. It is important to note that families with perhaps two to four children can move to a bigger house without paying increased rates. The Bill will help those families in particular. The increase in non-domestic rates, being pegged, will be limited to inflation. When the time comes, it will be clearer to the business community how much they will have to pay. They will realise that rates will be increased only by inflation.

Of course one appreciates the concern of local authorities that the scheme will be difficult to operate. Many schemes have been brought in by way of Government legislation and local government administration. I remind hon. Members of the great brouhaha when the Labour party brought in the selective employment tax. The House went into orbit. Yet, in a thoroughly unfair way, that tax operated for some while until it was repealed. I can think of other administrative difficulties in local government, which have been overcome by the skill of officials. After hiccups to begin with, the difficulties have settled down. In 10 years, we shall wonder what all the fuss was about in 1986.

The key thing is that officials must remember that the change is in the interest of ratepayers, not for the administrative convenience of local authorities. If the ratepayers feel that they are getting a fairer and better system, it is absolutely right that it should be implemented as soon as possible.

The Bill contains many Committee points. It is full of issues that will have to be thrashed out in detail in Committee—for example, the scheme for second homes, which I am glad the Government have introduced, caravans, holiday lets and so on. All those issues will be important. I believe that we shall find reasonable solutions in Committee. Some of the issues raised by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations will be Committee

points—for example, more than one single family living in one house, and how that problem will be resolved in the long run.

Another issue was touched on by the right hon. Member for Western Isles which is probably outwith the details of the Bill. That is the unfair valuation of sports grounds, on which we thought we had made substantial progress in the Rating and Valuation (Amendment.) (Scotland) Act 1984. Mr. Alex Kilgour and Mr. William Mann have campaigned well in Scotland and highlighted the importance of mandatory rate relief for sporting facilities. I hope that what they have started will grow.

The only point that I make to the House and to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, who has been intimately involved, is that that is nothing new. I looked up the debate on the Finance Bill on 19 November 1966, when I moved an amendment to bring in mandatory derating of 50 per cent. for sports grounds. It was thrown out by the then Labour Government. So there is nothing new under the sun. I hope that there will be a move by authorities to give mandatory relief whenever possible. I hope, too, that my hon. Friend the Minister will think again about the problem that is facing an important part of Scottish economic life, with regard to sporting lets. Tourists and others come to hotels in the countryside but they are being severely penalised because sporting rates are so much higher in Scotland than in England and Wales.

I say to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary and to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State that the Bill is a welcome measure. I hope that as it proceeds through Committee the anomalies that some hon. Members have highlighted will be removed and that by the time the Act is implemented in years to come, it will be welcomed, particularly by householders who are now paying rates that are far too high and who will be much better off under the community charge system.

6.32 pm

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): When I looked at the Bill, I must confess—perhaps this will stun the Minister—that I thought I might have been prepared to support clause 1 had it been a one-clause Bill. However, I could not in any way support clauses 2 to 32. Having read most of the Bill—it is long-drawn-out and badly written—I must ask who the author of the new system is.

I deplore the fashion in which the Bill has been introduced. In a way, it is a protective measure. It has been introduced so that the Government can protect that rare and disappearing species up in Scotland called the Conservative politician. Because, after revaluation, there was such a squeal of anguish from Conservative politicians north of the border who were terrified that they would lose their seats, Labour Members are being hustled into what we consider to be a lousy, unfair, cumbersome and uncaring piece of legislation, possibly the worst that has ever come from the Government, and that is saying something when one thinks of some of the regressive legislation that the Government have put through the House.

We must ask who made up the Bill. I imagine that it was a case of co-authorship. There are bits of Hans Christian Andersen that I recognise in the middle. There is certainly a good piece of Dennis Wheatley. The piece that intrigues me might have been injected by the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth)—who is busy writing his notes or cheques at the moment—and is probably from the St. Andrews think tank.

I do not often quote, because I always misquote. On this occasion I shall misquote again. This "quotation" comes from another William. This is Willie Shakespeare, I believe:

> "Oh what a tangled web we weave,
> In trying domestic rates to relieve.

The Government will be sorry that they ever embarked on this road. Let us look at some of the people who do not support the Bill and have not been mentioned so far. I should mention the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, only because it celebrated its centenary last year. That august body, which is certainly no bastion of Socialism, has deplored the Bill and said that there is nothing at all about it that it likes. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations has similar beliefs. In the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, 53 local authorities are against and three are for.

So where is the support for the measure coming from? If we were fair, and if we were to say, "Hands up those parliamentarians who will gain financially from this piece of legislation," precious few could not put up their hands. I am not being unfair, but it just so happens that I have some valuations taken at random from the Edinburgh roll. It would not be fair to mention names, so I shall not do so, but I shall tell the House the area in which the people live, and if people's faces go red, we shall know who they are. I mention first Duddingston Village. Current rates are £1,511 multiplied by 58·8p, giving rates payable of £888·47. For two adults on the electoral roll, the community charge of £229 multiplied by two is £458. If we subtract that from £888·47, we have a rebate of £430·47, or £8·28 a week. That is not bad. That is a fair and equitable system. We are shifting the burden. People on Members of Parliament's salaries will get a rebate by and large, although I understand that some Labour Members, for example my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross), will pay substantially more.

I have another example from Edinburgh. I shall not give the address because I have no intention of embarrassing individual Members. The house is approximately in Ainslie Place and between numbers four and eight. Current rates are £2,044, multiplied by 58·8p, giving rates payable of £1,201·87. For two adults on the electoral roll, the community charge, being £229 multiplied by two, is £458. That gives a grand saving of £743·87 or £14·31 a week. Some teenagers are forced to live on less than that sum.

Mr. Henderson: Is not one of the attractive possibilities that might emerge from the community charge the fact that fairly high-spending local authorities, such as Edinburgh now, and Lothian not so long ago, will exercise a more responsible role than in the past? All ratepayers in Edinburgh are likely to benefit, not just those whose addresses the hon. Gentleman refrained from giving.

Mr. McKelvey: The hon. Gentleman knows that I have said in the past that people get the councillors they vote for and the councillors they deserve. If they continue to vote for councillors, they will support the policies that they carry out in office. That is democracy, and there is nothing unfair about it.

I shall mention two matters which the Bill does not touch upon which create serious problems for people

[Mr. McKelvey]

north of the border. One is the chemical industry and the difficulties that it has met in paying rates through the contractor's principle; this has already been mentioned. No one would argue that our rating system was devised by the appliance of science. At worst it is a guesstimate, and at best it is someone's attitude, guesswork, balance of payments or a way of drawing in money. The system is not based on any science, but the contractor's principle and the opportunities that it has given for assessors north of the border to operate in the chemical industry puts that industry at a tremendous disadvantage vis-à-vis similar plants south of the border.

The system reveals some ridiculous examples. For example, immediately a pipeline crosses the border at Carlisle or Gretna, 50 per cent. more must be paid in rates in Scotland for the same pipeline carrying the same solution than in England. That is ludicrous and crazy.

When the Government speak of a evaluation and an equalisation, does that mean that Scottish rates will go down to those of England? Or is it more likely, since England has not had a recent revaluation, that the opposite will happen? If we introduced a revaluation in England now, the squeal of anguish that we heard in Scotland at the revaluation there would be drowned in an absolute roar of anguish from those who would have to pay those rates south of the border.

Another example illustrates my point even more dramatically. A large petrochemical plant which was recently built in Fife and provides jobs for people there now pays eight times what it would have paid if it had been built in England. It is impossible to reconcile the two figures. As its rates bill in Scotland is almost £10 million, as against £1·8 million in England, if there was any threat of closure of one of of the two plants, there would be an advantage of £8·5 million from closing the Scottish plant. That is a further threat to continued employment in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have considerable sympathy with the hon. Gentleman's points about the inequity of the contractor's principle, but does he accept that it is a valuation system based on capital values, which is what the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said the Labour party was considering as an alternative?

Mr. McKelvey: Theoretically, the hon. Gentleman may think that it is based on those values, but as there are no comparisons, in many cases, it is a stab in the dark. It is no more scientific than that. I could evaluate those properties just as well as the assessors are doing at present and take their fee.

We have already heard about the difficulties of some of our sporting clubs and racecourses because of the differences between north and south of the border. Again, the Government should move on equalisation. It is no good their saying that they have legislated for that and that if a racecourse north of the border can find a similar or identical racecourse in the south and make a comparison the assessors will take that into consideration and sort out the problem. So far, thousands of appeals have taken place and not one equalisation has been made. That does not encourage appellants to go through the process. We still eagerly await someone breaking tha mould so that we can apply it to other places. That formula will not work.

Mr. David Lambie (Cunninghame, South): How can one compare a racecourse in Scotland which was revalued two years ago with a similar racecourse in England or Wales which has not been revalued since 1973? There is no comparison. We are comparing 1973 figures with 1985 figures. It is a sham.

Mr. McKelvey: Of course, my hon. Friend is correct. For some years, he and my hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) have been meeting organisations which have this growing difficulty. We knew and forecast exactly what would happen on the last revaluation and of course that has come to pass.

I am mainly worried about short measure reforms that we can use to save the lives and existences of amateur sports clubs. On Friday I was present at a well-attended meeting in Kilmarnock. The Secretary of State for Defence was in attendance, not as a Defence Minister, although he had to defend some Government policies, but as a Member of Parliament for that area. He was there to discuss sports clubs with the 90 people, representing 28 different sports clubs, many of which are at the point of bankruptcy, who made up the audience. If there is no cash injection to those clubs by way of rates relief, they will go under. When they go under, the facilities that they provide for hundreds, nay thousands, of young children will end. What will happen on terms of human misery, apart from the cost, if we cast those boys and girls out on to the streets? Vandalism will increase, they will be encouraged to roam about in gangs, there will be increases in glue sniffing and all the other anti-social things which I am sure all of us would try to prevent.

I know that the Minister will say that the Government have legislated so that regional authorities can, by law, derate any of those clubs. I make two appeals—one to the regional authorities. I understand, as do all Opposition Members, why they are nervous about derating for any specific group, because whenever that is done and a barrier is drawn up, a group on the other side of the barrier pushes forward and tries to get its derating. One example is the voluntary groups, which do much excellent work. Over the years, because central Government have been clobbering the regional authorities for money, they are nervous about moving in that direction. I ask them—even considering that and the dangers that are involved in taking such a step —to save those sports clubs by inviting applications for derating from all those clubs. Those that are needy, deserving and due to go under could be saved by immediate derating.

If the Secretary of State for Scotland is genuine—he appeared to be in generous mood when he made his statement — he should promote that generosity and consider paying pound for pound with local authorities. I am not asking him to pay for the difference in rates that would be lost through the derating of the sports clubs, but if he is genuine and as interested in sports clubs, the welfare of young people and the hundreds of unemployed people who take advantage of the sports clubs and all the people who work voluntarily to support them as he says he is, and if he genuinely believes that he should help them, he can do so by telling the regions that for every club that they derate he will give them half the money that has been lost. That would show the regions that he is serious about

giving immediate assistance to a pressing problem, and would assure us that he is genuine in what he says about rates.

I shall volunteer to serve on the Committee that will consider the Bill, although I realise that I shall be inflicting punishment on myself. I warn the Minister and Conservative Members that there will be no easy passage for the Bill. We will fight tooth and nail on every sentence and every clause, and we will table thousands of amendments. Perhaps our first amendment should be to clause 1. It would probably solve the entire problem. We should take out the words "1st April" and insert, "the 12th of never".

6.50 pm

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): It was entertaining to listen to the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey). As he worried about the effect on Scotland of fewer Conservative Members than there were when we had more than half the votes of the Scottish people, I could not help but reflect that since the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) sat down there has been no Labour Member in the Chamber who comes nearer to my constituency than Glasgow——

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): What about Manchester?

Mr. Henderson: Manchester is even further away.

The hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun spoke of the difficulties of valuation. I should have thought that that would be a benefit of the Bill. The sudden changes that valuation can create in the amount that people must pay towards local government is one reason why many people want to have the rating reform offered in the Bill. The hon. Gentleman said that Moss Morran paid more in rates than if it had been built in the south. I remind him that the Labour Front Bench put a Whip on his party to vote to ensure that Moss Morran would pay even more than it is paying now. It is to the credit of Labour Members of Parliament in Fife that they supported the Government and ensured that Moss Morran would not have the higher rates bill that other Labour Members sought.

I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Ancram), on having delivered a workable scheme to replace the discredited system of domestic rates.

Mr. Maxton: Why is it discredited?

Mr. Henderson: I do not wish to take up too much time going over ground that has been gone over well, especially by the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South (Mr. Lambie), who, in every debate until this one—I have not seen him trying to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker——

Mr. Lambie: The hon. Gentleman knows that there are three Labour Members for Ayrshire constituencies and that we take it in turn to speak. My hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey) spoke for us tonight. The hon. Gentleman would not wish us to hog the debate all the time.

I have been making my rates speech in the House since 1970. Everyone knows it and I do not wish to repeat it. All I can say is that I have been the only person who has been consistent since 1970 in wishing to abolish local rates and introduce a national tax. I believe that there should be a 100 per cent. Government grant for local services and that local rates should be abolished. If the Secretary of State for Scotland had supported that view during the past four or five years, we would not be wasting our time with this debate tonight.

Mr. Henderson: I am glad that I gave way to the hon. Gentleman. Since I came to the House in 1974, I have heard him make that speech. It is a good speech. He was much more eloquent than I could hope to be in explaining why the rating system is discredited. The hon. Gentleman has said it consistently and with great passion year in and year out. He has gained the respect of hon. Members on both sides of the House for the firmness of his convictions on the matter. I am sorry that he has decided not to speak on the Second Reading of this Bill.

Conservative Members agree with the hon. Gentleman that the domestic rates system is discredited and should be replaced, although I acknowledge that this method of replacement is not the one that he has favoured until now. His view has been creditable. At one stage I was so determined to see the end of the rating system that I was prepared to accept his extremely radical solution and go for 100 per cent. block grant. However, over the years, I have shifted my position. The hon. Gentleman has not. He has been conservative and consistent in his view. I changed my view because I thought it important to have a clearly defined basis that recognised local control over local events and to make a clear distinction in the relationship between local expenditure and local taxation. That is why, on balance, I favour the solution in the Bill.

The Bill will be much more just than the present system. If I had known that the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) would not be in his place, I would have told him that I planned to mention his speech. On behalf of the Scottish National party, he appeared to favour a local income tax as a way of getting rid of domestic rates. Has he calculated the cost to his constituents or to the constituents of any hon. Members who support a local income tax? I have not done the arithmetic because I do not know enough to do the calculation off the top of my head, but I should be surprised if the income of people in the Western Isles was sufficient, even at 100 per cent. income tax, to meet the costs of local government in the Western Isles.

The right hon. Gentleman said in answer to an intervention that at least people would be paying according to their ability because it was related to income, but that would not apply if the rate of income tax was confiscatory in nature. I hope that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, who has more information than I have, will give us a more accurate view on what might be the effect of a local income tax in constituencies such as the Western Isles and others represented by hon. Members who support the idea. At first sight, but only at first sight, a local income tax has some attractions. The more one examines it, the more one sees that it has all the disadvantages and few of the advantages of the existing system.

People believe that rates are an extraordinary burden upon them, but domestic ratepayers in Scotland contribute only 13 per cent. of local government expenditure. That is at the root of the problem and the sense of injustice with the rating system, but it is also a reason why the charge of regressive taxation made by the

[Mr. Henderson]

hon. Member for Garscadden does not wash. We shall ask the community charge to meet 13 per cent. of local government expenditure. The rest will be paid by business or by central Government on behalf of the national taxpayer. That balances the interests of the better-off and the less well-off.

The hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun mentioned sports grounds. As I advised those in Fife who were worried about the rating of sports grounds, the present system contains the means by which amateur sports grounds can be relieved of rates. A decision of Fife regional council proved that point. On the question of professional sports grounds, I was glad to hear the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South point out the differences in valuation between Scotland and England. It is an important factor. Another factor is the expenditure policies of local authorities north and south of the border. That also plays an important part in making the valuation. Professional sports clubs regularly came to the House to lobby and draw attention to the problems of the high rates that they are paying in comparison to their equivalents in England. I calculated what a major Glasgow sports club would pay if it was based in Aberdeen—not south of the border, simply in Aberdeen. There would be a difference of more than £20,000 a year simply by shifting the club from Glasgow to Aberdeen. Of course, the difference would be even greater now.

Mr. McKelvey: I do not follow the hon. Gentleman's argument. If the valuations were equalised for the football clubs and race courses with the poundage paid in England, they would pay more rates. Are there no authorities in England which you would describe as high spenders? Are there high spenders only among Scottish authorities? The hon. Gentleman's equation does not balance.

Mr. Henderson: The hon. Gentleman appeared by his use of the word "you" to refer to Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I do not want to bring Mr. Deputy Speaker into my equation.

The hon. Gentleman misunderstands me. I did not say that there is no inequality between Scottish and English sports grounds, because there is. However, my point is that there are also inequalities within Scotland. It is not just a question of inequalities north and south of the border; inequalities also exist in Scotland. The inequalities are most severely felt by Scottish businesses which are competing with businesses in other parts of the United Kingdom. That specifically applies to tourist facilities. I have heard from people who run caravan parks, and to some extent a caravan park in Fife is competing for business with a caravan park in Cornwall. It is a scandal that there are such immense differences in ratings.

There are other facilities where there is competition between a firm in Scotland and a firm down south, and where the combination of the spending of the local authority and the valuation system places an unfair burden on the Scottish firm and reduces its capacity to compete effectively.

The most important consequence of the Bill becoming law will be the way in which it will improve accountable democracy in Scotland. Everyone will have a vested interest in examining the costs and benefits provided by the local authority. In other words, we will all be interested in the value for money provided by the authority. That is an accountability that does not exist at present, and to that extent democracy is weakened. That is the most important part that the Bill will play in making life more just and fairer in Scotland. The Bill will make Scotland a more truly democratic country than it is at present.

Of course, there will be gainers and losers. No one has ever concealed that. No Conservative Member has ever concealed the fact that there will be gainers and losers.

Mr. McKelvey: That is because Conservative Members are all gainers.

Mr. Henderson: The hon. Gentleman has just asked who will be the gainers. Three quarters of households will be gainers, or at least will be no more than £1 a week worse off. That is the overall effect of gainers and losers.

As I said earlier in an intervention, I believe that everyone will benefit from better local government which has a greater concern to provide better value for money. At the end of the day, the expenditure policies of local authorities will determine the total cost of local government. Fife regional council has been Labour controlled since the reorganisation of local government. That council has taken us from the lowest to the highest rated area in Scotland in just 10 years. No excuses can alter the fact that the expenditure policies of the council have brought that about.

Mr. Millan: Nonsense.

Mr. Henderson: It is not nonsense, it is a fact. If the right hon. Gentleman can recall the time when he was Secretary of State for Scotland, he will remember that Fife regional council then was a lot more responsible, yet he chopped a lot more of its budget than any Secretary of State for Scotland has done under this Government. He will remember the 6,000 fewer staff in Scottish local government—the number that he slashed from local government in one year. We do not need to hear about cuts from the right hon. Gentleman, who knows more about that than anyone else. He introduced cuts more sharply, more harshly and more unreasonably than anyone else.

To that extent, I accept that in 1979 the expenditures of Fife regional council were a good deal less than they are now. That was partly due to the work of the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) in screwing down the expenditure of Scottish local authorities. I acknowledge that. However, since then Fife has continued, regardless of help from central Government, and regardless of the wishes of the majority of ratepayers, to increase its expenditure every year. The council has gone to the limit of what it thought it could get away with before it was hit by the Government for gross over-expenditure. The council has done a great disservice to the people of Fife, who must bear the burden, and to the business community, which provides the jobs that are much needed at the moment.

Even Fife regional council, which I have severely criticised for its expenditure policies over the years and its lack of sense of priorities in expenditure, acknowledges that in north-east Fife and in my constituency the people will be significantly better off as a result of the community charge. On that basis, I am prepared to accept the judgment of Fife regional council. I support the Bill because I believe that it will improve matters for my constituents, and because it will produce a more just system.

7.6 pm

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): The reasons given by the Secretary of State this afternoon for the introduction of the Bill had nothing to do with the real genesis of this legislation. The Bill is another manifestation of the breakdown in the relationship between central and local government. That is the direct responsibility of the way in which the Government have behaved over the seven years since 1979. The Government have attempted to screw down local government expenditure and to control it by one device or another. They have tried to impose penalties when local authorities have not behaved in a way that is considered acceptable to the Scottish Office. The Government have behaved in a thoroughly authoritarian manner towards local authorities and they have accompanied that approach with considerable reductions in the amount of assistance from central Government to local government.

The rate support grant percentage for the current year is 56 per cent. whereas the Government inherited an RSG percentage of 68·5 per cent. in Scotland. They have made these grants on relevant expenditures that have been consistently understated and unrealistic. The result is that, with an extremely modest real increase in expenditure by local authorities in Scotland, there has been considerable increase in the rates burden. In 1978-79 the average domestic rates in Scotland were £132. In 1985-86 that figure had risen to £392; almost three times the 1978 figure, and, of course, the rates have increased again in the current year. That is the real crisis in local government finance. It has nothing to do with the rating system per se, it has more to do with the way in which the Government have treated local authorities over the past seven years.

Any tax, whether it is rates, local taxation or central taxation, that has too much burden placed upon it, will eventually give under the strain. That is true of local taxation and local rates and also about income tax, VAT and any other form of local or central taxation. The crisis came in 1985 because of the Government's mishandling of the 1985 revaluation in Scotland. The Bill was born out of the panic that was generated by the effects of that revaluation. It has nothing to do with providing greater accountability, fairness or getting rid of unsatisfactory features of the domestic rating system. Scotland is now bearing the first of the burdens of the 1985 revaluation and is getting legislation first.

There is no ideal tax. The Secretary of State mentioned an ideal alternative. I agree that there is none, and the Bill certainly does not provide it. I am not maintaining that the rating system is ideal, but I have no difficulty defending it, because it has many virtues and advantages. It is cheap and easy to administer and, with a sensible system of Government support through the rate support grant, it has considerable flexibility. Scotland has had industrial and agricultural derating. We have had domestic rate relief and special relief through special legislation to deal with some of the worst consequences of the 1985 revaluation.

A few years ago, when there were special burdens on certain local authorities because of the oil boom, special adjustments were written into RSG. We have a system of specific and general grants and a system of distribution —RSG—which is subject to adjustment. One could say, if one wanted to be pejorative, that it is open to manipulation — which it has been under the present Government — but it can be used to change the distribution pattern between local authorities. That feature is retained in the Bill, so if there is a problem with manipulation, the Bill will not remove it.

With domestic rates, it must be emphasised that, with housing benefit, the burden can be related considerably to the ability to pay. It is nonsense to talk about rates and to fail to take housing benefit into account. The Government's complaint about housing benefit is not that it does not work but that it works too well—it excludes some ratepayers from paying any rates. The Government are here ensuring that everybody contributes to local expenditure.

There is no need to defend the rating system, however, because the Government are retaining it for non-domestic ratepayers. The odd thing about that is that many of the complaints and anomalies have nothing to do with domestic rates. The hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) spoke about sports clubs, but they will not be affected in the slightest by the Bill. The chemical industry and the contractor's principle also has nothing to do with domestic rates. There are anomalies and injustices, but the Bill does not tackle them. The Bill is no great deal for industrial ratepayers.

All we are given in the Bill is a temporary freeze at the existing level, which non-domestic ratepayers consider is too high. Like other ratepayers, they have suffered from the drastic reduction in grants of the past seven years. Increasing the valuation according to the retail price index in the transitional years is not appropriate. Besides, I oppose in principle anything in taxation legislation which protects one group of taxpayers for the future. No Government can bind a successor in that respect, so the idea that industry is getting some great favour in the shape of the freeze is a nonsense.

If the non-domestic sector wants to see what is in store for it, it should look beyond 1990, when there will be another revaluation which will cover England as well. I understand that the idea is to get valuation practices, procedures, bases and legislation uniform by 1990 so that revaluations can be uniform and there can be a uniform business rate. I asked the Secretary of State earlier today whether that would be uniform in Scotland or throughout Britain, and he replied that that had not been decided. That decision is crucial for businesses in Scotland because a uniform business rate throughout Britain would be much more favourable to Scottish businesses than a uniform business rate throughout Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Why?

Mr. Millan: There are several reasons. The Secretary of State cannot answer that absolutely basic point — whether the rate will be uniform throughout Britain or throughout Scotland.

When we have the revaluation in 1990, whereas the difference for Scotland will represent the five years between 1985 and 1990, the difference for England will represent the 17 years from 1973 to 1990. I do not what the effect of the revaluation will be, but we should bear in mind the consequences of a five-year revaluation. The Government speak of protecting business from dramatic changes, but there will be a considerable problem for businesses on both sides of the border in 1990, but presumably especially so in the south.

There will be winners and losers among business and among local authorities. If there is a uniform rate which

[Mr. Millan]

is redistributed on a per capita basis, businesses in rural Scotland will pay more rates because they are at present rated below average, but local authorities will gain because redistribution of the business rate will give them more as rural local authorities, on average, have less industry than local authorities in urban areas such as Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen.

There will be a wholesale upset in 1990, and the Bill does not deal with that. When we ask the Government how they will tackle that upset, they have no answers. The Government dodge the questions, but the consequences that I have outlined are part and parcel of the proposals in the Green Paper and the results of the Government's intentions. There will be havoc in 1990 such as will make the 1985 revaluation in Scotland look like a minor hiccup.

Mr. Henderson: I am not quite sure whether the right hon. Gentleman is advocating a revaluation in England or whether he is saying that there should not be one because it would be so awful.

Mr. Millan: There should have been a revaluation in England long before now but the Government have dodged it. I introduced a revaluation in 1978 because I believed it was the honest thing to do. I do not criticise the previous Secretary of State for Scotland for having the revaluation in 1985, but I criticise him for not anticipating the results of that revaluation. The Government were caught by surprise when the results became available. It is quite wrong to go 17 years without a revaluation.

The Government are not being frank in the Bill, nor with the House or with business generally about the possible consequences in 1990. We should bear in mind the basic point that, although we discuss the burden of rates on business such rates are tax deductible. Whether corporation tax or income tax is paid it is deductible and therefore there is a reduction of the burden on businesses.

I shall not go on any longer about non domestic rates as I wish to draw attention to some of the consequences that the Government have not thought through, or, if they have, about which, they are not telling us their thoughts. The immediate issue is domestic rating. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) that the property that one occupies to some extent reflects one's ability to pay. Obviously, there is not a 100 per cent. correlation, but I do not find many people who are earning reasonable incomes living in the worst properties in my constituency. At least two Conservative Members live in my constituency, and they certainly do not live in the worst properties there. That is sensible.

Mr. Norris: This is the second time that the question of whether incomes are broadly related to property values has arisen. The Green Paper made quite clear that 10 per cent. of those earning £300 a week or more lived in property in the bottom quartile of rateable value while 7 per cent. of those earning £50 a week or more lived in property in the top quartile of rateable values. Surely the truth is that there is an insufficient link between income and property value. That makes a nonsense of the concept of capital value assessment.

Mr. Millan: That 7 per cent. who earn less than £50 a week and who live in the best kind of property are not paying rates because the whole of the rates will be paid through housing benefits. At that level, housing benefits take care of many such anomalies, including people living in property which is beyond their means.

I find the accountability argument sinister. Such an argument could be applied to central as well as local taxation. There are many pensioners who are not contributing in any way to the community. There are others on supplementary benefit. It is no use saying that they are all paying VAT. Of course, they may be paying VAT but when one is on supplementary benefit the VAT paid is only giving back to the Exchequer money which one has already received by way of supplementary benefit. Unfortunately, there are millions in our country who, because of unemployment, are not making a taxation contribution to the economy. Are we to deprive them of the vote? Will it be argued that, unless such people pay a certain amount of income tax or other charge, regardless of their income, there is no accountability at central Government level.

The accountability argument is phoney and in any case grossly exaggerates the numbers who are concerned. For example, if one takes into account married couples that reduces the numbers considerably. Other young people are temporarily not ratepayers but as soon as they get a house of their own they become ratepayers. Those young people lucky enough to be in a job and still living at home are likely to be heavy contributors to general taxation in terms of smoking, drinking and other entertainments which are, at the moment, heavily taxed.

When one sets aside all the arguments, the reality is that under this system a greater burden will be placed upon the poorer people, and a lesser burden on the better off. If that is not the position I do not know what the dickens we are doing having the Bill in the first place. If the Bill does not redistribute the burden in some way what is the purpose of the exercise? The purpose of the exercise is to put more of a burden on people less able to pay.

The comparisons made in the Green Paper are thoroughly dishonest — nearly as dishonest as the Secretary of State's public expenditure statement this afternoon. The Comparisons have always been done on the basis that the 20 per cent. minimum contribution to rates under the present system will happen in any case. The imposition of the 20 per cent. minimum contribution is part of the process of putting more of the burden on the poorer sections of the community and taking it off the better off.

One problem concerning the future has not been dealt with by the Secretary of State. I asked the right hon. and learned Gentleman a question about it but he gave an extremely inadequate answer. It concerns the safety net. If the new system is introduced at the same time as the redistributed grant — many Conservative members do not seem to understand that it is not just a question of changing the basis of local domestic taxation; there is also a change in the grant distribution — it will have a detrimental effect on the areas of Scotland that most need Government help, including my city of Glasgow.

If all these changes happened at once one would not be talking about a community charge in Glasgow, for example, of £262; it would be £314. I do not know how the safety net will operate. The Secretary of State could not tell us this afternoon. It will be self financing, however. I have news for the hon. Member for Fife, North East (Mr. Henderson) and other Conservative Members. If one takes the examples of Dumfries and Annandale and Eskdale

their figure for the community charge, without the safety net, could go down to £108, but with the safety net they will be paying £172. They do not regard it as a safety net.

The redistribution is temporary and is only shielding the full effects of the system from those areas which will be worst affected. The Secretary of State did not mention any of this. I asked him a question but he gave an answer in general terms which did not explain the reality of the situation. Comparing the present system with the new proposals it is clear that, for many areas, the situation will get worse—it is not static—once the new grant system and the poll tax take effect.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden said, the poll tax is an administrative nightmare. Property does not move but people do. It is often difficult to keep track of people. We do not carry identity cards in this country and it is possible to move from Glasgow to Edinburgh or from Edinburgh to Aberdeen. One does not have to tell anyone about it—even, presumably, one's wife. That may be the idea of the move in the first place.

Under the new system one is under an obligation, as soon as one moves from Glasgow to Edinburgh, to tell the registration officer that one is resident in Edinburgh. If that is not done one is committing an offence. I am glad to say it is not a criminal offence. The administrative costs of the new system are more expensive than the present system. It will give rise to all sorts of difficulties. The Government have paid absolutely no attention to representations on this matter from COSLA and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and all the people who must administer the system.

Basically the Government think that they will get away with the new tax because it will be phased in over a period, because there will be a safety net and because it will be complicated and people will not know what is happening. It will not immediately hit those who will suffer under it so everything will be all right. The Government made the same miscalculation about the cuts in rate support grant and the penalties for local authorities. In the first year it was not too bad, but eventually it hit people and the Government, and the 1985 revaluation was the last straw that broke the camel's back. The same will happen here.

Leaving aside all the details, the essential feature of the system is that 80 per cent. of local government expenditure will be centrally controlled, and only 20 per cent. will be in the control of local authorities. They will have to make expenditure decisions, knowing that if they want to spend more, the burden will be placed on only one sector of local taxpayers, namely the domestic sector. As soon as the domestic sector understands what is happening, the opposition that has already been expressed against the Bill, will become greater.

This is all unnecessary because the reasons for the crisis have arisen not from fundamental difficiencies in the rating system, but from the way in which the Government have dealt with the rating system and local authorities during the past seven years.

If I were asked how I would reform the system, my first, biggest, simplest reform would be to increase the amount of central Government support for local authorities to restore some of the money that has been taken away from local authorities, leaving ratepayers to bear the burden. In other words, I would stop punishing ratepayers. That would do a tremendous amount to reform the local government system. I would not introduce the new proposals on housing benefit which, again, will hit the poorest members of the community, and I would do something about revaluation.

At one time we had, not periodical revaluation, but continuous revaluation. Even with periodic revaluation there is no reason why there should not be transitional arrangements, so that the whole burden of a revaluation does not take effect at once. Those simple reforms are always in the hands of any Government who genuinely want to give a fair deal to local authorities and ratepayers.

I have never seen local income tax as a substitute for rates, but it could be an important supplement to them. Even then, I am not particularly enthusiastic about local income tax. I would prefer to see it used for a Scottish assembly than for local authority taxation.

The idea that because the Government have introduced this iniquitous Bill the rest of us must run about and produce all sorts of fanciful proposals for reforming the rating system is absurd. If one is hitting one's head against a brick wall, the first step is to stop. The trouble is that the Government have been hitting the heads of local authorities and ratepayers against a brick wall and first we need them to stop doing that.

This is an iniquitous Bill and it will not prove popular, although the Government mistakenly believe it will. Their idea of what is popular in Scotland is demonstrated by their performance at public opinion polls and district and regional elections. We shall oppose these proposals and if the Bill, unfortunately, is passed, it should be repealed and replaced by a system which provides much more sensible relationships between local and central Government.

7.33 pm

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): I am grateful for the opportunity to follow the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan). I shall not follow all the highways and byways of the various options to which he treated us, but I must dispute his central theme, which was that the community charge would not enhance accountability.

The right hon. Gentleman seemed to argue that the rate support grant was the principal source of the problem. He quoted some likely figures for a community charge, and we have seen them published by the Scottish Office in *The Scotsman* and the *Glasgow Herald*. I am a little puzzled, because the community charge figures at district level for this financial year are £81 for Stirling district council, but £48 for Falkirk district council and £47 for Clackmannan district council. Yet all three authorities have similar problems—indeed, if anything, those faced by Falkirk and Clackmannan are greater—and all three are Labour controlled.

In Stirling the extreme Left is in power, spending as if money has gone out of fashion. That accounts for the cost of local government on a community charge basis almost doubling. For most of my constituents the news that the district council is costing them nearly twice as much as those in Falkirk and Clackmannan would come as a great surprise. What is wrong with the present system is that when the excessive bill drops through the letter box, my constituents have no way of knowing that. The community charge will draw that into sharp relief. To show that I am impartial in my views on this matter, and to give all parties an opportunity, I should say that the community charge in Perth and Kinross would be £42.

We have not yet heard what the alliance parties have to say, and I am a little puzzled why Liberal Members in

[Mr. Michael Forsyth]

particular and, indeed, SDP Members who represent Scottish constituencies, should be so opposed to the Bill. After all, their constituents will benefit considerably. At district level and for the community charge as a whole their constituencies would have the lowest figures. For example, in Tweeddale the figure would be £30, in Gordon it would be £25, and in Inverness it would be £32, compared with Stirling's £81. There are special circumstances in Shetland, but the total community charge there would be £101 compared with Stirling's £223. Therefore, why are the alliance parties so determined to inflict considerably higher costs on their constituents by opposing the Bill? That is the reality of the impact of the community charge on their areas.

Mr. Henderson: Does my hon. Friend agree that there is a slight similarity between the position of Liberal Members on this issue and their position on council housing? They seem to be in favour of council house sales in principle but not in practice, and here they seem to be in favour in principle of getting rid of domestic rates, but they produce an impossible method in practice.

Mr. Forsyth: Yes. I accept my hon. Friend's point. To be fair to Liberal Members, there is a distinction. With the sale of council houses only a proportion of their constituents could benefit, and by their weasel position on that perhaps they are disadvantaging only a section of their electorate, but in this case they are disadvantaging every elector in the area.

Mr. Wallace: The hon. Gentleman said that every constituent would be disadvantaged because of our opposition to the Bill. Has he tried to work out the rateable values and the rates paid by some of my constituents? Even the figure that he has given for a possible community charge in Shetland would seriously disadvantage many of my constituents.

Mr. Forsyth: As I understand it—it is always difficult to divine Liberal policy—the hon. Gentleman's policy is against both the rating system and the Government's proposals. Therefore, it is a disingenuous attempt to argue that some people who are paying rates now will be worse off under the community charge at the same time as arguing against the rating system. Instead, the hon. Gentleman proposes a local income tax. In his constituency few people earn high salaries and the base from which the revenue would have to be drawn is narrow. His constituents would be among those who the Green Paper says would have to pay an additional 11p on the basic rate of tax, so his constituents, whom he pretends to defend, and who are currently paying income tax at 29p in the pound, would pay it at 40p in the pound on low wage levels.

The right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) is not present, but he is in a similar position. His community charge would be £110 and he, too, has a narrow income base in his constituency. Therefore, he would be condemning his constituents to paying 40p in the pound. When I put that point to him, he said that it was nonsense and that the whole point about local income tax is that it reflects the ability to pay.

The right hon. Gentleman appears to be on the point of recognising the importance of rates of tax. He might even join us in the Lobby in future and vote for cutting the basic rate of tax, because, like every Member of the Liberal and Social Democratic parties, he is condemning his constituents to paying high rates of tax, especially those who are least able to pay. I notice that the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) is leaving the Chamber, unable to answer my point. Let us hear less about fairness from that neck of the woods.

The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Milan) began by being sympathetic to business and then observed that, of course, rates are tax deductible. I have news for him, because the high spending of councils such as Stirling and others that are run by his party has resulted in many businesses being unable to make profits. If they do not make profits, they cannot claim the tax deductions. That is why areas of Glasgow and other parts of Scotland have been blighted and businesses destroyed. In turn, when a revaluation is performed, the assessors say, "There are no businesses, this is a deprived area. Mark down the rateable value." However, they mark them up in my constituency and in others, thus spreading the canker of deprivation and destruction that high rates have produced in Scotland.

The right hon. Member for Govan admitted that a uniform United Kingdom business rate would be of considerable advantage to Scotland. I asked him why, and he said that it was because of revaluation. However, revaluation has nothing whatever to do with the overall aggregate levels of rates that are paid by businesses. Scotland would benefit considerably from a UK-wide business rate poundage because many Scottish councils are controlled by his party and are, therefore, committed to extravagant policies and to levying high rates.

The hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey) discussed the contractor's principle. I advise my hon. Friend the Minister that I am disappointed that we have not taken the opportunity in the Bill to deal with the problems that arise from valuation methods in Scotland. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun is not in the Chamber. However, it was evident from his remarks that he did not understand the contractor's principle.

Sports clubs and other organisations are in difficulties as a result of valuations performed on the contractor's principle, because it operates on the basis of capital valuation. That was dragged out by force from the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) as being his party's thought on what it might do. It is ludicrous to look at the capital value of a sports club that can be used for only part of the year, take a proportion of that and call it the rateable value.

In England, the revenue principle is more dominant. It considers the revenue that could be raised and assesses the rateable value on that basis. Although the sympathy of Labour Members for sports clubs is welcome and predictable, their intellectual commitment is suspect and, once again, they have nothing to offer in terms of a coherent policy.

I am surprised that the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun should have gone to such lengths to suggest to the Government that they might have a pound-for-pound basis to help with rating relief for sports clubs, because we have substantially increased the rate support

grant for Scottish local authorities, giving them more than adequate mileage to use their discretionary powers to give total relief, if they wish, to sports clubs.

The costs are very small and are much less than Labour authorities have squandered in the not too distant past on grants to striking miners and other causes that are dear to their hearts. Indeed, what Fife paid to the striking miners would almost cover the cost of giving complete relief to every sports club in Scotland. *[Interruption.]* I advise the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) that the only clubs that enjoy mandatory relief by statute are the miners' welfare clubs in Scotland. There may be a lesson in that, and one can predict why it came about.

The debate has been most revealing. Once again the Liberal and Social Democratic parties have a policy which will not work and which is different from everybody else's. The Labour party has come out as the reactionary party. It is the party for the status quo and without a new idea. I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State on the Bill, which is radical, and which is a real attempt to deal with a problem which has dogged successive Governments.

The Labour party is defending a system that is a legacy from a time when land was the sole measure of wealth. It is defending a system that penalises the pensioner, although year after year we hear speeches from Opposition Members saying that we should do more for the single pensioner and the widowed pensioner, and that is quite right. However, the hon. Member for Garscadden has brushed aside single pensioners as representing a mere 9 per cent. of the electorate——

Mr. Maxton: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would tell us how many single pensioners and widows pay rates under the present system. May we have those figures? I asked the Minister to provide those figures because the whole case seems to be based on them, but he was unable to tell us.

Mr. Forsyth: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, but if he had been listening to the speech of his hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden he would have heard him say 9 per cent.

Mr. Maxton: That is different.

Mr. Forsyth: It is an odd argument that considers single pensioners — many of whom pay income tax — not in terms of the justice of helping them when they are perhaps stuck in family homes and facing huge rate bills on small incomes, but on the basis of what percentage of the population they represent. That is especially odd when it comes from the party which accuses us of being the accountancy regime in politics. — *[Interruption.]* The Labour party cares only about perpetuating a system in which the minority of people have to pay for the extravagances of the party in power. If the Labour party itself had designed the rating system it could not be more perfect, but what has gone wrong with the system is that not only has it become unfair, but that it has encouraged irresponsibility in our councils. That is why there is politics on the rates, and why, up and down the country, including Scotland, the conventions of local government have broken down.

There is a fundamental flaw in an argument that seeks to fund local government solely by a redistributive tax. There should be an element of charge, because local government does, after all, provide services. If the unfairness of the present system is that rates are levied regardless of ability to pay, it is also unfair that the rates that are levied bear no relation to the services that are received.

The right hon. Member for Govan, who has now left the Chamber, was honest enough to say that he fully supported the revaluation. I have to confess that I do not remember his saying so in the Chamber at the time. However, we are grateful for his support on that matter.

I wish that the hon. Member for Garscadden would clearly tell the Scottish people that the Labour party supports the revaluation and future revaluations of the domestic scene. If one supports the rating system and claims to be concerned about fairness, implicit in that is a belief in regular revaluations. We have not heard that from the hon. Member for Garscadden, but perhaps we shall hear it later in the debate.

Let me spend a little time talking about local income tax, which seems to be the only alternative that we hear from the Opposition Benches. I have already made the point that it would have the effect of crippling rural areas in Scotland, crippling constituencies which are represented by Liberal and Social Democratic Members and crippling constituencies represented by at least one Member of the Scottish National party.

I am surprised that hon. Members have not made the point that the interesting thing about the local income tax proposal is that when one makes the point about the narrowness of the tax base the vague assertion is made that there could be some sort of grant to redistribute the money. *[Interruption.]* I shall gladly give way to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) if he can explain to me how that would work.

Mr. Kirkwood: I shall make my own speech in my own time.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman does not know. We have been given no clear idea of how that would work. however, perhaps I can assist him.

One way would be simply to say that all local government finance will be funded by a local income tax which will be the same in every area—4·5p in the pound —and the money will be dished out by the Government, but that would introduce central funding of local government. That would not be a local income tax. A lot of money could be spent to set up a bureaucracy to collect the money at local level, and in doing so the Liberals would give us that ultimate freedom of information — the ability for local government officers and councillors to find out how much each and every one of us earns. Not many of their constituents would want that.

If we go back to the idea that money would be collected centrally, which is more sensible, the Liberals, and Scottish nationalists and others who support local income tax would have destroyed local government and the very local accountability about which they talk. Local income tax would not be perceptible to those who are paying it. It would be taken from their pay packets and people would not know how much had gone to central Government, how much to local government or how much in national insurance and other stoppages.

Mr. Norris: I agree with my hon. Friend's points. Will he consider what might happen given that at present one pays income tax in relation to the place of one's

[Mr. Norris]

employment, but presumably one would pay local income tax in relation to one's place of residence? As the two are frequently different, how, even from a technical point of view, could they be reconciled?

Mr. Forsyth: My hon. Friend makes a good point. At the moment, as I understand it, the Inland Revenue operates on the basis of people's place of work address. A new register would have to be drawn up. Yet we are being attacked because it is said that it would be impracticable to set up a register to collect a community charge.

Hon. Members on both sides of the House have had experience of constituents who write to us because their mortgage relief has not caught up with the fact that they moved house three years ago. The Inland Revenue deals expeditiously with such matters, but such problems add a burden. Imagine the effects on local businesses having to deal with 56 different levels of local income tax in Scotland alone, all varying from year to year. They would have to take account of the fact that Joe Bloggs had moved, and inform the Inland Revenue each time. That is a recipe for complete chaos. It would be bureaucracy gone mad. Yet that is put forward on the basis that our system is too complicated and difficult to administer.

Mr. Maxton: I accept the point made by the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris) about the present situation, but if the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), has talked to any Treasury Ministers he will be aware that the Inland Revenue is presently undertaking the computerisation of the system. I have been to a seminar on that with Treasury Ministers, and it is they who claim that such problems will eventually be overcome. If the hon. Gentleman were to deal with other objections to local income tax, he would get on much better.

Mr. Forsyth: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. He makes a fair point about the computerisation of the Inland Revenue. I can only say that I recently computerised my constituency casework and it has taken me a year to make the system work properly. A computer is only a tool. It does not change the fundamentals of the situation with which one must deal. There would be 65 different rates of tax. All that is different from the point of view of the register is that, instead of local government having to make up the register, control and police it, the Liberals, Scottish nationalists and others who advocate local income tax are passing the burden on to small businesses. That is from a party which tells us that it is concerned about the burden on small businesses.

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Does my hon. Friend agree that there is a further patent disadvantage about a system of local income tax, and that is that it would result in disproportionately severe tax burdens upon people who, be they print workers or successful entrepreneurs, have high incomes and who would be bled white to contribute to local government services?

Mr. Forsyth: That is true. That brings me to the point that was fairly made by the hon. Member for Garscadden, when he tried to imply that there should be some equity in local government and that the amount that people pay towards services should be based on their ability to pay. What he did not take into account was my hon. Friend's point that the vast amount of local authority income comes from the Government, the bulk of which is from taxation, so that those people are already contributing through their income tax to the cost of local government. Therefore, there is a progressive element. The community charge, to which Opposition Members object because they say it is regressive——

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): The poll tax.

Mr. Forsyth: —or the poll tax—is less than one sixth of total revenue.

It is interesting that the hon. Gentleman tries to get us to call it a poll tax rather than a community charge. Opposition Members are so bankrupt of arguments that they are reduced to trying to give it a name which implies some threat to the right to vote. They cannot argue against it on the basis of what it is. Therefore, they insist upon using the term "poll tax", which, I freely admit, I have used in the past to advocate such a system, but it is misguided, because it implies that the right to vote is somehow connected with it, which it is not.

Even if the advocates of local income tax had managed to get their administrative act together, there is still one good local government reason for it being a bad system for funding local authorities—the highly buoyant nature of local income tax as a source of revenue. Even a small increment in local income tax will produce extremely large sums of money for local authorities. I think that it is true that for most local authorities a ½p local income tax would account for almost 10 per cent. of their total revenues. That means that efficient councils would not be able to demonstrate to their local income tax payers their efficiency by cutting the rate of income tax. If they did make savings, they would have to be at least 10 per cent. in order to make a ½p cut, which the Inland Revenue, even with its computers, says is the smallest sum with which it could consider dealing. Equally, it means that if they put ½p or 1p on local income tax, a huge increase in revenues will occur, and who doubts that most local authorities would find the means to spend that money? It would be an accelerator for high spending by local authorities and make them less accountable.

Mr. Henderson: I have been following closely my hon. Friend's argument, and clearly he is extremely knowledgeable. However, has he not underestimated the problem of collecting local income tax from small business men? Presumably, the party advocating local income tax envisages it for the whole of the United Kingdom, so there will be not just the 56 local authorities in Scotland, but the 400-odd in England and Wales with which the employer must keep in touch.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Member for Cathcart is keen on computers and implied that he is interested in the idea of local income tax.

Mr. Maxton *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Forsyth: Well, those who are interested in the idea can treat us to an account of how those who have computerised payroll systems on a United Kingdom basis will programme their computers to deal with the varying changes. My hon. Friend the Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) is right.

We have heard rather a lot about White Papers and Layfield and all the reports on the funding of local government. Layfield pointed out that a local income tax

could not be levied at district level because the local authority is too small. That means that one has to levy at regional level in Scotland, which means that there has to be something else to raise the revenue for the district. We look forward to hearing from the hon. Member for Cathcart what that something else will be, and how it will work.

I appreciate that I have gone on for some time, and we are all looking forward to hearing how alliance Members will deal with local income tax. However, is it possible for my hon. Friend the Minister to consider putting certain aspects before the Committee? Is there not a case for putting in a requirement to force local authorities to take some action about sports grounds and perhaps introduce some element of mandatory derating? If it is possible to do that, perhaps we can go a little further and consider the possibility of harmonising methods of valuation.

I am worried about enforcement. I am disappointed that it will not be a criminal offence not to pay the community charge. I wonder whether we should consider people having a community charge number, which would be required for them to claim benefits or receive other services. I see no objection to that in principle, any more than there is objection to people having a national insurance number before they take up employment.

Could we not improve the Bill so that, instead of saying that when people move they have to apportion the amounts payable in each area, we could opt for a system rather like the census? Where someone is resident on a given day should be regarded as determining his obligation for a community charge, and on a swings and roundabouts basis authorities would gain and loose equally and there would be no disadvantage. This would simplify administration.

Opposition Members have made great play of the fact that we have rejected particular methods in the past and not tackled the problems for 10 years. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State is to be congratulated on grasping the nettle, for holding it fast and for introducing a system which is politically brave. I believe that when the people of Scotland see that the Opposition parties have nothing to offer but the status quo, which has long since been discredited, they will support us at the polls, whether they are gainers or losers.

8.3 pm

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): It is perhaps not surprising that the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) devoted the larger part of a long speech to shadow boxing about local income tax. It was somewhat galling that he had to rely on misinterpretations of the proposals of the two alliance parties on this subject because there had been no contribution to the debate for three and a half hours from any alliance Member and he had to go on suppositions and interventions to make his point.

The hon. Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) said that the speech of the hon. Member for Stirling was informed, but it was not. Had it been, he would have known that it is not a novel suggestion to finance local government by local income tax, and that it is a tax employed by many democracies, notably in 13 states in the United States of America. If he had come to grips with the reality of local income tax, instead of creating fantastic opposition to it, he would have realised that if one lived and worked in the city of New York, one would pay income tax to the city, to the state and to the federal Government.

It has never been argued, not even by this Government, who are opposed to local income tax, that it is not possible to introduce it. It has always been accepted, from Layfield on, that it would be possible to introduce it, and to do so by the latter part of this decade, when the process of computerisation by the Inland Revenue will be complete. The Government chose to reject this, not on the grounds of inoperability, but because they prefer a form of taxation that will allow them much greater control over local authority spending, because they do not choose to strengthen local authority accountability and because they wish to reduce the freedom of local government to spend.

The system of taxation advocated by the hon. Member for Stirling, which the Government are proposing in the Bill, is not, by contrast to local income tax, known in any civilised country. It is a bizarre, inequitable, and extremely burdensome tax. It will be impossible to collect. It will lead to the greatest discontent in Scotland when its incidence is felt.

It is not entirely surprising that the Government should have spent so little time discussing the merits of their case, because it is not possible to present the community charge, as they choose to call it, as the culmination of a careful process of reviewing local government finance options and the alternatives to domestic rates. The Government were bound to domestic rates from the day they took office back in 1979 until there was an uproar at the Conservative party conference last year. The Government set their face against the criticism made about local rates by the two parties of the alliance.

Mr. Norris: I am amazed that the hon. Gentleman should draw the conclusion that community charges are unknown. In a great many areas, not only in this country but in Europe, it is well known for local services to be provided on the basis of a specific charge. That is the basis of the community charge proposal.

Mr. Maclennan: That is obviously an illustration of the hon. Gentleman's total failure to understand that a community charge is not for specific services provided. It is a compulsory tax imposed on everyone. That is different from payment for specific charges and neither the hon. Gentleman nor any member of the Government can produce a single example of a community charge as they define it in operation in any other country.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Japan.

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Gentleman did not find time to put that example into his half-hour speech. Even in Japan, it is so varied according to income that it is much closer to a local income tax than a poll tax.

The reality is that the Government have not once, but twice, professed their commitment to domestic rates. They did so in their 1981 Green Paper on the alternative to rates and in their White Paper of August 1983 they described local domestic rates as the "best of the options". The sudden conversion is not really a systematic thinking through of the problems. It is to deal with a rather acute little political problem that the Conservative party in Scotland has faced and which is making certain hon. Members, such as the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and

[Mr. Maclennan]

Bearsden (Mr. Hirst), who looks ever more precarious in his constituency, feel uncomfortable. The Government stated in their White Paper of August 1983 that they

"have concluded and announced to Parliament that rates should remain for the foreseeable future the main source of local revenue for local Government."

What is the background to this extraordinary volte-face?

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): What about the hon. Gentleman's party?

Mr. Maclennan: I shall come to my party's proposal, but I now intend to deal with what is before the House tonight, which is the Government's retrogressive and burdensome attack on local government and the poorer people in this country.

Three factors have led our sinuous Secretary of State to bring forward this deceptive Bill. The first is the desire of the Government to continue their war against the freedom of local authorities to determine their own levels of expenditure. Almost every Session in this Parliament, as the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) pointed out, has seen the Government introducing a new twist of the screw by some legislative means or some cut in the rate support grant to reduce the scope of local authorities to deliver the services that Parliament has entrusted to them. The Government have tried to pretend that local authorities have been profligate in their rating policy. Certainly some have been more spendthrift than the majority. The reality is that in local authorities throughout the length and breadth of Scotland service provision is being cut back by the deliberate action of the Government.

The next factor to account for the Bill is what I think could properly be described as the Perth revolt.

Mr. Hirst *rose*——

Mr. Maclennan: I will not give way. I have had to wait for three and a half hours to participate in the debate and I propose to develop my argument before I give way. I do not see why I should keep out other hon. Members who have also been waiting.

The cornered and angry Conservative activists confronted the Government in Perth with the need to do something to wipe out the recollection of the injustices wrought by rates revaluation. If necessary, Ministers would have to incur the acute indigestion caused by eating their own words. Despite their repeated earlier defence of the rating system, which, in their words, was "highly perceptible well understood, cheap to collect and difficult to evade", they were prepared to do that.

No one doubts that the Secretary of State for Scotland is a smart chap. His improvisation on the theme of local government irresponsibility today, however, bears little relationship to what he and his colleagues have been saying and doing for six years. He hopes that his bravura in introducing this Bill in the dying Session of this Parliament will serve to distract his audience from what has gone before.

The next factor that the Secretary of State regards as favourable to his proposals is their timing. The Scottish electors are being asked to buy now and pay later. The hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey) threatened to introduce 1,000 amendments to the Bill. I think that it is fair to predict that that would result only in the Government introducing the guillotine and leaving the details of the Bill largely undebated. It is a fair guess that an election will be interposed before the implementation of the Bill and its full and nasty impact is felt by the suffering Scottish electors.

I was interested to read in the *Local Government Chronicle* an analysis of the impact of the proposed poll tax on Durham. The analysis has been carried out for local government in that area by the John Gibson Consultative Group. It is an important analysis, because it is the first one that attempts to put flesh upon what the Government are proposing. It points out that the Government decided to move on this matter in Scotland because 100,000 Scottish households—about 5·26 per cent. of the total—had experienced an increase in their rates of more than one third following revaluation. The Durham study shows that the Government's criterion of the unacceptable is far exceeded by the imposition of the poll tax. It shows that in the eight different districts of the Durham county council the percentage of households with bill increases of more than 20 per cent. will be, on average, about 50 per cent. One goes as high as 69·56 per cent. In fact, according to the study, it is bound to result in every local authority in England, Scotland and Wales suffering an extraordinary increase in their total tax under the Government's proposals. I commend the study to the House.

As I said earlier, it is not the Government who have been consistently drawing attention over the years to the unsatisfactory and arbitrary nature of the rating system. Unlike the Labour party, the two parties of the alliance are not bound to the rating system. We see that it has certain attractions and a certain sort of rough justice about it. The possession of real property offers some rough measurement of the wealth of the ratepayer but there are too many anomalies and the system has become too complex for the ratepayer to perceive that what he is being asked to pay is just. I do not think that the right hon. Member for Govan's defence of the rating system on the grounds of flexibility is good enough. Almost every year it had become necessary to introduce changes in the calculation of the rate support grant to reflect changed perceptions of need and to bring new reliefs from the burden of rates. That led to a system of such complexity that perhaps only the right hon. Member for Govan fully understood how it operated. That complexity was a sufficient reason, in my judgment, for looking carefully at the continuance of the rate system.

Mr. Peter Lilley (St. Albans): Would the hon. Gentleman explain whether the system that his party proposes to introduce, if he is going to mention it at all, would contain a needs element and, if so, how it would be calculated if not by the present system?

Mr. Maclennan: I shall turn, more quickly if I do not give way to interventions, to the question of a local income tax which the alliance parties favour. In drawing attention to the inadequacies of the rating system, we had rather better authority in the form of the Layfield committee on local government finance. We have consistently advocated a move to a form of local taxation that we believe will be much more popular with the Scottish people—a local income tax. Our views about its popularity are fortified by opinion polls which show that it is overwhelmingly the most popular system of taxation for local government. A February Gallup poll was the last full poll on the subject

that I have been able to find. It found that the public favoured local income tax by a majority of two to one over any of the alternative systems proposed.

The Secretary of State sought to dress up the Bill as an attempt to increase the accountability of local authorities. The Bill's true intent is to extend the sway of the Government's economic dogmas to the local sphere. It is more concerned to control the quantity of services and the manner in which local government provides them than to strengthen local government accountability.

The Bill is a centralising measure. By making local government dependent for 87 per cent. of its funds on central Government, the Bill will ensure that local government has to accept central Government priorities and policies. That figure was given in a parliamentary answer by the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland—the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Ancram). If he believed in true local accountability, he would not be sucking into the centre control over local spending. He would be seeking to create local authorities that were genuinely accountable and answerable to their electors, and would be giving them genuine control.

It was always accepted, until the Conservative party came to power, that local authorities, although bound by legal framework setting out their duties, were not governed by the policies of central Government. However, the Government are determined that local government must be submissive to their policy framework. That is a novel constitutional doctrine, but it was set out by the Government in their reply to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology in House of Lords paper No. 243.

There is little point in having local authorities, councillors and elections if they have to follow the policies of central Government. The obligation of those authorities is to accept the law and within the law to make their policies. That may be extremely inconvenient to central Government, although I believe that it does not have an impact on the macro-economic management of the economy if local government seeks to finance its additional expenditure from taxation raised by its own hand, provided local authorities' borrowing powers are controlled. Such a policy may be unpopular with the local electors, but the remedy lies not in drawing financial controls ever tighter but in instituting an electoral system which ensures that the views of the electors are fairly and proportionately reflected in local government.

The Conservative Administration has firmly set its face against this. If they were seriously interested in promoting local accountability, they would easily dispose of the extremists in local government by introducing a fair electoral system. But they will not do that. It would rather sustain this great gulf between itself and the Opposition than bring the voices of moderation and sense into local government.

Mr. Norris: Will the hon. Gentleman give way on this point?

Mr. Maclennan: No, I shall not. The hon. Gentleman's interventions have punctuated every hon. Member's speech.

The essence of the Government's justification for this wretched Bill is that it will ensure that locally raised revenue is drawn from the population at large and not just from the 30 per cent. of the electorate who pay domestic rates. The Government make much of the proposal whereby non-domestic rates should ultimately be pooled nationally and distributed on a per capita basis. That is a bizarre suggestion, because non-domestic rates will be unrelated not only to the ability of businesses to pay—businesses, even more than the individual ratepayer, caused the Government embarrassment in Perth—but to the consumption by businesses of local services. There may be a reduction in the extent to which the responsible authority—central Government—will be accountable for the tax of those who pay.

In Scotland, no less than 62 per cent. of rate income is raised from non-domestic ratepayers who do not have a local vote. The Government are doing precious little about that. They are just index-linking the payment of the non-domestic rate until they can bring about this pool system over which local government will have no control. It is only two years since the Government introduced an arrangement whereby at least businesses had a right of consultation with local authorities. When these powers are transferred to central Government, what right of consultation will businesses have? Once again, the Secretary of State is shrouding behind a smokescreen his intention of depriving local authorities of the ability to respond to business needs.

If the Government proceed to pool the non-domestic rate, it will have a considerable impact on local authorities resources. The Public Finance Foundation—a wholly independent source—found that some local authorities drawing on that pool would receive more than they would require to carry their total rate-borne expenditure.

Mr. Hirst: Will the hon. Gentleman tell us in straightforward terms whether the alliance supports indexing for non-domestic ratepayers? Many small business men in Scotland eagerly await what the alliance will do.

Mr. Maclennan: They are right to be eager, because they can be sure that they will get a better deal than they are getting from the Government.

Mr. Hirst: Answer the question.

Mr. Maclennan: Indexing, of course, is an interim measure. It is perfectly acceptable, but it does not go nearly far enough to protect local business from the vagaries of the existing system. It will not equalise the rates imposed on local businesses in Scotland. It will not do anything to protect local businesses from the depredations of profligate local authorities. The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst) should not try to deceive the small businesses in his constituency, implying that they are receiving a great bounty from the Government, when the reverse is true.

Pooling the non-domestic rate would result in a sharp increase in the local taxation of businesses. Nineteen authorities, including Caithness and Sutherland, would have to pay no community charge at all. What sort of local accountability will my constituents have if, as a result of the redistribution of the pooled non-domestic rate, they are not required to pay any local taxation? It is the reductio ad absurdum of local finance when local government becomes 100 per cent. dependent on central Government spending. That will happen if the Government's proposals are accepted.

If one accepts the Government's figures on the changing burden of funding local services, one sees that

[Mr. Maclennan]

there are some spectacular gainers and losers. I have looked at the figures that concern my constituency, before the pooling of the non-domestic rate. If domestic rate relief is phased out, as seems highly likely — indeed, this conforms with the Government's present policy — the increase in individual tax per adult per year will be £26 in Caithness and £28 in Sutherland.

The Bill is indeed most unacceptable in its impact on the individual elector. The term "community charge" is entirely bogus, for the reasons that I gave to the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris). It does not relate to the amount of service used and it involves no choice over the use of the service that the word "charge" implies. It is precisely those people who will have to pay the community charge, and who are not at present paying rates as householders, who make least use of local government services—that is, mainly young adults aged 18 to 24.

The main categories of expenditure are directed towards young people and the elderly. If the local tax were indeed a charge, families with children at school and persons aged 75 and over would be required to pay higher local taxes than working adults without children. At the level of the individual taxpayer, the community charge paid will no more reflect the services taken up than do rates at present. In truth, the so-called charge is a compulsory charge, and it is properly called a poll tax. It will be much more regressive than the present system. Pensioner couples and young, non-householder unemployed adults will be particularly badly affected.

The Government have concealed their impact of their proposals on individuals but, again to quote the Public Finance Foundation, it has been explained thus:

> "While it is difficult to quote precise figures given the almost deliberate attempt of the 1986 Green Paper to mislead the reader, it is clear that the totality of reform makes households with net actual incomes below £200 a week considerably worse off whilst those over £200 per week are considerably better off."

That is precisely the point. The poll tax is not related to ability to pay. It is designed to be unpopular from the start. It is intended to taint local government. Its purpose is to act as a disincentive to increased spending and taxation.

Due to its gearing effect, a local authority spending 10 per cent. above average would need a tax rate three times that for expenditure 10 per cent. below the average, while at 20 per cent. below, there would be no need to levy a tax at all. With high grant, quite small increases in local spending require much greater increases in tax rates. It is those percentage increases alone which the public could control at local level. In the Government's view, local accountability is satisfied by controlling this marginal expenditure borne by local electors. It is a narrow and flawed concept of local accountability.

Turning to administration—I shall cut my remarks short, although I must draw attention to the fact that, in opening the debate the Minister spoke for three quarters of an hour, that the Front Bench spokesman for the Labour party also spoke for about three quarters of an hour and that this is the first intervention by an alliance speaker in the debate—the administration of this tax has been criticised by those who will have responsibility for it. It has been dismissed by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, by the Law Society of Scotland, by the sheriffs' officers and by anybody who has any knowledge of these matters.

According to the explanatory and financial memorandum, the cost of introducing the system has been set at roughly what it would cost to introduce an Assembly for Scotland. Let the Government, soon to be the Opposition, not criticise the cost of establishing a Scottish Assembly when they so lightly embark upon an increase in the cost of levying local taxation. The problem of evasion is huge. The Government argue that it can be minimised by cross-checks with the electoral roll, by canvassing households, by checks on those using local services and by a number of other snooper techniques. The reality is that it will not be enforced and that it will be brought into disrepute.

The Government ought to have used these seven lean years of government to introduce a worked-out system of local income tax which would have given genuine local accountability to local government and have helped to reduce the tied nature of local government spending. The existing criticism that may be made of local government finance is that it is so heavily dependent upon central Government grant that it induces irresponsibility. It is important that that should be changed.

Our view is that a local income tax system—which would not be a wholly new tax, because at present income tax is paid to central Government and then returns in the form of grant to local authorities—would result in a link between the provision of services and the paying for services. It is the true argument that the Government are abusing to justify the introduction of the poll tax.

On average, under our proposed system, householders would end up paying the same amount of local, Scottish and national income tax together as they pay at present in rates and national income tax combined. The changes would not mean an additional taxation burden.

We recommend that non-domestic rates should become part of national taxation but, unlike the Government's proposal, that taxation would be used to finance the equalisation of local authority resources. It would be the best means of ensuring that local authorities have the means to meet the service needs of their communities.

It has been dismaying to watch this Government's approach to local finance unroll over seven years and finally to unravel with the introduction of a tax that led to the peasant's revolt in England in 1381. It has not been reconsidered since, and for good reason. When the opportunity comes to vote against the Bill, we shall take it, and we shall take our case against it to the country. And in the election we shall win the argument.

8.36 pm

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Spectators of Scottish debates must sense a certain predictability about their course. Today's debate has been no different from previous debates. It has been predictable the range of arguments deployed on both sides. Once in again the Secretary of State for Scotland has bested the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) at the Dispatch Box. It has also been predictable, in that there was a 33-minute speech by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) which contained nothing about the alliance policy. I was slightly amused to hear the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland say that he would take the alliance case to the

people at the next election. I just hope that the people of Caithness and Sutherland have the time to listen to him, if they have not fallen asleep.

Today the Opposition have dwelt strongly upon fairness. Fairness, or the lack of fairness, has characterised all their arguments. I do not recall that there has ever been a cheep from them about the unfairness of 750,000 people in Scotland who have incomes not contributing to local government costs. I was amazed to hear Opposition speakers refer to young people having to contribute to the community charge although they make no use of local government services. When I visit my local sports centre and use its club and swimming facilities, I am the old man there. Most of the other people there are youngsters—those whom the Opposition think do not use local government services.

It is offensive to hear members of the Opposition parties scoffing about little old ladies living on their own who, by being thrifty, have made savings and whose income means that they do not qualify for any relief or rebate. Yet the rates bill represents their largest single outgoing in the year. I am amazed that they are unaware that elderly people and single-parent families have had to sell the family home and move to a smaller house because they cannot afford the rates burden. The hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) was very dismissive about little old ladies. Nevertheless, rates bear heavily on them. We heard the alliance talking about rough justice. It is rough justice and one of the things that delights me about this measure is the justice that it will bring to the elderly, the widows, the single-parent families—all those people who for too long have been the victims of injustice and unfairness.

In considering unfairness we must stop and think about the people who do the desirable thing of improving their properties. Having put in central heating or built an extension they discover that the rates bill goes up. That is unfair. It seems mad to encourage people to become owners of property and to keep their housing stock in good condition and at the same time to penalise them with higher rates bills when they improve those properties.

Mr. Wallace: I, too, have used that argument against the rating system. Is the increase in rates for someone improving his property as the hon. Member describes greater than the value added tax imposed by the Government on people who carry out such repairs?

Mr. Hirst: The hon. Gentleman much espouses the concept of Europe and he knows that VAT on major property improvements or extensions operates throughout the Community. Of course they will pay more VAT, but at the end of the day they will have a substantive capital asset. My complaint is that income outgoing in a higher rates bill year after year is unfair. [*Interruption.*] The hon. Gentleman should be careful about running down that line. When we talk about fairness we should be thinking about fairness for the non-domestic ratepayers, the people who have no opportunity to exercise their rights at the ballot box. No one in the Opposition has taken the trouble to think about the effect of unfairness on small businesses which, year by year, have suffered rates increases substantially beyond the rate of inflation.

The Edinburgh chamber of commerce says it all. The veritable forest of "To Let" boards in Princes street speaks volumes for the fact that high rates drive out business. I welcome the efforts that the Bill will make to protect the business sector until such time as there is a national revaluation followed by a simplification and standardisation of valuation procedures. There is no reason why there cannnot be consensus in the House on the matter, because every hon. Member must know of an example from his constituency of a business which, endeavouring to compete in Scotland, faces rates bills substanially higher than those of its potential competitors in other parts of Britain. I have an example of a constituent who owns a cold store. His rates bill is £130,000 per annum. A cold store of comparable size in Manchester pays £39,000. How can that man run a business, make a profit, provide employment and create wealth when he has to operate with such a severe disadvantage?

My hon. Friend the Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) was right to speak of the unfair burden on the Scottish business ratepayer. That burden must be lifted. The small business man in Scotland is acutely worried about his rates bill and I hope that he will watch carefully as the Labour party and probably the alliance oppose the various provisions within this Bill that would bring relief to such businessmen.

I listened carefully to the speech by the hon. Member for Garscadden who expressed the views of his party about how it would tackle rates. When pressed again and again by my colleagues on the Front Bench about what the Labour party would do about rates, he wriggled and squirmed and was evasive. Finally, he was taxed about the speech made by the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) who, we understand, speaks for the Labour party on rating matters, and the hon. Member for Garscadden said, "We could think about capital values." Capital values would be severely injurious to people. What about somebody who lives in a small house in a rundown area that has suddenly become gentrified? That person would suddenly discover that the capital value of his property had increased, but at the same time so would his annual rates bill. If the Labour party goes down the road of capital values, it will encounter massive hostility and objections.

The hon. Member for Garscadden raised one point that is worth greater examination and I should be grateful if my hon. Friend the Minister would address it in his winding-up speech. The hon. Gentleman spoke about non-domestic rates. When they become index-linked, a local authority will be faced with a substantial amount of additional expenditure—perhaps because of a national settlement or some other factor outwith its control. If it cannot look to the non-domestic sector to make a contribution to those extra costs, they will fall disproportionately severely on the domestic ratepayer or the community charge payers. Can the Minister tell us what the Government intend to do in such cases? Would they increase the needs allowance to avoid the impact falling too severely on the domestic ratepayer, or would some other arrangement be made?

We saw no sign from the Opposition of any real alternative to the present rating system. I hope that people in Scotland will recognise that there is only one party, the party in government, which is prepared to tackle the nettle of domestic rates in the way that the Government are doing. I recall the vehemence with which the hon. Member for Garscadden and some of his hon. Friends have said they intend to oppose the Bill root and branch. I hope that the people of Scotland will remember that the Labour party opposed root and branch tenants' rights to buy their

[Mr. Hirst]

council homes and the right of an employee to have a secret ballot before taking strike action. In time, just as those things are now accepted and welcomed by the public at large, people will see that the community charge is a much fairer way of financing local government.

Why is there opposition to the Bill? Accountability must surely be one of the features that we seek in the new arrangements. At the moment, one of the primary weaknesses of the rating system is that it does not confer accountability. The people who have to pay rates are not necessarily in a position to influence the spending policies of local authorities. By this Bill accountability is enhanced, and that is why the Labour party is running scared of it.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) protested strongly about young people being expected to make a contribution to the community charge, albeit on a fully rebated basis. He said that it was quite impracticable and unreasonable to expect them to make any payment and that they might well seek to evade it. There are some interesting statistics about the number of young people in Scotland who take on credit sale arrangements for hi-fi sets and things like that. If the hon. Member for Springburn bothered to look at the statistics, he would discover that young people in Scotland have the best record in the country for honouring their debts under credit sale agreements. It is grossly insulting to suggest that they would seek to evade their appropriate share of the cost of local government. To say that they are irresponsible is a gross calumny on them, and the hon. Gentleman ought to be ashamed.

There is one final point that I should like the Minister to address. We have had a limited discussion on the impact of the community charges on a collective basis. Can the Minister tell me what will happen when a property is let out in rooms to students or other people who pay rent to the owner of the property? That rent includes a proportionate share of the rates. As I read the Bill, it does not appear that that sort of property would be covered by a collective community charge. I know that there is some anxiety over this matter, because people have made representations to me, and it would be helpful if the Minister could give me a substantive answer or write to me about it. I listened carefully to the speeches by the proponents of local income tax, the alternative which the SNP and the alliance pretend is the great way to sort out this whole matter.

Frankly, I was staggered by the way in which the right hon. Member for Western Isles skated over the problem of schedule D taxpayers and seemed to assume that they could be brought into the computer net in the same way as any employee. I remind Opposition Members that centre 1 has operated for the past 16 years. If Opposition Members' constituents do not bring them problems about their notice of coding or their tax affairs at centre 1, their surgeries are not well publicised, or their constituents are remarkably lucky. With 56 rates of local income tax, it is clear that better-off people, who would be subject to a higher charge, will swarm out of the higher rated areas into lower rated areas.

It must be a proven fact that areas with a high, strong income base would have a low local income tax. Correspondingly, comparatively lower income areas would have a much higher local income tax. If the proposal is merely to collect the whole lot and spread it out again, local government accountability will go right out of the window. How is it possible to overlook the fact that the largest proportion of costs and the largest amount of local government income come, and will continue to come, from the Exchequer, to which all peop'e in the country pay according to their ability?

I must conclude my remarks because I know that other hon. Members wish to contribute to the debate. I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Government Front Bench, in the weeks and months ahead when we consider the Bill, to be prepared to take account of the representations made by responsible people. It is surely in the interests of everybody in Scotland that we get the most workable, practicable and fair alternative to the rating system.

8.51 pm

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): I know that it is not always in your power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to curtail the length of hon. Members' speeches, but it is deplorable that, in a debate such as this, the SDP spokesman, the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) took half an hour to speak. I know that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have to be fair to hon. Members in minority parties, but they should return that fairness by ensuring that they do not speak for too long. It is unfair when other hon. Members wish to participate in the debate.

The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst) stated that young Scottish people have a good record in repaying their debts. He is a chartered accountant. He will be used to dealing with people who pay debts. He knows all about statements, bank accounts, and so on. He will know that a young Scottish person aged 18 to 21 very seldom will get into debt unless his or her parents, who are householders, are prepared to act as guarantors. Many young people, who are fortunate enough to be able to acquire debt at that age, have the restraining hands of their parents to make sure that they pay on time. This is a different situation. It means that debt is to be imposed on young people whether they like it or not.

The Secretary of State said that people have the legal right to vote and, therefore, have to take the disadvantages along with it. A person who, at the age of 18, sets up a home, runs a house and incurs debts, has to take the same responsibility as someone my age and someone else in the community who is a householder. But if a young perosn decides to remain in the home into which he or she was born, there is no reason in the world why they should have certain penalties imposed upon them.

I have a teenage family. My son and daughter have a commitment to put something into the household. I can assure the House that that money is put in on Friday, and by Monday they look for funds from their mother to go to the disco or to do something else. It is not fair to put a burden of responsibility of that nature on to young people of that age.

The Secretary of State said that the community tax would be fair. The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden knows full well that the area that will gain from the passage of the Bill is the Bearsden area in his constituency. The people in that area will pay about 13 per cent. above the Scottish average, yet, in a city such as Glasgow, they will pay 18 per cent. above the average, with all the problems of poverty and deprivation that that city

has. We all want to see the inner cities repopulated. There have been successful attempts in the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow to get housing into the city centres. We all know that if rateable values or community charges go down in outer and suburban areas of our cities, property prices will go up. The trend will be reversed, and we have been trying to avoid that for many years. We are working towards bringing people into city centres.

The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden suggested that this will be a simpler scheme. I cannot see how it will be simpler. The Secretary of State and other hon. Members have hidden the fact that, in the early years of the scheme, we shall still have about 13 different rate charges. We shall still have domestic rates. They will exist for a number of years to come. We shall still have non-domestic charges for water and the services. We shall have charges for the non-domestic ratepayer for region and district. There are personal community charges for region and district. The standard community charge will be for the region and district. There is also a collective community charge.

The Secretary of State for Scotland is a legal advocate. He can say things with a straight face—that is part of his legal training—but I do not know how he can stand at the Dispatch Box and, with a straight face, say that this will be a simple method of paying local taxes. That is nonsense. It is not borne out by the facts.

I understand from the director of finance at Glasgow district council that, at the moment, a pensioner with an income of £40·60 does not need to pay anything in rates. If the Bill is passed, that person will have to find £1·20 a week. It does not appear to be fair to pensioners at the moment.

Students have been mentioned. The Secretary of State said that it was nonsense to argue that students would be paying more. My understanding is that the Scottish Office intends to make arrangements whereby students will receive about 80 per cent. of the Scottish average charge in their grant. If Glasgow is to be 18 per cent. above the Scottish average, students in Glasgow will be at a disadvantage, and that could discourage students from coming to the university in Glasgow, and perhaps to Edinburgh and other cities. It could prevent them coming north of the border.

I am not happy with what the Secretary of State said about lodging houses and hostels. He stated that there would not be an extra charge for people living in that accommodation, yet according to the Scottish Office's proposals, those who are in charge of the hostels—not always charitable institutions—will be required to make allowances or calculations on a daily basis. That will mean extra administration for those establishments. I am sure that those who are in charge of the hostels will not say that they will bear the cost of the extra administration. That cost will be put on to people who are in less fortunate circumstances than most people in the community. I do not see how it can be said that that section of the community will be helped.

Sheriffs' warrants will be served on more young people than at present. Instead of a decrease in the number of debts collected under that unfortunate method, there could be an increase. I heard the Secretary of State say that if bills were not paid timeously, a surcharge would be put on the individuals, amounting to about one third of the outstanding debt.

In the community in which I was brought up, I remember seeing the sheriff's officers come to some of the households. It was not a very nice sight to see furniture pointed in preparation for warrant sales, when sheriffs' officers marked household items. Even if the person against whom the action was taken stated that the item of furniture did not belong to him, but belonged to a friend or relative, it was still pointed.

How will the Secretary of State collect debt that has been incurred by a young person in the household of someone who has no responsibility for paying the debt? In my home, my son owns a hi-fi set. Some of the records that he plays on the set might belong to me, his sister or his mother. How will the sheriff's officer ensure that he repossesses only those goods that belong to the individual who incurred the debt? That will be an impossible task. The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden bleats on about us not paying due regard to the needs of an elderly person. An elderly mother with a family of three or four could be harassed several times during the year because of young people not paying debts.

The new grant system to local government apparently will be such that the Secretary of State will not need to take cognisance of pay, price increases and population change. No instructions are to be given to the Secretary of State on how to introduce or calculate that grant. That puts us in a worse position than at present, when at least the Secretary of State has to do those things. Therefore, I seriously urge the Government to reconsider what they are doing. They will impose a great deal of hardship throughout Scotland.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's brevity.

9.4 pm

Mr. Steve Norris (Oxford, East): I endorse that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am equally grateful for the brevity of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin). It has been a privilege for someone from south of the border to listen to the debate. There is great interest in this subject south of the border. I regard our Scottish colleagues as trail blazers rather than as guinea pigs in one of the most important developments, if not the most important, in local government this century.

I am also pleased that I can return to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and tell him that, if the sum total of the arguments advanced against his proposals are those that we have heard tonight, he will have little to fear when the proposals for England come before the House.

In the short time available, I shall make one or two observations which perhaps can be taken on board during the passage of the Bill. The first is on enforcement. Ironically, the matter was raised by the hon. Member for Springburn. Rita Hale from CIPFA talked about the national Wham! record collection that might emerge if a local authority were to try to proceed against young people, many of whose only assets might be a ghetto blaster and a collection of Wham! records. That is an uninviting spectacle and one that no serious-minded Administration could contemplate.

A radical proposal such as the community charge demands a radical solution. That must be found in the concept of attachment to benefits. As hon. Members will know, there is a clear arrangement whereby recalcitrant or

[Mr. Steve Norris]

involuntary contributors to divorce settlements contribute via an attachment to earnings order. That is a perfectly straightforward practice which states that, if they are not prepared to pay voluntarily, the court will attach their earnings. All hon. Members probably have constituents who get into difficulties with statutory undertakers and must have the bills paid direct by deduction from DHSS benefits until the individual is back on par, at which point there will be a debate as to whether it would be helpful to him to pay his bills quarterly, or whether he should continue with a system of direct contribution. If we are to overcome the problems of enforcement, we must do so by a radical re-examination of the entire principle of attachment of benefits.

Secondly, I shall stress something that has not emerged from the discussion — what the poverty trap is. There has been much talk about the poor not benefiting from these proposals. That ignores the fact that the rebate system enforced at present will continue under the new proposals and the fact that the 20 per cent. contribution contained in the Social Security Act 1986 could perfectly well be adjusted by an equal adjustment in the rates of supplementary or unemployment benefit.

On that basis, it is evident that those who have no income are no better or worse off. But the crucial factor which has been studiously ignored by all Opposition Members who have spoken is the fact that it is especially the widow who lives in a poverty trap, where she has just enough income to put her over the level at which she would receive any supplementary benefit and/or allowances and benefits, including rate relief, who would be one of the greatest beneficiaries of the welcome measure which the Government seek to introduce.

It is extraordinary that a party which has its social conscience firmly sewn on to its sleeve, can ignore a great number of people who would be substantial beneficiaries of the new system. I say to Opposition Members that the correlation between that poverty trap and single occupancy is far too inconvenient for them to ignore. It is far too great a correlation.

My third point goes to the heart of what we see as the role of local government. In a Fabian Society article, Alan Alexander linked the politicisation of local government to the cynicism among young Labour voters over the betrayal, as they saw it, of the Wilson years. Perhaps it was, but my local authority has long since ceased to remember its true role as a provider of services and a body that will simply get on with the job of sweeping the streets, cleaning the bins, keeping the lights on and doing all the other jobs that I wish to see it do as a provider of services.

It is a fundamental misconception to see this charge as a poll tax. If a poll tax was a primary form of taxation, it would be regressive. The community charge reflects our fundamental desire to return accountability to local government and to ensure that it reflects a charge for services.

Earlier in the debate, my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher) invited me to participate in these proceedings. I am pleased to have had this brief opportunity to do so. Having listened to the entire debate, I shall have to spurn his further invitation to join the Committee. None the less, I am convinced, having heard all the arguments for and against, that the measure will find the greatest favour with the House. I look forward to its introduction in England and Wales, where it will be greeted with equal enthusiasm.

9.10 pm

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): I would welcome the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris) on to the Committee if the rules of the House allowed it — there is some doubt about whether an English Member can serve on a Committee that is discussing a Bill for Scotland — especially as he comes from an area where I used to live. The hon. Gentleman was wrong to say that those who receive rebates now will automatically receive rebates under the new scheme. First, we do not know what the new rebate system will be, and, secondly, the existing rebates will be changed dramatically in 1988 by the Social Security Act 1986, under which many people will be taken off housing benefit and, therefore, will get no rates rebate or relief. Young people are not covered by the scheme, and we are not sure how they will be covered in the future.

The Green Paper made it clear that a youngster aged 18, 19 or 20 on unemployment benefit was unlikely to get a rebate. That must be made clear. Many youngsters should be aware that that is the case.

Why are we discussing the Bill at all? Despite all the fine words from Conservative Members and from the Secretary of State in a recent article in the Glasgow *Evening Times*, the Tory party has no manifesto commitment to the abolition of rates. The 1983 manifesto did not include rates. The 1979 manifesto did not include a commitment to abolish rates.

The last Conservative manifesto to suggest the abolition of rates was the 1974 manifesto. The Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay), might be interested in this in view of the troubles that he is having with teachers. It also suggested transferring expenditure on teachers' salaries directly to the Exchequer to relieve the burden. It stated that the Conservatives would replace the domestic rating system by taxes more broadly based and related to people's ability to pay. Even now, they have not fulfilled their manifesto commitment, because they are introducing a tax that has nothing to do with people's ability to pay.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher) spent some time attacking the Labour party about the Assembly, but the manifesto which committed the Conservatives to the abolition of rates also committed them to the establishment of a Scottish Assembly with revenue-raising powers. He seems to have forgotten that, although he remembers other matters.

Mr. Fletcher: The difference between the two parties is that we learn from experience but the Labour party does not.

Mr. Maxton: It is fairly obvious from the Bill that the Conservative party has learnt nothing about the abolition of rates.

We must examine the way in which the Government have handled the matter. Conservative Members are hiding behind widows' skirts. Practically the only argument that we have consistently heard from Tory Members during the debate is contained in their attack on the ground that there are widows in Scotland living in large houses, with small incomes and paying large amounts in rates.

Mr. Rifkind: Small houses.

Mr. Maxton: The Secretary of State says, small houses. If they are living in small houses, they are not paying especially large amounts in rates. However, we have no idea how many widows are so affected. The Government keep throwing these widows up as an emotional smokescreen to hide behind. I specifically asked the Minister how many single householders in Scotland pay rates and he could not tell me because he does not know. We do not know the facts upon which the Government base their case.

It may be that only 2 or 3 per cent. of householders are widows. However, it comes very hard from the Government to accuse the Opposition of not caring for widows' interests when the Government have ensured that there are fewer home helps in Scotland today than there were in 1979 and that fewer meals on wheels are served today than in 1979; and by cutting rate support grant the Government have pushed up the rates tremendously for widows.

The Secretary of State is up to his usual tricks. He is having his little private jokes and his laughs on the side. He never takes anything very seriously, as we well know. However, the fact remains that the people whom the Government continue to call in aid were present in 1981 when the Green Paper was published. However, in the Scottish White Paper in 1983 the Government claimed:

"There is little point in replacing rates with an untried and unfamiliar system having little support from the outset. The Government have therefore decided to make reforms to the rating system which is basically sound but needs improvement."

In the English and Welsh White Paper the Government said:

"The Government recognise that rates are far from being an ideal or popular tax. But they do have advantages . . . They are well understood, cheap to collect and very difficult to evade. They act as an incentive to the most efficient use of property. No property tax can be directly related to the ability to pay; but rate rebates, now incorporated in housing benefit, together with Supplementary Benefit, have been designed to reduce hardship. The Government have concluded and announced to Parliament that rates should remain"——

this is the important point—

"for the forseeable future the main source of local revenue for local government."

Yet in the news release produced in connection with the Bill, the Government ignore the 1983 White Paper and refer to the 1981 Green Paper and state:

"Like others before it, the Government proceeded to make minor improvements to the system but always in the firm knowledge that the days of the domestic rating system were, in reality, numbered."

In other words, the Government have said that they knew in 1983 that the days of rates were numbered and that they would be done away with. There is a massive contradiction between what the Government said in 1983 and what they are saying now.

Mr. Craigen: Does my hon. Friend think that it is even more significant that as early as January 1984 the former Secretary of State for the Environment, the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin), told the House that the poll tax suffered from fatal defects?

Mr. Maxton: My hon. Friend is quite right; and the White Paper claims that the poll tax suffered from defects. It is worth while stressing that the Green Paper suggested the poll tax only as an addition to rates. It never suggested that it should totally replace rates. The Government have changed their mind dramatically. It is not the widow living on her own who is the problem, because she existed before the Government got the fright of their lives when they introduced revaluation in Scotland.

There is nothing basically wrong with revaluation but, in combination with massive cuts in rate support grant, a dramatic increase in rates is inevitable. That is precisely what happened. The Tory faithful started to scream, the Government's standing in the opinion polls, already low, plummeted even lower, and they looked desperately for some solution which would not necessarily help the widow, as she could have been helped by a much better rebate system. They came up with a system which was designed primarily to relieve the tax burden on those whom they perceived as their voters and to put it on to those whom they perceived as our voters. That is the simple political fact behind the poll tax. The Government are shifting the burden from the wealthy to the poor.

If the Secretary of State doubts my assertion, I shall give him an example drawn from the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), just as he drew examples from mine. An employed couple living in Kinfaun drive in Drumchapel who are not getting any rebates pay £377.50 in rates. They will pay £446.25 in poll tax. That is a low estimate of what poll tax will be in Glasgow. Those people who know Glasgow will know that Wittingham drive is a smart part of the city. Perhaps the Government Whip lives there, although he represents Aberdeen.

Mr. Gerald Malone (Aberdeen, South): Close by.

Mr. Maxton: Close by. The average rates per house are £1,007 in that street, and the average rate bill per head is £416.52. The average poll tax per head will be £245. The person in Wittingham drive who lives in an expensive house and is earning a good income will pay less in tax than less well-off people in Drumchapel. Nobody can claim that that is a fair system of taxation. It is extremely regressive. Such examples can be found time and again throughout Scotland.

The Secretary of State has tried desperately to put all of my constituents in Castlemilk on the dole, and therefore make them eligible for rebate, but he has not quite succeeded. There are some who are in employment, and they will pay more tax than people in better-off parts of my constituency.

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): I am much obliged to the hon. Gentleman for speaking in his native Oxfordshire accent so that those of us who are English can understand what is going on. I do not believe that a poll tax is an appropriate way in which to deal with local taxation, but it is equally clear that, despite the Government's resistence to the various alterations that the hon. Gentleman has mentioned, the Bill appears to be the most appropriate way in which to deal with the fairness argument. The hon. Gentleman has not yet persuaded me what the Labour party would do in regard to rates. He will have to face this issue next year after we have won the general election.

Mr. Maxton: One of the themes throughout this debate is that the Government have put up a scheme because they were in desperate straits in Scotland. They have proposed an unfair, unworkable and undemocratic scheme. Conservative Members then turn round and ask us what we would do about rates.

[Mr. Maxton]

I believe that there is considerable merit in what the Government said about rates in 1983. They made perfectly fair points. They believed it then. Why should we disbelieve those arguments now? We are prepared to examine alternatives, but in the short term we would return to a rating system. It cannot be right to replace one tax which is considered to be unfair and put in its place one that is even more unfair and unjust. It would be easier to continue the present rating system until we have time to consider alternatives rather than to introduce something new.

The Government have no logical argument in terms of the community charge of the poll tax and they simply keep on saying to the Opposition, "What would you do?" The only thing that I like about that is the admission that they think we might form the next Government and will therefore be in a position to do something about it.

The Government are introducing an unfair and regressive tax. It is also an undemocratic tax——

Mr. Porter: Why?

Mr. Maxton: If the hon. Gentleman cares to listen, I shall tell him.

The tax is undemocratic because it is based on a principle which I thought we had done away with at the beginning of this century when we said that there should be universal suffrage. Then the property qualifications for voting were abolished completely. However, the Secretary of State, throughout his speech, said that there must be some relationship between people paying taxes at a local level and their right to vote. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has said that to achieve accountability, there must be a relationship between the payment of taxes and the right to vote.

The principle of the argument is undemocratic. The undemocratic nature of a poll tax is recognised in many parts of the United States where it is unconstitutional to introduce it because it is considered that it will interfere with the democratic process.

Let us take the example of what will happen to students as a result of the Bill. The Secretary of State made it quite clear that students must register for the poll tax at their place of study. They must register not at home but where they study. Therefore, students will consider how they can get themselves off the register at home.

There will be a major disincentive for students to register for electoral purposes at their home address. If they are on the electoral register at their home address it is inevitable that, when the assessor is drawing up the register for the poll tax, he will make a comparison—in fact, he is obliged by the Bill to make such a comparison. He will see a name on the electoral register at such-and-such an address and he will therefore put that name on the register for the poll tax. It will then be up to the student to get himself off that register. If he does not he will find himself paying two poll taxes. [HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish".] Unless students get themselves off the register, of course they will have to pay two poll taxes.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): Has the hon. Gentleman read the Bill?

Mr. Maxton: I have read the Bill. The fact is that students will have to go through a complicated procedure to get themselves off the register. *[Laughter.]* As usual the Secretary of State fails to take anything seriously. He thinks that his inane giggling is an answer to every debate. Students will find it difficult to get themselves off the second register and to avoid paying two poll taxes. That is undemocratic.

Others may think it is easier to evade the tax by staying off the electoral register, which will be the major point of comparison.

Mr. Norris: The hon. Gentleman is presenting a travesty of the Government's proposals in suggesting that students will be denied their democratic rights simply because the Bill lays down clear arrangements about what students should do and where they should register for the community charge. It is a complete scaremongering exercise. The hon. Gentleman should be worthy of better than that.

Mr. Maxton: It is not a scaremongering exercise to suggest that the assessor will use the electoral register as his major point of comparison for his register. He will draw people from the electoral register for poll tax. There are dangers that people will not register in order to avoid paying poll tax or paying it twice.

My hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden spoke about rebates and said that today's circumstances were different. The Under-Secretary of State suggested that that was history and in the past. I accept that the Act of Parliament is past and there may be nothing at this stage that we can do about it, but it must be remembered that the Social Security Act 1986 is not in force. When the Secretary of State gives figures for rebates, he talks about the present rebate system, not the one that will be in force when the poll tax comes into existence. He talks about the same people receiving rebates who are receiving them now. Obviously, many people will be taken out of housing benefit by the Social Security Act, many will receive considerably less benefit as a result of it and rebates will be assessed in a completely different way.

The Secretary of State failed to give a straight answer to the question whether everybody would have to pay the 20 per cent. that is in the Social Security Act. He was careful never to say that anybody would get a complete rebate. He was always careful to say that most people would receive a rebate on some of the poll tax.

Some people will have to pay the 20 per cent. for example, the young unemployed man to whom my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) referred will have a debt of £50 or £60. The Secretary of State said that the payment would be £1 a week. If he does not pay it——

Mr. Rifkind: Should he pay it?

Mr. Maxton: Of course he should pay it. *[Laughter.]* How clever. The Secretary of State is surely not suggesting that a Labour Member, and in particular me, should suggest non-payment? Does the Secretary of State believe that the citizens of Strathclyde who own cars, most of whom are considerably wealthier than me—the young unemployed—should pay the parking fines left on their cars? I assume he would say, "Yes, of course." The fact is that 50 per cent. of them do not. The idea suggested by the Minister on the radio recently that the people of Scotland are so honest that they will pay their community charge

is not borne out by the good citizens of Glasgow paying parking tickets—many of whom probably come from Strathkelvin and Bearsden.

Some youngsters will evade the tax and then we shall have to go through the complicated legal procedure of trying to get £50 from them. It is not worth a local authority beginning the process of law to obtain £50 from young unemployed people. They may be registered in Castlemilk or Drumchapel, but they may have taken the advice of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and got on their bikes to look for work in the south of England. Are we to go through a complicated procedure to trace them? When they are traced, what will they have? It is optimistic to think that they will have various items of stereo equipment. They are more likely to have only a small Walkman. Are we to go through a complicated procedure to take such an item off them to pay their debts? That is nonsense.

This is a bad Bill. It will not work, it is unfair, and it will distort the democratic process. I urge my hon. Friends to vote against it tonight.

9.35 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): The Bill enacts one of the most fundamental reforms of local government finance in Scotland for a generation or more. It is therefore hardly surprising that it has given rise to a debate of strong feelings and genuine concerns. In a major and radical reform of this kind that is inevitable. I hope to be able to respond to those concerns, if not tonight, in Committee.

Above all, the Bill abolishes a discredited and outdated system of raising local finance—the domestic rates. It replaces that system with a new source of revenue, the community charge, which is simpler, fairer and more democratic. It further makes provision to protect commercial and business ratepayers from the swingeing increases which have been so damaging to them and the jobs that they provided in the past. I am grateful to my hon. Friends for the welcome that they have given it. They speak for the ratepayers of Scotland, who have been burdened unfairly for too long and too hard. I also pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris) who sat through the debate and made a valuable contribution at the end.

One might have thought that the need to reform the rating system was common ground in the House tonight. It almost is, with the remarkable exception of the main Opposition party, but there were not many Opposition Members here this afternoon, and perhaps some of those who were not here might have supported our measures.

Until the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) sat down, I had some lingering hopes that we might hear the Labour party's view on the rating system. I thought that we might have had a definite and positive statement of its position, not on what it did not want, but on what it did—either a robust defence of the present rating system, or a cogent and comprehensive alternative to it. We have had neither—the first because the present system is no longer defensible in any rational or democratic terms, and the second because, quite simply, it has no alternative and it knows that there is no workable or acceptable system other than that which we propose in the Bill.

We have had a demonstration of doublespeak, of spinning in ever-decreasing circles, and of desperately hoping that the Scottish people will not notice that the Opposition have no policy other than the system that we have, which can no longer be defended. I hope that the message that reaches the people of Scotland from today's debate is that under Labour the Scottish ratepayer will continue to suffer, with the certainty of a domestic revaluation in 1990. If that is the Labour party's position at the next election, the Scottish people will have something to say about it.

Let us look at the rating system which, according to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), the Labour party is defending, and which it uses to compare our proposals and to find them unfair. If it is justified in making the comparisons that it has made in the debate, it must argue that the present system is fair enough in order to make such comparisons against it.

In democratic terms, it is inconceivable that anyone can defend as fair a system of local taxation in which only 39 per cent. of the electorate pay anything, and only 29 per cent. pay in full for their share of the benefits that they receive. It is even harder to defend the fairness of a system where no account is taken of the numbers of people involved in receiving benefits or paying for them.

The hon. Member for Cathcart may be relieved to hear that I shall not talk about the person to whom he dismissively referred as the small widow, but on radio the other day the hon. Member for Garscadden and I were faced with a call from a retired teacher, living alone, who had saved all his life to buy his own house and who lived next door to a family of four earners. He rightly resented the fact that his contribution to local government services was the same as theirs together. To give him his due, the hon. Member for Garscadden did not try to defend that situation. He merely avoided answering the question because he knew that there was no answer to it.

More fundamental, however, is the illogicality of domestic rates as a way of paying for local government. It is a property tax which bears little relation to local government spending or the benefit that the local taxpayer gets from it. It is a tax where the shape of the home, the extent of insulation in it, or even whether the garage can take two cars side by side or end on, dictates what one pays towards local government services, although there is no relationship between the two. Added to that is the necessary concomitant of a rating system—revaluations. Revaluations, as we know too well in Scotland, are hardly conducive to stability. Without any action on the part of local government or the ratepayer, they can almost overnight massively increase the bill which the ratepayer has to pay.

All in all, it is a system which cannot be justified or continued. It is neither democratic nor fair, but it is against that system that Opposition Members compare the community charge and pronounce it unfair. As a comparator, its credibility is shot through and their conclusions are invalid, and even if they were not, the fact that they have not taken into account the rebate would make their comparison unacceptable.

Mr. Lamble: The hon. Gentleman said that there would be no revaluation in Scotland in 1990. Will he confirm that revaluation will still take place in 1990 in Scotland for industrial properties? Will he also confirm that no revaluation will take place of domestic or non-domestic properties in England in 1990?

Mr. Ancram: The intention with regard to non-domestic properties is that there will be simultaneous revaluations in England and in Scotland in 1990. If the hon. Gentleman supports this legislation there will be no domestic revaluation in Scotland in 1990, and he will be able to prove finally to the ratepayers of Troon, about whom he has spoken so often, that he cares for their interests.

We have also been accused tonight of introducing a system that takes no account of ability to pay. At the lower end of the incomes scale, I reject that. The rebate scheme that we have outlined, both in the debate and in the commentary, makes it clear that those on low incomes will be protected, even if — I confirm this to the hon. Member for Cathcart — everyone, rightly, has to contribute something. The hon. Gentleman has not read the Social Security Act carefully. It does not mention a percentage, and I am sure he will agree that the rebate system that we impose on houses should be the same system as we impose on the community charge, otherwise two different systems will create the confusion and concern that he outlined.

Ability to pay is a factor in the community charge. The hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. Hamilton), who is not in the Chamber at the moment, fairly put his finger on the point. He said that 60 per cent. of local government spending in Scotland is paid for by the central taxpayer, where ability to pay is inherent, not only through income tax, but through VAT and excise duties. Including the community charge, the top tenth of households in terms of income will contribute 19 times as much as the bottom tenth, and the average of that top tenth is way below the level at which the Leader of the Opposition believes they should be taxed. That system is right and it will continue.

Only 13 per cent. of local government expenditure in Scotland is covered by the domestic rate and will be covered by the community charge. It is only there that democratic accountability can be created, and it is only right that in that small sector each adult, rebates apart, should pay the same.

The ability to pay has at least brought one clear statement of policy from the Opposition Benches. The spokesman for the alliance, the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), and the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) have come out clearly in favour of local income tax. That was the only clear thing said by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland. The policy was unclear. Indeed, if one blinked, one missed it.

In the processes leading to the Bill some of us were attracted to the concept of LIT until we looked at it in detail. I have to say that it failed on almost every count. Many of the reasons for that were put excellently by my hon. Friends the Members for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) and for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) and I do not want to reiterate them. The spokesman for the alliance said that effectively the system would be run through PAYE — *[Interruption.]* I apologise if that was said by the right hon. Member for Western Isles. I sometimes find it difficult to distinguish the parties. If it was done through PAYE, it would become one of many deductions above the bottom line. I ask the House to consider seriously how many people would notice it. Those not on PAYE would not feel the effect of a particular rate of LIT for up to 18 months, during which time the rate of that tax might have changed.

Let us start with the hypothesis that a local income tax is to be introduced. Those who propose it argue that it would be less onerous on the less well off than the community charge. That point was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Henderson) and my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling. They asked me to provide figures to show whether that was true. I shall give some examples based on 1985-86 figures.

If we assume—I am again taking the points raised by the spokesman for the alliance and the right hon. Member for Western Isles—an equalised local income tax system with the yield of 1p in the pound of local income tax, the same per adult in all areas—that is a formal equalising system — we find that a single man on the average manual worker's wage would pay between £266 and £399 in the regions of Scotland, depending on which region he was in. That is an average of £361. Under the community charge, he would pay between £153 and £229, an average of £207. Therefore, on average under LIT he would be £154 worse off. In fact, every manual worker who is single with an income of over £112 a week would be worse off.

When I tell the House that 80 per cent. of manual workers in full-time employment had an income in excess of that figure in 1985-86, the implications of local income tax become even clearer. I must say to alliance Members and to Members of the Scottish National party, if they disagree with the figures, why do they not put their own figures before us? We have called upon them for many months to do so. The fact that they have not done that makes me believe that they have not worked it out properly. I want to tell them what their system would do.

Young adults in employment living with their parents are another sector about which there has been a good deal of concern. In 1985-86, 70 per cent. of full-time male manual workers in the age group 21 to 24 had an income in excess of £112 a week, which is a measure of the proportion of those in that age group living at home who would be worse of under a local income tax system. It is for that reason that we believe that the system proposed in the Bill is not only right but fairer than any other system that has been suggested tonight.

Mr. Maclennan *rose*——

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman has had time to state his policy. He did not do it and he will now have to wait for another occasion.

I am prepared to concede that no scheme of local taxation can be perfect. I appreciate some of the concerns raised tonight.

Mr. McKelvey *rose*——

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Member for Cathcart asked how many single pensioners and single parents there are. Those two categories together form about 20 per cent. of all tax units. For him to say that the benefits that would adhere to those should be disregarded leads me to question the concern that the hon. Gentleman and his party have for vulnerable groups within our society.

Mr. Maxton: That is not the question. The question is, how many of those single households, in the present circumstances of rebates, actually pay rates?

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman has seen the Green Paper and the calculations. I have waited for him to say that he believes that it was right that, under any system, those people should gain, but he has ignored them. He has

effectively said that they are a small minority and that we need not bother about them. That is certainly not the Government's view.

We heard a fascinating suggestion, which, in a sense, came from the hon. Member for Garscadden and from the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland, that, in some way, the Bill was less democratic in terms of local government because the Government would be directly funding a greater proportion of total local government expenditure. That is a fascinating argument after years of hearing, every time rate support grant was reduced, that we were loosening control over local government by removing some of the central control that we had through the grant system.

The hon. Member for Garscadden referred to the number of summary warrants. The summary warrants system for rates is an effective system of diligence, because it leads to the recovery of money due. Only a relatively small number of summary warrants for rates lead to further diligence, and only a tiny number lead to warrant sales which, as the Scottish Law Commission's report on diligence and debtor protection pointed out, are almost unknown in rates cases. The system, especially when it is reformed this year, will be perfectly capable of dealing with that type of problem.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stirling asked whether registration should be based on residence at a qualifying date. The weight of the views on consultation was in favour of a rolling register rather than a fixed one such as the electoral register. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State said that a rolling register would maximise accuracy and efficiency in the system.

My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher) asked why we were retaining the basis of selective action in the Bill to limit the community charge. The Bill abolishes two of the three present mechanisms of control. It gets rid of grant penalties and general rate capping, and I hope that my hon. Friend welcomes that. We believe that it is important to have a power in reserve, —which we would hope not to use—in case we find particularly at the start of a four-year period, that a council is prepared to behave irresponsibly, to the severe detriment of those who are paying the community charge. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State believes that this power should be used only sparingly, and he would hope not to have to use it at all.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries asked about shooting rates. [*Laughter.*] The Government will be asking the working party of the Scottish Assessors Association and the Inland Revenue valuation office to examine present Scottish and English law and practice on the valuation of shooting rights and to make recommendations for a necessary change in legislation to ensure that the situation is treated equitably north and south of the border. The Opposition may laugh, but on the Labour front Bench there is an hon. Member who, I recollect, once tabled an amendment in connection with the matter that my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries raised.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stirling asked about sports clubs. Local authorities are empowered to give relief of up to 100 per cent. if those clubs meet the required criteria. We believe that it is right that local authorities should have that discretion, because they are the only bodies which can see in each case whether that discretion is merited. We will ask the working party of the Scottish Assessors Association and the Inland Revenue valuation office to examine present Scottish and English practice and to make recommendations for necessary change, which I hope will be implemented in time for the 1990 revaluations. I appreciate that one of the major concerns is the different levels of rates paid by sports clubs north and south of the border.

Towards the end of his speech the hon. Member for Garscadden was forced to admit that if he had to suggest some reform of the rating system he would look at a system of capital values. He should return to the Layfield report and see what the committee had to say about that. Although Layfield did not say that such a system was impossible, he had a number of severe reservations about it which, were they to occur in practice, would create a situation which was no better and very little different from that which we had under the rating system in the past, whose time, we believe, has come and gone.

The hon. Member for Cathcart suggested that this was a panic measure, and he referred to various manifesto commitments. It is a strange argument that although we took one view at one stage and revised that view later, we are not entitled to do so. One of the failings of the hon. Gentleman's party is that it is so doctrinaire that once it has stated a policy we have to wait for generations before it realises that that policy no longer applies and that it must be changed.

There has been opposition to the proposed system throughout the debate. We have been told that the community charge system will create unacceptable financial burdens for those who pay little or nothing to local government. I do not for a moment deny that payments of up to £5 a week in the highest charge areas are significant, nor do I suggest that the payment, by those on full rebate, of £1 a week, again in the highest charge areas, will be difficult to find, even though it is only just over the price of a pint of beer. That is precisely why the system is being phased in over three years. Of course sums of that kind matter. Accountability would hardly be created if they did not matter. However, the level of charge will be much lower in those areas where authorities do not spend more than they need to spend.

I find it hard to accept the attitude of Opposition Members that these are cruel and unacceptable burdens to place on the poorer members of society, and I shall put the matter into perspective. During the last few months the Labour party has made official promises to the electorate. We are now able to cost those promises. If we believe them —and it is a big "if"—and if we accept that the Labour party would raise direct taxes only on those who earn over £27,000 a year, the cost of its programme would result in a VAT increase of 43 per cent. According to our calculations, it would mean that the lowest tenth of households, in income terms, would have to find an additional £351 a year for VAT—nearly £7 a week—and that they would still have to find the money to pay for the rates. Compared with our proposals, it is extraordinary that the Opposition should make such a point about that.

If we do not believe the Labour party's direct tax increase restriction, and if it took that road rather than increasing VAT, income tax would be increased to 53p in the pound. For the average male manual worker that would mean an increase of £23·50 a week if he was married, or £29 a week if he was single. Or it might be a combination of both, or it might be that the Opposition

[Mr. Ancram]

do not expect to be called upon to fulfil their promises. If ever there was a case of crocodile tears, that is what we have had tonight from Opposition Members.

The Bill is no short-term stop gap. It is no hurried or temporary expedient. It is a well considered and well worked out reform which sets up a new and viable system for financing local government for generations to come. It creates a new balance, a new fairness and a strengthening of local democracy and accountability which will stand the test of time. No wonder that the Opposition hate it. It means the end of a system that has underwritten their profligacy at local level, which has drained ratepayers, which has milked businesses and destroyed jobs, but which has been the bedrock of their local government survival. The ratepayers of Scotland have waited long for this Bill, and I call on my hon. Friends to support it.

Question put, That the Bill be now read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 258, Noes 204.

Division No. 24] **[9.59 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irving, Charles
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, John
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Merchant, Piers
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Osborn, Sir John
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powley, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'lch N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Gerald Malone and
Mr. David Lightbown.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. James Hamilton and
Mr. Allen Adams.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

ABOLITION OF DOMESTIC RATES ETC. (SCOTLAND) [MONEY]

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of—

(a) grants to local authorities for the financial year 1989-90 and each subsequent such year equal to the aggregate amount which the Secretary of State estimates is to be available for that year for the payment by him out of such money of grants (other than housing subsidies) to local authorities, under deduction of the portion of that amount which he estimates will be allocated to grants in respect of such services as he may determine;

(b) payments to local authorities of subsidies relating to the making by these authorities of rebates in respect of community charges and calculated by reference to such factors as are specified in or under the Social Security Act 1986 as modified by regulations made by the Secretary of State; and

(c) any increase attributable to the provisions of the said resultant Act in the sums payable under any other Act out of money provided by Parliament.

—[Mr. Neubert.]

Food Aid

10.13 pm

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Chris Patten): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8705/86 on food aid policy and food aid management and the supplementary Explanatory Memorandum from the Overseas Development Administration of November 1986; endorses the view that reform of the European Community's food aid programme is necessary; and welcomes the United Kingdom's endeavours to ensure that food aid is better integrated with other forms of development assistance and is provided in ways that are primarily intended to meet the needs of recipient countries.

I begin by welcoming the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation that the House should discuss these documents. The debate is extremely timely. Experience during the past four years since the existing framework regulation for Community food aid was introduced clearly shows the need for a further thorough review of its policy and management. Since the Commission submitted its formal proposal for a new framework regulation in July this year it has been possible, under the United Kingdom presidency, to make rapid and substantial progress towards the adoption of a text which, although not perfect, will I am confident, provide the basis for a great improvement in the future.

There are two documents for debate tonight; the original Commission proposal, and, attached to a supplementary explanatory memorandum dated November 1986, a revised text agreed at the Council of Development Ministers on 11 November. Before I deal with these, however, it may be helpful to the House if I briefly sketch in the background.

The Community food aid programme began in a small way in the mid-1960s, very much as an adjunct to the management of the common agricultural policy. It has grown steadily until, in 1985, its cost to the aid chapter of the European Community budget was some £333 million. The United Kingdom share, which is attributed to the British aid programme, was £77 million. Additional costs in the form of export restitution payments are met from the European agricultural guidance and guarantee fund. It is second only to the food aid programme of the United States in size and represents about one third of the Community's total expenditure on overseas aid. But it has not been easy to shed the influence of its origins. A high proportion of the programme has always been in the form of food for resale by the Governments of recipient countries, where it is especially difficult to protect the interests of local producers. Procurement procedures, tied to the operations of the common agricultural policy, have been slow and cumbersome.

At the time of its adoption in 1982 it was hoped that the previous regulation would go a long way towards meeting these criticisms, but that did not happen. Nor did a resolution passed by the Development Council in 1983, much of which was incorporated in the third Lomé convention signed the following year, have much effect. The European Court of Auditors produced a series of harshly critical reports focusing on slow deliveries and poor quality control. The famine in Africa in 1984-85 showed up the deficiencies of the present system, especially on the procurement side. The Community institutions found it very difficult to react with the speed and flexibility then required. This was recognised by the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs in its report "Famine in Africa", which also supported the Government's broad approach on food aid policy. So it is clear that reform has been needed urgently.

I turn now to the documents before the House. The Commission's proposals are set out in document 8705/86. This was submitted to the Council and to the European Parliament in July this year. The stated aims of the Commission were, first, to link food aid more closely to other forms of European Community development aid; secondly, to deal with certain institutional problems concerning the 1982 regulation which have never been resolved with the European Parliament; thirdly, to base food aid on the part of the treaty of Rome concerned with the external relations of the Community, deleting the present reference to article 43, which governs the common agricultural policy; and fourthly, to strengthen the Commission's powers of implementation.

In practical terms, the main changes proposed by the Commission were to allow more triangular transactions, or the purchase of food in developing countries with surpluses rather than in the Community; to introduce a new procurement and transport procedure for food aid under the direct responsibility of the Commission; to change the form of the Food Aid Committee which considers individual allocations of food aid; and to remove from the Council the power to fix annual quantities.

The Government carefully considered those proposals, which were the outcome of a major effort of review and discussion within the Commission. As explained in our initial explanatory memorandum, we fully supported the objectives set by the Commission for the new regulation. However, we felt that the detailed proposals did not go far enough towards improving the developmental effectiveness of food aid, and the solutions put forward by the Commission to the institutional problems gave rise to some concern.

For those reasons, when detailed discussion of the text began in Brussels in September, the United Kingdom introduced a series of amendments aimed at broadly maintaining the status quo on institutional questions; at laying down clear operational guidelines on the developmental significance of food aid; at giving clear priority to emergency operations; at emphasising the financial implications for donors and recipients of food aid; and at liberalising further the possibility of purchase from outside the Community where this is cost effective.

Discussion on those amendments and on the amendments proposed by other member states continued during October and the early part of November. At the same time, the European Parliament played its part by producing its opinion on the Commission's draft with commendable rapidity and thoroughness, proposing 14 amendments. Almost all of them, except on the institutional issues to which I will refer later, have been accepted in part or entirely by the Council. The outcome of the deliberations is reflected in the text which is attached to the supplementary explanatory memorandum. This text was approved as a common position at the Development Council which I chaired on 11 November following several discussions with other EC Development Ministers. On two issues, the setting of annual quantities and the form of the Food Aid Committee, the Council's view differs from that

of the European Parliament which has, therefore, invoked the conciliation procedure, about which I will have more to say later.

First, I wish to explain briefly the main differences between the text on which the Council reached agreement and the original Commission proposal. These are set out in more detail in paragraph 2 of the supplementary explanatory memorandum but can be summarised as follows: the references to the need to ensure that food aid is better integrated with development policy have been strengthened throughout the text; the proposed limit on the overall level of triangular transactions has been dropped; major improvements have been made in article 6 dealing with emergencies; regular evaluation of significant food aid operations is provided for; it is proposed that the Council should continue to set annual quantities, although there was general agreement that these should be in conformity with budget appropriations, and that the present form of the Food Aid Committee should be maintained.

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): The Minister refers to the Council of Ministers. Does he mean Development Ministers? Is there not a meeting on Monday concerning this document and, therefore, is not its status only provisional? Will he clarify the matter for the House?

Mr. Patten: I shall come to next Monday and Tuesday's meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council. I am referring to a meeting of Development Ministers of the EC, at which I am pleased to say that we reached a common position on the text of the regulation. But, as the hon. Gentleman suggests, there is still a hurdle to clear next Monday and Tuesday.

The new text goes a long way towards meeting United Kingdom concerns. Of course it is not perfect. Other member states have different attitudes and different priorities. For example, we would have liked a cleaner break between food aid procurement and the common agricultural policy and even more clear-cut arrangements for purchase in developing countries. But we have made more progress than we expected in the relatively short time since the issue of the original Commission proposal—more progress than anyone seemed to think was possible a few months ago. I might add that it took nearly three and a half years rather than three and a half months to reach the corresponding position during the preparation of the 1982 regulation, which most hon. Members would regard as less than wholly satisfactory or adequate. It is important now that the momentum is maintained so that the new regulation can be adopted in time for the new policies and procedures to apply to the 1987 programme.

It is our intention—I come to the point made by the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) — that conciliation with the Parliament on the two outstanding institutional issues should take place at the Foreign Affairs Council on 15 and 16 December, and I hope that the new regulation will be formally approved either at that meeting or as soon as possible afterwards. To do this would, of course, require good will and understanding from the European Parliament, from other member states and from the Commission. However, I am encouraged by the positive attitude and sense of urgency which has been shown so far by all parties, without which it would not have been possible to move so far so quickly.

The outstanding issues are of course important and complex. The main United Kingdom aim is to obtain early agreement so that the new rules can come into force. The existing arrangements for aid committees, including the Food Aid Committee, are spelt out in more detail in a memorandum on European Community aid published by the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs earlier this year. We believe that, while it is important that the Commission should be given the necessary authority to manage the food aid programme effectively, it is equally important that member states should continue to be able to influence policy in an effective manner.

I conclude by repeating a point I made at the beginning of this speech. Everyone agrees that a new framework regulation for food aid is needed. The text before the House is not in every detail the text I would have drafted myself, but it is, I believe, a very considerable improvement on the 1982 regulation which it will replace. I am also sure that it can provide the basis for a better targeted, more relevant, more effective Community food aid programme in the future. The successful passage of this new regulation will be good news for the European Community but, above all, good news for the developing countries. It is a positive response to public pressures and concerns within Europe and to the anxieties expressed by some of the recipients. The progress that we have made can, without hyperbole, be properly regarded as one of the principal successes of our presidency of the Community.

10.26 pm

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): The Minister was right to draw attention to the fact that these are potentially major reforms. However, they are still not firmly in place. As he has made plain, the EEC Council of Ministers has yet to approve the measures.

The Minister did not underline the extent to which the Council and the European Assembly disagree on two main points—which institution should have the power to set the actual quantities of food aid to be allocated, and the role of the Food Aid Committee of member states' representatives that examines individual food aid proposals from the EEC development directorate. Although these two issues are important in principle, we do not believe that they should be allowed to delay the adoption of the new food aid bill. However, they are important issues and the House will want to watch them carefully.

The European Assembly wants the Food Aid Committee to be an advisory committee. The Council wanted to have a veto on the lines of the procedures set out in article 8. That means that if any member state should challenge the proposal on the Council it could mean a delay of up to two months unless the aid was designated as emergency food aid. That very much qualifies the otherwise forward-looking provision that a 48-hour consultation procedure by telex should take place between Governments under the emergency food aid provision. Although under the measure food aid policy should be dissociated from the common agricultural policy and given more of a development emphasis, it by no means resolves all the fundamental problems in relation to food aid policy or food aid distribution. Several of these problems are unlikely to be solved by the new provision, even if it is adopted on Monday. Inasmuch as they cut the formal policy links with the CAP and increase the scope for purchases of food aid in the developing world, the changes are to be welcomed. The provision also emphasises the need to use food aid to promote food

[Mr. Stuart Holland]

production in the developing world rather than as a substitute for local production. But in practice, the issues are difficult.

Food aid should be used to help the hungry who cannot afford food, and for disaster relief. At present, only 10 per cent. of EEC aid is reserved for use in emergencies. The remaining 90 per cent. is divided into programme food aid that is often used by developing Governments to generate income by sales on the internal market through counterpart funds. It is also used in project food aid such as food-for-work schemes and nutritional feeding.

Much food aid therefore finds its way into sale on international markets. It clearly does not reach the destitute who need it, and it depresses food prices and therefore discourages local food production. Food aid is often inappropriate. Dairy products are the best example of that. Hon. Members do not need to be told about the hazards of milk powder, but a clean water supply is needed for the reconstitution of butter oil and milk powder, and that is rarely available in the developing world.

Food aid in such circumstances can be dangerous, especially to children. In spite of that, however, the EEC is committed to spending £163 million this year on dairy food aid. That is one third of the food aid budget. I stand to be corrected, but, as far as we can see, dairy food aid is not covered by the measure. I am sure that the House agrees that milk powder sales to the Third world should be stopped.

Food aid is almost always less effective than other forms of development aid. There is a strong case for saying that non-emergency food aid should be phased down rather than out, to be replaced by an equivalent amount of development aid to smallholder food production, which is the bread basket of much of the developing world.

The Minister spoke of seeking the support of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. In its report on famine in Africa, it stressed smallholder production. It is not clear that the EEC is proposing to phase out dairy or non-emergency food aid. Perhaps the Minister will say that he will fight that case. If so, we welcome that. Article 2(2) states that the Community's food aid shall be integrated as thoroughly as possible into the development policies and food strategies of the countries concerned. The EEC is laying great emphasis on the food strategy approach which as the Minister said, has been incorporated in the third Lomé convention under the heading of food security. Yet how food aid has inhibited development strategy is illustrated by the case of Mali, which has had a food aid agreement with the EEC since 1982. Food aid in Mali has been sold to generate counterpart funds, which have been used to increase cereals prices to local producers. The EEC appears to consider this an ideal example of the developmental use of food aid, but the food aid was supposed to be used only for a transitional period. In reality, Mali is the largest recipient of food aid in the Sahel, the increase having come only since the cereals policy was started in 1982. Food aid has risen from some 26,000 tonnes in 1981-82 to 90,000 tonnes in 1984-85.

I am not sure whether the Minister has had the opportunity to visit Mali, and I am sure that he would like to make that one of his first priorities. I had the opportunity to visit Mali. It is one of the poorest economies and societies in the world. It is situated on the edge of the Sahara and literally on the margins of survival. I am sure that he would not wish to interpret my remarks as suggesting that we are claiming that, pending the development of greater economic viability in Malian agriculture, food aid should be stopped. But there is a grave dilemma, and the reality is that Mali also suffers from the cash crop syndrome. Food which has been produced for local consumption by smallholders has been diverted. The World Bank counts it as a success that Mali should be a food exporter. The reality is that Mali has debts like those of Chad, Niger or Burkina Faso, and that is the real problem. That debt could be written off from an accounting error of the World Bank and if that were pursued Mali would be in a much stronger position to pursue an effective food policy.

We are not saying that food aid should be removed in any circumstances, nor that food aid policy necessarily harms food production. Inversely, however, the planned withdrawal of food aid does not necessarily harm a food development programme.

In the mid 1960s the United States cut off cereal aid to India, but since then India has greatly increased cereal production so that imports are now unnecessary.

Mr. Chris Patten: Market prices.

Mr. Holland: It is interesting that the Minister should take that up. It is not market prices which have had this effect. In India there is a minimal price support scheme which guarantees income for farmers. I am glad that the Minister made that point, because it is something to which I wish to address further remarks.

If one simply uses the market mechanism in rural development, one cannot guarantee a minimum income to farmers who are on the margins of existence. If one applies to farmers the principles of income support of the type that we have had in Britain, directly under the deficiency payment scheme and now indirectly, through the CAP, self-sufficiency in food production in many developing countries could be achieved.

I have cited two countries that are entirely different in scale, size, and organisational abilities—one of the most powerful countries in the developing world, India, and one of the weakest. But the principles are relevant to both. If there is to be a policy of increasing local sufficiency, one needs a policy of income support for farmers.

We display double standards when we say that there should be market forces at work in areas like sub-Saharan Africa, yet we do not expose our farmers to the rigours of market forces. A minimum price level should be supported in some of these developing countries. But they are not strong enough to do that. Therefore, either price support policies or income support for specified categories of farmers especially in the marginal dry areas, is the strategy which the EEC, with its considerable collective resources, should be adopting in its policies towards developing countries.

That would make much more sense of the regulations before the House. It would give a context and strategy for a transition to a different policy and make it feasible to consider phasing out non-emergency food aid over the longer term.

In balance of payment terms, non-emergency food aid is open to use or abuse as a political instrument, going far beyond conditionality or conditionality with a human face —to use the felicitous terms used earlier today. There are countries—it is not necessary to name them or to go

through the pack drill—where that has been the case. It is doubly damaging because it undermines the feasibility of sustained indigenous agriculture — including some medium-sized states in the Third world, not simply Mali and the sub-Sahara — and because it does nothing to remedy the underlying problems which are both agricultural production and debt.

The World Bank figures for debt in sub-Saharan Africa are about $85 billion, and others estimate that the real figure is about $120 billion to $130 billion. That needs tackling. It should not simply be a matter of development Ministers being responsible for development food aid policy or of food aid in relation to development. Finance Ministers should consider issues of the global debt crisis not only in terms of the costs and risks to British, United States or other banks in relation to developing countries, but also the terms of development.

The Minister has done well with the measure. He has been active, gone abroad and campaigned on it. We welcome that and congratulate him on it. But if he wants a real fight, he should carry the issues of debt and underdevelopment onto the agends of his colleagues in government and ensure that in foreign policy terms we can see a long-term relation between restructuring debt and enabling many of these countries to restructure their agriculture, rather than to continue with a food aid policy which is a back-door form of balance of payments support.

Certainly the above cases illustrate some problems that are likely to continue despite the new regulations. The real answer is, not only a long-term phasing out of non-emergency food aid, but new dimensions to development policy. If one pursues a rural development policy in, for example, sub-Saharan Africa, one is also pursuing a regional development policy. If one wants to ensure that out-reach agriculture and support systems reach those who otherwise come off the land into the capital cities, one needs a policy which encourages Governments willing to do it to ensure that skilled personnel are prepared to live in the out-reach centres and towns. That implies an education policy for those who are qualified to work there, support policies, and a development package in which agricultural development relates to regional development. Those are the types of policy that those countries need.

I am tempted to refer to the Foreign Secretary's speech in May in New York in which he referred to fitter and leaner administration and the cutting of public expenditure. I am happy to have fitter administrations and, certainly, if necessary, leaner administrations, but none of those countries in desperate food crisis in sub-Saharan Africa can pursue wide rural development policies by cutting public expenditure.

In that respect food aid policy should certainly be part of and not a substitute for development policy, and I am sure that this is something with which both sides of the House will concur.

10.43 pm

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): The distribution of food aid should be one of the EC's strongest points. In fact, it is an issue on which the Community in recent years has too often seemed to be mean and inept. Over the years, there have too often been physical and administrative delays in getting food to famine areas and in the end it always seems to be the Russian consumer who gets the biggest help from our food mountains.

I suspect that one reason for that paradox is that much greater attention is paid to the problem of how to try to stop our agricultural surpluses from accumulating in Europe than to thinking of sensible ways of distributing those surpluses.

Will the new proposals help to inject more vigour and imagination into our food aid programme? I share my hon. Friend the Minister's hope that that will be so and I congratulate him on bringing the policy forward.

One area in which the Community's food aid endeavours should be expanded is the provision of food aid to refugees. The Community should underwrite most of the food requirements of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. So far this year, I am told, the Community has given £20 million in food aid to the High Commissioner, of which about £17 million has been allocated to help Afghan refugees.

That sounds like quite a lot of money, but it is not when one considers that there are 3 million Afghan refugees, so our food aid works out at just £5 per year per head, and that the £17 million pays for only about one week of storing our residual food mountains. That £17 million is also very much less than the food subsidy that we give the Russians who are bombing the Afghans.

Article 6 of the document, which deals with emergencies, refers to food aid for refugees and our scope for giving food aid to the refugees seems to be hedged around with qualifications. Will the new Food Aid Committee even have the power to recommend that the Community programme of food aid for refugees should be much increased?

Will the new Food Aid Committee have the power to look at schemes for food aid for our people? Once upon a time the Community operated schemes which subsidised the sale of butter out of intervention stocks to some European consumers at Christmas. There was also a beef token scheme some years ago. But all those schemes were held to be uneconomic. Perhaps they were, but I note in passing that in 1987 the United States will spend some $17 billion on its food aid programme, through food stamps, for its own population. The new European Food Aid Committee will primarily be a management committee, but will it be empowered to try to work out a scheme for cut-price food for our own hospitals, nursing homes and pensioners at Christmas?

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): My hon. Friend is pursuing an interesting line of thought. One of the questions which he prompts in me is whether, as in America, he foresees a switch, as happens in some states, from direct cash benefit to people receiving benefits to a proportion spent on providing in kind, or is that too dangerous a path to tread?

Sir P. Goodhart: Not only is it a dangerous path but I should be out of order in treading it in this debate. Suffice it to say that I see it only as a bonus at Christmas and that we should work out longer-term programmes for assisting our hospitals and nursing homes.

Meanwhile, I continue to resent the absurd fact that the inhabitants of Moscow get more direct benefit from these food mountains than do my constituents. I only wish I was more confident that this instrument would help to put things right.

10.50 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): We broadly welcome the instrument and particularly the Government's efforts to improve it. It is much better than it was, and the Government deserve credit for knocking it into a shape which more reflects views held in all parts of the House about the food aid programme.

There are great dangers in the assumption, which is widespread — particularly among those who are not aware of some of the difficulties involved — that dumping large quantities of EC surplus food in very poor countries will save a situation when in reality it can make it much worse.

When I refer to the instrument having been improved, one must realise, to get that sense of improvement, what it was like before. It still contains, for example, references to "triangular operations," in which food is bought in a poor country to supply to another poor country, rather than supplying direct from the Community's food surplus.

An essential condition for making use of this opportunity of triangular operations is that it should be kept within limits which do not jeopardise the basic principle of mobilising on the Community market the products to be used for food aid. In other words, we must still make sure that they eat our surplus and not anything that they buy from, or which is produced in, another poor country. Having seen the earlier document, one appreciates that this provision is a piece of elegant back-pedalling in an attempt to save face on the broad principle. However, the document has made an important concession, which we welcome.

The problem that underlies our debate is the fact that food aid frequently represents the supply of food — designed mainly to ease our surplus problems — into areas which would be helped more if they were encouraged to produce food and given a reasonable price at which to sell it.

In many cases, the value of the food being provided to a poor country would be better spent on improving facilities in that country. It must be galling for people in some countries to realise that the value of what is being given to them, if given in cash, could be spent more effectively on internal transportation and food production which would overcome their food problems for a much longer period.

Sometimes the food provided is inappropriate to local diet and need, especially when dealing with under-nourished children, or it creates future diet expectations which the local economy cannot, and should not be attempting to, satisfy. It can also produce a dependence on food imports which is inimical to the development of the local agricultural economy. The views which I have expressed so far are firmly held within the ODA, which has expressed them on many occasions.

Food aid has a valuable part to play in emergencies, disasters and crises where a short-term benefit is sought. But such emergency aid must be provided efficiently, and several hon. Members have pointed out that the record on that is not all that good either. Food has not got to where it has been needed quickly and efficiently enough.

The hon. Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) referred to Afghan refugees. Whereas in that and similar situations it is legitimate to use our food surplus to good effect, we must not allow our aid policy to be distorted as the by-product of an agricultural policy which is going deeper into chaos.

The root of the problem is that we have a common agricultural policy that is producing large surpluses. It is no part of our development aid policy merely to devise a means of getting rid of the embarrassment that the surpluses are causing. We must not let an important aspect of development policy simply become a means of concealing that embarrassment; that is what this is really all about. Unless 12 nations and different political parties within those nations face up to that problem and deal with it, there is no way in which development needs can overcome their difficulties for them or provide them with a way out of these difficulties.

There is a legitimate case for having some surplus food within the European community in order to deal with possible disasters or harvest failures. There is no argument against having limited food surpluses and there are uses to which such surpluses can be put in emergencies or disasters. However, the generation of surpluses is so large that we look round in desperation to see what to do with them. That cannot be morally justified. It leads us to the absurdity of selling surpluses off cheaply to the Soviet Union or allowing the food to be stored and to rot and degrade while in store. That is clearly what has happened to intervention beef. That cannot be justified.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): Hear, hear.

Mr. Beith: I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey), who speaks for the alliance on agriculture, is here, sharing our concern.

Clearly, when we are looking at what to do with the surpluses, we must look at some of the means available to use them within our own economy, not as an act of selfishness against people in under-developed countries, but because there are some circumstances in which we can usefully make butter available to pensioners, hospitals and schools in our country. There are limits to that, especially at a time when most health authorities are trying to encourage patients to eat less fat and to wean them off the eating of large quantities of butter. We are now dealing with surpluses for which there is no appropriate use in our economy or anybody elses.

At the same time the CAP, which is giving us the surpluses we are trying to get rid of, is directly affecting the economies of the countries to which the food aid is directed. It is affecting the prices they can obtain for their own foodstuffs — the market price of the basic commodities they produce and their ability to sell in our markets, which is traditionally how they earn their living. The classic example of that is sugar; we all know the history of what happened to the main sugar producers.

The root of the problem, as I have said, is the common agricultural policy. We would not be discussing the food aid programme tonight if it had not been devised as a means of getting rid of the surplus by-products of the CAP. We would no doubt be engaged in other debates such as looking at whether Europe could meet certain disaster needs. We would not be looking for ways of offloading in various parts of the world surpluses which have been created by a process which is, in part, harmful to economies of the Third world. That problem must be tackled by any and all of the Governments of Europe. The food aid activities in which Europe engages must be

assessed for their value as a development aid and must never become subordinate to the despair which is indicated throughout Europe by the present state of the CAP.

10.58 pm

Sir John Osborn (Sheffield, Hallam): I was a member of the European Parliament's Committee on Development and Co-operation some 10 years ago. I operated Lomé 1 and was involved in renegotiating Lomé 2. I have perused the working documents, especially A2-201/85 published on 14 January, and the work of the Committee. I have noted the names of the people who supported it. I have also perused the document before us. Article 2 is very strong. It states that the objective shall be

"to raise the standard of nutrition of the recipient population, to help in emergencies".

Paragraph 4 states:

"The grant of food aid shall, if necessary, be conditional on the implementation of annual or multiannual development projects".

I have heard my hon. Friend the Minister make speeches on this subject. I have no hesitation in supporting the motion. I should like to know how it will strengthen his hand.

I welcome the decision on 11 November by the European Community's Development Ministers to change the way in which Common Market development aid is administered. I, too, welcome the leading role played by my hon. Friend the Minister. I shall watch with interest what happens at the Foreign Minister's meeting next week. That food aid should be given in a controlled way, together with other development aid, to enable the Third world countries to use their resources in the best possible way to develop their agricultural economies is a great advance. As has been said, it should not be used as a means of disposing of food surpluses as a result of the common agricultural policy.

This spring, Sir Henry Plumb took part in a Council of Europe seminar in Switzerland on the subject "Agriculture 2000". I have looked at the report of the summit meeting of the Organisation of African Unity which took place in July. Bodies such as the OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank have acknowledged that many of the problems encountered by African Governments have been of their own making. They admit to extensive corruption, inefficiently run state enterprises, depressed performance in agriculture and the lack of incentives to the private sector. The summit meeting expressd a determination for self-sufficiency—a point that was touched on when my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary was in New York. These are all issues in which the Community is providing a part of the necessary help.

I am chairman of the sub-committee of the Council of Europe's Economic Affairs and Development Committee which has been working on these matters and called "North and South Europe's Role". It has been responsible for setting up a public awareness campaign which will run in 1988. The campaign's themes are, broadly, interdependence and solidarity and will apply between all developed and developing countries, but especially Europe and Africa. The European Parliament's Committee on Development and Co-operation is assisting in the campaign.

The motion refers to this country's

"endeavours to ensure that food aid is better integrated in other forms of development assistance".

One such form of assistance could be the fostering of the private sector in Third world countries so that they can better help themselves. My hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development, the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) and I attended a few weeks ago in London a meeting of the Committee on Development and Co-operation of the European Parliament. Sir Henry Plumb had expressed his views on our aims. We are all striving for the same object. We realise that Europe working together can achieve more than it will if there is disorientation. One suggestion—to direct some of the funds that are spend on aid programmes not into indebtedness but into investment—has been put forward by the World Bank, and I welcome the fact that encouraging investment featured in the Queen's Speech. I hope that we shall move forward.

I could say much more, but this is a short debate. The motion is positive. I hope that the outcome will be a positive European contribution in an area that must be the responsibility of all developing Countries. The work of the Council of Europe leads me to look to the World Bank, the DAC and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will feel that his hand has been strengthened by the resolution of the House.

11.4 pm

Mr. Stephen Dorrell (Loughborough): I join the chorus of approbation of my hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development. He is to be congratulated for having cajoled or charmed his colleagues in the European Community's Council of Ministers into agreeing this draft regulation much more quickly than any of his predecessors were able to do. The intention that emerged from a meeting of the European Community's Development Ministers reflects major improvements in the Community's food aid programme. They include the divorce of food aid from its link with the common agricultural policy, the commitment to integrate food aid more clearly with the development programmes of the recipient countries, the commitment to better administration, the freeing of triangular deals and the commitment to make the system more flexible and more closely attuned to the development requirements of the recipient countries. Those improvements are long overdue and very welcome.

My purpose in rising to speak is to ask my hon. Friend to suggest that his colleagues in the Council of Ministers should take the initiative, or he should take the initiative himself and follow through the logic of all that. It is not enough to say that food aid should not be regarded simply as the disposal of CAP surpluses. We should ask ourselves what developmental purpose can properly be served by food aid. The Community has not yet addressed the answer to that question with sufficient honesty.

All of us agree that food aid has an important part to play in disaster relief. However, as the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) pointed out, food aid constitutes only 10 per cent. of the Community's food aid programme —roughly £35 million. The Community is still spending £300 million on food aid that has nothing whatever to do with disasters or refugees. It is surely legitimate to ask what that money is being spent on, or what is the guiding principle that we are trying to establish by spending that money.

[Mr. Stephen Dorrell]

Anybody who looks, even in the most cursory way, at food aid must conclude that it is a very dangerous commodity. It is rather like a drug. It is too easily seen in Europe as a quick fix to sort out some of the CAP's problems. Much more seriously, it induces in developing countries a dependency upon imports either from rich countries or from other poor countries that are financed by rich countries, a dependency that developing countries cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, afford. If that is the danger of food aid, and if we are conscious of the fact that that is the danger, however well intentioned, it has potentially very dangerous consequences for the economic and social structure of the recipient countries.

The Community owes it both to the electorate who are paying for this £300 million programme, divorced from disaster relief, and to the recipient country to make clear what integrating food aid into a clear development plan means. Anybody who examines development must accept that any sound development programme has to concentrate, among other things, on the promotion of local production of agricultural products and on the promotion of an agriculturally based development programme. That must mean, within the relatively short term, phasing down the food aid programme and using the money for more specific developmental functions within the recipient countries.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall addressed this issue but was anxious to stress that he did not think that food aid should be removed overnight. If food aid is potentially dangerous and induces a state of dependency, we have to recognise that the discipline of withdrawing food aid in certain cases, although it may not be an easy or a particularly attractive option, may have a role to play.

Mr. Stuart Holland: I said twice that I thought food aid ought to be phased down in relation to development policies for agriculture, especially in marginal areas. I said that quite clearly and I would not wish to be misunderstood. I said that I did not recommend that it should be phased out, because if one takes somebody off drugs overnight the result may be disastrous.

Mr. Dorrell: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for clarifying what he said, but that still does not invalidate the gloss that I sought to put on what he said, that we must recognise that the commitment to phase out food aid may well be a discipline to be imposed on the recipient country within a time scale in which it is entirely reasonable to expect that country to increase its own domestic production.

One of the great fallacies that many of our electorates believe is that recipient countries of food aid, developing countries, are in some sense unable to feed themselves. With proper development programmes they would be well able to feed themselves and some of the countries that run the biggest deficits are well endowed by nature and well able to to provide for their own food needs in the forseeable future.

Perhaps my hon. Friend will address his mind to the role that food aid plays in his development policy. I should like to draw his attention to an article that he wrote in *The Sunday Times* on 9 November, in which he said:

"We also believe that food aid proposals, outside famine emergencies, should be thoroughly examined so that they make financial and developmental sense."

That is absolutely right. He went on to say:

"They should help, not hinder, local producers."

How does he see food imports—because that is what we are talking about—helping rather than hindering local producers of food? That is the guts of my question.

Like the hon. Member for Vauxhall I do not argue for the immediate withdrawal of food aid, but we need to see a structured programme for its reduction. Still less do I argue for a reduction of European Community development assistance in total. I am arguing that we spend £300 million on this programme and in general it is not well spent. We need to think about how it could be better spent.

11.12 pm

Mr. Chris Patten: I have had the pleasure today of listening twice to the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland). I hope that it will not worry him too much if I say that once again I found myself in agreement with a great deal of what he said.

Mr. Holland: The hon. Gentleman should not let it worry him.

Mr. Patten: I hope that reselection is out of the way.

Perhaps I should clarify the position in which we now find ourselves. The Community has settled its food aid policy. However, there are two institutional questions that remain to be resolved. I do not underestimate the difficulty of trying to resolve them, but I hope that it proves possible to reach a satisfactory conclusion next week and to engage in a process of conciliation with the European Parliament that will produce the results to which we all hope conciliation will lead.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall gave an admirable criticism of the way in which food aid is sometimes operated, and his speech contained much with which I am in agreement. I have said much the same things myself from time to time in a number of widely unreported speeches. I have no doubt that the result of the regulation on which the Council arrived at a common position last month will lead to greater integration of food aid development policy.

The hon. Gentleman asked about two specific issues. He inquired whether dairy food was covered. I assure him that it is, and that under the regulation the same criteria will have to apply to dairy food aid as applies to other products. The hon. Gentleman eloquently posed the Mali dilemma. I am glad to say that in 1986 the European Community decided, with our strong support, to provide cash from its food aid budget to stimulate local food production rather than flood developing countries with European surplus products.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) made an interesting contribution to the debate. I should point out that the regulation is about the contribution to developing countries. Thanks to the economic policies pursued by the Government over the past seven years, we have not continued our descent to developing country status. My hon. Friend asked whether the new proposals would inject new vigour into the emergency distribution of food aid. I can assure him that they will. He asked also about food aid for refugees. The European Community annually provides substantial quantities of food to the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees as well as cash from a European Community budget line specifically for aid to refugees.

I also recently approved an allocation of nearly £3 million in British food aid to help the UNHCR's programme in the Sudan. We have chosen to help Afghan refugees largely with cash. So far, we have contributed about £40 million to Afghan refugees. When I was in Peshawar two weeks ago, I announced the contribution of a further £3·5 million to the UNHCR. I commend everything that my hon. Friend said about Afghan refugees. I hope that in the next months and years we shall be able to demonstrate that we are alive to our international obligations towards the 3 million refugees who have been driven from their country by Soviet weapons. In addition to cash aid to Afghan refugees, we also provide substantial quantities of food aid through the UNHCR.

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), like the hon. Member for Vauxhall, set out a number of criticisms of existing food aid policies. I am in substantial agreement. Of course I accept—I have said as much—that we should not allow food aid to provide a spurious moral justification for the creation of surpluses in the United States or in Europe. I have made that point again and again, not only in this country, but in meetings with my colleagues, the Development Ministers from other countries, but the problem of surpluses and the adequate use of food aid are different matters. They require different solutions. To some extent, the fact that they have been linked so often in discussions has prevented the clarity of view that is necessary to solve the problem of surpluses.

Mr. Stuart Holland: I am sure that the House will welcome a counter-soporific intervention at this stage of the debate. How does the Minister argue that point? Surely it is clear that when there are surpluses on so sizeable a scale there is pressure for their disposal rather than destruction? It serves the farm lobby in Europe well for there to be this PR exercise, in that there is food aid to developing countries rather than butter being sold at 3p a pound to the Soviet Union, or food being destroyed. If the Minister cannot grant that fact now, will he go deeper into the undergrowth of the farm lobby? It is a widely held view. I am sorry to find that he does not share it.

Mr. Patten: I was not aware that I made that point. I assure that hon. Gentleman that, on this issue, I speak with all the courage of an hon. Member who has two farms in his constituency. I thought I had just said that we should not allow food aid policy to provide a spurious, specious moral justification for running up surpluses. Food aid policy has to some extent disguised what we need to do to reduce those surpluses. I find wholly convincing the arguments which the World Bank advanced about the cost to developed and developing countries of illiberal agricultural trading policies and substantial state aids, which all too often disfigure our policies in Europe and North America. I am extremely pleased that on that issue this Government and this country have been so substantially on the side of the angels.

Mr. Beith: Speaking as one who has many farmers in his constituency, I hope the Minister will accept that farmers are well aware of the dangers posed by the policy. It is certainly not any part of the lobbying done by farmers in this country to argue that it is a good thing to maintain food surpluses because one could always give them away to the Third world. On the contrary, farmers in this country and their representative body, the National Farmers Union, are actively looking for ways of ending the production of surpluses.

Mr. Patten: I said that I was pleased that this Government and this country are, on the whole, on the side of the angels. I am delighted to have confirmation from the hon. Gentleman that the farmers are positively angelic as well.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Sir J. Osborn) said several kind things, for which I am extremely grateful. I know that his knowledge of these matters begins more or less where mine ends, and that he has laboured in this vineyard for several years. I shall be as interested as he said he would be in what happens at the Foreign Affairs Council next Monday and Tuesday. I also agree with what he said about the importance of encouraging the private sector. I hope that shortly we shall be able to announce ways in which we can do that in Nigeria, for the agriculture industry there. I trust that in future we shall be able to do it in other countries, where we have bilateral programmes.

My hon. Friend the Member for Loughborough (Mr. Dorrell), in the final speech of this short but interesting debate, said a few kind things about me as well. He and I ran some joint charm campaigns in the past, in which, alas, we were not as successful as both of us might have liked. Nevertheless, we both survived, in a manner of speaking. I hope that, having survived, I shall be able to respond to my hon. Friend's challenge and articulate more explicitly the developmental objectives of food aid.

I endorse the point made by my hon. Friend, that food aid can be a dangerous drug on which both donors and recipients get hooked. I remind him that the European Community agreed about two years ago, following persuasion by my distinguished predecessor, a regulation allowing substitution actions, that is, providing cash from the food aid budget instead of food at the request of the recipient country. If one looks at our bilateral food aid programme, one sees several examples of food aid being used in a sensible developmental way. That is happening with the export of 7,000 tonnes of Kenyan maize to Ethiopia, and with the 7,000 tonnes of Zimbabwean maize that is at present going to Mozambique.

With the approbation of the House ringing in our ears, for a change, we shall set off with due humility to Brussels next week, and to the next round of this important battle.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8705/86 on food aid policy and food aid management and the supplementary Explanatory Memorandum from the Overseas Development Administration of November 1986; endorses the view that reform of the European Community's food aid programme is necessary; and welcomes the United Kingdom's endeavours to ensure that food aid is better integrated with other forms of development assistance and is provided in ways that are primarily intended to meet the needs of recipient countries.

Air Transport

11.24 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Michael Spicer): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 5938/84, 7932/1/86, 8324/86, 8109/86 and 9132/86, on the liberalisation of air transport in Europe, and fully supports the Government's determination to press for such liberalisation in the context of the 1992 deadline for the completion of the Community's internal market.

The Government very much welcome the decision by the Scrutiny Committee that the latest Commission proposals on liberalisation of air transport should be debated. The proposals, produced just before the summer break, form an important element in the current negotiations. They update the Commission's original policy paper, which is called memorandum No. 2, on which there is also an outstanding commitment to a debate. It is clearly sensible to take the old and new Commission proposals at the same time, and also to take the proposal for amending the 1983 Community directive on regional air services, which to a large extent forms part of the package now under consideration.

This debate comes at a crucial moment. We are approaching the conclusion of the British presidency, in which one of our main aims has been to try to make worthwhile progress with liberalisation. That means cheaper fares, more competition on routes, greater commercial freedom to mount capacity, and application of the Community's competition rules.

Those elements must be taken together as a package. Liberalisation will not, in practice, have much effect unless all the elements of the package are in place. Of course, at first sight, fares appear to be the most important aspect, but cheaper fares will not come about simply by relaxing fares regulation. They will come about only if it is possible for airlines to compete on routes and on the level of services. Under our presidency, we have been trying to secure agreement in Europe to a package covering all those elements, so that after far too long—that is our view and, I suspect, the view of many hon. Members—Europe can begin to have the air services that it needs.

Our campaign goes back to 1979, but the development that first allowed us to put real pressure on other Community countries was the publication in 1984 of the Commission's second memorandum. The Commission proposed that, for the first time, airlines should be free to propose fares without first consulting the other carriers on the route. It proposed that fares should be automatically approved, provided that they met certain criteria, and it proposed that, up to a limit of a 75-25 split of the capacity in the market between two countries, airlines should be free to mount what capacity they thought commercially justified. Finally, it proposed that, if such liberalisation could be agreed, airlines would be given wide-ranging exemptions from the application of the treaty's rules on competition.

That approach was broadly acceptable to the Government, with one proviso: the Commission failed completely to include proposals for opening entry to the market so that new airlines could start services competing with the carriers and so that new routes could be started. That omission was a fatal flaw which we said at the time would have to be put right. From 1984 until this year, progress on those proposals was desperately slow. Only Britain, the Dutch and the Commission were seriously interested in applying the principles of the treaty to air transport, and we faced intense opposition from other member states and their airlines.

The position began to change only as a result of three things. First, the success of our bilaterally negotiated agreements with the Dutch and, later, the Belgian, Luxembourg and West German Governments established a new climate for discussions in the Community. Secondly, the succession of the Dutch and British presidencies this year created a major window of opportunity which, in the enlarged Community, will not occur again for five years. Thirdly, the important European Court judgment in the now famous Nouvelles Frontieres case earlier this year confirmed that the competition rules apply in principle to air transport, and enabled the Commission to take the first steps towards applying them in practice.

Those developments brought considerable pressure to bear on the negotiations, and during the first few months of this year it became clear that some amendments were needed to the Commission's proposals in memorandum No. 2. Therefore, the Commission produced the further proposals which are the immediate cause of this debate. More specifically, it proposed some technical additions and changes to its proposals for group exemptions; revised ideas on fares designed to take up the concept of fares zones, which are favoured by most member states, but with a more flexible approach to the conditions attached to fares; and it proposed introducing new safeguards within the maximum 75-25 per cent. capacity sharing range. It also, separately, introduced amendments to remove most of the restrictions in the 1983 regional services directive, and to widen its scope to cover routes between category I and category II airports.

Before the Commission's new ideas were generally available, however, the Dutch presidency was able to secure unanimous acceptance, at its final Transport Council, that the agreed 1992 target date for completion of the internal market applies to air transport, and that, in order to achieve that target, which must mean full liberalisation. A first step should be taken quickly. The Dutch secured agreement that the first step should last for three years. Taking us to 1989, and leaving three further years for a more radical second stage.

May I now consider the developments under our own presidency which have taken us to the point at which it may at last be possible, given a further effort by other countries, to agree on a first step which will bring real and quick benefits to travellers and to airlines.

The Government decided, having considered the Commission's proposals, and having established the attitude of other countries, that it would be necessary to put forward our own package, based to a large extent on what the Commission had suggested, but adding the substantial and vital ingredient of market access. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport therefore put our presidency proposals to an informal meeting of Transport Ministers, here in London, in early October.

On fares, we envisaged provision for airlines to make unilateral fares proposals, without having to agree them with other airlines, combined with a new, fast arbitration procedure for circumstances where one Government or airline seeks to block the fares proposed by another. Equally important, we have proposed that, for cheap fares, airlines should, within wide ranges, have complete commercial freedom in terms of prices, and should be

allowed to offer such fares with far less restrictive conditions than has been the case up to now. In particular, the nonsensical requirement that to make use of a cheap ticket one has to stay either six nights or a Saturday night would be swept away, and airlines would be able to price their tickets on the basis of time of day—the so-called peak or off-peak pricing.

This of course, is the concept which British Caledonian has experimented with on the few routes where other European Governments have allowed them to do so. As the House knows, the experiments have shown the existence of hitherto untapped markets, and it has given passengers an attractive choice of fare types with some markedly lower prices.

Our objective for fares remains unchanged — the removal of all restrictions on conditions, and full commercial competition — but, as a first step, our proposals would represent a major advance towards that.

Sir John Osborn (Sheffield, Hallam): My hon. Friend knows of my interest in these matters. I welcome the fact that he is referring to the Community documents here and he knows that I have had conversation with members of the European Civil Airline Conference and the European Airline Passengers Association. However, the Council of Europe deals with other airlines outside the Community. Can my hon. Friend tell us to what extent the proposals will affect airlines outside the Community rather than those airlines inside the Community?

Mr. Spicer: I will certainly do that when I conclude. I will consider the implications of greater liberalisation within the Community for real relations outside and the competitive advance of European airlines against other airlines. If I may, I will leave that point until the end of my remarks.

On capacity, we have proposed that, by the third year of a first step, shares of total capacity could, where airlines judge it sensible, be able to vary within a range of 60 per cent. to 40 per cent. This not only represents a significant step towards the Commission's eventual target of 75 per cent. to 25 per cent.; it will in fact allow as much growth as our airlines are likely to be capable of using within the period, and will create room for new carriers on all the major routes where capacity restrictions bite at present. Clearly we shall insist on going beyond this, and on to full freedom, by 1992. However, as a first step, our 60 per cent. to 40 per cent. proposal would remove all the serious immediate constraints.

Mr. Anthony Steen (South Hams): Why are we waiting until 1992? That is a long time to wait. Will my hon. Friend also say something about the French?

Mr. Spicer: My hon. Friend may know that 1992 was the date agreed by the Heads of Government for the full internal market. The great breakthrough was achieved this year when the 1992 arrangement—it had been in doubt — was agreed to. It was a major step forward. It determines the impact that our own package will make because that can be seen as a step in that direction. That is important and fundamental.

I am not sure what my hon. Friend wants me to say about the French. Perhaps he will be more specific.

Mr. Steen: My hon. Friend the Minister will correct me if I am wrong, but, whereas all the other European countries have been happy to discuss liberalisation with him, the French have been extremely tardy. I am even advised that they may not be prepared to see my hon. Friend. Will he tell us about that?

Mr. Spicer: France is one of the six countries which have not seen fit to go along with the arrangement on fares, but the relationship with the new French Government, in particular, has been cordial. I cannot speak for the French, but I sense that they are becoming increasingly persuaded to accept some of our arguments. We shall be seeing the French Minister before the Council meets on Monday morning.

In addition to the proposals on fares and capacity, we decided that to produce a balanced package we must go further than the Commission has suggested on market access. We have, therefore, taken up the Commission's limited ideas for liberalising routes from regional to "hub", but have said that market entry on these routes should be liberalised for all aircraft and not only for those up to 70 seats. We have gone on to say that, while aircraft with more than 70 seats should be counted within the overall capacity range that has been agreed, smaller aircraft should be freed from all capacity control.

Perhaps most important of all, we have included proposals for ensuring that there can be head-on competition between as many airlines as each country separately wants on all Europe's major trunk routes. Multiple designation is fundamental to competition, and is the first and most vital step to getting the passenger a better deal. The Government have never understood the Commission's failure to produce proposals on this, but we have now taken steps to put this right.

Taken together, these ideas on market access amount to a major step forward, which would sweep up the most important ideas in the Commission's proposals for amending the regional services directive and add the major missing feature. If our proposals are accepted, we envisage that exemptions from the competition rules could be granted, but only for the three years of the first step, not for the seven years originally proposed by the Commission.

How have these ideas been received? That is what lies behind the questions of my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen). The Transport Council met in Brussels last month, 11-12 November, and had the most extensive and detailed discussion of air transport in its history. It did not come to an agreement, and the press and, I suspect, the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who is laughing from a sedentary position, saw this as a failure. That certainly applies to the press. We were able, however, to secure the support of 10 countries — every one except Greece and Denmark — for our proposals on capacity, and that of nine countries for those on market access, where Greece and Denmark were joined by Spain in dissenting. The House will recognise, given the previous hostility in Europe to any changes, that these figures represent a major shift in the position of restrictionist countries.

Only on fares were we left with apparent deadlock. The Council was evenly divided over our proposals, and it became clear that we would have to work very hard, in bilateral discussions, to persuade those concerned that we were right.

The Government see the issue of fares as crucial to the argument. There can be no further concessions on our part. It is for the countries that are doubting us on this

[Mr. Spicer]

matter to think again about their positions. If they are unable to do so, there cannot be an agreement this year, and the procedures which the Commission has started to apply in introducing the competition rules will inevitably be carried through to completion. The House will recall that the Government have made it clear that, in the absence of agreement, we would have to try to apply the competition rules unilaterally, under article 88 of the treaty, although that would be an unprecedented step that would take time to implement.

Since the last Council, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have seen the Ministers of almost all the countries which had previously opposed our ideas on fares, and those few which have difficulties on capacity and market access. It is becoming clearer by the day that there is a real desire on the part of most of them for agreement, and a growing recognition that agreement must be on our terms.

Against this background, the Government have decided to provide further time for discussion of this issue at next week's Transport Council to see whether the positions have changed. If we can secure support for all aspects of our proposals, it will represent a major step forward, making the 1992 goal achievable, and bringing early benefits to travellers and to airlines.

I ought to add that we have throughout our campaign had the fullest support of our airlines. They have fought battles in parallel with their European competitors. That has been of great help to us. Next week's Council presents us with a chance—some might say a hope—of success. We cannot guarantee it, because our ideas still go further than most countries would really like, but there is a chance.

Our success in opening up European air routes to greater competition will be to the lasting benefit of the travelling public and of those airlines which attract more business and to the European aviation industry as a whole, which will be better placed than it is today to face the competitive pressures not from inside Europe, but from the United States and the far east. For that reason, the timing of this debate is ideal, and I ask the House to support the Government's strategy.

11.41 pm

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): I was struck, listening to the Minister, who made a bravura and eloquent speech, by the parallel with the return of the Kaiser's army to Germany in 1918. They might have had holes in their socks and empty ammunition pouches, but the band was playing and the flags were flying. Does anyone think that if there had been the great triumph to which the Minister referred, we would be here at dead of night in a comparatively thinly attended House to hear about it? It would have been trumpeted from the rooftops and the Prime Minister, who referred to herself this afternoon as the leader of the pack, would have been boasting of her Ministers' achievements.

There are, of course, no real achievements to point to, and not even the eloquence of the Minister can convince us otherwise. I remember listening to the Minister's brave words when, on 22 October, he said that the aim of our presidency is to devise a specific package for the first three-year step towards full liberalisation. On that litmus test, the Minister has managed eloquently to gloss over the failure even to move towards that objective. As he replied, on 11 and 12 November, the Government discussed the entire EEC Ministers meeting to air fares. We await the results of that meeting with bated breath. I fear that the results were sparse enough not to merit comment in the Minister's speech.

As the Minister said, in June, the European Court of Justice ruled that fare fixing broke the treaty of Rome and was illegal. One would have thought that that would have provided the United Kingdom with the ideal chance to move ahead. We were building on the previous six-month presidency of the Dutch who, the Minister said, have also pressed for liberalisation. Why the failure? Let us not shirk that word because, regrettably, it was a failure. In part, the Government have had to change course because they must safeguard their top priority, the flotation of British Airways. No brave words from the Minister could be allowed to prejudice that flotation.

Notwithstanding the difficulties which the Minister referred to earlier, I understand that on 3 October, his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, at an informal meeting of EEC Ministers, suggested that he would tone down his demands for liberalisation. Is it true that, instead of ensuring that 75 per cent. of any route was open to competition, within three years, according to my information, that 75 per cent. was to be replaced by 55 per cent. and then moved back up to 60 per cent.? Is it true that that was the compromise put forward by the Secretary of State? Is it also true that the right hon. Gentleman's Dutch equivalent—if the newspaper article was correct—said that there was too much water with the wine in those proposals?

The Government, when they set off on the road to liberalisation, made continual reference to the great success of deregulation in the United States. There is less talk about deregulation now because in the United States and elsewhere it is not perceived to be the great success that it at first appeared. Deregulation has become liberalisation. The Government say that they believe in the fullest possible deregulation. The Department of Transport has pursued that policy with regard to bus services outside London. But the Government cannot expect to be taken seriously if they change policy in order to sell off British Airways. The present stance taken by the Department of Transport in the aviation world is that nothing must be allowed to prejudice the great flotation when it occurs.

The lessons of deregulation in the United States provide us with warning signals. It is true that, in the early part of the 1980s, it appeared that deregulation was a great success. New carriers came into existence, lower fares were offered and there was extra competition which largely benefited the air traveller. Things have gone somewhat sour in recent years.

It appears that seven United States companies now control about 80 per cent. of passenger journeys within the United States. When we compare deregulation in United States and liberalisation in Europe we are not comparing like with like. The Minister should learn something from the American experience and not damage one of the few industries within the United Kingdom which is still expanding, despite Government activities over the past seven years.

To embark on the road to complete liberalisation—the Government have not done so; they have only talked about it—would have serious effects on the profitability of many British airlines.

The proof given to justify the United States example, at least until recently, was that EEC fares are much higher than they should be and could be brought down to the price levels in the United States if the policies which the Government profess to advocate were implemented.

First, let us dispose of one fallacy. Most of the policies of liberalisation which the Government advocate will not come about, because there is no legislation that the House can pass and no directives that emanate from the Council of Ministers which will make the Italians take any action that will prejudice the future prospects of Air Italia or the French co-operate in a way which they perceive to be against French interests.

That might be distressing for a liberaliser such as the Minister, but we should not allow his obvious distress to blind us to the truth. No legislation emanating from anywhere can or would compel other European Governments to act against their perceived national interests, especially when that national interest has to do with the profitability of the national airline.

Mr. Rob Hayward (Kingswood): Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that we should not make the effort to act on behalf of consumers?

Mr. Snape: No, I am not making any such suggestion. If the hon. Gentleman will contain himself for a few moments, I shall in my customary tentative fashion make some suggestions which may meet the requirements of British consumers and his sentiments. But first, we should dispose of the propaganda that has emanated from the Department of Transport in recent months that we are on the brink of an enormous breakthrough and that on the morrow will come this bright new dawn of liberalisation, because it will not.

Nevertheless, I agree with the hon. Gentleman that there are certainly routes within the European Community and elsewhere where the fares charged are much higher than those of United States equivalents. We are not comparing like with like because, unlike the United States, Europe has a large and comparatively cheap charter market. Indeed, 60 per cent. of all travel within Europe is on charter flights. For most people who fly once a year on holiday, the only time they use an aeroplane is on such a charter flight. It would help them enormously if the charter anomalies, which I hope the hon. Gentleman agrees exist, were dealt with, but the Government are set on cutting scheduled fares and, in the words of the Minister, on having no restrictions to competition on scheduled routes.

If that is the Government's policy, the obvious question is: who will pay? Somebody must pay for the extra capacity which fare cutting is hoped to generate, but that is normally ignored. In the United States the result of widespread deregulation has been to cut expenditure on matters such as safety. Not that I would suggest that what has taken place there, with heavy fines levied by the Federal Aviation Authority on airlines that have cut routine safety matters, would be repeated in Europe. In a fully deregulated or liberalised market the pressure on airlines, especially the small ones, to cut what may be seen as non-essential maintenance is undoubtedly enormous.

I do not know whether the hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) will be participating in the debate. He is showing some unusual signs of restiveness for this time of the night. I have not taken up nearly as much time as his hon. Friend.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): He is a Minister.

Mr. Snape: Of course he is a Minister. The hon. Gentleman, with his traditional loyalty, would never criticise a Minister. After all, he hopes, whether by a chartered airline or a cut-price route, to sit there himself at some time in the future. If the hon. Gentleman will bear with me for a moment or two, I promise not to keep him too long.

We shall no doubt hear from the hon. Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen), who diligently represents the interests of British Midland Airways, to name but one. Mr. Michael Bishop and his colleagues at British Midland are desperately anxious to see the fullest liberalisation of scheduled air carryings within the EEC.

If Mr. Bishop and the hon. Gentleman were told that that great liberalisation would come overnight, I am not sure what the hon. Gentleman's reaction would be, because he is fairly unpredictable, but I dare say that Mr. Bishop would blanch somewhat at the prospect.

Whatever their public pronouncements, the management of Britain's airlines worry particularly about two things, first, they worry about the future once British Airways is privatised, if privatised it is going to be, because, although they all profess to be in favour of that privatisation, it does not stop them writing to hon. Members on both sides of the House to say that, once the privatisation has taken place, we must regulate a privatised British Airways to see that it does not behave in a predatory fashion towards other airlines and their routes. One can understand that view, somewhat illogical though it might be. Secondly, as business men, they do not want the precarious existence that a fully liberalised regime would bring about. They want some long-term guarantees of the security of the market in which they operate.

Despite the Minister's brave words earlier, there was not a great deal of content in what he had to say. We understand the Government's avowed intention to move towards this great liberalisation, but we do not really feel —*[Interruption.]* I am not sure whether the strange noise that I can hear is coming from the watch of the hon. Member for Crawley or some other piece of equipment, but I shall regard it as the final whistle and urge the hon. Gentleman, unlike his hon. Friend the Minister, to exercise a little realism on liberalisation.

The Government's brave words have not been translated into deeds and the Opposition's forecast, without defending some of the high fares that are prevalent on many routes, is that they will remain as brave words and there will be comparatively few brave deeds to follow.

11.58 pm

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): I follow the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Shape) with a little more hope than he expressed. I am rather sad that he should be so sour even at this late hour. It would be nice to know that he thought it was a good thing that we should be making progress on a measure that we have not thought it worth while debating in the House for years because it was a waste of time debating the possibility of lower air fares when no progress was being made.

[Mr. Kenneth Warren]

I pay tribute to my hon. Friend and the Government for the fact that they have exercised initiatives which we have been waiting for over a decade to hear. I hope that they will go on exercising those initiatives and carrying them into action beyond the present.

The volume of paper does not decline the older the EC becomes. We are supposed to attend to six colossal thick documents in order to debate the matter. If there is anything that my hon. Friend can do to cut down the amount of paper that floods in from the EC, he will be rendering us a singular service. I say that because, while I would not pretend to have gone all through the documents, it is extraordinary how few times the person, the passenger, is mentioned. We learn only of regulations. As usual, the European Community is missing the trick.

When I served on the Council of Europe some 10 years ago, we had endless debates about the need to reduce air fares and give passengers a better chance of flying Europe. Everyone attending the Assembly in Strasbourg agreed and all voted in favour of resolutions to that effect—even those I moved—but when next the subject came up we found that nothing had been achieved.

I am concerned about the pace that the EEC has set itself to achieve this unbelievable competitiveness that has eluded Europe so far. Can it be achieved in six years? While 1992 may seem a long time hence, looking back six years does not seem to take us back far. The fact that document 7932 has taken two and a half years to arrive in this House, let alone in other Parliaments in the Community, makes me feel that not much will happen and I hope that the Minister will kick the other members of the Community——

Mr. Steen: Very hard.

Mr. Warren: I agree, particularly the French — to make sure that they get on and achieve by 1992 the task that their citizens expect them to achieve by then.

Hon. Members will welcome the chance to move towards an open market, but may be told, on the question of air fares, whether the airlines are required to consult — for example, in this country the Civil Aviation Authority or the Government—before introducing new fares?

While we want to see the cost of flying reduced, that should not occur at the expense of any diminution of the air safety standards which we accept as normal and which in this country are of the highest in the world. A provision on air safety standards should be written in to give that assurance.

I hope that the cost of flying in Europe as well as inside the United Kingdom will be seen in terms of the cost that it imposes on our trade competitiveness in dealing with our competitors in the United States who are trying to fulfil the same trade task.

Document 7932 troubles me in capacity terms in view of differences in paragraphs 3 and 6 of the helpful memorandum produced by the Department. Paragraph 3 says:

"either country in a bilateral relationship would be allowed to vary"

its capacity, but paragraph 6 says:

"The proposals, if adopted, would override the UK's air services agreements".

If we are to override such agreements I shall be delighted, because they have worked actively against the interests of the passenger since they were introduced in Europe. It would be helpful to know whether this proposal overrides "the UK's bilateral air service agreements."

Are we to understand from the explanatory memorandum that new airlines will be allowed to enter and leave routes? How will they be able to do that? The Minister may not be able to answer these questions in detail tonight. It would be helpful if, in due course, attention were paid to these issues before we lose the presidency. After all, paragraph 3 states:

"any country should, as a safeguard, be able to intervene in the market".

What will such intervention mean? Will any country be able to freeze out any airline or other country from operating on a particular route?

The Minister has had correspondence with Mr. Alastair Tucker, a well-known aviation consultant, about document 9132. I wish to register the concern that is felt in the air transport industry about other problems, such as the question of computer reservation systems, which reside within this determination to give liberalisation.

At the moment, it is very much the right of particular airlines to allow others to enter or not to enter their computer reservation systems. As a consequence, passengers do not have the freedom to book on other airlines if they cannot get satisfaction within one airline's computer system.

We must ensure that the competition directorate in the EEC provides what is required and what is stated in explanation document 9132/86, where it says:

"The Government is aiming to secure agreement during the present UK Presidency on a general community regime for civil aviation covering fares; capacity; application of competition rules".

These competition rules should cover the protection of passengers so that they know that if they want to get a reservation they will not be restricted to particlar airlines by the computer reservation systems in the Community and that they will fly with the airline with which they are booked. There are some rather hairy situations in the German reservation system, where one can book on Lufthansa and end up on another airline.

I make a plea to my hon. Friend. After the many years of trying to get deregulation and cheaper flight regimes in Europe, which we would all welcome, can we ensure that the wheel is not invented yet again? The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East spoke with some disparagement, I have no doubt from personal experience, about what he believes to be the lack of success of the deregulation system in the United States. In fact, in general it is considered that deregulation has been a success in the United States.

What is wanted — and this is where the Americans have erred — is information for Europeans about the route patterns that will be available to passengers, and the frequency of services, so that we can achieve customer satisfaction, which, as I said earlier, is not mentioned in the documents.

My hon. Friend the Minister said that the ideas that we put forward from this country are more numerous than most countries in the Community would like. So be it. I think that we should be the pace setter in this matter. We have always been proud to be a leader in aerospace. I ask the House and the European Community to remember

that we are supposed to be representing the citizens' interests in travel, and that should shine out more strongly in our declarations.

12.7 am

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): The hon. Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren) is an expert on this subject. I am certainly not an expert, so I am somewhat encouraged to learn from his speech that he does not entirely understand all the documents, or even the Minister's explanation. Therefore, I feel slightly more confident about asking one or two questions than I did a few moments ago.

I am in favour of liberalisation but not of total deregulation. I think that the Government will learn a lesson on deregulation with the buses and perhaps they will be able to apply it to the air transport industry. I believe that what has happened in the United States with People's Express airline going bust and other things cannot really be a very good story. It may be that the seven major companies that are now left are competing well with each other and fares may have fallen, but there have been some disastrous job losses in the interim.

I have no doubt that the Minister's heart is in the right place and that he has tried very hard. Despite our presidency of the Council of Ministers, we have not, in all honesty, made as much progress as we would have liked. However, I wish the Minister well next week. In the brief to document 7932 we are told that the

"Commission now hopes to facilitate early agreement on a first step towards full liberalisation by the target date of 1992".

The Minister hailed that as a breakthrough; therefore, I shall accept it as that. However, there are nearly six years to go and in the mean time fares to most member states are grossly over-priced. I travel to the Western European Union, which meets in Paris, and I am staggered by some of the fares. The explanatory memorandum can only report that the Government will aim

"to secure agreement to a worthwhile 'first step'".

There is less than a month to go before the Belgians take over the presidency, so next Monday's meeting obviously is important.

Document No. 8324, to which the Under-Secretary of State referred, applies to the position of companies such as British Caledonian, which has had an agreement with other airlines in Europe. Is the exemption to be permitted only for a limited period—three years? One has some sympathy with British Caledonian which has had a pretty lean summer. I am sure that its actions have been in the best interests of the airline and of the consumer.

Document No. 424 makes a minor concession, to which the Under-Secretary of State referred, to regional Community airports and aeroplanes with fewer than 70 seats. The hon. Gentleman said that more wide-ranging proposals had been submitted by us, and presumably they will be discussed on Monday. Does that limited agreement mean that when the docklands airport comes into operation aeroplanes with fewer than 70 seats will be able to operate from the docklands STOLport into the main city airports of Europe, or will they have to operate from regional airports? That is a vital question. I support the docklands STOLport and think that it has a great future if aeroplanes flying from it can fly to the main cities of Europe.

The Under-Secretary of State did not refer tonight, although he may have done in the past, to the report last January by the National Consumer Council in which it made 29 recommendations to the Government. May I take it that the recommendations are generally approved of by the hon. Gentleman and that they have all been taken fully on board?

I wish the Under-Secretary of State well on Monday. I hope that he makes progress. I congratulate him on what he has done, but I wish that he could have done a bit more.

12.11 am

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): I endorse the charitable instincts of the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross), who regularly acts in that manner on these occasions. I am afraid that the same cannot be said of the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who suffers from a serious deficiency in his party—he is not only clever but sensible. In the words of the *Daily Telegraph* sketch writer today in respect of another of the hon. Gentleman's colleagues, in the Labour party that is about as much use as a vulture with a glass eye.

This is an important debate as far as I am concerned, because I have a substantial constituency interest in these matters. Gatwick airport is in my constituency and a number of the airlines affected by these directives are based at Gatwick.

As predicted by the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East, I want to congratulate my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on the progress that they have made in the past few months. Much of the criticism directed at their progress has been entirely the fault of their Department. There is too much talk in Government generally about breakthroughs, achievements, triumphs and God knows what else in the relentless quest for satisfactory presentation of propaganda, but we all know that these are very complex arrangements that require detailed and careful negotiation between a large number of countries and that there will not be achievements overnight on anything like the scale that we would like. I hope that we will not continue to raise the temperature of expectation but will continue with the estimable, satisfactory and good progress that the Government have made in the Community in the past few years.

In the spirit of the comments of the hon. Member for Isle of Wight, I wish my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State and his colleagues every success in the European Council in a difficult and important negotiation. To doubt the Government's commitment to liberalisation is absurd, because, self-evidently, just from reading the documents and knowing a little about what is happening, the Government have already created a firm framework for reform.

Air transport has proved to be a fantastic generator of jobs. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East and I know that a healthy aviation industry is of great benefit to this country. The hon. Gentleman knows that, apart from the creation of an enormous number of jobs in the aviation industry, it results in many jobs in the tourist industry—not just seasonal jobs but, to an increasing extent, long-term jobs. It is important for all our airlines that there should be a satisfactory outcome to the negotiations.

As for document 9132, I hope that my hon. Friend will attach particular importance to the development of regional airports and to the job creation opportunities that should be provided in the more remote parts of the United

[Mr. Nicholas Soames]

Kingdom that do not enjoy the benefits that are to be found in the south of the country and in London. No single reform could do more to put flesh on the bones of a people's Europe than the liberalisation of air transport. The advances in air transport have done more than practically anything else to promote the concept of a wider and a more united Europe. I hope that my hon. Friend will use that argument to good effect.

I am convinced that the Government's fares policy is right. All the evidence, particularly that of British Caledonian in my constituency with its issue of "timeflyer" fares, suggests that the concept of off-peak pricing in aviation works satisfactorily. It strengthens the commercial position of those airlines which use it and it provides a product that is highly attractive to customers. There is a very long history of much publicised cheap fares which turn out to be almost unavailable to the public because of the restrictive conditions that are imposed. It clearly makes sense, as a first step, to put this right in the way that my hon. Friend has proposed. The Government should also make it irrevocably clear that they intend to give airlines full commercial freedom regarding conditions at the earliest possible opportunity. It would be wrong to leave that until 1992. It should be implemented as a second step.

It is also important to bear in mind the role that is played by the smaller airlines in introducing real competition in the market, provided that they are allowed in. Head-on competition is healthy on those routes that can sustain it. It is also valuable to have easier market entrance on secondary routes. It allows new markets to be developed and new comparisons between airlines to be made. I urge the Government to be resolute and firm and to insist that their suggestions about market access are accepted by the Council as part of the current package.

There has been talk of unilateral action by the United Kingdom. I urge my hon. Friend to be extremely cautious and not to be pushed into adopting what could be a simplistic approach. The airline industry depends upon international co-operation. Airlines are highly vulnerable, as British Caledonian can testify, to rows between Governments. If the disruption is severe, with adverse consequences for basic forms of co-operation, the traveller as well as the airline undoubtedly suffers. It is right that the Government should have a "bottom line", but they should do eveything possible to secure a negotiated settlement in Brussels at the earliest opportunity.

I ask my hon. Friend to attend to one very important matter—the absolutely chaotic conditions that prevail in the cargo market. My hon. Friend's officials were extremely helpful over a cargo airline that phoned me the other day. It was having dramatic difficulties. It was literally within six or seven hours of having to undertake a contract that it might not have been able to fulfil. I am happy to furnish the details to my hon. Friend, but I know he will agree that it is extremely important that not only people but also goods should have great ease of entry to these enlarged markets. I congratulate my hon. Friend on the progress that he has made and wish him every success in the Council.

12.20 am

Mr. Rob Hayward (Kingswood): I apologise to the Minister for not being present at the start of his speech. I was unavoidably detained elsewhere, and I hope that in my speech I will not cover ground that he has already covered.

To be confronted with a great mound of Euro jargon and to wade through it paragraph by paragraph has proved extremely difficult, if not impossible. I tried to find references to the role of airports in terms of the provision of capacity and flexibility. It is important that one should bear that in mind, especially when some airport authorities say that their runways and terminals are at, or in some cases above, capacity. They are probably more capable than the Government in periods of liberalisation to influence the way that airlines operate, because operation is determined by the provision of services.

I share the disappointment expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) and by other hon. Members that the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) failed to make proper reference to consumers and their interests, and set about denigrating the changes that have taken place in the United States. If one looks at safety in the United States contained in, I think, the McGill university study carried out in the mid 1970s, one sees that air safety was higher in the United States than anywhere else in the world.

Mr. Snape: That was before deregulation.

Mr. Hayward: The hon. Gentleman says that that was before deregulation. The point I was about to make is that there is no evidence to show that since deregulation those safety standards have fallen.

Mr. Snape: The Federal Aviation Authority's Donald D. Engen has linked

"the heated competition spurred by deregulation of the airline industry to a falloff in spending on critical airplane maintenance . . ."

The FAA inspectors discovered 78,000 safety violations and fined the airlines a total of 9·5 million dollars since deregulation. That does not square with what the hon. Gentleman is saying.

Mr. Hayward: The hon. Gentleman has not chosen to refer himself to the safety violations that occurred during the period of deregulation. His choice of quotations is astute. The hon. Gentleman should provide comparable figures for the position before and after deregulation, because they would be much more relevant. It is worth emphasising that the CAA has found those violations despite deregulation. In other words, the system still works.

The hon. Gentleman said that a series of mergers and takeovers had taken place in recent months in the United States. In 1986——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Let us return to air transport policy within the EEC. That is what the debate is about.

Mr. Hayward: I apologise, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In relation to liberalisation, the opportunity to compete on different routes is important and there is a United States parallel that one must bear in mind. In terms of price levels and the opportunity for different airlines to operate within Europe, when liberalisation goes ahead we will find that in Europe as in the United States, after a transition period the number of airline services available—whether from London to Milan or any other service in Europe—will

rise. The number of airlines offering the service will increase, as has been the case in the United States—even after the transition period.

I should like to make one or two observations about the documents. In document No. 7932 I welcome the section on capacity at paragraphs 9, 10 and 11. I am somewhat worried that the countries about which the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East spoke will choose to use paragraph 12 excessively, because it gives them an opportunity to,

"reach agreements to apply greater restrictions on their right to intervene . . ."

I ask the Minister to concentrate on such a paragraph when dealing with matters of capacity and, if possible, to water it down. It gives excessive opportunity to states to intervene, and I know why it is there.

The hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) and the hon. Member for Crawley referred to document No. 8324. I welcome a joint operation between different airlines if it provides a facility to operate from two different, relatively small locations to a location in other parts of Europe or other parts of the world. We should not have to use the main airlines in the main cities for every single major route that we wish to follow. It is important that people in provinces in countries throughout Europe should have the opportunity to twin with provinces in other countries and then fly on from there to capital cities rather than be forced to use London or, as is increasingly the case, Manchester, which I welcome.

I welcome the operation into which British Calèdonian and Sabena have entered. I hope that that example will be used by other airlines in other parts of Europe, as and when these documents are approved, in the way that will best suit British airlines. There is no doubt that British airlines are in the best position today to cope with a more liberalised system of air transport. Therefore, this is yet another example of British industry being in a position to compete well with European airlines if it is given the opportunity.

12.25 am

Mr. Anthony Steen (South Hams): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on his measured speech, to which the House listened with great interest. I also congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) on his fervent and enthusiastic speech. He is always worth listening to.

It is regrettable that the Members on the Labour Front Bench are always so sour. We realise that the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) has a job to do, but it is painful, at this hour of night, to hear his siren voice complaining hour after hour about whatever the Government have done. Not a debate goes by without the hon. Gentleman complaining that whatever the Government do is wrong. It is probably worth examining *Hansard* to see when he has ever said anything decent or nice about the Government's initiatives.

Mr. Stephen Ross: The hon. Gentleman may not be on the Channel Tunnel Bill Committee, but if he reads some of the speeches of the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) he may be surprised.

Mr. Steen: I should be surprised. We will not be drawn into a discussion about the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East. He has attracted enough attention this evening. We all enjoy listening to him, but this evening he let us down badly. Not only was he sour; he was boring.

Mr. Snape *rose*——

Mr. Steen: The hon. Gentleman should resume his seat. I remember when, on another occasion, I wanted him to give way to correct a mistake that he had made, and he refused. The best place for the hon. Gentleman is a sedentary position.

I wish to make a short speech. At this time of night the House does not want to hear too much more on these complicated documents. It must be right that airlines should compete freely. It must be wrong that a Government should distort market forces. It is quite wrong that a European Government or this Government should say where airlines should fly and at what price. It must be obvious that an airline should be able to fly wherever it likes, and at whatever price it likes, provided there is space to do so and it considers that it can do it at a profit.

It is equally wrong that cartels should allow British Airways and Lufthansa, for example, to carve up one route to the exclusion of all other airlines and to make profits that avoid any real competition. Whether Lufthansa makes the profit, or British Airways makes the profit, does not matter. They share the journeys and they share the profits and losses. That is not competition, and it works against the consumer. That is obvious. I am sure that all hon. Members welcome competition, and should welcome competition, if it brings down the cost to the consumer. There is no better example than what happened on the Amsterdam service.

At this stage, I willingly declare an interest in British Midland Airways. If I do not declare my interest at an early stage of my speeches, the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East mentions it every time. It is well known that I am interested in and represent the interests of——

Mr. Snape: The hon. Gentleman is doing very well.

Mr. Soames: My hon. Friend is doing very well.

Mr. Steen: I am grateful for the interventions of my hon. Friend and the hon. Gentleman. I try to do my best. It is a first-rate airline, and it has brought competition into this country. If any hon. Member had wanted to fly to Amsterdam a year ago, he would have had to pay twice as much as the price now being offered by British Midland. A single fare costs £39. That must be great progress in liberalisation and free competition.

It is no good having competition if airlines cannot fly into the airports of their choice. I welcome the inquiry that the Minister has set up in the past few months. I think that this is right. Some of the principal airlines, the Civil Aviation Authority and the British Airports Authority are looking at ways in which more airlines can go to Gatwick and Heathrow and whether more space can be made there. The Minister must realise that, regardless of the sterling work that the Government and he personally are doing to liberalise that area and allow planes to fly in and out of whatever country they like, the BAA must also play a part in encouraging competition. If my hon. Friend is way ahead in the market place in getting airlines to fly anywhere in Europe, it does no good if the BAA discriminates against the independent airline approach so that airlines cannot get into Heathrow or Gatwick and are forced to fly elsewhere.

The Minister must consider the problems that arise for the smaller airlines if they cannot fly to Heathrow or

[Mr. Steen]

Gatwick because the costs that the BAA is imposing on them discriminate against them and they have to go to Stansted, Luton or elsewhere. The Minister must lean heavily on the BAA to see that it provides a fair service and does not take a hostile attitude towards the independent sector. He must realise that whatever good work he may do in Europe, the BAA could put paid to the concept of liberalisation if it did not help put that into practice.

The Minister has come here to give us a short report. He has come here because he feels that the House wants to know what he is up to. We all know that he is doing a first-rate job. We congratulate him, and we look forward to another debate early in the new year, so that we can hear about the progress that he is bound to make.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the Minister want to speak again?

Mr. Michael Spicer *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Michael Spicer.

12.32 am

Mr. Michael Spicer: That is a lukewarm invitation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I shall try to respond quickly. Perhaps I will be allowed two or three minutes to try to answer one or two points, because it has been an interesting short debate. Hon. Members on both sides of the House might like me to comment briefly on one or two matters.

The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) chided us for not doing enough about competition. That was a remarkable event in itself. He then spoiled his speech by seeming to argue against lower fares in Europe. If our proposals were not worth having, they would not be opposed as vigorously as they are by the restrictive countries.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren) referred to consultation. It is our proposal that automatic approval should be given for new types of fares, so there would be no element of consultation. Air safety standards came up in my hon. Friend's speech and others. There is no question of them being affected. The CAA remains in charge, and the standards will be rigorously applied by the CAA. If we reach agreement, it will override air service agreements in the way suggested by my hon. Friend.

I was most grateful for the comments of the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross). Sometimes it is not easy to praise people across the Floor of the House, but it is extremely useful as we go into negotiations next week to have had his support. But I do not wish to embarrass the hon. Gentleman, so I shall not continue. I assure him that, under our proposals, the competition exemptions will last for three years. I share entirely his interest in and enthusiasm for the Docklands airport. Whether it will be a category I or category II airport will be a matter for negotiation, since it is a London airport, but if it is a category I airport, as we believe it should be, under our regional proposals — my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) said that it was important to press on with them — the traffic that it could accept and distribute would be greatly liberalised. I assure him that we are completely in favour of the National Consumer Council report.

My hon. Friend the Member for Crawley asked us not to raise expectations too high. That is wise advice. It is extremely difficult to obtain the agreement of 11 other countries, some of which—until recently the majority of which — believed that it was in the interests of their countries and their airlines to be highly restrictive. On most issues, persuading 10 out of the 12 to come our way has been a great struggle and a tremendous achievement. To persuade the others, especially on fares, will be a great problem. I agree that we should not raise expectations. Nor should we give up on the struggle.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley that it would be far preferable to have a negotiated settlement. His argument that a settlement would be highly critical to the development of a wider and stronger Europe, especially as it faces competition in aviation from outside, is absolutely right. It will best be achieved through negotiation and agreement. Of course, if it cannot be negotiated, the Commission has already made it clear that the relevant articles applying the competition rules would begin to apply. But I agree that that would cause difficulties. Those who argue that this is a simple way through underestimate the difficulties involved.

I should tell my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) that the strength of British Airways is undoubtedly a factor in negotiations. But there are 52 airlines in Britain, some of which are among the best in the world, let alone in Europe. I was not sure whether my hon. Friend was referring to co-operative operations between airlines or linking different airports, especially regional airports, but we shall need some of both.

My hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) made an important point. Some say that there has not yet been an effect on air fares, but he gave the perfect example of the Amsterdam route, which is becoming much more liberal. The effect on air fares is becoming considerable. He asked me to bear in mind, in the liberalisation programme, the fact that we must have access and capacity at our airports, especially the London airports. That is why we decided to progress with Stansted, and why we retained traffic distribution powers at Heathrow.

It is a disgrace that the principles of the treaty of Rome have not yet been applied to air services as they have been applied for a long time to manufacturing products. The Government's goal remains to put that right as quickly as possible so that consumers can get a better deal from air services, and so that our airlines, which are among the strongest and most efficient in Europe, can compete properly and win the traffic and markets that they deserve.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 5938/84, 7932/1/86, 8324/86, 8109/86 and 9132/86, on the liberalisation of air transport in Europe, and fully supports the Government's determination to press for such liberalisation in the context of the 1992 deadline for the completion of the Community's internal market.

Wolverhampton Group of Steel Companies

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

12.38 am

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise this matter on the Adjournment and to the Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for appearing at such a late hour to answer the debate.

I raise this matter tonight because it must be one of the last chances to right a 40-year-old wrong suffered by a citizen of our nation at the hands of the British Government. I raise it here because I believe that one cannot eradicate an injustice through the passage of time. I raise it because, no matter how long after the event, it is the function of the House to ensure that that wrong is righted.

This is not just a story about the abuse of power. It is also the story of a British citizen who has been brave enough to pursue an issue, not just for himself or his companies, but as a matter of principle for the rest of us. Once wealthy, he is now a ruined man.

In 1944, there was a group of five interlinked steel companies known as the Wolverhampton group. They were independent steel producers and were both profitable and vital to the war effort. Their managing director was Mr. Simon Peel Fletcher. Within a year, both he and the group would be ruined and the Government, far from aiding the war effort, would lose a useful source of supply.

The start of that ruin came on 6 November 1943 when Mr. Fletcher's reserved occupation status was abruptly cancelled and he was called up to the army. Four months later, on 24 February 1944, under the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act 1939, the Government took control of Mr. Fletcher's group and installed their own agent to run the business.

Before the war, steel making in Britain had been controlled by a powerful cartel known as "Big Steel". During the war, with steel a vital product, the Government placed the Ministry of Supply in overall charge of steel production into which cartel members from Big Steel had been conveniently co-opted. The Minister at the time, the Right Hon. Sir Andrew Duncan, was formerly the chairman of the cartel's trade body, the British Iron and Steel Federation. His subordinates included Mr. Spens, accountant general to the Ministry of Supply, who was himself a director of one of the big steel companies.

Mr. Spens had the power to recommend the controlling agent to run Mr. Fletcher's companies. The man he chose was Mr. John Adamson whose name will crop up again during the story and who was another former director of one of the big steel companies. All three men had conflicting interests which should have barred them from becoming involved, but it did not. Given the events that were to follow, we must ask why, four years into the war, it suddenly became imperative that the Government should take control of Mr. Fletcher's operation.

The answer to that may lie in the fact that Mr. Fletcher had just received official permission to install a continuous steel rolling mill—then only the second such mill in the United Kingdom. That would cut his costs dramatically and, come the end of the war, put him in a strong position to undercut the cartel prices. He was doing, in effect, what this Government profess to believe in—making his plant leaner and more efficient. However, that efficiency posed a threat to the cartel — a cartel that was of course protected by its own members in the Government.

Within three months of one arm of the Ministry of Supply agreeing to the continuous steel rolling mill, its other arm — controlled by Mr. Fletcher's rivals — had snatched control of the business that would have run the mill. The Ministry and Mr. John Adamson took over the Wolverhampton group under the emergency powers at the time. That legislation allowed them to control the undertaking, that is to say, to control the day-to-day business of the group. It did not allow them either to pledge the company's credit or to take its stocks without paying for them. Yet that was precisely what Mr. Adamson and his masters proceeded to do.

Within just nine months, the Wolverhampton group had been run into the ground. Its stocks, including £90,000 worth of steel from one company alone, had been entirely consumed but never paid for. The group's credit had been cancelled, its bank balances destroyed and the continuous mill was never built. Worse still, Mr. Adamson ordered the wrong type of steel — incidentally, conveniently offloaded from the Big Steel cartel—and made sure that the Wolverhampton group was stuck with it even though it was useless to the group.

Having created that chaos, what did the Ministry do? It set about burying its own mistakes. First, the Ministry loaded the companies in the group with debts that were not really their own and then bought one of the bogus debts, quickly pulled out its agents and sued for the money. Not surprisingly, given the Ministry's appalling stewardship, the companies had no cash to meet the claim. The Ministry had sold the stocks, kept the money and destroyed the credit.

Of course, the Ministry had totally exceeded its powers. From that day onward, compensation was owed for the stocks and for damage to the companies, their shareholders and the directors. That compensation is still owing today. Mr. Fletcher then applied for leave of absence from the Army to rescue the group's finances. He was refused. Next, the Ministry encouraged suppliers to sue the now rudderless companies for debts which the Ministry's agent had run up. Many were reluctant to do that. Others, including the British Iron and Steel Corporation, were only too keen. Such indecent haste is perhaps not altogether surprising, bearing in mind that the company's political wing was the British Iron and Steel Federation. The former chairman of the federation was the Rt. Hon. Sir Andrew Duncan, the then Minister of Supply.

On 13 December 1944, only 13 days after the Ministry withdrew its controlling agent, the first salvo was fired in the final stage of the campaign to destroy the Wolverhampton group. The British Iron and Steel Company sued one of Mr. Fletcher's companies for payment for steel supplied to, but never paid for by, the Ministry's agent. It demanded the winding up of that company.

Three weeks later, on 9 January 1945, the Ministry itself sued for the £29,000 worth of debts that it had bought. These were debts of its own creation. Captain Fletcher, as a result of excellent service, responded. He was still in the Army, where he refused leave of absence. He filed affidavits opposing the winding-up petition, and claiming

[Mr. Paddy Ashdown]

—understandably, in my view—a conspiracy between the Minister of Supply and Messrs. Spens, Adamson and the cartel "Big Steel".

The Iron and Steel Corporation winding-up petition came before Mr. Justice Vaisey on 26 January 1945. He granted it, but fiercely attacked the Ministry's controller, John Adamson, for passing on the confidential information of the Fletcher group to the Iron and Steel Company, which used it to crucify Mr. Fletcher's companies. Mr. Justice Vaisey said—I use his words precisely—

"I do not like the look of it."

Nor should he have, for within the space of one year the directors and allies of a powerful cartel had used and abused the Government's emergency powers to take over a man's business, pay him no compensation, appropriate its assets, run it into the ground and then wind it up for debts that they had created, some would say for their own benefit. All five companies in the Wolverhampton group were involved in the liquidation, but let us remember that their insolvency had been brought about by Adamson and the Ministryof Supply. Before the Government stepped in, all five companies had shown healthy profits. In the 10 months prior to its demise, for example, one company in the group had shown a clear profit of £56,000. At today's prices, that would be a six or seven figure sum.

By the end of 1944, all of Mr. Fletcher's steel companies were in the hands of the official receiver. What did the official receiver do with them? First, he appointed a special manager to run the companies in the interim and prepare them for sale. The man he chose, Mr. Deputy Speaker—and you may find this as hard to believe as I do—was once again Mr. John Adamson, the very man who had destroyed the companies by his actions as controller. It was probably the first time in history anywhere that a man who wielded the knife was appointed as the official undertaker. He was shortly to add to his interest by taking on the role of body snatcher.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Mr. Fletcher was beginning to smell a rat. He therefore awaited Adamson's first report and accounts with some interest. It was a long, long wait. John Adamson, chartered accountant and Government appointee, failed to file any reports or accounts for any of the five steel companies for 12 years. Let me repeat that to ensure that it is understood. For 12 years, Mr. Fletcher, his fellow directors and shareholders were deliberately denied information about their former companies. For 12 years the requirements of various Companies Acts were not complied with by an experienced chartered accountant and Government appointed specialist. It is scarcely credible.

So why did it happen? It was not until much later, in circumstances which we shall come to shortly, that it was made clear that a special dispensation had been given by the then President of the Board of Trade for no accounts or reports to be filed. I must ask the Minister, if he does nothing else, for an account of how such a dispensation—a suspension of company law, as I understand it—came to be made. Was it asked for by Mr. Adamson? Or was it offered by the Board of Trade to the official receiver? Will the Government place in the Library all papers relating to the dispensation?

Mr. Fletcher knew by now that some of his companies' assets had been sold—almost instantly—to members of the steel cartel or to agents of the Minister of Supply. What he could not know, because he was denied the accounts of his own companies, was for how much, or rather, as we shall see, for how little. He knew also that his own career was in ruins. Not content with stealing his steel companies, the Government had, in 1948, contrived the winding-up of Carlton Greig Ltd., his merchant bank that had been linked to the steel group. Nor did it stop there. In December 1950, the official receiver issued summonses alleging misfeasance by Mr. Fletcher and another director of one of his steel companies. It was a hopeless action and was subsequently dismissed. But within a year a new way had been found to get rid of the troublesome Mr. Fletcher. He was adjudicated bankrupt, and once again the circumstances were suspicious in the extreme. He was declared bankrupt on the basis of a two-year-old assessment by the Inland Revenue that he owed more than £250,000 in tax.

A bankrupt cannot go to court. That was useful, as Mr. Fletcher had previously instituted a misfeasance action of his own against John Adamson. That action was therefore promptly struck out, and yet, by the time that he obtained his release from bankruptcy, the Revenue admitted that he owed only £1,978—one 200th part of the sum that it originally claimed and a sum that he would easily have been able to pay to start with. This makes a mockery of the grounds for the official receiver's application for his bankruptcy, which were those of

"general desirability and public policy",

unless the "general desirability" was that of covering Mr. Adamson's tracks and "public money" had become merely a vehicle for the official suspension of the law.

What of the official receiver and the accounts and reports that he was so anxious not to file? When Mr. Fletcher finally forced their publication, they showed fraud on a grand scale. I shall detail but one of the rip-offs. One of the Wolverhampton group of companies was sold in 1945 to the big steel cartel for £38,881—a fraction of its operating worth, to say nothing of its substantial assets, and an auditor's report shows how gross was the fraud. This was indeed the sale of the century, and the man who auctioned it was, once again, John Adamson.

The Government have made great play of their desire to stamp out fraudulent liquidations, and yet they have refused even to examine the books of this fraud—a crime for which, as with the original abuse of power, compensation is still owing. Mr. John Adamson was released from his duties as liquidator of the Wolverhampton group in 1957. From that day onwards, Mr. Fletcher has attempted to bring this issue before the courts. In each of his scores of appearances, he has been opposed by the Attorney-General of the day or by a representative of the Board of Trade. It is incredible that, on each and every occasion, our judges have been prepared to strike out his action without hearing any of the evidence. It has been enough for the Government counsel simply to ask that the case be dismissed for the courts to close their doors to Mr. Fletcher.

I should like to drive home that astounding fact by reading the words of Mr. Justice Nourse in 1981. Of Mr. Fletcher he said:

"He has never succeeded in getting those allegations tried. On every occasion his proceedings have been dismissed or struck out before trial . . . Mr. Fletcher says that the very important evidence which he filed, exhibiting accounts and so forth, was never read or considered by any of the courts. I accept that as being correct."

The Government claim that they have been consistent. They say that it was all a long time ago and that they have no responsibility for the actions of John Adamson and his masters. Compensation is still due and owed by the Crown to Mr. Fletcher's companies for the theft of their assets and for the fraud of their liquidations. Of course, Mr. Fletcher has been, in a sense, an easy target. He has fought the case alone as a litigant in person, as he has no money to instruct counsel. It is a situation of which the present Government, in particular, have taken grateful advantage. Successive governments, including the present one, have acted to perpetuate the abuse of power and to cover up the sordid history of governmental conspiracy and fraud.

I remind the Minister that, in 1983, the Attorney-General applied for an order which declared Mr. Fletcher a vexatious litigant — which effectively slammed the doors of the courts on his pleas. The order was subsequently overturned. I remind him that, after a BBC radio investigation in 1984, the hon. Member for Calder Valley (Mr. Thompson) who I see in his place and who is Mr. Fletcher's Member of Parliament, began negotiations about compensation with the Attorney-General and the Department of Trade and Industry. I remind him that, according to the hon. Member for Calder Valley, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Attorney-General refused to have anything to do with Mr. Fletcher, except shortly afterwards to have reinstated the vexatious litigant order. I remind him that compensation for the damage suffered is an obligation required by the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act 1939, which is not statute barred because its terms prevent it from being so. It is still due and owing now. If the Government refuse to meet their debt, and if this House allow them to do so, the country will say, with justification, that we no longer care to implement our laws when we find them inconvenient.

I ask the Minister to give two assurances: first, that he will place before this House a copy of Mr. Adamson's original and still secret report that led to the control orders being made, together with all the papers relating to his stewardship; secondly, that at the very least, he will order a full and searching inquiry to be conducted with a view to determining how much and how quickly compensation should be paid to the directors and members of the Wolverhampton group and Carlton Greig.

Throughout the past 43 years, successive Governments have either ignored Mr. Fletcher or abused the law of the land. Parliament has refused to help him and the courts have refused to hear him. Yet he has been right throughout. There has been a monstrous abuse of executive power. It is time for that abuse to be put right and for Mr. Peel Fletcher to receive the justice which he has been so long denied.

12.55 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): The matter which has been raised by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) has, over the years, attracted the interest of a number of other hon. Members. I shall have a little more to say about that in due course, but I believe that it is right that I should give the House a detailed account of the events surrounding the failure of the Wolverhampton Group of Steel Companies and the subsequent consideration given to Mr. Fletcher's claims by the courts and others.

In December 1943, the Ministry of Supply became concerned with the low output of steel by a group of five companies — Wolverhampton Rolling Mills Ltd., Shropshire Iron Company Ltd., Monmore Green Rolling Mills Company (1924) Ltd., Wolverhampton Steel and Iron Company Ltd. and Haybridge Steel Works Ltd.

They were known as the Wolverhampton Group, and were under the control of Mr. Fletcher. Production of the group was affected by the shortage of raw materials which suppliers were threatening to withhold through non-payment of accounts. Output, especially by Wolverhampton Steel and Iron Co. Ltd., was urgently needed for the war effort. In January 1944, the Ministry of Supply (Iron and Steel Control) appointed Mr. John Adamson — a well-known chartered accountant with experience of the steel industry — to investigate the financial affairs of the group. In February 1944 he reported an unsatisfactory state of affairs and a shortage of working capital. Moreover, when the companies knew that the Ministry of Supply was considering placing nominees on the boards of the operating companies, funds of the companies held with a finance house controlled by Mr. Fletcher were put on deposit for a fixed term of 12 months, which exacerbated their liquidity position.

Following the liquidation of the finance house it was found that the major part of the funds deposited with it had been invested in the purchase of shares in the various steel companies. Mr. Adamson also ascertained that Mr. Fletcher had arranged finance for the companies in the group by the creation of a revolving credit. This was granted by merchant bankers in favour of Wolverhampton Rolling Mills with an upper limit of £80,000 and was guaranteed by the other four companies in the group. The security for the credit was the earmarking of steel billets held under letters of trust at the four producing works.

In the light of the report received from Mr. Adamson, the Ministry of Supply made control orders in February 1944 in respect of all the companies in the Wolverhampton group under regulation 55(4) of the Defence Regulations 1939. The orders were deemed necessary for the efficient prosecution of the war and the maintenance of supplies. Mr. Adamson was appointed controller of each of the companies. Immediately afterwards, a demand was made by Mr. Adamson on the finance house for repayment of all the moneys on deposit with them, but there was no compliance with this demand. Mr. Adamson found that no system of earmarking the billets held as security was being carried out at the producing works; in fact, he regarded such an operation as impracticable. Furthermore, stocks had fallen sharply and were of less value than the amount due to the merchant bankers. Mr. Adamson therefore regarded the security which was intended to be provided to them as illusory and he notified them accordingly. After discussions, the Ministry of Supply paid the debt of some £80,000 due to the merchant bankers and the guarantees were assigned to the Crown. Late in 1944 Iron and Steel Control decided that it no longer needed production from the Wolverhampton group and accordingly the control orders were withdrawn.

Following this, things happened very quickly. The British Iron and Steel Corporation, on an unsatisfied judgment obtained by it, petitioned for the winding-up of Wolverhampton Steel and Iron and a winding-up order was made in March 1945. In the course of these proceedings serious allegations of conspiracy and dishonesty were made against Mr. Adamson and others,

[Mr. Michael Howard]

including Ministry of Supply officials. It is these allegations that have since been repeated over the years by Mr. Fletcher. That court hearing was the appropriate time for the allegations to have been ventilated and, if appropriate, substantiated, but, far from seeking to substantiate them at that time, they were in fact unreservedly withdrawn in open court on behalf of the company and Mr. Fletcher, at whose instigation they were originally made.

Shortly after that, the Attorney-General, on behalf of the Ministry of Supply, obtained judgment against the remaining companies in the Wolverhampton group for the sum of £80,000 and in July 1945 these companies were wound up on the petition of the Crown.

In February 1948, the finance house was wound up on the petition of the official receiver as liquidator of Wolverhampton Steel and Monmore Green whose claims with two other unsecured creditors amounted to £248,000. In October 1964, a receiving order in bankruptcy was made against Mr. Fletcher on the petition of a bank for £13,000. His appeal against the order of adjudication on the ground that the bankruptcy rule under which the application for adjudication had been made was ultra vires was dismissed.

Prior thereto, Mr. Fletcher and his late father had started misfeasance proceedings against Mr. Adamson. But as a result of the death of Mr. Fletcher's father and the adjudication of Mr. Fletcher no order was made except as to costs.

In July 1959, Mr. Fletcher's application to be discharged from his bankruptcy was granted, subject to a 12 months suspension, but his request for a certificate of misfortune was refused. The liabilities to unsecured creditors exceeded £85,000, to whom no dividend was paid.

The main complaints which Mr. Fletcher has made over the many years may be summarised as follows. First, the controller's powers were limited to acting on behalf of the Crown and in contracting on behalf of the companies he acted without authority. Secondly, the controller neglected to claim from the Ministry of Supply funds to enable him to discharge the liabilities of the companies arising from the contracts he had made. Thirdly, the judgments obtained against the companies by the Attorney-General for the Ministry were, in such circumstances, oppressive. Fourthly, the billets held under letters of trust were used in the business of the companies whilst under the control of Mr. Adamson without payment therefore by the Crown and the £80,000 paid to the merchant bankers to discharge their claim was wrongly treated as a loan. Fifthly, the liquidator of the Wolverhampton group of companies was wrong in admitting a proof by the Ministry for £80,000 against any of the companies. Sixthly, there was undue influence in the choice of Mr. Adamson as special manager of Shropshire Iron Company to assist the liquidator. Seventhly, the assets of the companies were sold for totally inadequate considerations. These allegations have been the subject of persistent complaints by Mr. Fletcher which have been ventilated in various quarters and in the courts.

The courts have consistently held that there was no evidence that anyone in the Ministry of Supply or the Board of Trade during or since the war was actuated by improper motives and that there was no evidence to support the claims of Mr. Fletcher—claims which the courts held were without justification and an abuse of the process of the courts.

Mr. Ashdown: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Howard: The hon. Gentleman took far more than his time and I have a good deal of material to get through.

In 1962, the Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning, said there was no evidence of a prima facie case and that the allegation that the controller had acted in excess of authority could not be substantiated.

In 1964, Lord Justice Sellers remarked that Mr. Fletcher's claim was without justification and that there was no evidence of intention on the part of the defendants to injure Mr. Fletcher. The defendants in this action included Mr. Adamson and officials of the Ministry of Supply, the official receiver's department and the Treasury Solicitor's department, all of whom were accused by Mr. Fletcher of conspiracy. Lord Justice Davies in the same case said that the case was a hopeless one and an abuse of the process of the courts.

In 1966, Mr. Fletcher presented a petition to the European Commission for the Protection of Human Rights which, too, was not accepted. Mr. Fletcher has sought to have the Parliamentary Commissioner inquire into alleged maladministration. The Parliamentary Commissioner declined to exercise his jurisdiction and the matter was taken to the House of Lords. That application was refused by the House of Lords.

In all, 20 actions have been launched by Mr. Fletcher between 1955 and 1982 in relation to the companies and his related bankruptcy. Those matters have been considered in the greatest detail over the whole range of issues raised by him—by the courts of first instance and on appeal to the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords. He has had some limited success on points of law, but at the end of the day, the courts have not been persuaded that he has a claim for compensation.

The hon. Gentleman quoted from the judgment of Mr. Justice Nourse in 1981. I am bound to say that his method of doing so was quite extraordinary. He sought to combine in his quotation two quite separate paragraphs in the judgment, separated indeed by some three pages of transcript. He ended his quotation in the middle of a sentence, not only without saying that he was doing so, but suggesting that the learned judge had concluded that passage at that point.

After accepting that Mr. Fletcher's evidence had not been considered, Mr. Justice Nourse went on to say:

"But I cannot see that it helps Mr. Fletcher. All courts right up to the House of Lords dismissed his application saying (in effect) that the proceedings, whatever their merits might once have been, would not succeed and could not then be instituted."

In more recent judicial proceedings Lord Justice Lawton is on record as saying:

"whatever the rights or wrongs of Mr. Fletcher's many claims arising out of events which happened as long ago as 1944, they have been investigated by the court on a number of occasions and the court has decided against him."

Mr. Fletcher has also sought the support of hon. Members. In 1955 he petitioned through the Home Office for the recall of the Great Seal. No commands were issued.

In 1965 a petition was presented to this House on his behalf to which the then Minister of Power replied that all

the matters raised in this petition were properly considered by the courts, and it appeared that all the matters had already been before the courts.

Over the years there have been exchanges with several hon. Members who have expressed concern. I believe that those concerns were satisfied. I should just like particularly to draw to the attention of the House the efforts made by Mr. Fletcher's own Member of Parliament, my hon. Friend the Member for Calder Valley (Mr. Thompson). To say that my hon. Friend was assiduous in this matter would be a gross understatement. He has taken the matter up with Ministers in the Treasury, with my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,who was at that time Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, and with my predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Fletcher).

My hon. Friend the Member for Calder Valley was entitled to assume that everything that could have been done for his constituent had been done. By contrast, the hon. Member for Yeovil has asked one written question on the matter. But has never written to the Department, and has never sought an interview with me or any other Minister in the Department. In those circumstances, it would be unwise of me to express any confidence that what I have said during the debate would meet the concern of the hon. Gentleman.

Nevertheless, I hope that what I have said will have reassured the House tonight that the matter has been fully and carefully considered on many previous occasions—by the courts, by Ministers in this and other administrations and by others who have an interest in seeing that justice, not only has been done, but is seen to be done. Mr. Fletcher has argued his case with great skill, eloquence and commitment in the courts and elsewhere, but that cannot be a substitute for a well-founded case. On that, the courts have not been persuaded of its merits,nor have my predecessors, and I have not heard anything in the House this evening to suggest that I should take a different view of this matter.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eight minutes past One o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 10 December 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

CITY OF LONDON (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL
Order for Third Reading read.
To be read the Third time tomorrow.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL

GAIRLOCH HARBOUR ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL (HAM VOE, FOULA) ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL
Read the Third time, and passed.

Mr. Speaker: Questions to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry——

Mr. Gerald Howarth: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, which relates to the business of the House. The whole House is grateful to you for the protection and consideration that you give to Back Benchers. You may have noticed that the Order Paper states that Prime Minister's Questions are to begin at 3.15 pm. Surely the Leader of the Opposition deserves protection as well, and it may help him out of his discomforture to——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that Her Majesty's Stationery Office also deserves protection. It was a mistake.

Oral Answers to Questions

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Ford Motor Company (UK)

1. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of the Ford Motor Company (UK) and what subjects were discussed.

The Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry (Mr. Giles Shaw): My right hon. Friend met the chairman of Ford of Britain and some of his colleagues on 14 October. Discussion covered a wide range of topics.

Mr. Favell: Given the distressing news last week that Austin Rover's share of the home market is now below 13 per cent., has the Department any intention of reopening negotiations with the Ford Motor Company (UK)? That would be eminently sensible from the taxpayer's point of view and would protect perhaps not one or two Dumbos in management but the rest of the employees of Austin Rover.

Mr. Shaw: I understand my hon. Friend's question, but the position remains as reported to the House on 6 February, namely, that the possibility of the sale of Austin Rover to Ford will not be pursued.

Mr. Park: Does the Minister agree that the continual picking at Austin Rover does incalculable damage to that company's future?

Mr. Shaw: I entirely agree with that observation. It is a fact that Austin Rover continues to compete against a substantial view cultivated by many people outside the House and by some hon. Members that seeks to diminish the company's prospect of succeeding.

Mr. Norris: I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Park). Those of us who greatly welcomed the statement to the House the other day about having confidence in the future of Austin Rover very much regret the continual sniping at that company, which has enough difficulties to overcome in establishing itself as a niche marketer without that sort of additional difficulty.

Mr. Shaw: I welcome my hon. Friend's observation. It is essential that all hon. Members on both sides of the House should recognise the realities of the situation.

Mr. Evans: When the Secretary of State next meets the chairman of the Ford Motor Company (UK), will he tell him that Pilkington Brothers of St. Helens is a major glass supplier to that company and that the best way of safeguarding its supplies for the future would be for the chairman to use his influence in the City of London to ensure that Pilkington remains an independent company?

Mr. Shaw: I admire the hon. Gentleman's observations, but he will understand that I cannot comment on them, other than to say that Ford motors are produced in this country with a very high United Kingdom component level.

Product Liability

2. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many representations he has received on the subject of product liability since 12 November.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): Since 12 November the Department has received only five representations on the subject of product liability.

That is perhaps not surprising in view of the wide consultation we undertook last year on the implementation of the EC directive on product liability, when we issued more than 5,000 copies of our consultative document and received over 200 replies.

Mr. McCrindle: Is it correct to describe the Government's policy on this issue as a balance between introducing further rights of redress to injured consumers and containing industrial costs by allowing manufacturers certain residual defences? If so, many of us agree with that, as otherwise the cost of product liability insurance, if it is available at all, would increase considerably and ultimately so would the cost of products to the consumer.

Mr. Howard: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. It is because we desire to continue to encourage innovation that the development risk defence has been retained. It is

not only the cost but the availability of insurance that is important in that respect, as the Association of British Insurers recently confirmed.

Mr. Ashdown: Does the Minister accept that many believe that the acceptance of development risk liability has been created by powerful lobbying, particularly on the part of the pharmaceutical industry? Will he undertake to look at this matter again, especially as the insurance industry has indicated that it can be made available at relatively little cost? Does he accept, for instance, that those who suffered as a result of Thalidomide would not have received compensation under the development risk clause?

Mr. Howard: On the last point, the answer is no. A legal decision was never reached on the liability of the manufacturers of Thalidomide since the case was settled out of court. In the absence of that decision it is irresponsible for anyone to make judgments as to whether the Consumer Protection Bill would ensure compensation for victims like those of Thalidomide and I certainly do not intend to do so. Since then, the Medicines Act 1968 provides for a comprehensive system of licensing which makes it unlawful for medical products to be manufactured, sold, supplied or imported except in accordance with appropriate licences and clinical trial certificates. I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman, representing as he does a constituency in which the aviation industry is such an important interest, should call for the elimination of the development risk defence.

Mr. Williams: Why are the Government willing to allow manufacturers to escape paying damages by pleading the development risk defence when Belgium and France are making no such allowance, when Germany has made it clear that it will not allow that defence in relation to drugs, medicines and pharmaceutical products, and when the Law Commission for England and Wales and the Pearson commission, which was set up in the aftermath of the Thalidomide tragedy, said that the defence should not be allowed? Why have the Government surrendered to the industrial lobby and why have they abandoned the consumer, who, in future, could be left without any action for damages in any Thalidomide-type disaster?

Mr. Howard: I have answered the question on Thalidomide. It is important to recognise that the development risk defence places upon manufacturers the burden of raising and proving it. The defence is defined in very precise terms and it will be necessary for the manufacturer, if he is to rely on it, to show that no producer of products of the same description might have been expected to discover the defect. It would not be sufficient to point to particular testing difficulties encountered by him or even that he had followed procedures adopted by other manufacturers. He must have taken all the steps that he might have been expected to take by the informed observer. In those circumstances, it it is right that he should have that defence.

Copyright

3. **Mr. Hanley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received relating to the introduction of amending legislation on copyright law.

The Minister for Information Technology (Mr. Geoffrey Pattie): I have received several representations from hon. Members, individual companies, industry representative bodies and private individuals urging the Government to introduce legislation on copyright during the present parliamentary Session or inquiring generally as to when such legislation might be expected.

Mr. Hanley: Is my hon. Friend aware of the urgency with which this legislation is awaited in many quarters, not least by the music industry? Is my hon. Friend still committed to the just and necessary levy on blank tapes?

Mr. Pattie: Yes.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Does the Minister accept that the present law is wholly inadequate to deal with, for instance, the development of high technology? Is he aware that whereas one accepts the need to protect intellectual property, the present law allows huge corporations to sue for alleged breach of copyright by smaller companies which, before the case comes to court, are, of course, out of business? Does the Minister intend to introduce a Bill and, if so, when?

Mr. Pattie: The hon. Gentleman will be aware from the White Paper that one of the proposals contained therein concerns the speeding up of processes of patent law and the introduction of new procedures which will make it easier, and therefore less costly, for smaller firms to have access to the patent procedure. The introduction of a Bill will be as soon as the parliamentary timetable permits.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Is my hon. Friend aware that the proposals regarding intellectual property in respect of the broad base of engineering design will endanger far more jobs in the component industries than it will safeguard in intial manufacturing industry and that the consumer's interest is wholly opposed to any such legislation, so the balance of advantage for Britain must be against it?

Mr. Pattie: I am aware of the strength of representations on this. I assure my hon. Friend and the House that we have very much an open mind on this. We want to get the balance right. So far as we are concerned, the question is still open.

Mr. Merlyn Rees: I understand the reasons for the delay, as it must be very difficult to translate the White Paper into legislation, but is the hon. Gentleman aware that the long-term development of two firms in my constituency will be inhibited by the delay? Cannot firms of that kind be told that there will be a delay of, say, 10 years—that would suit me—before such changes will take place?

Mr. Pattie: I am not sure whether the right hon. Gentleman is referring to delays or to companies concerned about components in the motor trade. As I have just said, we are concerned to get the balance right in this very complicated issue. We are still discussing with the industry what the relevant procedures would be.

Mr. Key: I congratulate my hon. Friend on having the courage to grasp this very prickly nettle, but will he ensure that he hits the right target and does not bring down small firms such as Moore's Pistons and Auto and General Electrical in my constituency, which would be especially hard hit, as the alternative to their manufacturing might well be greater import penetration?

Mr. Pattie: That is precisely the kind of point that we wish to take into account.

Mr. Williams: Does the hon. Gentleman recall that when the Secretary of State was previously at the Department, on 22 December 1983, he promised effective and resolute action to tackle the problem of counterfeiting and issued a pamphlet on the subject? Is he aware that three years later, in the peak buying period before Christmas, our street markets are flooded with counterfeit perfume, after-shave, toys and tapes? In November last year the Under-Secretary of State said that he was convinced that no further action was needed. Is that still the Government's view? Do they intend to take any action at all to stop this multi-million pound rip-off of the British public, or will they simply issue another pamphlet?

Mr. Pattie: The right hon. Gentleman will be aware of the recent EEC directive on this. We shall wish to harmonise our legal requirements with that directive. I believe that there is a better way forward under that regime, which the right hon. Gentleman and his party appear not to support.

Mr. Robert Atkins: We are grateful for the fact that my hon. Friend is prepared to consider this matter especially in relation to the automotive industry. May I emphasise how much hostility and strength of feeling there is in the components and automotive support industries, as shown in my letters to him from constituents and in representations from national organisations? Does he accept that to legislate in that specific area would cause enormous damage?

Mr. Pattie: I accept what my hon. Friend said. His representations and others are being taken into account in this complicated and difficult matter. We hope to reach a decision before too long.

Exports

5. **Mr. Livsey** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received on Government support for exporters.

The Minister for Trade (Mr. Alan Clark): I receive frequent representations from industry about specific business opportunities overseas, and about services provided by the Government through the British Overseas Trade Board, which also advises the Government on these matters.

Mr. Livsey: Will the Minister look carefully at the CBI's "Business Manifesto", which expressly states that foreign Governments give their manufaturers far more support in relation to exports than is the case in this country?

Mr. Clarke: The budget of the British Overseas Trade Board will rise next year and the year after to more than £28 million. In addition, some £100 million has been spent by the Foreign Office in the past two years through its commercial councellors in overseas posts.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Has my hon. Friend heard the news from the British Footwear Manufacturers Federation that exports in the third quarter of this year were 20 per cent. up on last year and are now at an all-time record? Although the Opposition may have their own reasons for running down those achievements, is it not a fact that important sections of British industry are now competing very well in the world markets? The best thing for my hon. Friend's Department would be to stay well clear of those industries.

Mr. Clark: I am obliged to my hon. Friend for his advice. If that is the wish of the footwear industry, I am sure that my Department, whose resources are necessarily limited, will be only too glad to comply.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: Is the Minister aware that no industrial sector has tried harder in the export field than the British power plant industry? As the Department of Trade and Industry is its sponsoring Department, what discussions does the Minister have with his right hon. Friend at the Department of Energy about securing a base domestic work load for that industrial sector?

Mr. Clark: I have periodic consultations with my right hon. Friend at the Department of Energy.

Mr. Conway: Bearing in mind the success of my hon. Friend's Department in supporting the British Overseas Trade Board, the regional development councils and the chambers of trade in helping, assisting and advising exporters, will he tell the House what steps the Department could take to assist those exporters based in areas that are not in receipt of such Government largesse, especially those in rural areas?

Mr. Clark: All the facilities of the British Overseas Trade Board are available, and they are especially geared towards assisting smaller firms—such as those in my hon. Friend's constituency—which might not have full first-hand experience of exporting but are none the less well placed by reason of their products and their competitiveness to penetrate overseas markets. It is precisely those sectors that the BOTB is geared to assist.

Mr. Ron Brown: Has the Minister received any representations from NEI, bearing in mind that company's fine achievement in exporting submarine lifting gear to Libya? May I remind the Minister that that company is one of the biggest contributors to Tory party funds? It is also significant in the north-east of England and in Scotland. Has the Minister heard from that company?

Mr. Clark: I have frequent consulations with NEI. I am glad to pay tribute to the role that it plays in our whole overseas projects business. I am sure that it would reciprocate by acknowledging the help that it receives under the aid and trade provision.

Mr. Hirst: Is my hon. Friend aware that the Weir group of Glasgow, which has been making considerable efforts to develop its pump exports in Asia, and which was recently visited by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, has expressed considerable gratitude for the support and encouragement the Department has given it in developing these exports? Is that not precisely the role that his Department should be undertaking?

Mr. Clark: I am happy to receive my hon. Friend's endorsement. As he said, the Weir group was recently visited by my right hon. Friend. I am glad that it is satisfied with the assistance that it is receiving, which is precisely along this lines that we hope to advance.

Mr. Robin Cook: Is the Minister aware that during the time of the Government the number of staff in his

Department working in exports has fallen from 1,200 to 700, that the number of overseas trade fairs has fallen by one seventh, the number of trade missions by a third, and the number of commercial counsellors attached to the Foreign Office by one sixth? Is not the outcome of that record that, having inherited a £3 billion surplus in manufacturing trade, the Government have successfully managed to convert it into a deficit of £4 billion? Why does the Minister not face that fact and admit that his Department's cuts have cut our exports?

Mr. Clark: I have already told the House that the budget is increasing for this year, next year and the year following. The hon. Gentleman referred to the decline in our manufacturing exports, but—as I hope to explain in answer to a later question, if we reach it—manufacturing exports have increased. The trend continues to be upwards.

Touring Abroad (Prepaid Packages)

6. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce measures to regulate the sale of prepaid packages for touring abroad.

Mr. Howard: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to introduce legislation to regulate package tours. The Government favour self-regulation by the travel industry provided that it operates effectively. The effectiveness of the Association of British Travel Agents' code of conduct is currently being reviewed by the Director General of Fair Trading.

Dr. Clark: Is my hon. and learned Friend aware that there are travel firms in Britain which try to persuade Britons to go to America by selling them hotel vouchers which purport to offer a discounted rate whereas, in the majority of cases, the vouchers are more expensive than the hotels would be if they were booked on the spot? Is he further aware that the majority of the hotels also require a surcharge to be paid and that, in this way, British tourists are being cheated? Does my hon. and learned Friend intend to look into this matter? Will he refer it to the Director General of Fair Trading?

Mr. Howard: This is not a difficulty which has previously been drawn to the Department's attention, but if my hon. Friend will send me details of the cases that he has come across, I shall certainly look into them.

Mr. Heffer: Is it not clear that many ordinary working people get rooked and find themselves in great difficulty? They go on tours only to find that the hotel does not exist or that it is overbooked or that it is nothing like the brochure says. They get a pretty raw deal. Does the Minister listen to the excellent programme called "Breakaway" on BBC Radio 4 on Saturday mornings? Does he agree that if it was not for that programme, many people would not get a square deal? Is it not time that the Government did something about protecting ordinary people on package tours so that they can have a decent holiday, and, which is contrary to the Government's nonsensical philosophy, have proper protection?

Mr. Howard: I am a frequent listener to the "Breakaway" programme and I welcome the publicity that it can draw to the cases of people who need help. They have remedies under the law and under the arbitration provisions of the ABTA code of conduct. Those provisions should be drawn to the public's attention.

Engineering Industry

7. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of the engineering industry.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The prospects for the United Kingdom engineering industry are encouraging and I feel sure it will continue to make a vital contribution to our economic prosperity in the future.

Output has been rising steadily over the past five years and output per head has risen by 30 per cent., demonstrating a significant improvement in productivity.

The Confederation of British Industry "Industrial Trends" survey for October indicated that both mechanical and electrical engineering firms were expecting new orders to increase over the next four months. For the medium term, the National Institute for Economic and Social Research forecasts mechanical engineering growth at 1·5 per cent. per annum and electrical engineering at 3·5 per cent. per annum, the fastest for any manufacturing sector over the next five years.

Mr. Lloyd: The Minister paints a rosy picture of the industry, but it is the same industry which has lost 1 million jobs since the Government came to power and the same industry which can no longer offer a future to young people in my constituency and many others. Do the Government intend to use the public sector to revitalise the engineering industry in the many areas where the public sector is an important purchaser, as that is what we have not seen in the past and why we are still losing jobs in Trafford and elsewhere?

Mr. Shaw: I do not deny that there has been a substantial contraction in employment and a significant restriction on the number of apprenticeships available, as the hon. Gentleman knows from discussions that we have had previously. He will be aware, however, that public sector purchasing plays a vital part, especially in the power generation industry.

Mr. Watts: Does my hon. Friend agree that the opportunities for the engineering industry are very much greater than the growth forecasts that he quoted and that the proof of this is to be found by visiting any factory and seeing the vast quantity of imported machinery that is used? The challenge is therefore to British companies to identify what sort of equipment is imported and to get into the market and produce it itself.

Mr. Shaw: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There are many sectors of engineering in which there is a high level of import penetration and in which United Kingdom producers could meet the demand. With the reduced costs that many are now carrying, they should be able to meet such demand if they have a mind to do so.

Mr. Hardy: Is the Minister aware that one indicator of the dreadful decline in our steel and engineering industries is that the Ministry of Defence has now invited Thyssen to tender for certain engineering steels required by Her Majesty's armed forces? Is the Minister further aware that the Federal Republic will not allow any other power to tender for similar supplies for the German services? Is that not an appalling example of the deplorable negligence of the past five years?

Mr. Shaw: I shall look into whether we are able to tender for other European orders. The hon. Gentleman

will be among the first to recognise that, with the wider Community market available for the full range of engineering products, the prospects for the British to compete are increasing.

Mr. John Mark Taylor: In considering the future of the engineering industry, will my hon. Friend take note of the recent survey from the Birmingham chamber of industry and commerce, which showed that the two greatest inhibitors to growth were perceived by their members to be high local authority rates on the one hand and high interest rates on borrowing on the other?

Mr. Shaw: I am sure that my hon. Friend is correct. With regard to his latter point, clearly the Government will do their best in the management of the economy to ensure that interest rates do not increase but continue to decline on average. With regard to the first point, my hon. Friend will be aware that yesterday we passed a Bill which shows the forecast way in which local authority financing will be conducted.

Mr. Eastham: When will the Minister recognise the gravity of the position of the engineering industry, which has seen a decline of 30 per cent. since 1979? I draw to the attention of the Government the decline of confidence, because of all the takeover bids, which is having an adverse effect on the engineering industry. What will he do about it?

Mr. Shaw: I hear the hon. Gentleman's point. I understand it, and I know that in the Manchester area there have been significant contractions. However, I was present at the awards given by the Jaguar company to many of its components suppliers, 44 of which have pursuit of excellence awards. The winners for the past two years have come from the hard-pressed area of Yorkshire, of which I am proud to be a representative.

Mr. Thurnham: I am a practising member of the industry which last week His Royal Highness Prince Charles described as being not quite all that we would like it to be. Will my hon. Friend confirm that the measures that the Government are introducing should ensure that our engineering industry has every opportunity to take advantage of all the new technologies?

Mr. Shaw: My hon. Friend is right, and the take-up of computerisation in the engineering industry is a good example of what has happened. There is now much greater take-up of computerisation in the engineering industry, and this has shown a growth that is four times more than that which we inherited in 1979.

Mr. John Smith: Is the Minister aware of the enormous opportunites in advanced electronic engineering which the GEC-Nimrod project offers? In view of the crucial role that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry may play in the ultimate decision, may we be assured that he will fight for Britain's interest when this matter is discussed in Cabinet?

Mr. Shaw: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will have heard what the right hon. and learned Gentleman has said. It would not be for me to comment on what my right hon. Friend would say, but obviously the matter is of great concern and will be discussed fully in Government before a decision is made.

Nationalised Industries

8. **Mr. Michael Forsyth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of his Department's current expenditure goes to support nationalised industries; and what was the comparable proportion in 1979.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Paul Channon): In 1979-80 about a half the Department of Trade and Industry total expenditure was used to support the Department's nationalised industries. For 1986-87, the figure is more like one tenth.

Mr. Forsyth: Do not these figures throw into dramatic relief the success of the Government's policies of privatising the nationalised industries and insisting that nationalised industries are more competitive? Will my right hon. Friend confirm that this must mean that around £900 million is available for health and education and the social services, which would otherwise be squandered on inefficient industry if we were to follow the prescriptions of the Opposition?

Mr. Channon: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The success of privatisation and of turning most of the nationalised industries round to be better run and more efficient, with many of them making profits, is a major achievement for the Government. It has had the effect of releasing resources that can be used better elsewhere.

Mr. Hoyle: I have noted the Government's hostility towards nationalised industries. How will our economy be helped by allowing Leyland Trucks to be taken over by an American or Dutch company? Would not such action lead to a loss of jobs and to the destruction of the indigenous lorry industry?

Mr. Channon: If it is hostile to nationalised industries to try to make them pay rather than lose money, that is a curious way to describe hostility. It is in the national interest that nationalised industries should pay their way. That must be good for the economy and for the people working in them, who want a secure future. I answered questions on the whole matter of Leyland and the truck industry the other week and I have nothing to add to the comments that I made then. The hon. Gentleman will know that talks are taking place.

Mr. Gow: Are there any publicly owned industries for which my right hon. Friend is currently responsible through his Department which he hopes will not be denationalised by the end of the next Parliament?

Mr. Channon: I certainly hope that we shall make substantial progress in denationalising during the next Parliament with the enthusiastic support of my hon. Friend. Let us put steel at the top of the list.

Mr. Ashdown: Leaving aside for the moment the question whether the general consumer has benefited from this move—particularly in the case of British Telecom—to convert public monopolies into private monopolies, will the Minister explain to the House why he has taken the money that he has saved and squandered it on this year's accounts instead of reinvesting it in Britain in the long term? Is this not simply a waste of the nation's assets?

Mr. Channon: I do not follow what the hon. Member is saying. I am usually attacked by the Opposition because my Department's budget is not sufficient, yet the hon.

Gentleman has accused me of squandering the money. I do not know what the hon. Gentleman has in mind. I thought that the hon. Gentleman's party wanted to increase public expenditure rather than to reduce it. Over the past seven years the Department of Trade and Industry budget has rightly been reduced as we have cut down on wasteful expenditure on the nationalised industries. The money has been used to far better effect in the economy.

Manufactured Goods

9. **Mr. Evans** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will indicate the nature and size of the current deficit in the balance of trade in manufactured goods.

Mr. Alan Clark: In October there was a deficit of £0·5 billion.

Mr. Evans: In view of the appalling figure that the Minister has announced to the House, will he acknowledge that one company that has always made a positive contribution to Britain's balance of trade is Pilkington Brothers of St. Helens, a world leader in the manufacture of glass? Does the Minister agree that there is no industrial logic in BTR's bid for Pilkington? Does he further agree that it is in the best interests of the work force, customers, the community of St. Helens as well as the shareholders that Pilkington Brothers remains an independent company?

Mr. Clark: It is impossible for me to comment on that matter until we receive the recommendation of the Director General of Fair Trading.

Mr. Roger King: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the ways that we can close the export-import gap is to produce goods of the right quality, at the right price and delivered on time? Will he therefore join me in congratulating all sections of the Rover Group on showing incredibly increased export potential? Will he further join me in congratulating the work force at the factory in Longbridge in Birmingham on drawing the first quality bonus issued under the present payment scheme? Is this not the way to expand into markets such as Japan and France, where the Mini sells so well?

Mr. Clark: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the exploits of the Rover Group. Of course, it is quality, price, delivery and after sales service in the manufacturing area that will allow us to increase the rate of expansion. Our manufacturing exports are increasing in volume and value, and that will allow the increase to be maintained and will close the gap.

Mr. Pike: Does the Minister accept that those of us representing constituencies that are heavily dependent on manufacturing industries want to know when the Government will get our trade in the manufacturing industries into surplus? Does he not think that the EEC regulations affecting country of origin labelling will have detrimental effects if introduced in this country?

Mr. Clark: It is not the Government's business or responsibility to get manufacturing trade into surplus. Exports of manufacturers have increased in volume and value for the past three years. The gap is accounted for by the vast increase in the level of imports. Imports are the sum of about 25 million individual decisions and preferences by the British people as consumers and business men, based on an assessment of the factors that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) drew attention to earlier — quality, price, delivery and the many factors that add up to individual choice in these matters.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Will my hon. Friend again emphasise the fact that, if they are to export successfully, businesses must have the right price, quality and delivery? It is no good for Governments to try to think that they achieve that success. It is up to the individual firm. In this respect, will my hon. Friend care to examine the success of Ruston Gas Turbines in my constituency? That company exports over 19 per cent. of its products because it meets these high specifications. There is one thing I should like to ask——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member has asked a question.

Mr. Clark: My hon. Friend is entirely right. The record of Ruston Turbines is exemplary. I know that that company continues to sell in extremely difficult markets around the world.

Mr. John Smith: Given that it is the unique contribution of the Government that put Britain's balance of trade in manufactured goods into serious deficit for the first time in economic history, and given that we are heading for a deficit in excess of £5 billion in the balance of trade in manufactured goods this year, what action will the Government take to tackle this serious problem?

Mr. Clark: I am amazed at the way in which the right hon. and learned Gentleman continues to ascribe responsibility to Government and to Government policy. *[Interruption.]* Very well. Does he attribute blame to the United States Government and to their fiscal policy, which is the very reverse of our own? Their deficit in manufacturing is over £100 billion and has increased over the past four years. They are two totally different Governments with totally different policies. In each case, are the Government responsible?

British Rail

10. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the prospects for British Steel.

Mr. Channon: The British Steel Corporation's recently announced half-year profit of £68 million was encouraging and represents further progress towards sustained profitability. The corporation is now in a much better position to meet the competitive challenges presented by the market.

Mr. Brown: Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is excellent news? Do I understand from his answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) a few moments ago that proposals will be brought before the House after the next election if Government Members retain the confidence of the people of this country in regard to the privatisation of the steel industry?

Mr. Channon: Yes, I can give my hon. Friend that assurance. I look forward to seeing him serve on the Standing Committee that deals with the Bill.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Does the Secretary of State agree that the management and staff of the steel corporation

deserve our congratulations on the success that they have had in recent times? Will it not impede further progress to have a great debate about the ownership of the corporation? Does the Secretary of State agree that the most important thing now is to wind down the Common Market structure of quotas and subsidies so that the steel corporation can compete for overseas markets on a fair basis?

Mr. Channon: In general, I agree with what the hon. Gentleman said, and particularly with what he said in the first part of his supplementary question. It reflects the greatest credit on those employed by British Steel. I am sure that all hon. Members will agree with that.

Mr. Warren: Following the last question, what action are Her Majesty's Government taking to hack down the quota system? Does it not hold back the ability of British Steel to get into export markets in Europe where other companies are not as efficient as British Steel?

Mr. Channon: I understand and have some sympathy with what my hon. Friend said. Our objective is the restoration of a free steel market. This can best be achieved gradually, without market disruption and with the support of all member states in the industry. That is certainly our aim. We have received one report and an analysis from the Commission. We shall receive more early next year.

Dr. Bray: Is there any commitment that the Government would or could give that a privatised steel industry would maintain steel production at the five integrated sites?

Mr. Channon: The position on the five integrated sites remains exactly as it has always been. An assurance has always been contained in the strategy up to 1988. The steel industry, like all other industries, is subject to risk. No Government would responsibly give an open-ended guarantee on the future of any works. As the hon. Gentleman knows, I stand by the assurances that have already been given.

Mr. Gow: Will my right hon. Friend improve on the answer that he gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) and announce that he will introduce the steel denationalisation Bill in this Parliament and not in the next?

Mr. Channon: That rather depends on the date of the general election, which is not entirely within my gift. I note my hon. Friend's equal enthusiasm to play a detailed part in the denationalisation of steel, whenever it may come.

Insider Dealing

11. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to seek further powers to investigate insider dealing.

Mr. Howard: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will in due course be bringing into effect those parts of section 178 of the Financial Services Act which could not be commenced on 15 November, because they depend upon other provisions of the Act, such as those relating to the authorisation of investment businesses, being in force.

Mr. Dubs: Is the hon. and learned Gentleman aware that studies of takeover bids in the first half of this year often reveal dramatic increases in share prices ahead of the bid dates? Does he agree that the only conclusion that can be drawn from that and other evidence is that insider dealing is widespread and that a very nasty smell is coming from the City? Is there not, therefore, a need for rather more purposeful action to bring these people, who are often criminals, to book, or there will be a very bad reputation internationally for the City of London?

Mr. Howard: Whenever there are indications giving rise to suspicion, they are examined by the stock exchange, which reports appropriate cases to the Department. Any evidence of criminal activity will be investigated by the Department.

Mr. Grylls: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that anyone in the City who indulges in insider trading now, particularly after recent events, will know that, thanks to action by the Government, there is every probability that he will be promptly prosecuted?

Mr. Howard: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Robin Cook: Does the Minister recall that in January the House was assured that extra fraud lawyers would be recruited by the Director of Public Prosecutions, with additional support staff? Did the hon. and learned Gentleman notice last week's press release which said that, instead of that assurance being fulfilled, a moratorium was imposed on the DPP? There are no extra fraud lawyers and the additional support staff has been cut. Was the Department of Trade and Industry consulted about that moratorium? Did the hon. and learned Gentleman express a view? Given that lack of commitment, is it any wonder that, although the stock exchange investigates a suspected case of insider dealing every working day, his Government have managed to secure a conviction once a year?

Mr. Howard: Responsibility for prosecution of offences of insider dealing, which is what the question is about, rests with the Department. The hon. Gentleman knows full well that the record of prosecutions between 1980 and 1986 bears no relation to the situation which now pertains following the new powers which are available to us and which we put into effect on 15 November.

Mr. Hanley: Does my hon. and learned Friend recall that when insider dealing was introduced as an offence in the Companies Bill 1978 by the then Labour Government the Government proposed that it should be a civil charge? It was the Conservative Government in 1979 who introduced insider dealing as a criminal charge. Does that not show the Government's determination to stop this pernicious crime?

Mr. Howard: My hon. Friend is entirely right. It is important to recall that, during the passage of the Financial Services Bill, the Labour party did not suggest a single additional power related to insider dealing over and above the powers that are now contained in the Financial Services Act.

Infrastructure (Investment)

12. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what future meetings he has arranged to discuss investment in national infrastructure.

Mr. Channon: None, Sir.

Mr. Alton: Will the Secretary of State confirm that he is of the opinion that private sector investment in

infrastructure projects should be matched by a corresponding decrease in public funds? Instead of offering that view, would it not be better to ensure that, in projects such as the Mersey barrage, in which private enterprise has offered to put up about £220 million, private funding is matched in partnership with public funding to ensure that some of the 400,000 building workers who are languishing on the dole are given a useful job or work to do?

Mr. Channon: The Mersey barrage is a matter not for me but for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. In general, I am in favour of private sector spending, as well as public sector spending, on the infrastructure. The House will be well aware of the enormous amount of such expenditure, which has frequently been outlined.

Mr. Marlow: Given that the private sector is to finance the Dartford bridge and is about to finance the Channel tunnel, is it not right to give the private investor the chance to enjoy the benefits of investing in these great opportunities and to save the taxpayers' money by encouraging the private investor rather than the public investor?

Mr. Channon: I agree with my hon. Friend. Private finance is certainly welcome, provided that it is cost-effective. We should consider specific proposals on their merits. The new bridge at Dartford shows that there are good cases. There are extra benefits, such as incentives to efficiency, from a wholly private sector project. My hon. Friend made a good point.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: When the Secretary of State said that investment by his Department had rightly been reduced, did he understand that the impact of that reduction has been felt in my part of the country, west Cumbria, where industrial investment has collapsed? Is he aware that under a Labour Government factories were opening all the time every year, and now they are closing? Why does he not restore the industrial assistance that was available under a Labour Government—and to the level that it was in the 1970s — and once again seek the restoration of the west Cumberland economy? We are in desperate need.

Mr. Channon: The hon. Gentleman is a little unfair. He knows that since 1979 more than £770 million has been spent in the north-west on regional aid schemes which have created or safeguarded 72,000 jobs. There are also other schemes outside my Department. There is the Mersey basin campaign, the derelict land programme, the urban development grant and a host of other expenditures that have taken place. Of course, it suits Opposition Members to decry all that. We all know why they do it. They just do not want to hear any good news when it comes along.

Mr. Thurnham: Does my right hon. Friend agree that although the criteria for judging public sector infrastructure investment decisions have been much improved by this Government, those decisions are best made by private investors?

Mr. Channon: Yes, I agree, but there is also a place for public sector infrastructure. As my hon. Friend knows, there has been a massive increase in spending on infrastructure on such things as motorways and trunk roads, rail and housing. National Health Service spending is up 31 per cent. in real terms. Capital spending on housing renovation is now £1·4 billion per annum. Those are all massive amounts of public sector money spent on infrastructure.

Mr. John Smith: Is the Secretary of State claiming credit for spending more money, or for spending less, because he is giving confusing replies? If, as he claims, investment in the north-west has safeguarded so many jobs, why does he not increase the investment and safeguard even more jobs?

Mr. Channon: I am not in any way giving confusing answers. I was asked a question about infrastructure in the north-west and I gave the House the facts about what has been spent in the north-west. The fact that the figures are creditable is something that the Labour party does not like.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Does the Secretary of State accept that channelling investment into such items will increase output and increase the number of jobs rather more—possibly substantially more—than tax cuts, which just go through to consumer expenditure and increase imports?

Mr. Channon: I hope that we can have both.

Japan (Ministerial Visit)

13. **Mr. Forth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Japan.

Mr. Channon: My talks in Tokyo with Prime Minister Nakasone and other Ministers covered a range of trade and industrial matters. In particular, I underlined the need for urgent action to correct Japan's massive trade surpluses and to remove trade frictions such as the discriminatory taxation of imported alcoholic drinks. I also discussed ways of increasing British exports and improving access to the Japanese financial markets.

Mr. Forth: I very much welcome my right hon. Friend's comments. Can he give the House any further reassurance about the steps that the United Kingdom Government or the European Economic Community can take to guarantee fairer terms and a fairer balance of trade between our country and Europe on the one hand and Japan on the other?

Mr. Channon: There are several things going on which lead to there being more hope on this front. I do not wish to overstate the case.

Mr. Evans: The right hon. Gentleman has been saying that for seven years.

Mr. Channon: Yes, and before then, too. It has been said for a great deal longer than that. The hon. Gentleman should not imply that it is all the fault of one side of the House.

In answer to my hon. Friend's question, as he will know, the Community has already opened a GATT action on alcoholic drinks. We may have to consider further action under GATT if we do not obtain satisfaction.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Does the Secretary of State appreciate that Japanese industry has been successful because the Japanese have been wise enough to invest in their industry and in new techniques, whereas our steel industry, for instance, suffered years of neglect under private ownership? Is that not a good reason for the Secretary of State to have second thoughts about any rash privatisation scheme?

Mr. Channon: I agree with much of the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question, but I certainly do not agree with the second part. When I recall that when the Government came to office the British Steel Corporation was losing about £600 million a year, I find the hon. Gentleman's remark astonishing.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I call Mr. Beaumont-Dark.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: God bless you, Mr. Speaker.

Does my right hon. Friend accept that, for the past seven years, we have been promised that, in one way or another, the Japanese will do better? The more Mr. Nakasone weeps about wishing to be loved, the more the balance of trade goes against us. Have we told the Japanese that we are prepared to take swift and strong action to stop one industry after another being ruined by Japan's unfair trade practices?

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend will understand that I have made no rash promises to the House—*[Laughter.]* Nor do I think that is an especially funny remark. I am trying to be absolutely frank and realistic. My hon. Friend is entirely right to make those comments, which have widespread support in the House. As to the general position, we shall have to take action under the GATT, perhaps on a range of matters. As for the specific issues, we may have to consider ensuring reciprocity in financial services. I shall have reciprocal powers to deal with this matter early next year and I shall not hesitate to use them if we do not get proper access to the Japanese financial markets.

Manufacturing Industry

14. **Mr. George Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the Trades Union Congress to discuss investment in manufacturing industry.

Mr. Giles Shaw: My right hon. Friend and I meet the TUC regularly at the National Economic Development Council, where matters relevant to improving industrial performance are discussed. I have no plans for a separate meeting on this subject.

Mr. Howarth: If and when the Minister has a separate meeting on the subject, will he discuss the loss of manufacturing jobs at BICC in my constituency, especially the 55 jobs that have been lost in the high technology fibre optics unit—a unit which has a fine record of quality, price and delivery?

Mr. Shaw: I suspect that that is the hon. Gentleman's first question in the House, and I welcome him warmly to Question Time. I note what he said about BICC and I fully recognise its substantial record of quality and delivery of excellent merchandise. I shall have to examine the details of the point that he makes and I shall write to him about it.

Mr. Allan Stewart: If my hon. Friend meets the TUC, will he point out that, among other things, only yesterday the Secretary of State for Scotland announced a substantial increase in the provision for regional development grants? That is a direct consequence of manufacturing investment being much higher than was forecast. Does that not demonstrate how misleading is much of the nonsense talked about deindustrialisation?

Mr. Shaw: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He is right. Investment decisions are essentially for industry itself. The real rate of return of 7 per cent. on manufacturing investment last year was the highest since 1973. The growth in manufacturing output has resumed and next year it is forecast to increase by 4 per cent.

Mr. Janner: When the Minister discusses matters with the TUC, will he inquire why an area such as Leicester, where industrial relations have always been very good, is still in the throes of industrial misery in manufacturing, especially in the traditional industries? Why does the Secretary of State say that it is not the Government's business to promote British industry when the revival of industry lies in the hands of the Government, who must decide how, when and where they will put money into it? Unfortunately, they are not doing that now.

Mr. Shaw: I understand the hon. and learned Gentleman's anxiety about the traditional industries in Leicester, in which hosiery and clothing have played a large part. In the first six months of 1986, the export performance of the hosiery and knitwear industry has shown a significant growth over the same period last year. The hon. and learned Gentleman will also recognise the Government's achievement in renegotiating, largely through the efforts of my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade, a multi-fibre arrangement for a further five years. Those are the strategic changes necessary to help the hon. and learned Gentleman's constituents to resume their industrial growth.

Mr. Cash: Will my hon. Friend note that he could reasonably advise the TUC to ensure that the trustees of the pension fund of the trade union movement play their part in investing properly in British manufacturing and commercial interests?

Mr. Shaw: I should very much welcome further investment by the TUC in British industry, but I also welcome some of the decisions that it took at its recent conference. My hon. Friend will no doubt share with me the joy that the secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, Mr. Ray Buckton, has now been replaced on the executive by the secretary of the Musicians Union.

Mr. Williams: During the recent insider debate the Under-Secretary of State said that it was unfair to judge the failure of the Government's manufacturing investment programme by the 6 per cent. fall in the last quarter. A few moments later he also said that it was unfair to judge the Government's policy and failures by the fact that, in the long term, manufacturing investment remains 17 per cent. below the level that the Government inherited. Therefore, may I ask the Minister, in the spirit of good will that exists immediately before Christmas, to take his pick? Would he like to quote to the House any 12-month period since 1979 in which manufacturing investment has been even within 15 per cent. of the level which the Government inherited?

Mr. Shaw: I shall respond to the right hon. Gentleman's yuletide thoughts, but I think he will recognise that all investment moves in cycles. The pattern of industrial investment is cyclical. All I would say is that the present climate, created largely by the Government's policies, has meant that industrial investment is now flowing into more fertile areas with a profitable and reasonable rate of return on it.

Supplementary Benefit (Mortgage Interest)

3.31 pm

The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled (Mr. John Major): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on the arrangements for the payment of mortgage interest through the supplementary benefit system. As the House will know, 18 months ago, in the Green Paper "Reform of Social Security", the Government declared their intention to examine arrangements for reducing supplementary benefit help with mortgage interest. This was confirmed last December in the White Paper. We said then that we would discuss with building societies and others how we might take this forward.

In May, following those discussions, we referred proposals to the Social Security Advisory Committee for consultation. The main change was designed to limit the amount of benefit payable during the first six months only of a claim to supplementary benefit.

We have now considered the report of the SSAC and other comments and laid draft regulations before the House today that embody the Government's decisions. The committee's report has also been laid, together with the Government's response to it.

The Government have decided to proceed with the principle of limiting supplementary benefit assistance to mortgage interest but to make two significant modifications to our consultative proposals. First, the period in which only half the mortgage interest payable will count in assessing entitlement to supplementary benefit will be reduced from the six months originally proposed to four months. The regulations actually refer to 16 weeks. Thereafter, the full amount of mortgage interest due will again become eligible for payment. Secondly, we have accepted entirely the SSAC's recommendation that action should be taken to avoid creating a "mortgage interest trap" and the draft regulations have been amended to achieve this. That will help some people to qualify for supplementary benefit payments after 16 weeks who might otherwise not have been able to qualify at all.

The draft regulations also include changes to tighten up the payment of benefit in cases where a home is also used for business purposes, where the mortgage includes a business loan, or where a home is unreasonably expensive. The SSAC has supported all those proposals and we are carrying them through. Our intention is to bring the changes into operation on 26 January 1987.

There will be an opportunity to debate the regulations shortly, but there are several matters that I wish to draw to the attention of the House concerning the main change. First, it will affect only new cases. Secondly, the changes will mainly affect short-term claimants. Fifty per cent. of unemployed people leave the register within three months. Thirdly, the draft regulations reflect several important safeguards and improvements. No one over 60 will be affected; those whose claims are longer lasting will get full help after 16 weeks and extra help with interest on any arrears arising from this restriction. There is also a linking rule between claims to protect people who go on and off benefit and a special disregard of income from mortgage protection policies. Fourthly, the reduction in expenditure will be about £23 million compared with £30 million under the original proposals. Finally, we shall be encouraging and helping claimants to make early contact with their lenders to avoid difficulties. I should like to stress to the House that the SSAC has acknowledged in its report that the changes should not bring significant financial hardship to the majority of claimants affected. It was, of course, commenting in the context of the six months' restriction and not the lesser 16 weeks now proposed. Moreover, the Building Societies Association has indicated that it will respond to changes sympathetically and responsibly. These are welcome and important assurances. I hope, therefore, that, with the safeguards and concessions I have described, the House will recognise that the Government have struck a fair and reasonable balance between the borrower, the lender and the taxpayer.

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): Is the Minister aware that this punitive and shameful proposal, despite its minor and entirely unpersuasive limitation to four months, will still push 90,000 families deep into debt, leading to eviction and, no doubt, often to marital breakdown? Is he further aware that the Government's brutal message this Christmas to the unemployed is that they will be deliberately kicked when they are down, losing not only their jobs but, most likely, their homes?

Is it not symbolic of this Government's double standards that they are offering £35 a week to the Prime Minister to buy her half-million-pound mansion in Dulwich, while at the same time they are threatening the unemployed, the sick and the disabled on the poverty line with the loss of their homes? Is it not one law for the rich and another law for the poor, with a vengeance, that last year this Government gave £370 million in mortgage interest tax relief to owner-occupiers on incomes of over £30,000 a year and that now they are insisting on going even to the length of causing homelessness in order to claw back just £23 million from those on the poverty line?

Does the Minister comprehend what will happen to families on the dole under this proposal? Is he aware that a family consisting of husband, wife and two children with a £16,000 mortgage will have to find, under the proposal, out of supplementary benefit of £70 a week, an additional £17 a week, which is nearly a quarter of their weekly income? Is he aware tha a couple with a baby and a £30,000 mortgage—like many in the south-east—will have to find under this proposal an additional £32 a week, which is equal to 57 per cent. of their income on supplementary benefit?

Is he also aware that this is bound to lead to a huge increase in mortgage arrears and that repossession of homes by building societies, which has already increased by 700 per cent. under this Government since 1979, is likely, under this proposal, to reach 50,000 a year? Is that not only cruel but a false economy, too, when the costs of mortgage repossession often fall on the public purse, because families are then allocated local authority accommodation under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977?

Is the net saving, therefore, not likely to be even more piffling than the Government's estimated £23 million?

The Government justify their action on two main grounds: first, that mortgage interest payments to those on the dole are the most generous in the world. How does that square with the Minister's answer to me when he said:

"We have no detailed comprehensive information about the assistance with mortgage interest payments given to persons receiving social assistance in all European

Community and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries". — [*Official Report*, 26 June 1986; Vol. 100, c. 293.]

Secondly, the Government justify their proposal by saying that the unemployed are in a relatively favourable position compared with low-paid families in work. But why then do the Government not concentrate more aid on the low paid in work with mortgages—for example, the £320 million that could be transferred in mortgage interest tax relief, if that were limited to the basic rate of income tax?

Is the Minister further aware that the Social Security Advisory Committee, which is his own advisory committee, has stated:

"We do not think a scheme of this kind could be justified at all unless the building societies and other mortgage-giving bodies were prepared to give comprehensive assurances about the availability of rescheduling".

Will the Minister say whether he has had such comprehensive assurances? Will he confirm — [HON. MEMBERS: "Too long."] Will the Minister confirm that the Building Societies Association has not had any consultation with the Government on the proposals since it gave its views to the SSAC this summer, when it was strongly opposed? Is the Minister aware that nobody in the field supports the proposal—not the building societies, the finance houses, the local authorities, the National Consumer Council, or the independent Institute of Housing, or indeed even Conservatives on the Benches behind the hon. Gentleman, who have the wit to see that the proposal cuts clean across the right to buy?

Mr. John Heddle (Mid-Staffordshire): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Meacher: Does this not finally show——

Mr. Heddle: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Meacher: Does this not finally show that the Government's rhetoric about a home-owning democracy is a disreputable sham when it applies only to those in work? This proposal——

Mr. Heddle: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Meacher: This proposal will leave thousands of families in the new year without jobs, without homes and without hope, and it should be withdrawn immediately.

Mr. Major: I had thought for a moment that the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) was seeking to talk the measure out, but alas he cannot do that. I must say to him, in all charity, that I find his guise as the home-owners' friend difficult to take in view of his record and the attitude of the Labour party on mortgage interest relief which he has again attacked in the past few minutes. That was rather curious.

Let me respond as follows to the specific points that the hon. Gentleman made. He said that there was no consultation after the matter was referred to the SSAC. He will be aware that the purpose of referring the matter to the SSAC is so that it may consult and report. For that reason, our consultations were held before reference. I can confirm that we consulted widely before reference.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned 90,000 families. Our estimate is that the average number of families affected would be less than that at any one time, probably—

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): How many?

Mr. Major: If the hon. Gentleman will listen, he will find out how many. It is probably 75,000.

With regard to eviction and repossessions, I can confirm that the Building Societies Association has assured us that it proposes to act responsibly and sympathetically. I remind Opposition Members that it was not the attitude of the Building Societies Association or other major lenders to foreclose during the 12 months of the miners' strike when interest was not being paid. I see no reason to suppose that they will not act equally responsibly on this occasion.

On losses, we expect that those who are unable to meet the second half of mortgage interest payments will have it aggregated to the capital debt, and that sum will be wholly eligible for mortgage interest relief at the end of the four-month period. The hon. Gentleman, in making his wild assertions, overlooked the fact that 50 per cent. of the mortgage interest will continue to be paid on an aggregating capital asset from the first day that supplementary benefit is admissible, and that after 16 weeks, 100 per cent. of the mortgage interest will be payable.

The hon. Gentleman sarcastically referred to the observation that our supplementary benefit scheme for assistance with mortgage interest was the most generous in the world, and asked me for my source. It was not a Government source, but the Building Societies Association, that made that observation.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the relationship with mortgage interest relief. I am surprised that he does not appreciate the difference between the two propositions. However, I note yet again that his party has shown its antagonism to home ownership and mortgage interest relief.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a very long day ahead of us. This statement is important, but there is to be a debate afterwards. If hon. Members put their questions briefly, it may lead to briefer answers.

Mr. Richard Alexander (Newark): But are not my hon. Friend and the Government being just a little mean over this proposal? At a time when we are spending untold millions whenever the EEC asks for money and some £2,000 million on an airborne early warning system that the RAF does not really want, need we really be doing this to those whose cup of misfortune is already very full?

Mr. Major: I do not accept that it is unreasonable to expect those who are acquiring a capital asset to meet a proportion of the interest charges for a limited period. That is what we propose.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): Although the Minister has shown some comprehension of the anxiety expressed by the SSAC and his partial climbdown this afternoon is welcome, will he clarify the fifth paragraph of his statement and what he defines as a home that is "unreasonably expensive"? Does he accept that the statement and the principle that it embodies stand in stark contrast to his Government's trumpeting about wanting to create a property-owning democracy? We now see that property-owning democracy for what it is—under the Tories, people can have the right to buy, but that does not mean the right to keep.

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman overlooks the fact that more people own homes under this Government than ever conceived of it some years ago, and that that is a

[Mr. Major]

continuing trend. He asked about the "unreasonably expensive" proposition, but he will be aware of the provisions that have long existed in the supplementary benefit scheme in that regard. The new proposition is supported by the SSAC and seeks primarily and almost wholly to bring supplementary benefit into line with housing benefit provision.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): Does my hon. Friend agree that, despite the Opposition's synthetic rage and push-button ranting and the gentle concerns expressed by some of my colleagues, 50 per cent. of the mortgage is to be paid immediately from supplementary benefit and, after only 16 weeks, 100 per cent. is to be paid? Does my hon. Friend realise that there are people outside the House and perhaps even some hon. Members who recognise that he has a duty to balance the needs of individual responsibility, the social security system and the taxpayer? I believe that my hon. Friend has succeeded in doing that this afternoon.

Mr. Major: I think that my hon. Friend has spoken for many people. We seek to strike a fair balance between the borrower, the lender and the taxpayer, and that underpinned my statement.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): Will the Minister give an undertaking that no family will be made homeless as a result of this move? Will he also respond to Mr. Speaker's request that we should speed up proceedings by giving a yes or no answer?

Mr. Major: No Minister in any Government, at any time, would be so unwise as to give such an assurance.

Mr. Field: Then the answer is no.

Mr. Major: I reiterate that, throughout the miners' strike, the major lenders of mortgages did not foreclose and they will act in a similarly responsible way should the occasion now arise.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): Will my hon. Friend confirm that the SSAC is a completely independent body, which has not in the past been averse to criticising Government measures when it felt so inclined? Will he also confirm that in this case the committee said that the six-month period would not cause hardship, so it is unlikely that the four-month period will? That puts into context the gross and extravagantly long over-reaction of the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher).

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is right on both points. I confirm the independence of the SSAC, just as its own reports regularly do. My hon. Friend has correctly quoted its view about a six-month restriction, and we have lessened the period substantially.

Mr. Nick Raynsford (Fulham): Does not the Minister agree that, during the lifetime of this Government, the number of households in serious arrears with building society mortgages — that is, more than six months in arrears — has grown from about 8,000 to more than 66,000 currently? Does he also agree that the number of people homeless as a result of mortgage arrears has risen to the point where 10 per cent. of all homeless households accepted by local authorities are homeless because of mortgage arrears and that this measure will make life worse for those people in difficulties? If the Government had wanted to make savings they might have done so by restricting mortage tax relief — [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."] listen — to those who are receiving that relief at rates above the standard rate, as is proposed by the Labour party. A saving of £320 million could be achieved by that means without penalising anyone on incomes below £20,000 a year. That would have been a way of making savings without penalising the poorest and without the risk of increasing homelessness.

Mr. Major: I am grateful yet again to the hon. Gentleman for emphasising the innate hostility of the Labour party to mortgage interest relief. The fact is that this is a limited measure for a limited time, with a limited impact. The underlying proposition that the hon. Gentleman has to bear in mind is that less than one quarter of 1 per cent. of families out of 6·75 million mortgages are subject to repossession at any one time.

Mr. Stephen Dorrell (Loughborough): Does my hon. Friend accept that the flexibility that he has shown in the face of criticisms that were widely felt at the original proposal is welcome? Can he say a little more about the linking proposal that he mentioned in his original statement? What safeguards will exist to protect the position of somebody who takes short-term work to ensure that there is not a major disincentive if somebody working for three months then loses his entitlement to supplementary benefit when he goes back on benefit?

Mr. Major: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his earlier remarks. We are instituting an eight-week linking rule for those who go on and off benefit for precisely the underlying reason mentioned by my hon. Friend.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Did the information that was circulated by the Tory party when it was trying to lull people into buying their own homes make any mention of the intention of the Government to renege on their responsibilities and to make those who bought their own homes, instead of drawing the unemployment benefit to which they were entitled and for which they had paid, go cap in hand to the building societies hoping that they would pick up the responsibilities that rightly belong to the Government?

Mr. Major: It is a curious expression to refer to people being "lulled" into doing what they most wish to do. I observe once again the curious diversity of views on home ownership on the Labour Benches. On the Government's commitment, I remind the hon. Gentleman that 50 per cent. of mortgage interest will be payable from the first day that people go on to supplementary benefit and 100 per cent. will be paid from 16 weeks. That is a fair balance between borrower, lender and taxpayer, and we will stick to it.

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Ongar): Is the Minister aware that, while we accept the substantial modifications that he has announced this afternoon, some hon. Members remain concerned that the effect of these measures will land entirely on those who are buying their property and that those who are renting will be left entirely unaffected? At a time when many of the properties concerned will be council properties, which the Government have successfully urged people to purchase, is my hon. Friend quite certain that the announcement he has made this afternoon sits happily with our movement towards a property-owning democracy?

Mr. Major: I understand my hon. Friend's reservations. However, he must bear in mind that those who are buying property are aggregating a capital gain; that is a clear distinction between purchase and renting.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): Does the Minister realise that for people in constituencies such as mine, where unemployment is over 20 per cent. and where people have been on low incomes, there is no capital gain at this time, but that in fact, there has been a drop in house values? One building society in the town of Caernarfon has 50 borrowers who cannot afford to repay their mortgages but cannot sell the house in order to buy off the mortgage. In those circumstances, does the Government's proposal today not make the situtation that much worse for people who really are facing up to great personal and family difficulties at an extremely difficult time?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman raises a particular set of circumstances which currently exist in a limited number of areas. We have materially modified the original proposals and done all that we can through the Building Societies Association and others to ensure that repossessions and evictions do not take place. We think that we have struck a fair balance, and we believe that that will be shown to be so in due course.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): Does my hon. Friend agree that his statement today will be especially welcomed as fair by people with low incomes from work who live next door to someone going through a short period of unemployment and regard it as grossly unfair that the latter should receive much greater help from the state?

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is entirely right. We had that argument of equity in mind when we framed the proposals.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): Yes or no — do the building societies support the proposal?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman may ask questions in the way that he wishes, but I shall answer them in the way that I wish. If he wants to know the views of the Building Societies Association, I suggest that he asks it.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Is my hon. Friend aware that when he launched his first initiative I visited a jobcentre to discuss the proposal with professionals who counsel people immediately out of work and looking for jobs and I was surprised to find that they regarded the principle as right? Will my hon. Friend comment on that?

Mr. Major: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that information. I repeat what I said a moment ago. I believe that many people outside the House will regard this principle as right.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Why should people who are largely the victims of the Government's economic policies be punished in this way? Is the Minister aware that in the west midlands large-scale redundancies continue and many families who become unemployed will be hard hit and penalised by what might be described as this Tory new year present for the jobless? Was the Secretary of State too ashamed to make the statement himself? Why did he send — [HON. MEMBERS: "The monkey."] Why did he send his messenger boy? Why does not the Secretary of State have the courage to make this statement which penalises and punishes the unemployed?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman's charm is legendary in the House.

Mr. Winnick: Answer the question.

Mr. Major: He has about as much charm as a puff adder, as he has shown yet again today.

Mr. Winnick: Where is Fowler?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman's question was based on a false premise and the remainder was unworthy of an answer.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): Does my hon. Friend accept that, despite the welcome changes that he has made, the regulations will be bound to increase anxiety among those out of work when they are at their most vulnerable, when they first become unemployed? Does he agree that the Government having rightly and successfully encouraged home ownership, must accept as a consequence of that policy the increase in benefit expenditure on mortgage interest payments?

Mr. Major: It is because of representations of the kind that my hon. Friend has just made, which he has also made previously, that we have made the substantial changes announced today.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): What is the Government's main objective in this proposal? Is it fairness, as they claim, or is it to save money regardless of the people to whom it brings poverty? If the aim is fairness, why do the Government not limit mortgage interest relief to the standard rate of tax and thus save a far greater sum than that announced today?

Mr. Major: Three substantial propositions underline what I have said today. First, we wish to strike a fair and reasonable balance between borrower, lender and taxpayer. Secondly, we do not think it unreasonable to expect people acquiring a capital asset to meet a proportion of the interest charges for a limited period. Thirdly, we are keen to establish equity between those in and out of work on similar incomes—*[Interruption.]* If the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) continues to babble like a monkey on a stick, I should prefer him to get to his feet and ask a question.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): I apologise for missing the beginning of my hon. Friend's statement, which I shall read with interest. I unreservedly welcome the reduction from six weeks to four weeks, but as a humane man my hon. Friend will surely appreciate that the loss of this assistance coincides with one of the most difficult periods that anyone could face. Will the Government continue to review whether the proposal is fully in line with the policy of extending home ownership?

Mr. Major: I can certainly confirm to my hon. Friend that we will keep this regulation, as all others, under constant review.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): Does the Minister accept that many of today's unemployed are very apprehensive about taking on a part-time or short-time job with the prospect that it might lead to full-time employment? The eight-week linking rule could well discourage people from having a go at this type of job.

Mr. Major: The purpose of the eight-week linking rule is to meet precisely the concern that the hon. Gentleman has in mind. The hon. Gentleman will know, having been here for the whole of the statement, that, after 16 weeks, the full amount of mortgage interest would again be admissible for benefit.

Mr. Robert Atkins (South Ribble): I congratulate my hon. Friend on being prepared to be flexible and to adjust his proposals in the light of advice from an independent body. Will he agree that, these days, there are more and more people who are unemployed for a short period of time for the purpose of changing their jobs or looking for alternative employment in another part of the country? Does the proposal take cognisance of that fact?

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is entirely correct. About 50 per cent. of those who are unemployed are unemployed for less than three months.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I confess that I am surprised that the Government think they will save £23 million as a result of this change. Does that gross figure include the amount of administrative changes that the Department of Health and Social Security will have to go through? Does it involve the amount of extra work that the building societies must put in train? Does the gross figure account for the fact that a lot of the arrears will be rolled over and subsequently covered in benefit at later stages?

Has the Minister given thought to the fact that there are areas—Aberdeen immediately springs to mind—where people have bought houses at the peak of a price rise but now find that property values have slumped. Often, there is no council housing available. These proposals will have a bad effect in some areas.

Mr. Major: This is the best estimate that we can presently make. It may be changed subsequently, but it is the best estimate that we have at the moment. The hon. Gentleman's latter remarks echo what has been said previously and I have nothing to add.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will call those hon. Gentlemen who have been rising regularly but I ask them to put their questions briefly.

Mr. Gwilym Jones (Cardiff, North): Naturally I welcome the change which has resulted in the period being only 16 weeks. However, I put it to my hon. Friend that it is the anxiety of unemployment that is most important. This proposed change is putting the sword of Damocles over the family home, yet in every other way we are doing everything possible to help to encourage a return to employment. Does my hon. Friend agree that the real cost to the nation would be greater than any savings to the social security budget?

Mr. Major: I cannot agree with my Friend. I reiterate what I said earlier about foreclosures and the attitude of the building societies and other associations.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Since we have encouraged more than 1 million people to go out and buy their homes, can I sincerely ask my hon. Friend to reconsider these proposals? None of the people who lose their jobs lose them through any fault of their own. We have been encouraging many people to buy their homes. Would my hon. Friend please put out a leaflet urging potential home-owners to get a mortgage investment plan so that they will not suffer? We wish to encourage people to go out and buy their homes, but they may feel slightly let down today.

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is a source of constant surprise to the House, and no doubt he has been so again this afternoon. The decisions I have announced this afternoon are the result of reconsideration made after referring this matter to the Social Security Advisory Committee. I cannot promise my hon. Friend that we shall reconsider these proposals again.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge): I thank my hon. Friend for responding to the concerns that many of us put to him and reducing the period to 16 weeks. I have dealt with many mortgage repossession cases. I am sure my hon. Friend will agree that it is absolutely inconceivable that a building society would attempt to foreclose on a house because 50 per cent. of interest arrears over 16 weeks were outstanding. That is the reality of the situation, not the sanctimonious claptrap that we have heard from the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher).

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend speaks with considerable knowledge on these matters and I am happy to accept his advice.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Will my hon. Friend withdraw his previous insult to puff adders? Does he agree with me that the primary responsibility of home-owners, who stand to gain a lot from capital appreciation, is to insure themselves against contingencies, including that of unemployment? Is my hon. Friend aware that unemployment protection policies are available from insurance companies? Has he any comment to make in that regard, in the light of today's statement?

Mr. Major: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for those remarks. I am aware of the mortgage protection policies. Our proposals include a proposition that we would disregard mortgage protection policy income when calculating supplementary benefit in such cases.

Mr. Michael Hirst (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Does my hon. Friend agree that many people who leave employment receive severance pay to tide them over until they can find other alternative employment? Does he agree that the humbug we have heard from the Opposition Benches is insulting to the independent Social Security Advisory Committee and to building societies? If my experience as a constituency Member is typical, building societies show sympathy and understanding to people who become unemployed.

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend has put his points with total clarity, and I agree with him.

Mr. John Watts (Slough): Will my hon. Friend say a little more about the discussions with the building societies and other principal lenders, in particular whether the assurance that they will behave responsibly implies that they will not foreclose during the first four months of unemployment? Is my hon. Friend also aware that any doubts I have about the wisdom of the proposals were substantially reduced by the immoderate and Kinnockesque intervention of the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher).

Mr. Major: Rather than making bland statements, I would prefer to refer yet again to the practical experience

that this House and others have witnessed. Recently, during the miners' strike, a 12-month period when mortgage interest was not paid, the building societies, the banks and local authorities did not foreclose.

State Security

4.6 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The latest evidence heard in the New South Wales court revealing inconsistencies in the earlier evidence given on behalf of the Government."

I must persuade you, Mr. Speaker, that it is definite —although I have not been in any direct contact with Mr. Malcolm Turnbull. Nevertheless, from the tapes, the BBC 7 am, 8 am and 9 am news and the press, it is quite clear that Sir Robert Armstrong, in an earlier intervention, was given information very different from that which he now reveals about "Their Trade is Treachery" being known to the Government on 15 November 1980.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that you like us to be precise in applying for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20, so I shall refer to column 965 of the *Official Report* on 3 December. During our debate on security matters, I set out the whole timetable, which showed that, six weeks before publication, because of what the Government had acquired from the premises of Sidgwick and Jackson, they knew exactly what was said in "Their Trade is Treachery".

I outlined how, three days before the event, there was a request from No. 10 Downing street for a copy of the book. I mentioned that Mr. Chapman Pincher had said, "I can't give you a copy because if I do you will slap an injunction on me," and how the Government replied, "Of course we will give you a written undertaking in two hours that we will not apply for an injunction." Mr. Pincher said, "How can you do that?" The Government replied, "Oh, we have already read the book." Those circumstances bring me to my next point. The matter is important because state burglary authorised either by Ministers or by senior civil servants—unless we are to believe that MI5 or MI6 was operating on its own behalf—is a deeply serious matter. For the sake of time, I refer to the substantial question I put in column 1092 of the *Official Report* on 4 December.

Mr. Speaker: One minute.

Mr. Dalyell: The matter is urgent because, although the gremlins who arrange the printed questions have, fortunately, given me question No. 1 to the Prime Minister on 13 January 1987, which asks her if she will place in the Library all correspondence conducted on her behalf between Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr. Chapman Pincher, it may well be that, for the health of the state, we should know before then exactly what really happened. This matter is urgent and important because we have here another example of the Prime Minister instructing her Cabinet Secretary, to put it at its kindest, to be economical with the truth.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The latest evidence heard in the New South Wales court revealing inconsistencies in the earlier evidence given on behalf of the Government."

[Mr. Speaker]

I have listened with care to what the hon. Member has said, but I regret that I do not consider the matter which he has raised meets all the criteria necessary for an application under Standing Order No. 20, and I cannot therefore submit his application to the House.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): I am not challenging your ruling at all, Mr. Speaker, but I should like to refer to the facts that my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has outlined.

Can you, Mr. Speaker, advise us what method is now available to the House to ensure that Sir Robert Armstrong's evidence concerning Westland is not as flawed, ill-informed, economical with the truth and plain forgetful as evidence given under oath in an Australian court?

Mr. Speaker: It is not the role or function of the Chair to give advice on matters of this kind.

BILLS PRESENTED

Free Television Licences for Pensioners

Mr. David Winnick, supported by Mr. Allen McKay, Mr. Peter Hardy, Mr. James Lamond, Mr. Dennis Skinner, Mr. Ted Leadbitter, Mr. Ian Mikardo, Mr. Allan Rogers, Mr. Joe Ashton, Mr. Alfred Morris, Mr. Tony Banks and Mr. Roland Boyes presented a Bill to make the issue of a television licence free of charge to pensioners living in households consisting only of pensioners or only of pensioners and minors and to persons in accommodation for residential care and to provide compensation for the British Broadcasting Corporation for the loss of revenue: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 16 January, and to be printed. [Bill 15.]

Agricultural Training Board

Mr. Gerrard Neale, supported by Sir Peter Mills, Mr. Colin Shepherd, Mr. Patrick McLoughlin, Mr. Ken Weetch, Mr. David Maclean, Sir Hector Monro, Mr. Alexander Pollock, Mr. Andrew MacKay and Mr. John Home Robertson presented a Bill to make further provision with respect to the function of the Agricultural Training Board: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 23 January and to be printed. [Bill 16.]

Crossbows

Mr. Peter Bruinvels, supported by Mr. J. Enoch Powell, Sir John Biggs-Davison, Sir Gerard Vaughan, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. David Evennett, Mr. Ted Garrett, Mr. Michael Hancock, Mr. Kenneth Hind, Mr. Albert McQuarrie and Mr. Michael Shersby presented a Bill to create offences relating to the sale of crossbows to, and the purchase and possession of crossbows by, persons under the age of seventeen; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 30 January, and to be printed. [Bill 17.]

Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces)

Mr. Churchill, supported by Mr. Paddy Ashdown, Mr. Jack Ashley, Sir Bernard Braine, Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones, Mr. John Cartwright, Miss Janet Fookes, Mr. John Hannam, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, Mr. Alfred Morris and Sir Ian Percival presented a Bill to repeal section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947 and to make provision for the revival of that section in certain circumstances: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 13 February and to be printed. [Bill 18.]

Human Rights

Sir Edward Gardner, supported by Mr. Geoffrey Rippon, Dr. John Gilbert, Mr. Norman St. John Stevas, Mr. Terence Higgins, Mr. Alex Carlile, Mr. Robert Maclennan, Mr. Greville Janner, Mr. Dafydd Wigley, Mr. Austin Mitchell, Dr. M. S. Miller and Sir Antony Buck presented a Bill to provide protection in the courts of the United Kingdom for the rights and freedoms specified in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms to which the United Kingdom is a party: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 February and to be printed. [Bill 19.]

Access to Personal Files

Mr. Archy Kirkwood, supported by Mr. Jonathan Aitken, Mr. George Foulkes, Mr. Jeremy Hanley, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, Mr. Charles Kennedy, Mr. Austin Mitchell, Mr. Steve Norris, Mr. Jeff Rooker, Mr. Chris Smith, Mr. Robin Squire and Mr. Dafydd Wigley presented a Bill to provide access for individuals to information relating to themselves maintained by certain authorities, institutions and persons; to allow individuals to obtain copies of, and require amendment of, such information; to provide for compensation in certain circumstances; and to provide for the enforcement of these provisions: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 20 February and to be printed. [Bill 20.]

AIDS (Control) Etc.

Mr. Gavin Strang, supported by Mr. David Crouch, Mr. Archy Kirkwood, Mr. Laurie Pavitt, Mr. Andrew Rowe, Ms. Clare Short and Mr. Allan Stewart presented a Bill to make provision in relation to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 23 January and to be printed. [Bill 21.]

Licensing (Amendment)

Mr. Allan Stewart, supported by Mr. Gordon Oakes, Mr. Clement Freud, Mr. Michael Colvin, Mr. Ted Garrett, Mr. Robert Atkins, Mr. Roger Gale, Mr. Rob Hayward, Mr. Robert Jackson, Mr. Ivan Lawrence, Mr. Keith Raffan and Mrs. Ann Winterton presented a Bill to amend the Licensing Act 1964 so as to enable different permitted hours to be specified for individual on-licensed premises and registered clubs: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 30 January and to be printed. [Bill 22.]

Housing (Houses in Multiple Occupation)

Mr. Ray Powell, on behalf of Mr. Donald Anderson, supported by Mr. Tom Cox, Mr. Robin Squire, Mr. Chris Smith, Mr. Charles Irving, Mr. Nick Raynsford, Mr. David Knox, Mr. John Cartwright, Mr. Dafydd Wigley, Mr. Keith Best, Mr. Michael Meadowcroft and Mr. Ron Leighton presented a Bill to update, strengthen and simplify the law and procedures relating to houses and buildings occupied by persons who do not form a single household; to define categories of such houses and provide standards to apply to them; to clarify the duty of owners of such houses to maintain those standards; to confer duties on local housing authorities to enforce the standards and assist improvements by grants; to extend and simplify local housing authorities' powers to make control orders and compulsory purchase orders on the grounds of harassment; to increase occupiers' rights to initiate improvements and to be rehoused in certain circumstances; to repeal existing provisions relating to such houses; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 13 February and to be printed. [Bill 23.]

Hedgerow Protection

Mr. Robert B. Jones, supported by Mr. Sydney Chapman, Mr. Peter Lilley, Mr. Richard Page, Sir Hugh Rossi, Mr. Peter Hardy, Mr. Allan Roberts, Mr. John Cartwright, Mr. Kenneth Carlisle and Mr. Chris Smith presented a Bill to extend certain provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 and the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972 to apply to hedgerows: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 February and to be printed. [Bill 24.]

Obscene Publications

Mr. Gerald Howarth, supported by Mr. William Cash, Mr. Michael Forsyth, Mr. Neil Hamilton, Mr. Michael Hancock, Mr. Walter Harrison, Mr. Ron Lewis, Mr. Peter Lilley, Sir Peter Mills, Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock and Mr. William Powell presented a Bill to extend the scope of operation of the Obscene Publications Act 1959 and section 25 of the Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 16 January and to be printed. [Bill 25.]

Education (Nutritional Requirements)

Mr. Tony Lloyd, supported by Mr. Andrew F. Bennett, Mr. Ron Davies, Mr. John Evans, Mr. Sean Hughes, Mr. Frank Dobson, Mr. Peter Pike, Mr. Mark Fisher, Mr. Chris Smith and Mr. Terry Lewis presented a Bill to amend the Education Act 1980 to make provision with respect to nutritional requirements for school meals; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 20 February and to be printed. [Bill 26.]

Community Health Councils (Access to Information)

Mr. Terry Lewis, supported by Mrs. Ann Clwyd, Mr. Roland Boyes, Mr. Jim Callaghan, Mr. Brian Sedgemore, Mr. Robert N. Wareing, Mr. Richard Caborn, Mr. Tony Lloyd, Mr. Robert Litherland and Mr. Gerald Bermingham presented a Bill to give the public greater access to meetings of, and information held by, community health councils, and for related purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 30 January and to be printed. [Bill 27.]

Unborn Children (Protection)

Mr. Alistair Burt, supported by Mr. Ken Hargreaves, Dame Jill Knight, Sir Bernard Braine, Sir Peter Mills, Mr. A. J. Beith, Mr. Ian Campbell, Mrs. Anna McCurley, Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman, Mr. James Pawsey, Mrs. Ann Winterton and Mr. James White presented a Bill to amend the law relating to human embryos produced by *in vitro* fertilisation: and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 23 January and to be printed. [Bill 28.]

Police Complaints Authority (Information)

Mr. John Fraser, supported by Mr. Chris Smith, Mr. Allan Roberts, Mr. Robin Squire, Mr. Stuart Holland, Mr. Simon Hughes, Mr. Alfred Dubs, Mr. Clive Soley and Mr. Steve Norris presented a Bill to empower the Police Complaints Authority to publish information and reports in the public interest, subject to certain conditions: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 16 January and to be printed. [Bill 29.]

South West (England) Development Agency

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton, supported by Mr. Michael Foot, Mrs. Ann Clwyd, Mr. Tony Speller, Mr. Jack Ashley, Mr. Ken Weetch, Mr. Brian Sedgemore, Mr. David Winnick, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Dennis Skinner and Mr. Tom Cox presented a Bill to establish a South West of England Development Agency; to provide for the appointment by the Secretary of State of a South West Industrial Development Advisory Board; to make provision for assistance in connection with air services serving the Region; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 13 February and to be printed. [Bill 30.]

Motor Cycle Noise

Mr. Robert Adley, supported by Mr. Peter Snape, Mr. Terence Higgins, Mr. John Cartwright, Mr. Gordon Bagier, Mr. Robert Hicks, Mr. Roger Stott, Mr. Gordon Wilson, Mr. Nicholas Baker, Mr. Ron Lewis, Mr. Hugh Dykes and Mr. Conal Gregory presented a Bill to prohibit the supply of motor cycle exhaust systems and silencers likely to result in the emission of excessive noise; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 February and to be printed. [Bill 31.]

Register of Sasines (Scotland)

Mr. Michael Martin, supported by Mr. Jim Craigen, Mrs. Anna McCurley, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Gordon Wilson, Sir Russell Johnston, Mr. Alexander Eadie, Mr. Tam Dalyell, Mr. Albert McQuarrie, Mr. James White, Mr. Martin J. O'Neill and Mr. Allen Adams presented a Bill to make provision as to the methods of keeping the Register of Sasines: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 23 January and to printed. [Bill 32.]

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT 1982 (AMENDMENT)

Sir Edward Gardner, on behalf of Mr. Mark Carlisle, supported by Sir Ian Percival, Mr. Kenneth Hind, Mr. Alex Carlile, Mr. John Wheeler and Mr. Jerry Hayes presented a Bill to give powers to the courts on passing a sentence of youth custody to suspend the sentence either in whole or in part: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 16 January and to be printed. [Bill 33.]

SCHOOL GOVERNORS (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)

Mr. Allan Roberts supported by Mr. Robin Squire, Mr. Simon Hughes, Mr. John Fraser, Mr. Chris Smith and Mr. Robert Litherland presented a Bill to amend the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 so as to require school governors' meetings to be open to the press and public; and for related purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 23 January and to be printed. [Bill 34.]

Orders of the Day

Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill

Considered in Committee.

[MR. HAROLD WALKER *in the Chair.*]

4.18 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): On a point of order, Mr. Walker. I do not know whether you are aware that the list of amendments was not published until 11.30 this morning. No blame is attached to the Officers of the House — the real reason is that the Government are rushing the Bill through. This Committee stage comes only two days after Second Reading and hon. Members will have had little time to consult people outside or to prepare for today. Does not railroading such as this make parliamentary scrutiny almost impossible?

The Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Harold Walker): The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that I have been confronted with the same difficulties. I understand that the exceptionally large number of amendments posed problems for the printers, which delayed the selection of amendments and the posting of the selection. I do not think that there is anything that we can do about it now.

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): Further to the point of order, Mr. Walker. It is not just the quantity of amendments which has caused the problem——

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): It is the quality.

Mr. Fatchett: The quality is excellent, and I hope that some Conservative Members come to debate them later.

The real problem is the fact that we are being rushed into this crucial legislation. We had the Bill's Second Reading only on Monday night and, within 48 hours, the Government expect us to go through the Bill line by line. How is it possible for hon. Members to brief themselves and to talk to their constituents and other interested parties in time for today's debate? If the House's purpose is to scrutinise legislation in detail and to watch what the Executive is doing, we must have the necessary tools and resources.

The Government's timetable has ensured that Back Benchers who want to play their role will not be allowed to do so. It is no use Conservative Members, who are only Lobby fodder, saying that they have had time to study the Bill and the amendments—we have not. I ask you, Mr. Walker, in your capacity as one who wants to preserve the procedures of the House, seriously to consider delaying our proceedings today so that we have an opportunity to spend more time on these crucial amendments.

If the Bill goes through unamended, many people will lose fundamental democratic rights. If Parliament does not have an opportunity to scrutinise the Bill properly, it will be held in very little respect. I ask you, seriously, to adjourn the sitting so that we have more opportunity to examine the amendments.

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House (Mr. John Biffen): I shall intervene—I hope, to facilitate progress. I regret that, owing to extreme pressure of work at St. Stephen's Press last night, it did not prove possible for the marshalled amendment paper for the committee stage of the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill to be completed

within its normal time schedule. I understand that the process was completed at 11 o'clock this morning, and that copies were available in the Vote Office at about 11.30 am. therefore, I confirm the point made by the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice). I regret the inconvenience caused to Members, but I suggest that it would be best if we proceeded.

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): Further to that point of order, Mr. Walker. Cannot the real strength of feeling by Labour Back-Bench Members be gauged by the small number of them that have bothered to turn up?

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Further to that point of order, Mr. Walker. The procedure being used today is not dissimilar from that being used after a terrorist bombing, or when a war is imminent or we are sending troops to Northern Ireland. This Bill is being rushed through with unseemly and indecent haste because of the Conservative party's desperation to get it on the statute book. This is contrary to what normally occurs in peacetime. I hope that everybody will take notice of the way in which the Bill is being pushed through. I understand that it will go to the Queen on 19 December. They have got all this organised, but it does not give us enough time to look at our briefs. It is cheating, to say the least.

The Chairman: I do not know about any arrangements with the Queen. The business for today has been agreed by the House through a motion that was tabled formally. I hope that the Committee, having listened to the explanation given by the Leader of the House, will be prepared to get down to the business before it.

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): Further to that point of order, Mr. Walker. There is a serious point, of which the Committee should take note. It concerns the speed of proceedings and the shortness of time available for consultation with outside interests that are directly involved in this legislation. The legislation has major consequences for local education authorities and teachers' organisations. When one considers the date on which the Bill was published, the time available for discussion before Second Reading was short enough. If the Committee is to act as it should, as a representative assembly, it is important for hon. Members, whatever their view, to have the opportunity to consult those whose interests and freedoms are directly affected by the proposals, and specifically the amendments and the new clauses.

In view of that, Mr. Walker, I ask that consideration be given to the possibility of delaying a Bill which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) pointed out, is not an emergency measure like the Prevention of Terrorism (Northern Ireland) Act. Every hon. Member understands the need for emergency provisions, but this is not an emergency facing the House or the country. Would it not make more sense for the Committee to consider the whole matter at much greater leisure so that we can get the matter correctly settled and make the right decisions? I would be sorry, as I am sure you would be, Mr. Walker, if the Committee made the wrong decisions as a result of indecent and unnecessary haste.

The Chairman: I understand the hon. Gentleman's concern, but I have to point out two things. First, it was a decision of the House that enabled amendments to be tabled in sufficient time for today's proceedings. Secondly, this is a matter not for the Committee but for the House, and that matter was decided last week. It is not for the Committee to decide. It was decided for us by the House. Perhaps now we can get on.

Mr. Barnett: Further to that point of order, Mr. Walker. Would it be possible for us, in the light of the case that I and my hon. Friends have been making, to move to report progress?

The Chairman: I do not think that it would be wise for me to consider a motion to that effect at this time. Perhaps the sensible thing would be to move on with the business before us.

Clause 1

TERMINATION OF EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS

4.25 pm

Mr. Radice: I beg to move, amendment No. 2, in page 1, line 5, at beginning insert

'After the making of an Order under subsection (1A) below'.

The Chairman: With this it will be convenient to take amendment No. 8, in page 1, line 5, at end insert—

'(1A) Subsection (1) of this section will come into effect after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State, and no such Order shall come into effect until after such period of consultation as appears to him to be reasonable following publication of proposals in the form of a White Paper as to arrangements for determining the remuneration of teachers.'.

No. 9, in page 1, line 5, at end insert—

'(1A) Subsection (1) of this section shall come into effect after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State, and no such Order shall be made until after the coming into effect of an agreement with respect to the remuneration of school teachers (and such other matters as the parties to that agreement may determine) agreed between organisations representing school teachers and their employers.'.

No. 10, in page 1, line 5, at end insert—

(1A) Subsection (1) of this section shall come into effect after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State, and no such Order shall come into effect until after the publication of a report by the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service as to arrangements for the remuneration of teachers.'.

No. 11, in page 1, line 5, at end insert—

'(1A) Subsection (1) of this section shall come into effect after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State, and no such Order shall come into effect until after the laying before Parliament of a report by a Parliamentary tribunal of inquiry appointed to examine and report on arrangements for determining the remuneration of teachers.'.

No. 12, in page 1, line 5, at end insert—

'(1A) Subsection (1) of this section shall come into effect after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State, and no such Order shall come into effect before the conclusion of consultation with associations of local education authorities, such organisations representing school teachers as appear to him to be concerned, and any local education authority with whom consultation appears to him to be desirable, and the laying before Parliament of a report of the results of such consultation.'.

No. 13, in page 1, line 5, at end insert—

'(1A) Subsection (1) of this section shall come into effect after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State, and no such Order shall come into effect until after the laying before Parliament of a report by an independent inquiry into arrangements for determining the future remuneration of teachers whose members shall be appointed in equal proportions by the Secretary of State, organisations representing school teachers and associations of local education authorities.'.

No. 14, in page 1, line 5, at end insert—

[The Chairman]

'(1B) No Order shall be made under subsection (1A) above unless a draft of the Order has been laid before and approved by resolution of each House of Parliament.'

No. 17, in page 1, leave out lines 7 to 12 and insert

', together with conditions of employment, by measures which encourage and promote the full development and realisation of machinery for negotiation of terms and conditions of employment between local education authorities and teachers' unions and associations, or by such other methods as will allow representatives of such unions, associations and local authorities to participate in the determination of these matters.'.

No. 18, in page 1, line 10, at end insert

'provided that no such provision shall have the effect of altering the terms of any agreement as to remuneration or other matters between employers and organisations representing teachers agreed before the passage of this Act.'.

No. 19, in page 1, line 11, leave out paragraphs *(a)* and *(b)* and insert

'in the cases of school teachers and teachers in further education, by provisions agreed between, or settled in a manner agreed between teachers and their employers.'.

No. 20, in page 1, line 11, leave out 'having effect under this Act' and insert

'agreed between or settled in a manner agreed between, teachers and their employers'.

No. 22, in page 1, line 12, at end insert

'and agreed between, or settled in a manner agreed between, teachers and their employers.'.

New clause 7 — *Remuneration and conditions of employment*—

'Subject to the further provisions of this Act the remuneration and conditions of employment of teachers shall be in accordance with provisions agreed between or settled in a manner agreed between teachers and their employers.'.

New Clause 8—*National collective agreements*—

'(1) There shall be reported to the Secretary of State any national collective agreement made between teachers and their employers as to remuneration and/or conditions of employment.

(2) Upon receipt of such a report as is mentioned in subsection (1) of this section the Secretary of State shall unless in his view national economic circumstances otherwise require make provision by order made by statutory instrument giving effect to the provisions of such a report as regards remuneration.

(3) In the event that the Secretary of State decides by reason of national economic circumstances to make no such order as is mentioned in subsection (2) of this section he shall call for a further report of the Advisory Committee on the matters contained in a report made under subsetion (1) of this section.

(4) Where such further report is required to be submitted by the Advisory Committee the Committee shall consult:—

(a) with such associations of local education authorities as appear to them to be concerned, and

(b) with such organisations representing schoolteachers as appear to them to be concerned

and shall thereafter prepare and submit to the Secretary of State the further report requested by him specifying the provisions as to remuneration and conditions of employment recommended by them.

(5) Upon receipt of such further report of the Advisory Committee the Secretary of State shall subject to the provisions of section 4 of this Act, make provision by order made by statutory instrument giving effect to the recommendations of the Committee as to remuneration and shall notify the appropriate body or bodies constituted for the negotiation of national collective agreements between teachers and their employers of his acceptance of the recommendations of the Committee as regards conditions of employment.

(6) Upon receipt of notification from the Secretary of State of his approval of the recommendations as regards conditions of employment, the appropriate body constituted for the negotiation of national collective agreements between teachers and their employers shall adopt such recommendations which shall then formally have effect as terms of the contracts of employment of teachers to whom the recommendations apply.'.

Mr. Radice: The purpose of this group of amendments is to introduce a period and process of consultation before the Remuneration of Teachers Act is repealed, and to insert into the Bill the collective bargaining that the Bill seeks to abolish. No education Bill in recent times has been introduced in such a peremptory and authoritarian way. There has been no process of consultation with teachers, local authorities and parents about this Bill. In addition, the Secretary of State is trying to railroad this legislation through Parliament. There has been no manifesto commitment, no Green paper or White paper.

Mr. Batiste: While the hon. Gentleman is on this important point about consultation and the speed with which the Bill has come forward, will he confirm reports that I have received? They say that he was in consultation with the union leaders and some Labour council representatives during the negotiations leading up to the joint councils-unions proposals, and that the objective of those consultations was to come up with a package that would be acceptable to the Opposition but not to the Government? Was the Leader of the Opposition involved in those discussions? Will the hon. Gentleman make available in the Library details of what transpired in those discussions?

Mr. Radice: Throughout this whole sorry dispute, lasting for two years, I and my hon. Friends have been trying to achieve peace. I wish that the same could be said for the Conservative party.

The Committee stage is being taken only two days after Second Reading. The time allocated for it is only one parliamentary day. Normally, we take 20 or 30 hours in Committee and controversial Bills take even longer. We are told that the Bill will be introduced in the other place next week. Such haste and lack of consultation might have been justified in time of war or to stop terrorism, but it cannot be justified in the case of this highly controversial Bill. I remind hon. Members that it abolishes collective bargaining until 1990 and puts in its place a system of naked ministerial diktat.

The Secretary of State has continually sought to disguise what the Bill does. On 27 November, in reply to my question whether the Bill would enable him to impose a settlement, the Secretary of State told the House that it would give him powers similar to those that he already has, but he knew, as he said it, that his reply was misleading. Under the Remuneration of Teachers Act, which clause 1 is abolishing, the Secretary of State does not have the power to impose a settlement. He has the power only to set aside an arbitration award, and then only after an affirmative resolution of both Houses of Parliament. If there is agreement in the Burnham committee, the Secretary of State has to accept that. As I said on Second Reading, that is one of the reasons why the Bill is being rushed through in such haste. Even under section 89 of the 1944 Act, the Secretary of State could only accept or reject the Burnham recommendations. The Secretary of State was misleading the House on 27 November and he knew he was. He should at least have the grace to apologise for that.

Similarly, in his Second Reading speech, the Secretary of State showed a lack of candour. The Secretary of State

did not explain what was in the Bill. He left it to the Minister of State to tell the House—as far as she was able—what the Bill contained.

Although hon. Members were barracking my speech on Second Reading, there was a sudden period of surprised silence when I explained what the Bill really contained. Obviously, they had not read the Bill, and it would appear that the Secretary of State had not read it either. I want to let Conservative Members into a secret, as I suspect that they still have not read the Bill even though it contains only seven clauses. It proposes that the Secretary of State shall impose his solution without negotiation and irrespective of the suggestions from the advisory committee.

4.30 pm

The Bill abolishes negotiating rights and gives the Secretary of State sweeping ministerial powers over a long period of time. He cannot simply claim that the proposals are meant to cover just one year. They are not; they are intended for three years. Indeed, if we count the retrospective powers, they cover four years. The Secretary of State should have the common honesty and decency to admit that. Frankly, I would respect him more if he did. He should take a leaf out of the previous Secretary of State's book. Whatever criticisms I made of him, I never accused him of lacking candour. If he had produced such a Bill, he would have had the decency and honesty to tell the House exactly what it contained.

The Secretary of State's speech on Second Reading and the way in which he treated the House was disgraceful. I advise him to stop smiling and start telling the truth, which is that the Bill abolishes collective bargaining. Ministers have made a case for reforming the Burnham committee, and I broadly accept it. The Opposition agree that there is a need to discuss pay and conditions together. Indeed, we may have said that before the Government said it. We also believe that the Government have to be properly represented at the bargaining table.

As many hon. Members stated on Second Reading, we strongly believe that as the Government pay 46 per cent. of the total salaries bill, they should be represented at the negotiating table. There is no question about that. However, they have entirely failed to make a case for abolishing collective bargaining. That is what the Bill proposes and that is the issue that the Government must address.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) made an excellent speech on Second Reading. He said that in a pluralist society, people should have the right to belong to a union and the right to bargain collectively with their employers. Does the Secretary of State agree with that statement? Does he agree that teachers, organised in unions, should have the right to bargain with their employers? What is his answer? Perhaps I should give him a moment to seek advice, although it should not take much advice to answer that question.

As Ministers will be aware, once the Bill comes into force, 400,000 teachers will have fewer bargaining rights than any other group of public servants. I remind the House that civil servants at least have the Whitley council machinery, yet the teachers will have no bargaining machinery whatsoever. Nurses, doctors and the Armed Forces have independent review bodies that publish reports on pay. The teachers will not even have that. We want the Government to accept an amendment about publishing regular reports. At least that would be something.

No one can pretend that the advisory committee is anything other than the Secretary of State's poodle. Certainly, it is not an independent review body in the normal definition of such a body.

Teachers' organisations, including the National Union of Teachers and the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, that have already taken up the case with the relevant authorities, are correct to say that the Secretary of State's Bill contravenes articles 7 and 8 of the International Labour Organisation convention 151 regarding the rights of public employees, which has been ratified by this Government. It also contravenes article 4 of ILO convention 98 and article 6 of the European social charter. Are the Government really claiming that they mistrust teachers so much that they are to be uniquely deprived of bargaining rights, even if to do that contravenes international and European convention and law?

Mr. David Young (Bolton, South-East): Does my hon. Friend agree that, if the intention of the Bill is to bring peace to the teaching profession, the imposition of pay settlements is a prescription for disaster?

Mr. Radice: I believe that the Secretary of State has embarked on an extremely dangerous course and a dangerous gamble. To impose a settlement either now or in the future is a dangerous game to play. I warn him that he may not realise the consequences of his action. I very much hope that there will be peace in the classroom. After what has happened during the past two years, no one wants further disruption. However, the Secretary of State's action is very ill-advised and dangerous.

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): The hon. Gentleman has quite rightly referred to the amount of disruption over the past two years. Faced with that disruption, the continuing disarray of the trade unions and the lack of agreement between the unions, and acknowledging that my right hon. Friend has a clear responsibility to the nation's children, what else can we expect him to do? Clearly he cannot allow matters to drag on indefinitely. He has a great responsibility and he is entirely right to discharge it.

Mr. Radice: We shall deal with that issue in the next group of amendments. However, I repeat the point that I made on Second Reading—that I do not believe that there is a great deal between the Government's position announced on 30 October and the ACAS agreement. The difference between the two sides is marginal. If the Secretary of State is really interested in an agreement, he can achieve one. Is he really interested in an agreement? I sometimes doubt it.

Has the Secretary of State taken legal advice on whether his Bill contravenes the various conventions to which I have referred? I hope that he will answer that later. If the Government can take this action against the teachers, there is nothing to stop them from bringing in further Bills to clobber other groups of public employees — for example, health employees and local authority workers. It would be easy for the Government to remove all bargaining rights from workers in local government and the nationalised industries. Nothing that this Government might do would surprise me.

[Mr. Radice]

I cannot understand why the Government cannot accept the proposals for a reformed bargaining machinery that have already been agreed between the employers and the teachers, and which meet the criteria for which the Government have been asking—that pay and conditions should be discussed together and that the Government should be strongly represented at the negotiating table. I cannot understand why the Government do not eagerly accept and support that agreement. That would be the sensible thing to do.

We certainly support the ACAS agreement and believe that it should be implemented. Of course, reform on those lines is one thing — we warmly support it — but the abolition of collective bargaining, which is contained in the Bill, is another. The Government accept that bargaining on those lines works well for teachers in further education — indeed, the Secretary of State said that on Second Reading. He has not abolished collective bargaining in further education. If the machinery that links pay and conditions works well for teachers in further education, why should it not work well for teachers in schools? Again, the Secretary of State has not answered that question.

The Bill takes away bargaining rights not from the teachers, but from local authorities. What is the justification for that? They, not the Government, employ the teachers. Ratepayers, not the Government, pay the majority of the bill for teachers' salaries. Yet, under this proposed legislation, both ratepayers and local government will be disfranchised. Yes, they will be consulted—but the Secretary of State or the advisory body, if they so wish, will be entitled to ignore what they say. They have the whip hand.

Mr. Barnett: My hon. Friend has raised an exceedingly important point. Conceivably, there could be an extravagant Government with an extravagant Secretary of State who wanted to give in to teachers and pay them enormous salaries. That would place a burden on local authorities that ratepayers could not be expected to bear. The argument cuts both ways. The Secretary of State now tells us that it is his business to decide how much teachers will get — perhaps too little, perhaps too much. Therefore, the employers—the people who pay the bulk of the salaries — are completely in his hands. He can consult them, but he does not have to pay any attention to what they say. Therefore, a serious matter could arise for local education authorities if this sort of legislation were to be passed.

Mr. Radice: My hon. Friend raises a good point. What underlines what my hon. Friend says is that we need a balance, on the management side, between local authorities representing ratepayers and the Government representing taxpayers. We need to have teachers on the other side. That is the sensible way to go about it. Unfortunately, the Secretary of State seems to believe that he alone, and not local authorities, has the unique insight and wisdom to determine teachers' pay. When the hon. Lady—is she a right hon. Lady yet?

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): No.

Mr. Radice: The hon. Lady soon will be, I am sure. When she was a local authority representative, she had quite a few points to put forward and thought that people should take notice of what she said. Indeed, sometimes she said some sensible things.

I should have thought that the Secretary of State would respect the good sense of local authorities. He should have written into the Bill a way of ensuring that they had real determination and influence on what happens. I do not mean the lip service that he pays in the Bill to consultation, but the giving of proper bargaining rights to local authorities. There is a strong case for that.

There was no mention in the opening speech — of course there was not much in it—or in the speech that the hon. Lady made in which she tried to justify the Bill, of how Ministers justify taking rights from local authorities, who are the employers of the teachers. With the Bill, we shall reach an extraordinary situation in which the Secretary of State can, unilaterally, impose not only pay rates but contracts of employment, even when the Government or the Secretary of State are not the employer. Again, the Secretary of State says that he alone has the wisdom, the intelligence and the wit to know what should be in a contract of employment and that the employers do not have anything much to contribute. That is absurd.

If we examine the Bill, the realities of collective bargaining, the realities of the teachers' employment situation, the need to have local authorities properly represented and the need to ensure that teachers are able to bargain collectively about pay and, of course, conditions, we must come down in favour of collective bargaining.

4.45 pm

Irrespective of the present position and the inadequacies of Burnham, which are freely admitted by all hon. Members, it is wrong in principle and a breathtaking leap in logic for the Secretary of State to argue a case for getting rid of collective bargaining. That is a totally authoritarian solution to a problem that can be solved in other ways. The way forward has already been suggested —it is by and through the ACAS agreement. We argue for the purpose of these amendments, which is to restore collective bargaining to the Bill and to try to make some sense of a Bill that would otherwise be totally disastrous.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I was surprised by the speech made by the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice). For the past two years he has worked hand in glove with the Labour party in a way that has been unhelpful to schools.

Mr. Barnett: He is a member of the Labour party.

Mr. Greenway: Yes.

The general secretary of the NUT has gone around the country often saying disruptive things. At a meeting in Ealing, for example, he said that he was delighted that there were strikes in 14 schools. He thought it was excellent. He was supported at that meeting by the Militant Tendency, the hard-Left Labour councillors, and just one or two so-called parents. That is the sort of disruption that the hon. Gentleman supports. He argues that we shall lose something precious in the form of the bargaining that we have had. In the breath before that, he agreed with Conservative Members that the Burnham committee no longer performed a useful function and should go.

Mr. Radice *rose*——

Mr. Greenway: I shall give way later.

I remind the hon. Gentleman that, as a teacher, I lived under the workings of the Burnham committee for 23 years. For most of those years, there was precious little bargaining. The teachers' position was dictated by the National Union of Teachers, which had a majority on the teachers' panel. I have never belonged to the NUT, and never will. The NUT has never fully represented the interests of career teachers. That is its great failing. When the teachers' union to which I and my colleagues belonged put forward our views, they were always overridden by the NUT. It insisted on its views being put forward.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): Which union?

Mr. Greenway: I shall not be diverted from the point that I make, even if Opposition Members do not like it. They talk of democracy. For generations, from the teachers' point of view, there has been no democracy under Burnham. We listened to the hon. Member for Durham, North for 20 to 25 minutes. I think that I might be allowed just a few minutes. I did not speak on Second Reading, and it is time that the House heard from a real teacher.

Since the NUT lost its majority on the Burnham committee, there has been fairer representation of the teachers' views because they could no longer be ridden over by the NUT majority. The NUT majority meant that there was no genuine bargaining on the teachers' side formerly.

Mr. Radice *rose*——

Mr. Barnett *rose*——

Mr. Greenway: I said earlier that I would give way to the hon. Member for Durham, North, much as I respect the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett).

Mr. Radice: The hon. Gentleman got to the point in the end. The NUT has not had a majority since November 1985, so the argument that there is a dominating force overriding all else on the teachers' side can no longer be sustained. My simple question is: does the hon. Gentleman believe in collective bargaining?

Mr. Greenway: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who has made my next point for me. The NUT lost its majority in 1985, as I said and as the hon. Gentleman acknowledged. It now seeks to dominate the teachers' position by disruptive tactics. Having lost its position democratically, it seeks to impose its view in a dictatorial way.

Mr. Barnett *rose*——

Mr. Fatchett *rose*——

Mr. Greenway: I know that the hon. Gentlemen are in the pay of the NUT. They will have the opportunity to put their point of view.

Mr. Fatchett *rose*——

Mr. Barnett: On a point of order, Mr. Walker. I think that the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) should be asked to withdraw a statement to the effect that I or any other hon. Member is in the pay of an organisation in order merely to put that organisation's view in the Chamber. I should have thought that it is totally out of order for such a statement to be made. I would ask the hon. Gentleman if he would kindly withdraw.

Mr. Pawsey: Further to that point of order, Mr. Walker. Would it not be helpful if honourable colleagues were to declare their interests and advise the Committee that perhaps they are representing the views of a particular section of the community or of an industry?

Mr. Fatchett: Further to that point of order, Mr. Walker. I think that the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) included me in his comments about hon. Gentlemen being in the pay of the NUT. I hope that he will withdraw that comment. May I say that I have never received a penny from the National Union of Teachers. I am in no way responsible to that organisation, nor do I speak on its behalf. It would be useful if the hon. Gentleman got his facts right.

As for the comment by the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), if we were all to declare our interests, I suspect that there would never be questions or speeches in the House by Conservative Members, because they are paid so much from outside the House of Commons.

Mr. Greenway: I did not notice that the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) was there. [HON. MEMBERS: "Withdraw."] I certainly was not referring to him. The hon. Member for Greenwich knows that I have great respect for him. I think that he would concede that he is a consultant to the NUT. I do not know whether he is paid anything for that or whether money is paid into an association in which he is interested — perhaps his Labour association or some such body. I think that the hon. Gentleman will have to clarify the position when he speaks. He certainly has an interest in the NUT.

The Chairman: Order. With respect, that is not sufficient. We are all hon. Members. We all declare our interests in the Register of Members' Interests. Certainly, many hon. Members receive remuneration from interests outside the House, but it would be improper to say that hon. Members were being paid for expressing their views. If the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) said, or meant, that the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) was being paid for what he said in the House, he should withdraw.

Mr. Greenway: I think that it is fair for me to say that the hon. Member for Greenwich is paid attention by the NUT. I have never talked of money.

The Chairman: Order. I do not think that that is a sufficient response to my request.

Mr. Greenway: May we proceed, Mr. Walker? I have never talked about money. I simply say that the hon. Gentleman is paid — [HON. MEMBERS: "Withdraw."] I have nothing to withdraw. I have never talked about money, Mr. Walker. I said that the hon. Member for Greenwich is paid attention by the NUT. I leave him when he makes his speech to clarify any other aspect in respect of which he is paid cash. I am not interested in that.

Hon. Members: Name him.

The Chairman: Order. If the hon. Member for Ealing, North is saying that he never expressed in the words

[The Chairman]

attributed to him the views which are alleged against him, the Committee should accept that. If that is what the hon. Member is saying, we should proceed.

Mr. Greenway: I would not wish to say——

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Sneak.

Mr. Greenway: I do not think that it is parliamentary for me to be called a sneak by a hon. Member who does not know what the word means. If I implied in any way that the hon. Member for Greenwich was paid money by the NUT, I withdraw. None the less, the hon. Gentleman is a consultant to the NUT. I am surprised that he protests to such an extent. He has a real interest in advancing the views of the NUT.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: On a point of order, Mr. Walker. I seek your guidance, because this matter came up on Monday. The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) regularly speaks, and we all listen to him with great interest, but he has never declared in any speech, so far as I am able to ascertain, that he is the parliamentary consultant to the National Union of Teachers and whether there is financial help to his association, to his office or to him. I do not care what happens.

The Chairman: Order. It is open to any hon. Member or any member of the public to obtain a copy of the Register of Members' Interests. Hon. Members are required to declare their interests in the Register. I assume that if the hon. Member for Greenwich has such an interest, it is recorded in the Register. That matter is rather different from the one to which I was drawing the Committee's attention arising from the remarks of the hon. Member for Ealing, North. The hon. Member for Ealing, North has generously cleared up that matter, and I think that we should now proceed.

Mr. Greenway: Thank you very much, Mr. Walker.

Mr. Barnett: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Greenway: I shall in a moment. I have not mentioned the fact that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) records in the Register of Members' Interests that he is a consultant to the National Union of Teachers on a retainer of £1,000 a year.

Mr. Rogers: On a point of order, Mr. Walker. Is it in order for hon. Members to read continually from the Register? Under the name of the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) the Register records his employment outside the House as a part-time lecturer and an examiner of the London Regional Examining Board. Does that put the hon. Gentleman——

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Rogers: How much does the hon. Gentleman get?

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Rogers: I am sorry, Mr. Walker.

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Rogers: It is more than he is worth.

The Chairman: Order. The hon. Member for Rhonda (Mr. Rogers) has only confirmed what I have said—that the facts are available in the Register, which is available to every Member and every member of the public. Now perhaps we can return to the debate.

Mr. Greenway: I think that I have made it clear that, until November 1985, the NUT had by its position on Burnham dictated the teachers' bargaining position. There has been no genuine bargaining in the view of the vast majority of teachers. Since then, the NUT has continued to attempt to dictate to teachers by disruptive tactics. That will not do. The hon. Member for Durham, North talked of a loss of the teachers' bargaining position. I regret to say that he was not talking about anything substantial. Teachers may well find that, over the next two or three years, their bargaining position will be enhanced by the Bill.

Mr. Fatchett: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Greenway: I shall not give way.

The teachers' bargaining position will certainly not be helped by the Labour party's amendments, which are complicated and will not make the position as clear as it is now under the Bill.

Mr. Fatchett: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Barnett: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Greenway: There have been enough interruptions. I shall not give way any more, not even to the hon. Member for Greenwich. I gave way to him to clarify his point, and we must leave it at that. We accept that there is continual disruption and shouting by the Opposition. It is well known that, if hon. Members have nothing to say, they shout.

The present position under the Bill is analogous with the 1960s; it was a little different, but not all that different. There was discussion with the teaching profession, as there is now, on the need for higher pay. Some of us took part in a campaign calling for "More shekels, less Eccles". Sir David Eccles was then the Minister for Education. The hon. Member for Hillsborough was in the profession at the time. He would remember the "More shekels, less Eccles" campaign.

Mr. Flannery *indicated dissent.*

5 pm

Mr. Greenway: He cannot have much of a memory, then. Sir David Eccles picked up that campaign and forced the teaching profession into a debate similar to the one into which it is being forced now. The debate then, as now, was about paying teachers to persuade them to take the extra responsibility of headship, deputy headship, head of department, apparently small posts such as looking after stock in a school and the many posts in between. Sir David Eccles forced a debate on those issues and the profession could not make up its mind how it wanted to be paid.

Today we are in a similar position. The basic question facing the profession, which the Bill and the amendments force us to consider once more, is how the profession shall be paid to secure a viable structure in schools which will enable them to run. This amendment will not help that position.

In my last school there were 152 teachers. It was necessary to pay about 100 of them special allowances ranging between the salary paid to the deputy head at the top and to those on a scale 2 post, with varying positions of responsibility in between. Some of those allowances had to be used to persuade teachers to teach subjects where posts could not be filled by teachers being paid the basic scale. The amendments will not change that position or

improve it. The Bill is neutral on that. It is up to the profession to continue to work towards obtaining the right structure by arguing for it.

My final analogy with 1963 is that then, as now, the profession was totally divided. Today, five unions are opposed in one way or another to the ACAS deal. The position is confused and in urgent need of a resolution by one means or another. The amendments will not assist the position and I oppose them.

Mr. Barnett: I am glad to have the opportunity of following the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway). Normally, as I understand it, it is the practice in Committee to give way relatively freely. I shall certainly give way to Conservative Members, or indeed to Labour Members, if they wish to intervene, according to the more informal procedure in Committee.

For the benefit of the hon. Member for Ealing, North and anyone else who is in any doubt, I shall explain the relationship which I and one or two of my hon. Friends enjoy with the NUT. I joined that union 33 years ago when I first became a teacher. Indeed, I joined it before I became a teacher, when I was still in training. I joined it knowing that my first job was in a grammar school, where the normal practice in those days was to be a member of the Assistant Masters Association. I believed strongly in a united profession, and the NUT is the union which accepts people regardless of their position in the teaching world —whether they are primary school teachers, secondary teachers or head teachers, and whether they teach in grammar schools—as they were in the old days—or in secondary modern schools. That seemed to be the best way of achieving what I believe, and hope, is the objective of all hon. Members who take an interest in education—a united profession.

The hon. Member for Ealing, North is a member of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers.

Mr. Greenway: No.

Mr. Barnett: Oh, he is not even a member of that union. I do not know which union he is a member of. Whatever it is, it is not the NUT. He made that clear.

Mr. Rogers: If my hon. Friend looked at "Dod" he would discover that the hon. Member for Ealing, North is a founder and chairman of the London Schools Horse Society and the British Horse Society's award of merit. Those are his great achievements.

Mr. Barnett: I got the impression that the hon. Member for Ealing, North was a member of a trade union. Clearly it is not the NAS/UWT. Whichever union it is, I understand and perhaps sympathise a little with it because of the way in which its views were overridden by the majority on the Burnham committee. I sympathise with it because, sitting in opposition, my views are often overridden by the larger number of Conservative Members. It is only occasionally, on such matters as the Shops Bill, where there is serious division among Conservative Members, that the views of Labour Members—which are sometimes correct, as the views of Conservative Members are sometimes incorrect — are listened to. That is a good example of the way in which we are constantly overridden.

The union to which the hon. Member for Ealing, North belongs may have been overridden in the past by the NUT, but the effect of this legislation is that any union will be overridden by the Secretary of State. No union, however big or small, can, under this legislation, do more than be consulted.

Mr. Radice: Under the Bill, the Secretary of State will be the union and the management side.

Mr. Barnett: My hon. Friend has led me straight on to the essential point behind the amendments. As he said, a consequence of the Bill is the extraordinary position of the Secretary of State making decisions on behalf of employers and employees. A Minister or a Secretary of State making decisions on what shall be paid and what differentials shall exist, which must then be followed willy-nilly by employers and employees, is almost unprecedented.

At the beginning of the Bill—this may be remarked upon, so we had better dispose of it immediately—in the explanatory memorandum, the section entitled "Financial effects of the Bill" states:

> "The expenditure of local authorities on teachers' pay will continue to be taken into account for the purpose of rate support grant."

That is nice to know, but the point that I made when I intervened during the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) is that the local authority and the ratepayer in that area will have to pay rates not according to decisions made democratically by the local authority or local authority associations, or through the fair process of negotiation, but by the diktat of the Secretary of State.

The effect of the Bill will be far more sinister than that. As my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North said, on pay and conditions the Secretary of State is appointing himself as the employer and as the employee representative —the trade union—in place of those who hitherto had those responsibilities. This is the first step in the process of setting up a national teacher service. A vital part of the employers' function will be removed from them.

On Second Reading we noticed the extent to which the Government's approach was centralised. I am convinced that this is the first step on a slippery slope towards national pay and conditions. The next step will be a national curriculum. Local education authorities will be abolished and decisions about what is taught, and how it is taught, will be made centrally by the Secretary of State, with the assistance of the Department of Education and Science and such consultative or advisory committees as it may please him to set up and whose advice it may please him to follow.

The Secretary of State has taken that devastating step, completely out of line with the tradition of British education this century. The Education Act 1944 described our education service as a national service locally administered. There was a partnership between the Secretary of State, the Department of Education and Science and the local education authorities, in which teachers, through their representative organisations, played an important part. Those were the three parts of our education service in which decisions could be made. Indeed, in individual schools, head teachers could operate within considerable margins when deciding on the education that they could provide.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): The hon. Gentleman mentioned a partnership stretching back to 1944. Is it not a fundamental truth that that partnership

[Mr. David Madel]

has broken down and that the education service has been all over the place since this disruption? No Secretary of State could sit idly by and allow the matter to drag on.

Mr. Barnett: The hon. Gentleman is right to regret the disruption in our schools and to say that during the past few years the partnership has broken down. I blame that breakdown on the previous Secretary of State. Alas, this Secretary of State is only following the tradition set by his predecessor. When he took office, with his honeyed words about the way in which he would operate the education service, a few of us were deceived about his intentions, but the Bill demonstrates what his intentions were from the start. He intends to operate the education service in a dictatorial and authoritarian fashion, and that is why the partnership has broken down.

When I was a junior Minister, although not in the Department of Education and Science, I remember how the Department operated in partnership with the Confederation of Local Education Authorities and how it consulted the teachers regularly. It operated by consultation and consent.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): The hon. Gentleman's description of the breakdown of the partnership is inaccurate. It broke down because two of the parties—the school teachers representatives and the local authorities — attempted to impose on the Government what they regarded as a settlement. They tried to exclude the Government from the partnership.

Mr. Barnett: The hon. Gentleman has got it the wrong way round. That is a new argument. The hon. Gentleman should remember that the Secretary of State does not employ the teachers. The employer in this case is the local education authority.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) suggested that the Government were being excluded. Does my hon. Friend agree that clause after clause was inserted in the ACAS agreement because of pressure by the Government? There is considerable evidence in that agreement of the way in which the local authorities and the teacher unions have met the desires of the Secretary of State.

5.15 pm

Mr. Guy Barnett (Greenwich): That is true, and it is not the end of the matter. There is no doubt that the employers and employees were ready and willing to negotiate with the Secretary of State to try to reach an agreement that would be acceptable to all sides. Indeed, although the settlement that was agreed at Coventry and Nottingham would have meant more expenditure and a series of pay scales that may not have suited the Secretary of State's priorities perfectly, there is no doubt that it was all open to negotiation. The Secretary of State has shut the door on the possibility of negotiation between the various parts of the education service.

The Secretary of State has insulted the local education authorities and teacher organisations. It is not surprising that a representative lobby, fully supported by the NUT, is attending the House this afternoon. The teachers have been devalued by the Secretary of State's behaviour.

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is not trying to skate over the point, but he talks about the employers as though they were a unanimous group. He will know that the employers —the local authorities—were not in agreement. Labour authorities may have been in agreement, but I believe I am right in saying that some of those so-called employers walked out. May I repeat a point that was made on Second Reading? Outside this place, most people understand an employer as being the person who pays. Until the Opposition recognise that, we will get nowhere.

Mr. Flannery: The Government pay only 46 per cent.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: Yes; 46 per cent. means paying.

Mr. Barnett: The hon. Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) is saying that no local authority is an employer. Every local authority depends on rate support grant, so ultimately the Government are the employer. That is the only interpretation that I can put on his argument.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: The House heard me more clearly than did the hon. Gentleman. I said no such thing.

Mr. Barnett: I can only interpret what the hon. Gentleman said in that sense because, as he knows, the local education authority writes the cheques, pays teachers' salaries and pays the other expenses of running an education service. Of course it receives funds from central Government to assist it in doing that, but there is no doubt in my mind that the employer is the local education authority. The relationship is being interfered with seriously as a result of the Bill.

I am no supporter—indeed, we would not find a single supporter in the House—of the continuation of the Burnham committee. The amendments are an attempt to discover ways in which an agreement can be reached to reflect the shape of our education service, which is different from the service in France or in other countries which have a national system of education.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): The hon. Gentleman should note that amendment No. 13 says that an order should be made following

"a report by an independent inquiry".

The independent inquiry proposed by Labour Members is to consist of members

"appointed in equal proportions by the Secretary of State, organisations representing school teachers and associations of local education authorities."

The hon. Gentleman has completely failed to observe that the Bill provides an opportunity for genuine independent assessment, whereas that is avoided under the amendment and we shall be back to square one in no time at all.

Mr. Barnett: That is all very interesting, but we are not discussing that amendment. If the hon. Gentleman looks at the amendments that were called by you, Mr. Walker, he will discover that the amendment to which he referred is not on the list. The hon. Gentleman was wrong to refer to amendment No. 13.

Mr. Cash: On a point of order, Mr. Walker. The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) is alleging that I am not speaking to the amendment in question. I should be grateful if you would enlighten us on that.

The Chairman: Order. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman needs me to tell him whether he is speaking to the amendment. When he is out of order, I shall tell him.

Mr. Barnett: I do not pretend to put forward the best arrangements for negotiations to take place. That is a

difficult issue that would have to be decided as a consequence of consultations between the Secretary of State and representatives of the local education authorities and the teachers' organisations. The House cannot make such decisions.

It would be exceedingly difficult to ensure that all parties had an opportunity to see that their special interests were properly represented in whatever negotiating machinery was finally set up. However, that is the way that it should be done. If it is not done in that way, and if we follow the purposes of the Bill, which provide the Secretary of State with authoritarian powers, we shall destroy the arrangement and philosophy of the British education system and establish a national education system.

That may be desirable, and it may be what Conservative Members want but it is not what I want. I have always thought that one of the great strengths of our education system is that it allows room for differences to suit regional requirements and reflects democratically expressed opinions, through the local authorities. That room for difference also has the marvellous effect of making experimentation possible in our education system — for example, the comprehensive experiment and others——

Mr. Pawsey: The city technology colleges?

Mr. Barnett: They have hardly resulted from experimentation at a local level. The hon. Gentleman quotes something that has been imposed by central Government. That is hardly in line with the sort of experimentation and educational advance that has been made by people such as the late Sir Alec Clegg and others, who have pioneered new developments in education at local level, which later have had an impact on the education system as a whole. I value localism in education and am against national authoritarianism, and that is why I shall vote in favour of the amendment.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I followed the speech of the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) with some interest. He declared that our education system was distinctive, and so it is. It is distinctively barmy, because any situation in which the person who provides the money is not involved in the hiring and firing of any of the staff, and in which the person who hires and fires staff is not responsible for their day-to-day deployment, and in which the day-to-day deployment of the staff is put into the hands of somebody who neither provides the money nor hires and fires the staff, is a certain recipe for disaster. The extraordinary thing about the British education system is the way in which, over a long period, good will has enabled an unworkable system to tick along. The Secretary of State's proposals are an inevitable consequence of the breakdown of a system that was inherently unstable from the beginning.

However, the hon. Gentleman also said that he foresaw a dramatic centralisation of the British education system. I hope that he is wrong, and I think that he is wrong for two reasons. First, I have reservations about exposing any Secretary of State—even one with the broad shoulders of my right hon. Friend, or any less robust successor—to a constant round of direct negotiations on the details of pay, year in, year out. I hope that his proposals will be the first step to a radical change in the system of teachers' remuneration, because that is long overdue.

Secondly, we need a system under which schools are provided with a budget, out of which the head teachers would make the necessary allocations. That would allow them to chose whether they will have more staff and less equipment or more equipment and fewer staff. It is absurd to operate a system that is full of highly intelligent, dedicated, conscientious people and pretend that they are totally incapable of running more than a nugatory budget.

When teachers complain — as they frequently do — that they are under-remunerated, it might pay them to look at one or two other professions—for example, that of speech therapy. I have some knowledge of that profession, because my wife teaches within it. A district speech therapist with a salary of about £10,000 per year — *[Interruption.]* It is interesting that Opposition Members—from sedentary positions—pay no attention when one attempts to widen the debate in any way, shape or form.

Mr. Flannery: I assure the hon. Gentleman that we feel very strongly about the under-payment of speech therapists. We have tabled a motion to try to increase their wages, after many years of struggling to help them. Will the hon. Gentleman tell his wife that?

Mr. Rowe: My wife follows those matters with considerable interest. My point is not so much that speech therapists are under-remunerated, as that a district speech therapist who, like a teacher, is a graduate, will be responsible for a budget of somewhere between £250,000 and £500,000, on a salary of about £10,000 per year. The idea that the professional confreres of speech therapists, professions such as teaching, are incapable of handling money is an insult to the teaching profession. However, that is an inevitable consequence of the extraordinarily ramshackle system of dividing financial responsibility from personnel responsibility,—or from day-to-day administration.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I do not know what experience that hon. Gentleman has of teaching and of teachers. Does he agree that a teacher in the classroom wants not money in the hand but adequate resources, adequate time and adequate colleagues with which to do a collective job? Financial administration is best dealt with by other people. Indeed, in some large secondary schools the capitation sums, the accounting and the calculation of how much money can be put into staffing, or how much into the equipment, is left in the capable hands of bursars who are accountable to headmasters. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that that is the right division of labour for a professional teacher?

Mr. Rowe: The divorce of the allocation of resources, however small, which relates to the way in which one does one's job, from the doing of that job, is one of the reasons why so many professions are in some trouble these days. I could not agree more that there is a real need in schools for someone with the duties of a bursar to look after such things as the capital stock, repair and maintenance and the collection of moneys. But the administration of a department, the deployment of teachers within that department and the trade-off between hours in the classroom or the laboratory and doing other things, should be on the basis of having a budget to administer. It is demeaning to the teaching profession that most teachers are regarded by whomever is supposed to employ

[Mr. Rowe]

them as being incompetent and not to be trusted with money. The time is long overdue for schools to be run by people who control and understand the resources. That might even breed a clearer understanding of where the resources come from in the first place.

5.30 pm

I hope that the change in the nature of the negotiations is the first step towards a decentralisation of the education system and a combining of the personnel and financial administration functions. My goodness me, there is a need for a change in the nature of negotiations which, hitherto, have provided a form of contract which means that, the moment everybody stops doing what they regard as voluntary, the system falls to bits. Anything more absurd than that would be hard to find. For that reason, I shall support the Government.

Mr. Fatchett: The amendments centre on the right to free collective bargaining for teachers. It was interesting that in two interventions during the debate Conservative Members were either invited to say, or, during the course of their contributions, failed to say, whether they agreed with free collective bargaining for teachers.

The first occasion was when my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) asked the Secretary of State whether he agreed with free collective bargaining for teachers. It may be uncharacteristic of the Secretary of State, but he remained silent. There are not many days or occasions since he took over that office that he has remained silent, but on this occasion that was a pregnant and meaningful silence. We now know from his refusal to intervene that he does not agree with free collective bargaining for teachers.

Another contribution was made by the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway), and, even by his standards, I think that it is one that he may well regret. During the course of that speech, he was challenged by my hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) to say whether he agreed with free collective bargaining for teachers. The hon. Gentleman tried to obfuscate the issue. That is not difficult for him because he does that regularly on any issue, but on this occasion he did so as a tactic. It was obvious from that tactic that the hon. Gentleman did not want to say in the House and on the record that he also disagreed with free collective bargaining for teachers.

The indictment against Conservative Members is strong. We have the silence of the Secretary of State and the silence of the hon. Member for Ealing, North; a combination that means they they are likely to be taken at their word; such weight and intellectual ability combined to give the impression and to lead to the conclusion that the Government are opposed to free collective bargaining.

We need not take the argument much further, but the argument was made in other terms on Monday evening by the Minister of State. On Second Reading, the hon. Lady accused me of saying that the Government are trying to remove the negotiating rights of teachers. She almost gave the impression, despite all that we have heard, that that was a scurrilous and unfounded accusation on my part. But the hon. Lady went to to say:

"The Government have not denied that the teachers' unions have a role in pay determination. I assure the House that there will be no shortage of consultation."—[*Official Report*, 8 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 111.]

Mrs. Rumbold *indicated assent.*

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Lady nods in agreement and I am happy that she does so. She is making my case and that of my hon. Friends, the teachers' unions and the teachers. The hon. Lady is saying that she does not believe in collective bargaining for teachers.

Bargaining is a process which involves the two parties giving and taking and coming to a joint arrangement. That is the nature of bargaining. The hon. Lady offers consultation, but she knows, as we all do from the Government's record, that consultation simply means listening, not acting on, agreeing with or moving towards the views that come from the other party. What the hon. Lady said will be recorded and emphasised time and again because she has stated clearly what her right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and her hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North failed to state—she is against bargaining for teachers.

Mr. Steve Norris (Oxford, East): I believe in the right of free collective bargaining, but I fail to see how the frequent references to consultation and the provision for consultation, to which my hon. Friend the Minister referred, combined with the right of the teachers' organisations to take whatever industrial action they deem fit, as that is clearly not proscribed by the Bill, does not constitute just as free collective bargaining arrangements as are available in any other section of industry. It is a travesty to suggest that it is not perfectly retained here, but with the difference that it is now clear to whom the teachers should be directing their efforts, and that is to my right hon. Friend. That clarification is in the interests of both sides.

Mr. Fatchett: I am disappointed with that intervention. I acquired a warm respect for the hon. Gentleman during the debates on the Education (No. 2) Bill earlier this year. He had a great deal to contribute to the education debate. *[Interruption.]* However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) says from a sedentary position, that intervention was not up to the hon. Gentleman's usual standard.

Let me explain why. The hon. Gentleman is trying to equate bargaining and consultation. Let me give him an example to think about from his own constituency. For example, if, in Oxford, Leyland decided that all decisions about pay would be made by the managing director or the chairman of the company, the unions could come along, or perhaps come along—it is not clear from the Bill whether they would, on analogous terms, have that right — and make their presentation. They would be "consulted", to use the Minister of State's term, in that way. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that that is a fundamentally different process from that which currently takes place in British Leyland on the determination of pay? Let me describe the process, so that he can be clear before he answers.

What takes place currently on pay determination is that the two sides, management and the trade unions, sit and negotiate across the table until they come to a joint agreement. The nature of bargaining is a joint agreement; the nature of consultation is c ilateral decision-making. If the hon. Gentleman wants to return to Oxford and argue with his constituents and their trade union representatives

that consultation is the same as collective bargaining, he may be in for a shock and a rude awakening. However, I shall listen with interest to what he has to say.

Mr. Norris: The hon. Gentleman knows that in any bargaining arrangement that the two sides make, the terms upon which they are prepared to settle are quite clear. Movement towards an eventually agreed settlement takes account of a number of factors, not least the right of employees, subject to the arrangements that are provided for under the trade union Acts, to ballot their members and to withdraw their labour, if they regard the settlement as unsatisfactory. Were the proposals that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to include a waiver of the right to withdraw labour, I should have more sympathy with the hon. Gentleman's point, but clearly they do not. It is a matter of sophistry to decide whether there is a meaningful distinction between negotiation and consultation. Teachers will be just as able in the future as they are at present to make the full weight of their argument felt in negotiations and consultations with my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Fatchett: I do not want to labour the point for the benefit of the hon. Gentleman, but as we have a great deal of time it may be worth one more try. There is a fundamental difference between what the hon. Gentleman regards as consultation and the process of negotiation. However, he was almost there; there was a moment when I thought that there was a joining of hands across the Chamber, and we await the intellectual awakening of Conservative Members. At that moment the hon. Gentleman said that one party starts in one position, that the other party starts in another position and that then, through the process of applied pressure, which may be the threat of industrial action or the threat of dismissal by the employer, there is movement on both sides. That is implicit in bargaining but it is not implicit in consultation. It is intrinsic to the nature of bargaining but it is not intrinsic to the nature of negotiation. I hope that the hon. Gentleman takes my point fully and that he will join us in the Lobby when we vote on the amendment.

Mr. Cash: In the context of amendments Nos. 8, 12 and new clause 8, will the hon. Gentleman explain why the Opposition place such emphasis upon consultation? New clause 8 provides for national collective agreements, and it is implicit in the amendments to which the hon. Gentleman is speaking that there will be consultation. However, he seems to be suggesting that consultation is not very useful. Will he please explain how he comes to that conclusion?

Mr. Fatchett: I am trying to differentiate between the collective bargaining process and the consultation process in industrial negotiations. If the hon. Gentleman had recognised that fact, he would also have recognised that his intervention was otiose. He may be able to make his point later. We shall look forward to it, and from his track record there is no reason to suspect that he will not make it. I was simply trying to distinguish between collective bargaining and consultation.

Mr. Radice: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Fatchett: I shall give way to my hon. Friend in a moment. It is obvious that he has something to say on this point.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the comments on Monday night of the Minister of State, which were clear and distinct, is that she does not believe in free collective bargaining. She believes that teachers deserve only to be consulted.

Mr. Radice: My hon. Friend has made the distinction between consultation and collective bargaining absolutely clear to me. He may not have made it clear to Conservative Members, but it is possible that they do not want to listen. I do not believe that the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) has read the amendments. Had he read them, he would have seen that their purpose is to provide for a consultation process before the repeal of the Act. The hon. Gentleman is confusing two processes. He would have been well advised to read the amendments before intervening.

Mr. Fatchett: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his intervention. I hope, therefore, that we have shown the distinction between collective bargaining and consultation.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fatchett: I shall give way to the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) because I find that his interventions are always enjoyable.

Mr. Marlow: How would the hon. Gentleman describe the system of wage consultation over nurses' pay? Is that collective bargaining or consultation?

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman makes a valid point. I hope that he does not extrapolate from it that I welcome his point. What happens with nurses, and this is why they are so——

The Chairman: Order. It would be most unwise for the Committee to go into the collective bargaining arrangements for a variety of professions. The Committee ought to stick to the one profession that is the subject of the Bill before the Committee.

5.45 pm

Mr. Fatchett: I am always prepared to listen to your guidance, Mr. Walker, because it is obviously based on a great deal of experience. I shall give the answer to the hon. Member for Northampton, North outside the Chamber, not in these proceedings.

We have made a distinction between collective bargaining and consultation. Now I wish to consider some of the reasons that have been given by Conservative Members as to why the Burnham committee should be scrapped. Both sides of the House agree that the Burnham procedures and the Burnham machinery have failed. Therefore, we have to consider what to put in their place. In one of his more imaginative comments, the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) asked what else could have been done; he said that it has to be, as it is provided for in the Bill. Simply to shrug his shoulders and ask what else could have been done showed a lack of willingness on his part to put his great intellectual powers to good use.

The speech of the Minister of State on Monday night was full of interesting comments. Those of my hon. Friends who were not in the House on Monday night missed a great treat. Some of the Minister's hon. Friends must have been profoundly disappointed by it, if they were

[Mr. Fatchett]

not there on Monday night. I recommend them to read the report of her speech in *Hansard*. She said that the Bill is needed because the Burnham machinery and procedures have failed. For that reason, she said that there must be interim arrangements, involving an advisory committee.

I say with the greatest possible respect to the hon. Lady that that is a jump in logic that in itself is illogical. She is suggesting that there is no alternative to the Burnham machinery other than the Bill of her right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. That is clearly not the case. The ACAS agreement which is on the table contains provisions relating to a national joint council for negotiations on teachers' pay and conditions. The hon. Lady does not agree with the national joint council approach, an approach which, Mr. Walker, as you know from your past industrial relations experience, is used in very many industries. If the hon. Lady dares to intervene at this stage, perhaps she will tell us why she does not agree with it. She makes the illogical suggestion that there is no alternative to it. I should have thought that she would recognise that there is an alternative, and I shall advance that argument a stage further.

The hon. Lady referred in her speech to our suggestion concerning the European social charter.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Oh, no.

Mr. Fatchett: I know that the hon. Gentleman was completely disillusioned by the few years that he spent as a Member of the European Parliament. Perhaps we shall hear about it during the evening.

I refer to the European social charter only because it has been cited in the context of this debate and the Minister of State responded to it. The Minister said that article 6(2) requests Governments to promote voluntary collective bargaining, where necessary and when appropriate. My hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) realised that the Minister had made a crucial point because he tried to intervene to obtain clarification. However, the hon. Lady would not give way. Then she said:

"The article clearly recognises that circumstances can occur in which voluntary negotiations are not appropriate." —[*Official Report*, 8 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 110.]

In other words, the Government see their way out of their obligations under the European social charter by arguing that the voluntary negotiation system is not deemed by the Government to be appropriate.

Mr. Cash: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fatchett: No, I shall not give way for the moment; I will in a minute.

If that is not appropriate for teachers—that is what the Government and the hon. Lady are saying—the same argument could be applied not just to teachers but to every group of public sector employee. Our debate tonight on the Bill extends beyond teachers' pay and conditions to each and every public sector employees.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Fatchett: The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head. However, the Government's track record does not suggest that there will not be an extension to other public sector employees. We have already seen from the Government the ability to take away fundamental trade union rights at GCHQ. Now they say to us, "But the teachers are another special case." How many more special cases will there be in the public sector before the country realises that it is an attack upon the fundamental rights of public sector employees?

Mr. Madel: The hon. Gentleman talks about other public sector workers, but in such cases negotiating machinery already exists, negotiations are going on, and there is not the same industrial relations upset in other spheres of the public sector as in the teaching profession. The hon. Gentleman cannot escape the fact that the dispute in the teaching profession goes back many months. Many months ago ACAS offered to intervene, and the unions said, "Not interested."

Mr. Fatchett: I should like to build on the hon. Gentleman's intervention. He is saying that the argument for abolishing the machinery, which is similar to the argument used by the Minister of State, is that there have been difficult negotiations with the teachers. Are we to believe—I think we are, from what the hon. Gentleman says—that if those difficult negotiations are reproduced for local authority manual or white collar workers, or for Health Service staff, the same decision will be taken? That is why I said that the warning that comes from the debate and from the Bill is not just for teachers but for each and every public sector employee who is in danger of losing fundamental rights. Once the Government are tempted down that road, they will continue on it, and they will continue to attack trade union rights.

Mr. Cash: The hon. Gentleman is referring to new clause 8. Subsection (2) states that any national collective agreement must be referred to the Secretary of State by way of a report. This is the crucial bit. The subsection says that upon receipt of such a report, the Secretary of State "shall"—not "may"—

"unless in his view national economic circumstances otherwise require make provision by order . . . giving effect to the provisions of such a report".

New clause 8 shoots the hon. Gentleman's argument straight in the foot. This is what the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) will have to concede, too. Apart from the fact that our clause 3 provides for consultation and Opposition amendments Nos. 8 to 14 do so too, new clause 8 is a spurious and fraudulent attempt to convince people that they are negotiating in an exercise to provide national collective agreements. The let-out is contained in these very provisions. The paragraph contains the words "in his view", so that is not justifiable, and the let-out is:

"unless in his view national economic circumstances otherwise require".

Therefore, the new clause is completely worthless. I hope that the unions will take account of that.

Mr. Fatchett: I think that the hon. Gentleman must have read the point that I was about to make. On new clause 8, he should recognise that there would be collective bargaining and one would build upon the partnership in education. I have heard some Conservative Members say that that partnership has broken down. One will not renew it by adopting the Government's policies; one will rebuild it only by the recognition that is implicit and explicit in new clause 8. That is why the new clause refers to collective bargaining for unions and employers, and that is why the new clause also refers to the role of the Secretary of State. I must move forward——

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): Before my hon. Friend moves forward, I should like to ask him whether he agrees that far too much emphasis has been placed on the agreements breaking down between the teachers and the employers, so something must be done. Nothing has been said about why the agreements have been breaking down, and why there has been so much fuss. Is not part of the reason the continual hammering that the teachers have had from the Government — [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] The equipment grants have been slashed, and class sizes have been too high. They have been driven into the ground at every possible opportunity. Would not support of the teachers have been a better way to attack the problem in the education system than what the Government propose in this odious Bill?

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend has made a perceptive point, given the noises from Conservative Benches. He is absolutely right to say that, since the Government were elected in 1979, they have taken every opportunity to denigrate and devalue the contribution that teachers make to society. The Bill is part of that process. The Government have been determined to attack teachers.

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): Will the hon. Gentleman reconcile the fact that the teachers' salary bill has increased in real terms since 1979 with the derogatory point that he is trying to make?

Mr. Fatchett: I have no difficulty at all. In the three years or so that I have been a Member of the House of Commons, I have listened to Conservative Members at every education Question Time and in every debate. They have attacked teachers as a collective body or as individuals. If the hon. Gentleman popped into the House more often when it was dealing with education business, he would realise that there is no difficulty in reconciling those two points.

Dr. Marek: Before my hon. Friend does move forward again, if what the hon. Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) says is true, that is a result of the Clegg award. The Conservative Government were not responsible for that, and they berated us for leaving them such a legacy. We were proud of that legacy. That award is the reason why the teachers got a decent rise. The Labour Government were responsible.

Mr. Fatchett: I totally agree with my hon. Friend. It is interesting to look at the history of the dispute and of pay in the public sector since 1979. As my hon. Friend rightly says, in the early months and years of the Government's period of office, every attempt was made to criticise the Clegg award and the Clegg machinery. My hon. Friend is right that many public sector employees welcomed the machinery and saw the benefit of it.

I shall now move forward in my argument. I almost apologised to you, Mr. Walker, for giving way to one or two hon. Members, but I suspect that some Conservative Members are trying to delay this important debate. I cannot understand the reason for that.

On several occasions, today and on Second Reading, we have heard the argument from Conservative Members that it is the taxpayer who pays the bill for teachers, so the taxpayer has the right to demand the machinery that is set out in the Bill. That is an interesting argument. I should like to quote from a press release issued by the Department of Education and Science on 28 November this year, which was the day when the Secretary of State published his Bill. He said:

"Taxpayers and ratepayers who pay teachers' salaries are entitled to have a system which produces results."

Conservative Members will notice a slight shift in the argument. In today's debate and on Second Reading, we talked about taxpayers, but on 28 November, announcing the publication of the Bill, the Secretary of State also talked about ratepayers. I wonder why reference to ratepayers has been dropped in subsequent arguments, and I think that I know the reason. Perhaps the Secretary of State will not intervene again, so let me explain to the House. The reason is simply this. If one wants to have representatives of the taxpayers, our political system provides representatives of the taxpayers. The taxpayers' representative could be said to be a Minister and the ratepayers' representative could be said to be a local authority councillor. We have a system that is based on that principle, and it is called local government.

Hon. Members may have noticed that this Government do not have any great liking for local government, and perhaps that is one reason why reference to it has been deleted from any subsequent argument. But I suspect that there is another reason, and that is that the Bill does not allow local government to participate or negotiate in any way. The Secretary of State has taken away from the teachers' pay discussions the immediate representatives of their employers — namely, local government. That is typical of the Government's attack on local government. The Bill represents a fundamental attack not only on teachers but on our constitution.

6 pm

The taxpayer argument is dangerous, and Conservative Members should think about it before going ahead with the Bill. As my hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich said, the implication is that such legislation could apply to all other public sector employees. We now know that the Government do not believe in free collective bargaining for teachers. Judging by what the Government have said, they can foresee circumstances in which collective bargaining could be removed from other groups of public sector employees. We also know that the taxpayer argument could be used to take bargaining rights from all public sector workers. You were right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not to allow me to talk about nurses' pay, although I am sure that you realise that the Bill has implications that go far beyond the teachers' dispute, and extend deep into the public sector.

I shall conclude — [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I always like to play the populist card, and I realised that Conservative Members thought that this was the moment. I suspect that I shall have another opportunity to speak tonight, and it is always a mistake to have too much of a good thing all at the same time. Consequently, I shall bring my remarks to a conclusion. The other night, however, I said that I would oppose the Bill vehemently because it attacks an intrinsic right in any pluralist democracy — the right to belong to a trade union and for it to bargain collectively on behalf of its individual members. If Conservative Members listen to both sides of the argument, they will realise something that they probably know in their hearts, which is that being a trade union member is of little value if one does not have the ability

[Mr. Fatchett]

to make representations and to bargain collectively with one's employer. In a democratic society, that is a fundamental right.

The history of western Europe and even of industrial relations in the United States shows that democratic Governments have tried to further that right to bargain collectively. For example, the Wagner legislation, which dates back to the 1930s, gave trade union organisations the right to develop collective bargaining. It imposed obligations on employers to bargain freely and in good faith with individual trade unions and groups of workers. That legislation was not limited to the United States and has been reproduced in many parts of western Europe.

Mr. Spearing: My hon. Friend has stressed the importance of unions having the right to bargain collectively on behalf of individuals. But is not the obverse also true? If a trade union does not have the right to bargain collectively, the inducement or need to join that union is greatly diminished. Consequently, the Bill's effect, and one of its purposes, is deliberately to undermine and destroy the appeal that trade unionism has for teachers. People will thus be driven into making individual bargains, which will obviously prove to be less satisfactory to them and will undermine the coherence and partnership of education as a whole.

Mr. Fatchett: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. In western Europe and the United States, the trend has been to preserve democracy and to build on trade unionism and collective bargaining. The Government are going in the opposite direction. The debate and these amendments are important. I had hoped that I would win some support from Conservative Members. However, the power of my argument has obviously been enough to win me one supporter at least, as the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), who represents the Liberal party, has at last joined us in the Chamber —*[Interruption.]* I see that he is just disappearing, but at least one Liberal Member has given the debate a little of his time.

Having listened to our arguments and having understood the rights involved, I hope that at least some Conservative Members will join us in voting for the amendments.

Mr. Batiste: It will be apparent to all those who listened to the 40-minute lecture from the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) that he used to be a lecturer on industrial relations. He gave us a detailed but rather academic exposition on the difference between consultation and collective bargaining. In practice, it means relatively little, as much depends on the procedures and on how much they overlap. For the purposes of this debate, the significant and practical point is whether the arrangements that now exist have worked, and they patently have not.

I am as committed an enthusiast for the principle of collective bargaining as the hon. Member for Leeds, Central, but although teachers are important, it is the children in our schools who matter most. We have waited too long for a resolution of the dispute. The difference between the Opposition and the Government can be seen in the way in which we approach the present stalemate and seek to break out of it. The Opposition want a long-term solution. I believe that any long-term solution must involve a more formalised arrangement for collective bargaining. The Government propose a short-term solution to an immediate problem, and on that basis I am very willing to support it.

I am prepared to accept this short-term solution because I have urged my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State before to go further and faster than he did in the Education (No. 2) Bill and substantially to devolve power to the governing bodies of schools. After the next election, that must be one of our earliest priorities. A long-term solution to the collective bargaining arrangements within the teaching profession must wait for that fundamental reform of the way in which the education budget is administered.

Thus, we must find a short-term solution to this difficult problem. I would not have spoken if the right hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) had responded to my intervention. However, he completely ignored my questions, so I feel bound to repeat them in more detail. I am delighted that he has resumed his seat, as those questions are of fundamental importance. Why have the collective bargaining arrangements broken down, and what was the Opposition's role in their failure? That question must be put firmly on the agenda for this debate.

The right hon. Member for Durham, North is straining at the leash to reply, but I shall give him an opportunity later to put the record straight. Several questions have been put to me. During the course of the negotiations between the unions and the employers there were repeated and obvious moments when Labour party representatives on both sides of the table left the room on the understanding of the others present that they intended to consult the right hon. Gentleman. I put that to the right hon. Gentleman — *[Interruption.]* I apologise, is he simply an hon. Gentleman? I am sure that that is an ommission that time will remedy. There will, after the next election, be a vacancy for the post of Leader of the Opposition and, by tradition, the Leader of the Opposition is a Member of the Privy Council. I am sure that it is only a matter of time before the hon. Gentleman is a candidate for that post.

My point is that the hon. Member for Durham, North said that over the course of the past two years, he has made repeated interventions with a view to trying to ease a settlement between the two parties. If that is correct, it is fair. However, I have to say to him that many people are rather suspicious of some of his interventions and I want to give the hon. Gentleman the opportunity of facing squarely up to the points that have been put to me. I cast no aspersions. I am simply giving him an opportunity to answer the points that have been put to me by many trade unionists who are involved in the education world and who are concerned at the way in which his interventions may have led, for example, to the walk-out of some of the employers' representatives.

There were some helpful points in the package that was put forward. It may be that the hon. Member for Durham, North——

The Chairman: Order. Can the hon. Gentleman help me by telling me to which amendment he is addressing himself?

Mr. Batiste: I am referring to the entire package of amendments, because they were proposed on the basis that

they were an alternative system for collective bargaining to replace those being put forward by the Government. I am saying that there would be no need for those amendments if the obstacles to collective bargaining that exist were removed.

The hon. Member for Durham, North and others have made repeated references to the attempts of the parties to settle the disputes directly between themselves — employers and unions. I would very much like that to be a solution. I would have that as a preferred solution. However, there appear to be obstacles to that and the amendments that have been proposed will present further obstacles to that process. On that basis I would suggest, Mr. Walker, although I am always bound by your guidance, that what I am saying is directly relevant—as will be the response I hope, from the hon. Member for Durham, North. Unfortunately, the hon. Gentleman has now left his seat as I come to the point I wish to put to him.

In the package that has been brought forward there are, on public record, some points of common accord. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has accepted that many parts of the package are helpful. However, there are two sticking points that relate to the amount of money involved in the package and the question of incentive payments. I want to know, and I think that everybody is entitled to know, what interventions the hon. Member for Durham, North made on those two points. It has been suggested to me that his interventions on those points were designed to produce a package that would be acceptable to the Labour party but unacceptable to the Government and that, in fact, the dispute is being prolonged for electoral purposes by the Labour party. If that is so, it is a disgrace. It is a disgrace that the country should know about.

It is perhaps a matter of ultimate regret that, although it was obvious what question I was going to put to the hon. Member for Durham, North, he has walked out of the Chamber rather than respond to the points I have made. I have no doubt that if I sit down shortly he will come back in when the opportunity to respond has passed by. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will keep pressing the hon. Gentleman to respond to those points because I intend to make them again and again until we get clear answers as to exactly why he intervened in the negotiations, whether he did so with the authority of the Leader of the Opposition and the extent to which those interventions caused the failure of negotiations on those points and prolonged the dispute.

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Batiste: I am mindful of your intervention, Mr. Walker, and I will not take the matter any further. I am sure that, as soon as I resume my seat, the hon. Member for Durham, North will return to the Chamber and pretend that nothing has happened.

6.15 pm

Mr. Flannery (Hillsborough): I am sure that the hon. Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) was speaking on behalf of his union, Equity. It sounded as if he was standing in the Royal Shakespeare theatre. The departure of my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) whatever he has gone out to do, alarmed the hon. Gentleman to the extent that we heard the last great soliloquy of "Othello" during his speech.

Mrs. Elaine Kellet-Bowman (Lancaster) *rose*——

Mr. Flannery: I am not giving way. I wish the hon. Lady would sit down and let me get on with my speech.

Mrs. Kellet-Bowman: On a point of order, Mr. Walker. May we ask the hon. Gentleman to enlighten us as to which amendment he is speaking to?

The Chairman: I think that the hon. Gentleman is making introductory comments.

Mr. Flannery: I have not begun speaking precisely to the amendment yet. The hon. Member for Lancaster (Mrs. Kellett-Bowman) has a reputation in the House for intervening in the middle of the first sentence of any Labour Member.

Before I deal with amendment No 8 and other amendments, I want to say that the hon. Member for Elmet is not unknown to me. He and his wife were both councillors in Sheffield for many years. He has spent his conscious life struggling against free collective bargaining in trade unions.

Mr. Batiste *rose*——

Mr. Flannery: Let me say a few more words about the hon. Gentleman before I give way.

The hon. Gentleman is on the record in Sheffield as being totally opposed to trade unions. However, he said tonight that, like Labour Members, he believes in the principle of free collective bargaining. He does not. That is nonsense. He is utterly and totally opposed to free collective bargaining, just as the Secretary of State is. Before I go any further, let me warm the cockles of the hearts of Conservative members by saying that there are no Members of the Liberal party or the Social Democratic party in the Chamber.

Mr. Batiste *rose*——

Mr. Flannery: There are some Labour Members present. We do not have as many Members as the Conservative party——

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman *rose*——

Mr. Flannery: I am sure that the hon. Lady would like to stop me in mid-sentence again, but I will not let her.

It is appalling to see the Conservative party, with sickening unanimity, agreeing to the total violation of democracy contained in the Bill.

Mr. Batiste *rose*——

Mr. Flannery: Not just now. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will curb himself for a moment.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Give way.

Mr. Flannery: When I am told by the Secretary of State, I shall certainly give way.

Mr. Batiste: The House will judge the accuracy of the hon. Gentleman's general comments by virtue of the fact that I have never been a councillor in Sheffield. My wife was a councillor and on her first election she won her seat by 19 votes largely due to the fact that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) spoke against her.

Mr. Flannery: I am not allowed to say that the hon. Gentleman has distorted the truth but he knows that he has. The hon. Gentleman, as is fashionable these days, could plead the fifth amendment.

I want to speak about this horrific Bill. I was saying, when interrupted by the hon. Member for Elmet, who has

[Mr. Flannery]

a ready wit, as an actor must, that there is sickening unanimity within the Conservative party. I believe that Conservative Members — some of whom I know very well and respect—have pocketed their democracy. There is the unanimity of the graveyard on the matter of democracy within the Tory party. Even hon. Members that I have been in Committee with and listened to with great respect are going along with this diktat as if, in some way, there was a process of democracy in it. They know as well as I do that the reason for the Bill is that the Government are weary of negotiation. They have not got anywhere and, like any dictatorial grouping, they finally want a short cut. They have decided to get rid of democracy. It is no use their denying that. The TUC and all the unions are watching with great care this most serious debate on the most important education measure since the 1944 Act. Unlike the 1944 Act, which sought to advance the cause of education, with this Bill the Government are doing their undemocratic utmost to stifle the advance of education. The amendments seek to redeem the Government's reputation, which is steadily being lost, by taking a tiny step in the direction of democracy. Amendment No. 8 is a good example. I was about to refer to it when I was rudely interrupted by the hon. Member for Lancaster, who accused me of not wishing to discuss these matters.

Unlike most hon. Members, I sat on the Burnham committee for some years. I will explain to the House exactly what that committee was. Its members were elected in competition within the unions and the employing bodies. The only members who were not elected were those representing the Government.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: They were elected.

Mr. Flannery: They were appointed. Tory Governments and, sadly, Labour Governments, appointed a couple of representatives, but those representatives carried 15 votes—the Secretary of State will correct me if I am wrong—so they could sway the committee by putting their foot down on behalf of the Government. *[Interruption.]* That is not like the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) I have served with him on so many Committees that I almost called him my hon. Friend. But for the present leadership, I believe that he would have been Chairman of the Select Committee.

Clause 1 will repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. Before doing that, the Government took all kinds of steps to make the elected Burnham committee unworkable. The teachers, weary at seeing the committee stymied by the Government, agreed that it should go. They believed that it would be replaced by something equally if not more democratic, but the provisions in the Bill have nothing whatever to do with democracy. The Secretary of State will appoint every member of the new body without any democratic process whatever.

Mr. Maples: He is elected.

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman has clearly not read the Bill. I would not make a statement like that without evidence. Let the Secretary of State give us an answer. He failed to reply to me on Monday about the Bill going for Royal Assent on 19 December. He can deny that now if he likes, although it is not relevant to this debate.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: We want to know whether my hon. Friend the Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) was a member of Sheffield city council, as the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) has alleged. That has not been cleared up.

Mr. Flannery: I thought that it was, but if that is not correct I withdraw it, as it is not in my nature to persist in things that are wrong.

Mr. Batiste *rose*——

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman will now graciously thank me.

Mr. Batiste: I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his generous withdrawal, which shows yet again his close knowledge of his own city.

Mr. Flannery: I was already here for much of that time, while the hon. Gentleman was fighting madly to get here.

The interruption from the Secretary of State was not unexpected. I see that he still has the same smile on his face. He would look well waving from a carriage with that smile. Perhaps I may quote Lord Hailsham, one of the right hon. Gentleman's noble Friends. Indeed, I believe that one is supposed to call him the right noble Lord. Lord Hailsham is a democrat who believes that people should be elected. He noticed that when a party was elected with an overwhelming majority there was a tendency to be dizzy with success and drunk with power. He described such a Government—he was, of course, referring to a Labour Government at the time—as an elected dictatorship. As a result of their own interventions, the Tories succeeded in obtaining a bigger majority but a smaller vote in the last election than in the previous election.

They are now pushing things through for which they have no mandate whatever and which are a total violation of democracy, despite their claim that they have been elected and thus have the right to do virtually anything.

The Bill destroys the whole process of negotiation. The trade unions, the Labour party and many other people are watching this debate closely, because if the Bill is accepted the Tories will seek to destroy free negotiation in the public sector generally and then, judging from their reputation since 1979, to attack the trade unions generally. This is being carefully watched by the TUC, the president of which is not unknown to the National Union of Teachers. *[Interruption.]* Do I even have to tell the Tories his name? Harry will tell them, although he was in the National Association of Schoolmasters rather than the NUT, weren't you, Harry?

The Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that we do not refer to other hon. Members in that fashion in the House. If he wishes to draw attention to another hon. Member he should do so by reference to that hon. Member's constituency.

Hon. Members: The honourable Harry.

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman knows me well. He even knows my first name.

Mr. Greenway *rose*——

Mr. Flannery: I give way to the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway)

Mr. Greenway: The hon. Gentleman is referring to someone whom I have known for 30 years—Mr. Fred Jarvis. I think that we should be open about the name.

Mr. Flannery: Yes, you have made that clear.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: Conservative Members have listened, sometimes noisily but mostly with care, yet we have had very few answers from the Labour party. We believe in collective bargaining if the circumstances exist for it to function properly, but how can the free collective bargaining that the hon. Gentleman holds so sacred operate when there are six unions who cannot agree among themselves and 104 separate employer organisations?

Mr. Flannery: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: I will give way on one condition —that the hon. Gentleman answers those questions.

6.30 pm

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman, like the Minister, is always insisting on one condition—he has got to have his condition. However, I respect his views even though he does not respect mine. The hon. Gentleman may say that we never give him the expected answers, but quite frankly if I gave him the answer that he expects Big Ben would strike 13. He would never accept any answer. When the hon. Gentleman protests — methinks he protests too much—that he believes in collective bargaining, like the other member of Equity, the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), he does not fool us. The hon. Gentleman believes in the Bill. The Bill is totally and utterly opposed to any programme of democracy or any free collective bargaining.

On Monday night I was present for the debate on the Bill. I left the Chamber to perform a natural function. *[Interruption.]* I went to eat. I am sure that everybody denounced me for leaving the Chamber. When I returned I made a brief speech. It was shortened by the continual intervention of the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash). He is not here at present. The hon. Gentleman intervenes in every speech if hon. Members are daft enough to let him. I think that Conservative Members think the same as I do about that hon. Gentleman.

I went out of the House to pick up a copy of *The London Evening Standard* which always claims it has standards. On the front page it said "Victory". The victory apparently was against Mr. Chirac. We understand now that Mr. Mitterrand had told Mr. Chirac repeatedly not to introduce the Bill because it would cause endless trouble.

Mr. Chirac went ahead and put forward a Bill, not as draconian as this one, but a Bill that upset large numbers of people, and finally he had to withdraw it. I am not saying that this Bill will be withdrawn by this unregenerate Government and their Minister who, frankly, does not understand state education.

The Bill is causing unnecessary trouble. If the money had been provided two years ago, there would be no trouble now. I appeal to the Minister to put in the place of the advisory council a freely, honourably elected organisation which will discuss the issues democratically and honestly. If we did that, the Government and ourselves would not be in this present mess. I ask him to do something democratic to help education rather than attack free collective bargaining, thereby disrupting our schools and setting back education for years.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery). I recall his interventions and questions in the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts between 1979 and 1983. I honestly do not think that, if that Select Committee were considering the Bill, the hon. Gentleman would have painted such a lurid picture. He spoke of Domesday, comparisons with France, a terrible attack on trade union rights——

Mr. Flannery: It is a terrible Bill.

Mr. Madel: It is not a terrible Bill. In a few words I wish to explain to the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members why I do not believe that to be the case.

First, the Bill is a temporary measure; it expires in March 1990. Before that time there must be a general election. There may be two general elections and I hope——

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Pardon?

Mr. Madel: I cannot concentrate too well at the moment, but I shall give way to my hon. Friend shortly.

There may be more than one general election and I hope that education is a major issue of any election. Having listened to the past two and a half hours of debate, anyone would think that what is being proposed will last year after year. That is not so. The central point is that a new system of bargaining must be created for the teaching profession. The present system has broken down, but one cannot create a new system overnight. Collective bargaining works only if there is a recognised and reasonable framework within which it can operate. That framework exists in other public sector industries, but it has not always been the case.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) —I am sorry that he has left the Chamber—painted a picture of an unending flow of marvellous collective bargaining in the United States and western Europe. The hon. Gentleman conveniently forgot that, from time to time, collective bargaining has been interrupted by democratically elected Governments. There were the statutory wage policies imposed by the Labour party and the Conservative party—some of my hon. Friends voted for that between 1970 and 1974, although they wish to forget it. My hon. Friends may have changed their minds —and indeed a party can change its mind on such matters.

I remember that, in the 1960s, the late President Kennedy intervened in the collective bargaining process within the steel industry and imposed a settlement. The history of collective bargaining is not an even progress towards paradise, it is a bumpy ride. The Government have had to bring in the Bill because of difficulties in the teaching profession.

The hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) often mentions ACAS. I think that he is a convert to the role of ACAS in this dispute. I wish the hon. Gentleman had said in 1985—many of us did—that ACAS should intervene—and at a much earlier stage than the unions agreed. I remind the hon. Gentleman that in June 1985 ACAS formally asked all unions to come to it and to start negotiations on how to get out of the problem. My goodness, there was a problem in 1985. School after school was disrupted, parent after parent was worried about how his child would do in the O and A-level examinations in 1985. Some unions did not respond positively to ACAS. Frankly, the Opposition did not push anything like as hard as they should have done about this matter.

Mr. Radice: The hon. Gentleman was a supporter of the idea of ACAS coming into the negotiations, but as I recall, the Secretary of State did not respond to his request, which he made during Question Time. I wish to inform him, for the record, that I was in close contact with ACAS throughout 1985 and I strongly supported its intervention which led to the trade unions and the employers getting together under the ACAS agreement. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is saying that he supports the ACAS agreement.

Mr. Madel: The hon. Gentleman may say that, but the ACAS agreement is not firm. Let me give him another example of where things went wrong but the Opposition remained silent.

In October 1985 the then chairman of employers made a wage offer and the general secretary of the NAS/UWT said that there should be early discussions, without pre-conditions, of that offer. The hon. Gentleman should note the date. The NUT would have nothing to do with it. There was another three months of do-nothingism and classroom disruption and another three months of parents getting more and more worried as the 1986 O and A-level examinations approached.

No Government can sit idly by and wash their hands of the matter.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett *rose*——

Mr. Madel: I shall give way in a moment.

The Secretary of State has a duty to maintain a good education service. That is enshrined in the Education Act 1944.

Another trade union decided to disrupt and cause trouble in the autumn of 1985, even when its sister unions were calling for early discussions on the improved pay offer put forward by the then chairman of the Labour employers.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The hon. Gentleman has made an implied criticism of my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) for not pushing for negotiation. But what was the Secretary of State doing all that time? The Secretary of State has a role and a responsibility for education. He should have tried to get the parties together, but time after time he washed his hands of the entire matter. He did not produce the money.

Mr. Madel: I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman is wrong. If he studies *Hansard* he will see that the former Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph), consistently welcomed the intervention of ACAS in the summer of 1985. He was as aghast as we were that we had another three months of standstill in autumn 1985 because the NUT would not respond to the NAS/UWT request that there should be early discussions.

Opposition Members' other worry concerns the funding of education. Since 1979, there has been a steady increase in central funding of certain subjects. The hon. Member for Hillsborough has supported that. He has signed the agreement of the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts that the Secretary of State should take additional powers and strengthen the curriculum when he feels that it is defective. I know that the hon. Member will remember that there was such a recommendation in one of our reports. Nevertheless, the Opposition worry about centralism. The curriculum has been improved and the Secretary of State has done his duty by the 1944 Act.

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do that I want something balanced. We have visited many countries to study their education systems. I know that, like me, he wants the utmost democracy, but with the Bill the Secretary of State is taking powers that are draconian in the extreme. Everything for which we have struggled for years is under ruthless attack. I cannot believe that many Conservative Members quite understand that. I know them and I cannot believe that they are going along with the Bill.

Mr. Madel: I assure the hon. Gentleman that I have studied the Bill carefully and I do not believe that it gives the Secretary of State draconian powers.

It would not be right for me now to discuss new clause 11, which I have tabled, but my right hon. and hon. Friends have said many times that they want schools to have greater control over how money is spent and for teachers to have greater power to make adjustments to salaries as and when they think fit. That is an example of our democratising the education service. We are trying to make head teachers more responsive to what parents want.

To listen to Opposition Members, one would think that these temporary powers will somehow be used to cause a mighty collision with the trade unions in the teaching profession. I do not believe that anything like that will occur. The Bill is simply a bridge to try to achieve a settlement while we build in improved negotiating machinery.

If my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State does nothing, the dispute will drag on. Of course the dispute is upsetting to teachers, ratepayers and the Government, but it is supremely upsetting to parents, who are desperately worried that, if it goes on, their children's examination results will suffer and that that will affect their job opportunities. The Bill is simply a temporary bridge to try and achieve a settlement. I have listened to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State often, and I cannot believe that he wants to do anything other than work with the teaching trade unions to build a better education service.

6.45 pm

Mr. Spearing: The hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) is reading the Bill with rose-tinted spectacles. I do not doubt that the Secretary of State and other Conservative Members agree with his definition of the Bill's purpose, but I am afraid that I cannot isolate what is being done from other trends and the actions and attitudes of the Secretary of State. I deplore the fact that the Secretary of State announced education policy on a sympathetic television programme. I hope that he will say something about that when he winds up the debate.

We must consider the Bill in the context of the crisis that has emerged in Burnham and of the pattern in education, in regard to which the Secretary of State's irresponsible attitude on television last Sunday was but the latest emanation.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: It was good.

Mr. Spearing: The ideas might have been good, but it is not in order to discuss that now.

If the Secretary of State is to fulfil his duties and responsibilities, he should produce a White Paper, make

a statement in the House and make a speech about his plans. He should adhere to the customary procedures rather than come out with one or two superficially attractive ideas on a sympathetic television programme that is watched by millions of people. I am not suggesting that he does not have a right to go on such a programme, but if he makes statements in that way he is not fulfilling his proper function as Secretary of State in a parliamentary democracy.

I am a member of the National Union of Teachers. I taught in the classroom for 14 years before I came here. My tone might therefore be less light-hearted than that of some Conservative Members appears to be. When one has been at the bottom of the heap for 14 years, one understands a little more about the feelings of people who are being made to feel almost like peasants or peons. I challenge Conservative Members, especially those who have been in one of the caring professions—I see one present — to imagine what they would feel if their historic negotiating machinery, which had been built up over nearly a century, was swept away by a Secretary of State who came in from another Department and presented a Bill such as this, which is being pushed through the House within one week. Experience of being at the bottom of the heap is the basis of my feelings, and the Secretary of State knows that, but for a single vote on a certain selection panel in 1970, that is where I would be now.

Mr. Hunter: I also taught for 14 years and feel that I can intervene on the basis of some experience. During the hon. Gentleman's 14 years of membership of the NUT, what positive input did he have into that union's debates to overcome the inner flaw of Burnham—the separation of pay and conditions?

Mr. Spearing: I am still a member of the NUT. During my 14 years as a teacher, I was a member of my local association and of wider areas and I went to conference. The arrangements under which the Burnham committee operated were set down in the Education Act 1944. That Act was the fixed point within which the various bodies manoeuvred until 1963, when Lord Boyle of Handsworth, who was then Secretary of State, introduced his infamous Boyle's law, which is the predecessor of this Bill. I have no doubt that the people who drafted the Bill examined Boyle's law first, but they have taken twice the length to do the same job.

The difficulties that were perhaps apparent in the education world after 1944 did not centre on difficulty with the operation of the Burnham committee. Things were very gentlemanly, or ladylike—I must be careful with the modern idiom. I was a member of the west Lambeth branch of the NUT. It was regarded as a militant association. I do not know what educational establishment the hon. Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) was in, but when NUT representatives went to speak to their colleagues on the teachers' panel of the Burnham committee and their partners, the employers—that was the attitude taken—little was said about figures. It was not until 1957 that the west Lambeth association put a resolution to the annual general meeting of the NUT that we wanted to see a basic scale of £600 to £1,200 a year for teachers. Until that time, those who went into negotiation on Burnham did not have any mandate from the conference.

My reply to the hon. Gentleman is that at that time much more important matters in education were on the table than the apparent snagging up of Burnham, which has apparently happened now, although I do not believe that the statutory structure bequeathed to us by Michael Stewart, now Lord Stewart of Fulham, was as bad as has been made out. It has been snagged up more by personalities and events than by the statutory framework which the Bill seeks to replace.

Lord Boyle of Handsworth set the ball rolling 23 years ago by rejecting an agreement selectively agreed by teachers and employers. That agreement did not come after such difficulties as we have experienced in the past two or three years. It was reached after perhaps three months. On the flimsy excuse that differentials were not adequate, the officials persuaded Sir Edward Boyle, as he was then, that he should use his reserve powers under the 1944 Act and reject that agreement, as he had a statutory right to do.

The impact on staff rooms around the country was great. I had the privilege of teaching at Wandsworth school—now, alas, defunct through falling rolls. We had a fine collection of staff members who had worked together for five or six years without knowing what letters came after other people's names, without wondering what institutions others went to, or whether they had letters after their names at all. There were some two-year trained teachers taking A-levels in the sixth form, and there were some well-qualified, first-class honours graduates taking nearly remedial pupils. The proud boast of the headmaster of that school was that the most expensive department of the school was the remedial department.

When the Boyle bombshell burst, so great was the indignation at that school that a number of us went on unofficial strike and went to Curzon street to try to interview Lord Boyle, whom we regarded as selling out the education service through his arrogant approach. As we were mounting the steps, it emerged that of the three of us in the delegation selected to speak for those who had taken off the last period of school to try to make an impact, one was a member of the Liberal party, one was a member of the Conservative party and one was a member of the Labour party. We were all in receipt of special responsibility allowances, and we were all going on unofficial strike against being paid more. The best of British education was found in that staff room. We knew that once the Boyle Bill went through, any Secretary of State, ever after, would have powers of virtual dictatorship on the Burnham committee and that that would cause trouble and difficulty.

I shall not say that the last few years of trouble and difficulty have been entirely and only the fault of the way in which the Secretary of State has used his powers, either directly and indirectly. Every Conservative Member will know that the previous Secretary of State had some definite ideas about what he wanted out of Burnham, and over the three years of travail that we have had, the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) had his share in fouling up the system. One could go on arguing for years about relative responsibilities, but he played a part.

The 1963 Bill was the predecessor of this Bill. Between 1965 and 1985 we had, not the Boyle Act, but the Stewart Act, the one that is with us now. The difficulties that we face have not been inevitable within the working of that Act. Let me explan why I think that in education there

[Mr. Spearing]

must be a balance between corporate responsibility and individual limited licence. The essential element of what we try to do in the House in our parliamentary democracy is one of the great philosophical themes about which we can agree.

A great deal has been heard recently about the wishes of parents. However, the wishes of parents in one school are not the only important factor. There is the concern of the public as a whole, and that group of people have a corporate responsibility. If there is anybody who represents that public responsibility it is the Secretary of State, whether he be the one who is sitting in the Chamber, his predecessor, or his successor. That person is a public trustee. He is not at the apex of line management.

The Secretary of State is not like the Minister for Health, who is a super-manager. Whether or not he has a health board, the Minister for Health is in line management. He has the whole of the health industry, to use phrases that Conservative Members like to use, and he is at the apex of it. However, the Secretary of State is a public trustee for the whole nation. His remit is not only in the public sector, but is in the private sector too. He has responsibility for the licensing of schools, making sure that teachers are there, and so on. It is a big and responsible remit and he is the representative of the nation and the public at large, all of whom have an interest in the future and, therefore, by definition, in our educational establishment, and not just those who are fortunate enough to have children at school at the time.

There are also the representatives of the local interest, those who are living in the close community, whether it be Nottingham, Rugby, Leicester or any of these optimum-sized towns which are so characteristic in Britain. I am glad to see the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) nodding, because what is right for Leicester may not be right for Rugby, Nottingham or Newham. The local public also have an interest, and their corporate and collective representative is the local education authority.

What about those who operate the system — the employees, the teachers? This set of amendments is about the corporate identity of teachers and their interests. They, as a group, can be exploited. It is easy to exploit teachers because, by and large, teachers have a conscience about what they are doing. They know just how vital their job is. I can remember the psychological strain of the few months before I came to this place, which was caused by being responsible for 500 pupils in a London secondary school. That strain was very great, especially as a munificent Ministry of Education had given me just a room to share with three other people.

Mr. Fatchett: That sounds like the House of Commons.

Mr. Spearing: No, it was far worse. That school was built in 1956 and was subject to the Horsbrugh cuts. Teaching is a much more exacting job than being a Member of Parliament.

It is easy for parents and the public to exploit teachers. The teachers should collectively state that they want a remuneration broadly equivalent to that received by other people discharging similar responsibilities.

Mr. Richard Caborn (Sheffield, Central): Can my hon. Friend enlighten us about the Horsbrugh cuts?

7 pm

Mr. Spearing: Dame Florence Horsbrugh was a very well-known politician in the 1950s. When I joined the teaching profession, she suddenly decided that schools should not be as well provided for as they had been. There was a series of building cuts, and that meant that when I began teaching I walked around 19 rooms a week. I recall that the day after the Horsbrugh cuts were announced the evening papers had a placard that read, "Credit squeeze off — Official." Difficulties with resources from Tory Governments are not new; we have had them for the past 30 years.

There is a corporate responsibility of and a corporate need for teachers to get together. Many people have asked why the unions scrap rather than get together. Conservative Members may not understand what has happened. The history of education in this country is, sadly, unlike that of Germany and some other continental countries. In 1902, instead of reorganising around a rational system, the then Tory Government did a spatchcock job in the Education Act 1902. It is all very well for the Secretary of State to shed tears over decisions taken in Germany in the last century, but similar decisions should have been taken in Britain in 1902.

In 1902 there were many different schools with different traditions — grammar schools, the so-called public schools, technical schools, the all-age schools in rural areas and — after the 1920s — the new central schools in city areas. As class distinctions were, to put it bluntly, very much to the fore in those days, each type of school with its own tradition had its own collective association organised in counties and districts. At one stage the National Union of Teachers represented a rather wider range of staff than it does today. However, there was a dispute about equal pay, and one section of members — now represented by a leading union — hived off from the NUT. The unions and associations have reflected, and still reflect, some of the deep historic roots of our educational structure.

Conservative Members may forget that, unless the traditions, aspirations and attitudes are reflected in some form of collective bargaining, the ventilation of those aspirations will be suppressed. We all know that, if people believe that their case is not being put or if their gut feelings are not aired, they will not be happy with the form of discussion.

I believe that a wide range of traditions, practices and aspirations have come together over the years on the Burnham committee. That is not necessarily a disadvantage, because it adequately and properly reflects some of the traditions, backgrounds and positive virtues of the variety in our system. That is what Conservative Members must confront. However, the Secretary of State comes along with very strong views on how education should be conducted. He says that he wants to weed out the bad teachers.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) was challenged about criticisms of teachers. Anyone who can use the words "weed out bad teachers" has misunderstood the position. That is rather like saying "Weed out bad MPs"—*[Interruption.]* The public have a chance to do that every five years. They will make their judgment and that is not a partisan point.

If a teacher is appointed, passes his probationary year, is registered with the Secretary of State — he is given a

number and is therefore qualified—and is regarded as suitable for selection and training—paid for at public expense — there should be an obligation on the profession and teaching organisations to improve the standard of teachers. That is what we want. I am glad to see Conservative Members nodding. However, the Secretary of State has marched in and said that he wants to weed out the weak and bad teachers. What a way to start negotiations.

Mr. Jack Dormand (Easington): My hon. Friend has made a serious point and given us another example of the Government's hypocrisy. As I have always said and as I am sure that the Secretary of State will agree, there is nothing worse than the teacher who does not reach the required standard to continue as a teacher for the rest of his life. The education of thousands of children is involved.

There are several remedies for the problem. First—and I cannot understand why this has not been tried—if by the end of a three-year training period, the trainers do not realise that certain students will not become successful teachers, the trainers are not up to the job. Secondly, there used to be a one-year probationary teaching period during which teachers were examined by Her Majesty's inspectors and a local authority. I am not sure whether that procedure is still followed. I support my hon. Friend's point. There should be no question of weeding out. Decisions should be taken in the first year. The Government have been hypocritical. Why have they not done something about that, when they have been in power since 1979?

Mr. Spearing: My hon. Friend has underlined my point. The real, underlying magnetic forces in education have not been understood either by the previous Secretary of State or by the present one, as evidenced by his action in introducing the Bill.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I should like to come in on cue. Before the intervention of the hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand), the hon. Gentleman asked a rhetorical question along the lines of: "What are the Government going to do about the teachers who, as a result of appraisal, are considered not to be performing well?" I remind him that I have announced an increase in in-service training next year amounting to £200 million. That is the largest amount of money that we have devoted within the education service to the in-service training of teachers, and it will allow about 100,000 teachers next year — approximately a quarter of the profession — to have courses lasting for up to four weeks.

Mr. Spearing: I am grateful to the Secretary of State, because his motives in that regard are exceptional. If I may revert to the dimensions of the classroom — which perhaps even he has not understood—in-service training should be carried out in the school. It cannot necessarily be carried out through courses. By his reply, the Secretary of State shows that he has to some extent misunderstood the point. A teacher may be incapable of doing the job. A teacher may be magnificent in one school, but, when he goes to a difficult area, he may not be able to cope with the classes or the social surroundings in which the school is situated. What he needs more than most is encouragement, help and assistance from his colleagues.

Mr. Fatchett: That is right.

Mr. Spearing: I am glad that my hon. Friend agrees. When I was elected to Parliament, I left behind a school in which, nearly every evening, I had to stay behind with one or other of my colleague teachers and talk about the problems that they faced day after day. I also had to deal with some weeping teachers, weeping parents and weeping children. Teachers need assistance from their colleagues.

When a good teacher is selected to be a head of department, head of house, tutor or whatever, he does not think about promotion or about the next rung on the ladder, about which the Secretary of State is so keen. The teacher is giving out to his colleagues. That is the motivation. The satisfaction that he gets from doing a good job and helping his colleagues and the children transcends a great deal of the so-called career structure. Many of the assumptions about collective bargaining made by Conservative Members are quite wrong and out of keeping with what happens.

People working in a metal-working factory, or even in Sainsburys, Woolworths, or Boots, have managerial expertise and operate on a set of criteria. Those dealing with human beings have different criteria. To some extent, these are opposite rules. Despite that, the Secretary of State believes that a career structure with wider differentials will do the trick. I shall not say that it is not welcome because of the extra pay, but I suggest that the Secretary of State's assumptions about what motivates teachers are not as accurate as they might be.

Mr. Hunter: I appreciate a great deal of what the hon. Gentleman has said. There is much common ground. The message that I get from head teachers in my constituency is that these differentials are needed not to attract teachers but to retain them, in particular in areas of high employment—thank goodness there are some—where they seek other jobs.

Mr. Spearing: The hon. Gentleman is right. On this issue, there is a good deal of agreement among practical teachers. I have encountered difficulties, particularly with craft and technical training. It is impossible, even for schools with a high reputation and good collegiate atmosphere, to hold teachers, because they are offered jobs elsewhere with higher rates of pay. I suggest—again, this is a matter directly related to collective bargaining —that we need a structure of remuneration that reflects the demands for comparable skills and services in the general market.

The Secretary of State is bringing market forces into the classroom to an inappropriate degree, and in the end that will cause disaster. We shall be doing away with the power and responsibility of local education authorities. If they are not responsible in negotiations for directly determining the remuneration of teachers, their raison d'etre will disappear. Will local education authorities be reduced to the status of employers of caretakers, repairers of windows and wholesale suppliers of textbooks, soap and cleaning materials? That will happen if Conservative Members' wishes are taken to their logical conclusion. Local education authorities will be quartermaster agents of Queen Elizabeth house. That is what the Secretary of State will end up with—indeed, he more or less said so when he talked about city technology colleges being the forerunners of a new system.

Corporate collective bargaining is necessary in our education system. Every partner, including the Secretary

[Mr. Spearing]

of State, represents a corporate interest. Unless the partners can express that interest and co-operate within a satisfactory and proper statutory framework, the co-operative needs of education will not be met. The present legislation may need some amendment, but it does not need the changes that we are considering tonight.

7.15 pm

Mr. Pawsey: I wish to make a brief speech, if only because the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) spoke for about 40 minutes. It is significant that, so far, this batch of amendments has attracted more than four hours' debate. The hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) sought to suggest that the distinctions between the ACAS proposals in Nottingham and those of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State were relatively small.

Mr. Radice *indicated assent.*

Mr. Pawsey: The hon. Gentleman shows his agreement. He will be aware that we are not considering small distinctions. We are talking about nearly £85 million. Even in the context of Government spending, that is not a small sum.

Mr. Radice: I have pointed out a number of times, as has, I think, even the Secretary of State, that if the date of implementation—I am talking not about the January date but about the autumn date—is moved a month, it will immediately save over £40 million. The hon. Gentleman knows that as well as I do.

Mr. Pawsey: Even if we accept what the hon. Gentleman said, we are still talking in terms of another £45 million. Even then, as he knows, that is not the end of the difference between the two sides. Arguments about conditions of service still have not been resolved. The hon. Gentleman should understand that the increase proposed by my right hon. Friend amounts to about 16·5 per cent. In anybody's language, that is a substantial increase. I am amazed that we do not have more agreement from Labour Members on these major points.

The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) made much the same point. He appeared to forget the 16·5 per cent. increase and the £600 million. He also forgot the talks and protracted negotiations which have gone on month in and month out. They have not brought any solution.

The hon. Gentleman referred to centralisation. He chose to forget circular 10/65. He chose to forget the Education Act 1976 which was passed when he was a member of the Government. I shall refresh his memory. That Act was centralist in the most extreme form. It took away the right of local education authorities to decide their own form of education. It said, "Whether thou likes it or not, thou shalt go comprehensive." God knows, many of our children have regretted that decision. That decision was made by his colleague, known to us as Shirl the Pearl in the days when she was more Socialist than Democrat. I remind the Member for Greenwich that we shall not take any lectures on centralisation from him or from his Opposition colleagues.

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): Does my hon. Friend recall the fate of the direct grant grammar schools which suffered from the same type of diktat?

Mr. Pawsey: I do. I must tell my hon. Friend—he is probably not aware of it—that we still have grammar schools in Rugby and Kenilworth, and they are now under threat from a Socialist-alliance controlled county council. Many parents in my constituency are anxious for those grammar schools to be retained.

Mr. Barnett: Of course, the hon. Gentleman will recall that direct grant schools were abolished by his right hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Prentice), will he not? I do not know what the right hon. Gentleman's opinion is now. In my speech, I referred to the education service as a national service locally administered. National Government have every right to lay down general parameters within which the local authority runs the education service. The Government are taking away all rights with regard to the negotiation of pay and conditions. Does the hon. Gentleman see the difference between taking away those rights and those general parameters in respect of the way in which primary or secondary education is organised?

The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. Hon. Members should return to the amendments.

Mr. Pawsey: I am obliged to you for that courteous advice, Mr. Armstrong. My right hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Prentice) has had the privilege during his period in Parliament of being an honourable Friend to both of us.

Mr. Marlow: On the subject of centralisation, I wonder whether my hon. Friend would give hope to his constituents by assuring them that our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will in no way agree to a system of comprehensivisation from a Socialist local authority in Warwickshire?

Mr. Pawsey: I am more than delighted to listen to my hon. Friend, but he must appreciate that it is with some difficulty that I put words in my right hon. Friend's mouth. However, I do not have the slightest doubt that my right hon. Friend will carefully consider any proposals made to him. I hope that he will listen carefully to the representations of Warwickshire Members of Parliament who happen to believe deeply in the principle of grammar schools.

I thought that the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) was not being as fair as he might have been to my hon. Friend the Minister of State. The full quotation of her words is in *Hansard*. She said:

"we tried hard within the Burnham machinery to make it work, but we did not succeed. That is why the Bill is needed, that is why we must have some interim arrangements for involving an advisory committee, and that is why the Bill provides for consultation with the local authorities and the unions and why the Government's conclusion should be referred to Parliament."

Frankly, I see no reason why my hon. Friend should in any way be ashamed of her admirable phrase.

Mr. Fatchett: I ask the hon. Gentleman to note the term used by the Minister of State—

"provides for consultation with the local authorities and the unions".—[*Official Report*, 8 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 109.]

Perhaps the hon. Gentleman is right to chastise me for not going further in the quotation. But if I had done so, it would have made my case even stronger.

Mr. Pawsey: The hon. Gentleman is mistaken, and not for the first time. On Monday, he drew an analogy between my speech and football. The hon. Gentleman will recall that instance, so I shall not bore the Committee with it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Norris) scored well against the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett). He scored and scored again. The point that he made so effectively is worth repeating. First, he said that there is no taking away the right to join trade unions, as the hon. Member for Leeds, Central sought to imply at one stage.

Mr. Fatchett: No.

Mr. Pawsey: Oh yes, the hon. Gentleman did. Secondly, my hon. Friend brought out with his usual eloquence the point that the right to strike remains. *[Interruption.]* Of course I regret teachers going on strike. But the right to strike remains. It is still there to be used.

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman referred to me, and he obviously follows the usual courtesies. He rightly said that the loss of the right to bargain, if that is what it is —it is a matter of dispute between us—does not imply the loss of the right to strike. If the unions have the right only to consult, and not to bargain, will not the Bill make it almost inevitable that the only recourse to action will be industrial action? Is there not a danger that, through this legislation, the Government will precipitate industrial action rather than ease industrial relations problems?

Mr. Pawsey: That is a typically gloomy interpretation by the hon. Gentleman. One of his problems is his total inability to see anything worth while in any legislation introduced by the Government. He has a closed mind. If he intends to fulfill his ambition and sit on the Labour Front Bench, he must do something about that.

The justification for the legislation is to be found in the events in Coventry and Nottingham. The legislation is justified by the lack of agreement and the long dispute which has affected so many of our children. The discussions on pay and conditions have ground on month after gloomy month. The only result is that four of the six unions involved have come out firmly against the Nottingham agreement. As the negotiations have continued, the gulf has widened, not the reverse. It is significant that those four unions represent between one third and one half of teachers' union membership. The Opposition must understand that.

Clearly, Burnham is outdated. It has outlived its usefulness. It has become blunted by abuse. If the unions cannot agree among themselves, and agreement is still out of sight after months of abortive talks, what should my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State do? He has a clear duty imposed on him by the House to ensure adequate teaching for our children. That is what he is doing. That is the object of the legislation.

Government have a duty to the nation's children and a duty to bring order into the negotiations. The Bill, which provides for an interim committee and for consultations with local education authorities and with unions, will be more constructive than Burnham ever was. It will be more constructive than the recent discussions which sought to emphasise differences. Therefore, I urge my hon. Friends and Labour Members to reject the amendments.

Dr. Marek: We have heard a lot of talk from Conservative Members about Burnham having outlived its usefulness and not being worthy of consideration, but we have heard no reason why it has outlived its usefulness or as to the underlying problems in the teaching profesion which have led to so much discontent. It is a pity that Conservative Members, especially the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), simply say, "Something must be done. Therefore, the Secretary of State is introducing this Bill, which will solve the problems."

The Bill will not solve these problems. It will make them worse. Morale in education is at rock bottom already. Teachers have been hammered year in, year out. The Bill will do nothing about that. It will impose one more burden that teachers will have to bear. They will not be able to negotiate freely or, indeed, at all. Consulations will be reduced to a sham. Teachers will be bound hand and foot and will be required to do the bidding of the Secretary of State.

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend made a valid point about teacher morale. He restricted that remark to teachers in primary and secondary education but I am sure that he will agree that the collapse in teacher morale has occurred at all levels in the education system and is not restricted to primary and secondary teachers. Of course, that is a direct result of the Government's policy and their general attack on education.

7.30 pm

Dr. Marek: Of course my hon. Friend is right. The Bill mentions teachers in further education, and we shall discuss that in later amendments.

The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth told us what the Conservative party is about in resisting—as I suspect it will—many of the amendments. It is in favour of grammar schools and against comprehensive schools. Conservative Members believe that grammar schools were good and that comprehensive schools are bad. They believe in the assisted places scheme and in private education. They will resist the amendments — a large range of which seek to improve the Bill in a small way —partly for those reasons. Having said that, even if the amendments were accepted—they cannot all be accepted because they overlap a little — the Bill would still be extremely bad.

Mr. Madel: Will the hon. Gentleman withdraw that remark? Some of us have in our own local education authorities — I stress "our own" — supported a steady, reasonable turnover to comprehensive education. He must withdraw the remark that we are against comprehensive education and not try to smear the entire Conservative party as being against comprehensive education. That is completely wrong and downright mischievous.

Dr. Marek: I reject the charge that my remarks were mischievous. I apologise to the hon. Gentleman if I tainted him when I said that Conservative Members believe that comprehensive education is bad. However, the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth clearly spelt that out. He was, and perhaps is, a Parliamentary Private Secretary at the Department of Education and Science.

Mr. Pawsey: I shall clarify the matter. I speak purely as a freelance. I am not a Parliamentary Private Secretary, although I had the honour of being one to my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government, the hon. Member for Brent, North (Dr. Boyson), in three great Departments of

[Mr. Pawsey]

State: the Department of Education and Science, the DHSS and the Northern Ireland Office. Any qualities which I now possess are entirely due to my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North.

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for making that clear. I thought that he was a Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Department of Education and Science. His views will be made public through the *Official Report*. I am convinced that when his views are published, the public will see the true nature of the Tory party today. Of course, I have always accepted that the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) and several other Conservative Members are interested in comprehensive education, but at present the Conservative party is not interested and does not wish a better education system.

Mr. Flannery: Does my hon. Friend agree that a hard core of the Right who are in command in the Conservative party are totally opposed to comprehensive education? More than 90 per cent. of children are educated in comprehensive schools, but none of them dare attack that fact, because Conservative-voting parents are happy to have their children in comprehensive education.

Dr. Marek: I shall reply to my hon. Friend within the context of the amendments. His point is correct. That is why, when we vote on these amendments, the Government will try to resist them. The amendments would make a bad and odious Bill slightly less odious. But I suspect that nevertheless, the amendments will be voted down.

Mr. Pawsey: So far, the hon. Gentleman's speech has been full of inaccuracies. I am anxious to support the present proven system in the eastern area of Warwickshire because all my children were educated in that system. I speak with knowledge as a parent about what goes on. I tell the hon. Gentleman straight from the shoulder that those schools do a first-rate job. I have no desire to see them wrecked on the altar of political dogma, which is what the hon. Gentleman advocates.

Dr. Marek: I am not saying that some grammar schools do not do a good job. But, of course, it is at the expense of other schools. That is the point. The Conservative party has always been for the privileged classes that know the value of education and can make adequate plans for their offspring. That is not always possible for everyone.

Perhaps in supporting the amendments I can give the House some of the flavour of the problems that have made it necessary for the Government to try to do something. Of course, they did the wrong thing. They produced a Bill which would remove all negotiating rights from the unions. In the 1970s, the teaching profession was, by and large, losing esteem in the public eye. It took the Houghton committee to investigate what should be done, and it produced an excellent report. The Houghton pay scales were not attained, although they were very nearly attained because of the Clegg awards in 1979 and 1980. Since then — this is why the Bill is being discussed today — there has been an erosion of teachers' pay from 1981 and 1982 through to 1986. There has been a slow erosion of teachers' pay and facilities in schools.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Bob Dunn): That is not true.

Dr. Marek: If the Minister says that it is not true, will he please stand up and say so? I am always prepared to be educated. There has been a steady erosion in pay from the Clegg awards until the present.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be difficult for any Secretary of State to understand anything about low pay considering that they are paid £1,600 a week?

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. We must return to the Bill and the amendments.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I shall assist the hon. Gentleman. When we came into office, the index of average teachers' salaries on the retail prices index was taken to be 100. In 1975, under Labour, it was 117. So, in three years of Labour Government it fell from 117 to 100. At the end of the implementation of my proposals in October next year, it will be 127.

Dr. Marek: I am always mindful of the amendments. The Secretary of State's comments are important and pertinent to the amendments, because if everything was well in education neither the Bill nor the amendments would be before us. The Secretary of State quoted the figures at they were when the Conservative party came into office, but of course the Clegg awards were initiated and agreed by the Labour Government. It would have been fairer if he had quoted his figures from the time that the Clegg awards were implemented. That was what I was referring to. From then, salaries went down.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Does my hon. Friend accept that it is much more relevant to compare teachers' salaries with other salaries? At the end of the Houghton awards he teachers' index was 100. It has now increased to 294, yet the average non-manual earnings of men and women increased during the same period from 100 to about 359. Compared with other non-manual workers, teachers have lost out steadily throughout the period, and that losing out accelerated after 1979.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend has given us another set of statistics which show clearly that there has been a steady erosion of teachers' pay since 1980.

Mr. Fatchett: Would it not have ben more accurate to make a comparison between the post-Clegg award and the current level of teachers' salaries? My hon. Friend will have noted that the Secretary of State did not make that comparison. He talked about what the figures may be in a few months' time. If the comparison had been made on the basis on which my hon. Friend was arguing and which I have just suggested, his conclusions would have been valid.

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Perhaps I did not put it as succinctly as I could have done. That is precisely what I meant. If the Secretary of State asks for the figures from his civil servants in the Box, he will discover that that is the true position.

The Bill will remove all negotiating rights from teachers. The Secretary of State will dictate conditions and remuneration. There will be an advisory committee, but he will not have to accept its recommendations. He will not even have to consult very far. He may consult if he wishes, but he need not take any notice of the advice given to him.

The problem has been caused not only by the erosion of teachers' pay during the past five or six years but

because the Government have tried to cut public expenditure wherever possible. It does not matter to them where it is or even if it is a small amount; if it can be saved, the Government will try to save it. The result is that our schools are in the worst state that I can remember. In many cases, equipment is completely inadequate. I could give an example in my constituency, but I suspect that I would be ruled out of order if I did so. The general position is that the capital available and the equipment in schools are at the worst level that I can remember.

Mr. Fatchett: That is recognised by Her Majesty's inspectors.

Dr. Marek: As my hon. Friend says, it is recognised by the inspectorate. That is why we have this problem and that is why the Bill was introduced. We have tabled the amendments so that some collective negotiating machinery can remain after the Bill is passed. I suspect that, with their majority, the Government will railroad the Bill through the House. No doubt we shall have to sit very late tonight, but we shall give the Bill careful and detailed consideration before we let them have it.

Mr. Caborn: Does my hon. Friend know that the Secretary of State visited Sheffield, which has major problems with the fabric of some of its school buildings? Those problems put pressure on the teaching profession, so much so that, for the first time in a long time, the local press has considered the matter important enough to make it a major campaigning item and has circulated all the Members of Parliament for Sheffield to draw the matter sharply to their attention and to try to pressurise the Government into providing better facilities in Sheffield.

What we must also realise—this is unfortunate for many Conservative Members—is that in the inner cities, where unemployment is extremely high, children see their brothers and sisters leaving school without jobs. That in itself harms morale in school and puts pressure on teachers. This Administration have constantly attacked the education service, culminating in the imposition of this Bill. We are tabling amendments to try to mitigate its worst effects. I hope that the Secretary of State will take on board my hon. Friend's point.

7.45 pm

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He rather anticipated my remarks, because I was about to make some progress in my speech by saying that I have received many representations from teachers and from members of the public about the mess into which the Government have got the country. I do not blame the present Secretary of State or the Minister for that; I blame the Government because of their general economic policies and because they believe that all public expenditure is bad and must be cut, if possible.

I have received some material and letters which I wish to place on record because they will add to the debate and may allow Conservative Members to make up their minds, and perhaps to decide that the legislation is not the best way forward and that we should allow collective bargaining and negotiation, which is what the amendments seek to do. First, may I quote from the parliamentary briefing that I received from the NUT. I dare say that many hon. Members received it. It quotes a letter fom the Minister for Education, H. A. Fisher, to Lord Burnham on 25 November 1919:

"I am keenly alive to the great embarrassments and great public disadvantage consequent upon disputes between the Local Education Authorities and the teachers in their employment on the question of salaries"—

things have not changed very much, have they?—

"and when in July last I proposed that the Associations of Local Education Authorities and the National Union of Teachers should come together to form a Standing Joint Committee, I did so in the hope and belief that 'an orderly and progressive solution' of an extremely difficult and complicated problem would be best reached in that way. I felt sure that it was better"—

[HON. MEMBERS: "Boring."] Conservative Members may find it boring—I suspect because they are not interested in making this a better Bill.

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. This is a very important debate and we are not helped at all by sedentary interventions from either side.

Dr. Marek: This is an extremely pertinent quotation from a former Minister for Education in a letter to Lord Burnham. Of course, I am reading it because I could never commit it all to memory. It is not unknown for Conservative Members to quote letters.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: I have a copy of it.

Dr. Marek: The hon. Gentleman might have received a copy, but not everyone has. It is an important quotation that should be placed on the record so that the public knows what is happening.

The letter continues:

"I felt sure that it was better for the Local Education Authorities, to whom under our English system of public education so great responsibilities are assigned, and for the Teaching Profession, and for the State, that the problems should be settled if possible by agreement rather than by direct intervention on my part. My confidence has been fully justified."

That statement is the complete opposite in every way possible to what the Government propose. I defy any Conservative Member to find any common ground between that statement and the Bill. The House should ask why, in the space of 67 years, we have moved from black to white. Something must be wrong if such a thing can happen in a comparatively short period.

During that period, we have had the development of local government. It is true that the local government system has developed, but the basic processes of oganisation in central and local government have remained the same. I subscribe completely to the view expressed in 1919, that the employers and teachers should be able to get on with it and to reach an agreement.

The problem is, of course, that by blocking grant restrictions and by grant holdbacks the Government stop the employers and the teachers from reaching an agreement. The amendment is fundamental to the Bill because it would allow a measure of negotiation between the employers and the teachers, before the Secretary of State exercises any of the powers that he would have under the Bill.

The briefing that I have received from the NUT says:

"The Bill removes all negotiating rights and establishes in their stead an Advisory Committee with members appointed by the Secretary of State himself. . . . The Secretary of State has depicted the Bill as a measure to bring to an end the present dispute over teachers' pay. This is a deliberate misrepresentation of the purpose of the legislation which seeks to conceal the implications for democracy and civil rights. The Bill removes negotiating rights for teachers, and does not seek to improve the negotiating arrangements."

[Dr. Marek]

The NUT can say that again, because it is absolutely right. The Secretary of State's proposals make no provision for negotiation, but sweep it away completely. The teachers would be left almost on their own. The Government tried that with GCHQ—I do not think that they will win that argument — and they are now trying again with the teachers.

Other public servants, as well as other professions, have national joint councils of some sort, for example, there is the building and civil engineering NJC, the engineering NJC, and the electricians NJC. The chief executives and the chief officers of local authorities have NJCs, as do the probation service, the justices' clerks, the municipal airports, and the Police Service Federated Ranks. Local authority fire brigades also have councils where negotiations can take place. The industrial Civil Service has a joint co-ordinating committee and the non-industrial Civil Service has the national Whitley council. The National Health Service has eight Whitley councils including a general Whitley council, and there are councils for ambulance officers, administrative and clerical grades, ancillary staff, community dental services staff, medical and hospital staff, scientific and professional staff, and laboratory staff and technicians.

All those public servants have co-ordinating councils of some sort. So, why are teachers' negotiating rights to be swept away? I shall gladly give way to any Conservative Member who can tell me why negotiating rights will be swept away from the teachers.

Mr. Caborn: My hon. Friend has just read out a very interesting list. If one considers the present actions of the Secretary of State and applies them to the joint co-ordinating councils and to other organisations or negotiating bodies, the trade unions in this country appear to be coming under tremendous pressure from the actions of this very centralised Government, and that will affect many tens of thousands of workers.

Although the House is in Committee, our discussions today have serious implications for many trade unions. Within a few months the Government could centralise, or take away the negotiating rights of many thousands of workers. The Government are becoming very dictatorial and appear to be moving further to the Right. In years to come, imagine that——

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not make a speech; he must make an intervention.

Mr. Caborn: There is not much danger of making a speech when my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) is on his feet because he will be speaking for at least another three hours. I need clarification on points as they arise. My hon. Friend made the important point that the Bill is one of the most serious to come before the House in terms of the wider trade union movement.

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for underlining the importance of the points that I have made. The Bill is special because it relates only to the teachers. It does not even apply to teachers in further education, to whom, at present, the Bill seeks to give some negotiating rights. That is why we have tabled the amendments. My hon. Friend has made an important point and I hope that he will rise and seek to catch your eye, Mr. Armstrong, later in the debate, and make that point in his own way and in his own good time. I should be interested to hear what he has to say.

The amendments seek to retain some sort of negotiating machinery and some consultation between the teachers' and the employers' organisations. Although there were problems with the Burnham committee, an agreement was signed between four out of the six authorities about 10 days ago. However, the Government made it clear that they would not fund the full cost—whatever pay levels were awarded by that agreement. Of course, if the Government do not fund the full cost, the local authorities and the employers' organisations are subject to grant withdrawals, grant holdbacks and to losing grants if they decide to pay more than the Government are prepared to fund. That is a serious criticism of the present situation in local government as it relates to the employers.

There would be no problem if the Government did not interfere. The Government could even say, "If you go over and above what we recommend, we shall not fund it and you will have to pay for it out of your rate income." In that case, there would be no problem. Unfortunately, the Government insist, as their overriding policy, on grant holdbacks, on blocking grants and on trying to strangle the local authorities. In the recent haggling, the result has been that employers and teachers have not known which way to turn, so they are taking a long time to reach an agreement.

Another problem besetting the Government is that many of the employers' organisations are Labour-controlled. I should be deviating again from the amendment if I were to pursue that argument further so I shall leave it. However, I am sure that that fact is at the back of the Government's mind.

I have received correspondence from the Clwyd division of the NUT. As I do not wish to take too long, I shall not read out the whole letter.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Read it out.

Dr. Marek: I have received a lot of letters. However, I shall quote just one paragraph from a letter from Mr. Gordon Donaldson, the general secretary of the Clwyd division, who has explained the Bill succinctly, in a way that the Government would not dare:

> "We see this Bill as a device to set aside the agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service negotiated at ACAS by the Unions and the Local Authority Employers. The Bill, if passed, may well ensure an end to peace and calm in the schools of your constituency".

I take that very seriously indeed. That is why we have tabled the amendments. They would at least allow some negotiation.

Mr. Caborn: Is my hon. Friend's constituent a teacher, and, if so, is he in primary or secondary education, or in some other part of the profession?

Dr. Marek: He is a teacher, whether in a primary or secondary school I do not know. That criticism is levelled at me, and my hon. Friend has caught me out. However, I do know that Mr. Donaldson has long experience of the profession and is committed to raising education standards in Britain. He has the welfare of the children at heart, which the Government do not, whatever the ritual mouthings of various Conservative Members when they

ask, "What about the children?" If they were really concerned about the children, they would have good, well-paid teachers who considered themselves to be professionals with a job to do to the best of their ability, who had the equipment necessary to do it. The Government do not do such things. They try to cut money and lower morale as much as possible. Then, like the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), they say, "Look at these dreadful comprehensives. Look at private schools instead. They are a lot better." I think that I have interpreted what the hon. Gentleman said reasonably correctly.

8 pm

I have a copy of a letter that was sent to the Secretary of State, signed by Doug McAvoy, the deputy general secretary of the NUT. It is an extremely good letter and I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) agrees. No doubt that is why Conservative Members made disdainful noises when I referred to it. That letter addressed all the problems, in particular the withdrawal of negotiating rights, and the amendments have been tabled to try to retrieve the position. The letter is also signed by Fred Smithies, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters/ Union of Women Teachers, Geoff Beynon and Joyce Baird, joint general secretaries of the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association and Peter Snape, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association. It is dated 5 December 1986.

I appreciate that some hon. Members have a copy of the letter, but some do not. It says:

"Dear Secretary of State, The recent negotiations with the employers have covered four issues, one of which was that of future negotiating machinery."

We know that if the Bill is enacted without these amendments there will be no future negotiating machinery. The letter continues:

"Considerable publicity has been given to the differences of view held by the various teacher organisations on the total package agreed with the local authority employers. Whilst there may be some division of view about the whole of the package, there are no divisions among the four undersigned teacher organisations on the issue of negotiating machinery."

Those are the major teacher organisations involved on the Burnham committee. They command much respect within that committee. Indeed, they command a majority within the Burnham committee.

The letter goes on to say:

"Section 7 of the provisional agreement sets out the agreed views of the teacher organisations together with employers."

I shall not dwell on section 7, because that matter will be more properly addressed when we consider the next set of amendments. However, the letter is pertinent to the amendments that we are considering and the complete abrogation of the negotiating machinery.

The letter continues:

"It provides"—

the agreement—

"for a National Joint Council to deal with pay and other conditions of service for teachers and in so doing acknowledges the need for discussions with you on your role in the new negotiating machinery."

The unions are even prepared to go to the Secretary of State and say that they would like to discuss the matter with him and come to an agreement. They are all reasonable, fair-minded and moderate people who want the best for our children and the country. They do not want to see strife, and they want to see morale within the industry increase. Therefore, they are prepared to see the Secretary of State to consider what can be done.

However instead we see a Bill that is being rushed through. It received its Second Reading on Monday, and today, two days later, we are discussing it in Committee and the Government think that there is so little in the Bill that it can be given its Third Reading before midnight. That is simply not true. The Bill is one of the most serious that I remember in my life on this planet, in as much as it takes negotiating rights away from employees.

Mr. Caborn: My hon. Friend referred to a letter from the NUT to the Secretary of State. Does he have the reply from the Secretary of State? I am sure that the Committee would be pleased to be given its flavour.

Dr. Marek: I do not have the reply, if indeed there was one. I could give way to the Secretary of State, but it might be better if the Secretary of State, if he has drafted a reply, or had one drafted for him, would give us its contents when he replies to the debate, which will not be long now.

Mr. Caborn: If the Secretary of State does not do that, what does my hon. Friend think might have been in the Secretary of State's reply to the NUT?

Dr. Marek: I do not think that I should attempt to give an opinion. I shall only say that I think that the reply is the Bill, and that is why we have had to put down the amendments that we are debating. We have the Bill. We have the Secretary of State's answer. I do not think that he will withdraw it, although that is what he should do. If he did, I am sure that my hon. Friends on the Opposition Front Bench would be happy not to press the amendments. Let us go away and see whether we can come to an agreement. If we can do that, there clearly will be no need to press the amendments.

Let me finish the letter. Its final paragraph says:

"We are united in our opposition to your Bill 'Teachers' Pay and Conditions' which removes from teacher organisations the right to direct negotiations. We urge you to reconsider your position and to accept the principle that any new negotiating machinery for teachers' pay and conditions of service should include direct negotiation."

That is a sensible and reasonable request. The signatories are prepared to see the Secretary of State to hammer out a generally agreed solution.

It is not too late to do that. I do not accept the reasons given by some Conservative Members that this has been going on for two years and that it is time to put a stop to it; that we should get a sword and cut the Gordian knot and impose a settlement. There is no need for that. Reasonable people would not go that way. However, in many of their acts the Government have not been reasonable or responsible. They have been guided by one aim above everything else—to give more privilege to the rich and to cut public spending for those who need it.

Mr. Nellist: Some hon. Members may not be familiar with the Gordian knot. If that term is to be used again, it might be to the advantage of the Committee if my hon. Friend were to explain its background.

Dr. Marek: I suspect that I would be ruled out of order. I see, Mr. Armstrong, that you are nodding vigorously. I have tried your patience on a number of occasions. However, I have tried to keep within the ambit of the

[Dr. Marek]

debate and to address myself to the amendments. However, I have not yet reached the amendments and I want to consider them in a little more detail later.

I have a letter from the Secondary Heads Association. One might have thought that it would support the Secretary of State, as the National Association of Head Teachers has done. However, it takes a different line. That letter, dated 2 December, from T. P. Snape, the general secretary says:

"1. The SHA cannot accept the principle that Teachers Pay and Conditions should be determined by the Secretary of State advised by a Committee on which they have no representation as of right. While we accept that the Burnham Committee has outlived its usefulness, and that both pay and conditions should be negotiated in the same forum, we nevertheless remain strongly of the opinion that settlement imposed by the government, even after consultation with those who the Minister wishes to consult, is unjust, undemocratic, and in the last analysis, totally unworkable. You cannot legislate to ensure the commitment of teachers; our fear is that many currently in the profession will simply ignore any conditions imposed by statute, and that the Government will be impotent to do anything about it. In short, we see this proposed legislation as inevitably leading to further protracted periods of unrest and disruption in the schools."

What can be clearer than that?

Mr. Caborn: It is tragic.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend says that it is tragic. "Tragic" might be the right word to describe it.

Mr. Forth: It is magic.

Dr. Marek: The hon. Gentleman says that it is magic. I do not know whether his selectors will think that it is magic when they see what is likely to happen. The lowering of morale, which is already low, will lead to even more difficulties. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will at least share with me the sentiment that we want better education for our children, not education that is continuously disrupted by outside influences.

I have here, too, a letter dated 3 December 1986 from the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, the career teachers union. It is a long letter, which contains a very important passage relating to these amendments. It deals with the abolition of the negotiating and consultation procedures. It regards their abolition as the most damaging part of the Bill. I, too, believe that it is the most damaging part of the Bill. If the negotiating procedures were to be swept away, we should enter a period of discontent and difficulty in our schools.

The NAS/UWT says:

"On the question of negotiating machinery the NAS/UWT has led the way in calling for fundamental changes to the present structure. We recognise Burnham's failings and support proposals to unite negotiations of pay and conditions of service in one forum. We are very much opposed to the attempt to take determination of these matters completely out of the hands of the directly elected representatives of the nation's teachers."

The NAS/UWT there says in unequivocal terms that it does not like this part of the Bill and the sweeping way of negotiating rights. Why, therefore, are the Government so obdurate? Would it not be possible for them to introduce a new clause in the other place that would allow for more than just consultation, even if it amounted to only the professional teachers' organisations having the right to representation on the advisory committee? However, that has to be left for the schedule and I shall not delve into that topic, because if I were to do so I should be ruled out of order straight away.

In its letter, the NAS/UWT also says:

"Such a move would cause considerable resentment among the vast majority of teachers who naturally want the right to have their voice heard in detailed discussions over the complex issues of teachers' pay and conditions. A more realistic way of seeking to reduce future conflict in negotiations would be the establishment of a mechanism to maintain the level of teachers' pay in relation to their comparators. We note with considerable regret that such a guarantee is another important element missing in the recently"——

8.15 pm

Mr. Caborn: I am wondering, Mr. Armstrong, whether it would be possible for my hon. Friend to give the date of the letter from which he is quoting? The Committee is thankful to my hon. Friend for bringing it to its attention.

The First Deputy Chairman: I hope that the hon. Gentleman does not intend to read another letter.

Dr. Marek: I am nearly at the end of the letters from which I wish to quote, Mr. Armstrong. There is only one more, I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) for his timely intervention.

The letter is dated 3 December. It then says:

"We note with considerable regret that such a guarantee is another important element missing in the recently signed agreement."

If the Secretary of State were to agree to the NAS/UWT's suggestion and provide machinery whereby salaries were fixed by means of comparators to arrive at a settlement, it would be accepted by the teaching profession. It is accepted by the police, the Army and the fire service. Why is it not possible to have something like that for the teaching profession? The NAS/UWT's suggestion is sensible. It would do away with the need for clause 1 and these amendments.

Finally——

Mr. Clement Freud (Cambridgeshire, North-East): Oh, no.

Dr. Marek: I hasten to assure the hon. Gentleman that I am referring only to the letters, not to the final part of my speech.

The Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association has also written an interesting letter. It says:

"As a matter of principle, however, we totally reject the suggestion that the Government's interest and your responsibilities are such as to justify the effective abolition of collective bargaining procedures between the organisations which represent teachers and their employing authorities.

Not merely do we regard the rights of employees to negotiate direct with their employers as being a fundamental characteristic of a democratic society, we are convinced that orderly industrial relations can in the long term flow only from such a process."

A professional organisation is again saying that it is convinced that if this is to be put right it can be put right only if we retain some form of negotiating procedure, to which the amendments address themselves.

The union then says:

"We therefore cannot accept that the Government is justified in seeking to confer upon you (and your possible successors)"—

the letter is written to the Secretary of State—

"the power to determine teachers' pay and conditions as you think fit. Nor do we accept that the consultative arrangements

the Bill proposes are at all adequate to ensure that teachers will consider your determinations to be equitable. It is, in our view, far more likely that teachers, deeply resentful of terms and conditions implemented by government imposition, will lose all impulse to contribute the commitment which lies beyond their purely contractual obligations."

That is a new point that is not mentioned in the other letters. Teachers do much more than their contracts demand. It is upon that commitment that the quality of the education service relies.

The letter contiues:

"We urge the Government with all the sincerity at our command to reconsider what we are convinced to be an unwise and tragically counter-productive initiative. Because of the widespread interest in the matter, I am releasing this letter to the media."

I hope that the Government will take that plea seriously. If the quality of teaching is to be over and above that which would be regarded by the Secretary of State as adequate, teachers have to be motivated. If they have to be motivated, they have to be satisfied with their terms and conditions of employment. They have to be satisfied with their salary. They must have high morale.

If clause 1 is not amended—I hasten to add that even if it is, it will still be a bad Bill—those things will not be achieved. I have letters from teahers' organisations, from the SHA, the NAS/UWT, and the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, which spell it out clearly. They say, "Why cannot the Secretary of State give us something, and say that some negotiation will be allowed at a future stage?" If that cannot be done now in Committee, we shall do it later in the other place.

I should like to refer next to the International Labour Organisation convention that was ratified by the United Kingdom in March 1980. It deals with negotiations and the rights of individuals acting collectively to take part in collective negotiations and agreements affecting their terms and conditions of service.

Mr. Caborn: As my hon. Friend has now been speaking for nearly an hour, I wonder whether I can summarise that part of his speech. For a long time the Secretary of State has been rejecting the opinion of many professional bodies, and he is bulldozing legislation through the House of Commons against all that professional advice. On the other hand, he is trying to tell young people that teachers are responsible and should be looked up to, yet he is denigrating them by rejecting all that professional advice. Then he says that the teachers should act professionally towards the young people. Does that summarise the first hour of my hon. Friend's speech?

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his succinct summary. I have taken a little longer, but it is an extremely important matter, to which the Government should pay attention. I am sorry that so far we have not been able to make them see the error of their ways in introducing the Bill.

Mr. Nellist: I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) will agree with this, because he was on the same Committee as I was. In a previous incarnation, when the Secretary of State was at the Department of the Environment, there was the same seeking of professional opinion and setting it aside during the abolition of the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils. Perhaps history is repeating itself, as can be seen in the first hour of the contribution by my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek).

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend is right. I do not know whether the Secretary of State is master in his own Department or whether he is doing the bidding of his mistress in No. 10 Downing street.

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): On a point of order, Mr. Armstrong. One of the Ministers who is now present will reply to the important points that my hon. Friend is making, yet the three of them are just talking.

The First Deputy Chairman: The hon. Gentleman knows that that is not a matter for me.

Dr. Marek: This is important. I should like to rephrase what I have just said. I hope that the Secretary of State is master in his own house, in the Department of Education and Science, and not doing the bidding of the Prime Minister at No. 10 Downing street. I suspect that he is doing the bidding of the Prime Minister, but it would be nice if, for once, he broke out and said, "In view of all the opinion in all parts of the country, let us treat the teachers like the grown-up, responsible beings they are and allow them negotiations and some say in how their profession should develop." That is all that we in the Opposition are asking for. Is it too much to have some movement by the Government on that issue?

Let me make progress and refer to the ILO convention. I shall not be long. [HON. MEMBERS: "Go on."] The convention was ratified by the United Kingdom in March 1980. I am at a loss because I have two pieces of paper — a National Union of Teachers' briefing and a photocopy of the convention.

Ms. Clare Short: Read it out.

Dr. Marek: I will. Unfortunately, it is referred to as article 4 of ILO convention 98 in the NUT briefing, and in the photocopy it is article 7, under part IV:

"Procedures for Determining Terms and Conditions of Employment".

One must be right.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): It is article 7.

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. In that case, I shall confine myself to article 7. It states:

"Measures appropriate to national conditions shall be taken, where necessary, to encourage and promote the full development and utilisation of machinery for negotiation of terms and conditions of employment between the public authorities concerned and public employees' organisations, or of such other methods as will allow representatives of public employees to participate in the determination of these matters."

Hon. Members should note the last few words. Where are they in the Bill? Where is participation mentioned? There is no participation. It is diktat by the Secretary of State for Education and Science. He will decide. He will consult if he wishes, make a recommendation, implement it and there will be no appeal. We shall all like it or lump it. That is the way that the Government are going. They will not succeed.

I am not a lawyer. Perhaps some of my hon. Friends will develop this point later. I wonder whether we should be debating the amendments and whether the Bill should be before us in its present form because it is counter to the ILO convention ratified by the United Kingdom.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): My hon. Friend is making a serious point. There is a widespread belief that the Bill breaches international law, including an ILO convention. Like him, I am not a lawyer. Does he believe that the Attorney-General has been consulted on those matters by the Government and the Prime Minister? Has the Solicitor-General been consulted? If they have, does my hon. Friend think that they have offered a view and, if so, what does he think that view is?

Mr. Barnett: Did he write a letter?

Mr. Madden: Does my hon. Friend think that if they were consulted they were encouraged, perhaps over a weekend, to write a letter that was private and confidential? If that was so, is my hon. Friend not as surprised as I am that the letter has not been widely leaked and brought into the public domain via the Press Association?

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. If the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) pursues that line, he will be out of order.

Dr. Marek: I take your advice, Mr. Armstrong, before entering on that line. Let me make just one sort comment. I hope that some of my hon. Friends who know more about the legal side of these matters than I do will present to use an exposition of the reasons why clause 1 could be against the ILO convention.

Mr. Nellist: I understand the reluctance of my hon. Friend to get involved in the Australian connection. One thing puzzles me. My hon. Friend may come to it later. It is the date of deratification of an ILO convention. A year or so ago I took part in many debates in the House on ILO convention 26, which was deratified by the Government. That convention protected the wages of people under 21. A year's notice had to be given before the ILO convention could be deratified. Would the Government have to give similar notice when applying for deratification of this ILO convention? If that was so, it might delay the passage of the Bill.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend makes an important point. If I give the information on the convention, perhaps my hon. Friend can comment on it in his own speech if he catches your eye, Sir Paul. However, I do not know the answer to my hon. Friend's question. I know that some of the amendments seek to change the date of the Bill's implementation from, I think, 1987 to 1988, or from 1986 to 1987. I just wonder whether we were wise to table our amendments, as they may give the Government an excuse to deratify the convention, if that is what they have to do for the Bill to be enacted. However, I am an eternal optimist, and I still hope that the Government will see the folly of their ways and will change the Bill in some way.

8.30 pm

Mr. Freud: As we come into the second hour of the hon. Gentleman's speech, I wonder whether he can give the House some indication of its shape, so that we can pace ourselves.

Dr. Marek: I am happy to reply to the hon. Gentleman. I apologise to him if he wishes to speak later in the debate.

Mr. Freud *indicated dissent.*

Dr. Marek: I see that he is shaking his head, but in case he does wish to speak, I shall try to bring my remarks to an expeditious conclusion—[HON. MEMBERS: "No".] The hon. Gentleman asked me about the shape of my speech, and the answer is that I am trying to get the Government to think again and to allow some sort of negotiation.

Later, I shall go quickly through the amendments. Several options have been put forward, and I am grateful to my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Opposition Front Bench for thinking up so many possibilities, as they give the Secretary of State something to go on. But the right hon. Gentleman can also fall back on letters from the teachers' organisations promising co-operation and help, and asking why they, as sensible and reasonable people, cannot talk to him in order to hammer out an agreement.

In pressing these amendments, we are trying to give the Government a partial way out. The Bill will still be bad, but if they accept some of the amendments or reject them but introduce similar amendments in the other place we shall, in some way, have succeeded. That is not a party point. I believe that there is unease among certain sections of the Conservative party. That unease may not be the same as the unease that we feel, but some Conservative Members are uneasy about the fact that if the Bill is unamended, it will give the Secretary of State draconian powers to impose conditions, and will enable him to do without any negotiating machinery. That is why we have tabled the amendments. We wish to enable some sort of negotiations to take place.

Article 8 of the ILO convention is very short, and says:

"The settlement of disputes arising in connection with the determination of terms and conditions of employment shall be sought, as may be appropriate to national conditions, through negotiation"—

hon. Members should note the use of the word "negotiation"—

"between the parties or through independent and impartial machinery, such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration, established in such a manner as to ensure the confidence of the parties involved."

Article 8 says that there does not have to be negotiation. We, of course, would like negotiation, but if we cannot have that, article 8 at least offers a way out. It talks about "mediation, conciliation and arbitration". The confidence of the parties involved must be maintained, and the machinery must be impartial.

But with respect to the Secretary of State, the Bill will not give teachers or their organisations any such confidence, because they will have no say about who is appointed to the advisory body. They will suspect that the whole business will be rigged, so that they will not only have no say but will be trodden on by the Government, just as they have been for the past five or six years.

I do not apologise for reading out another two articles, as they are important in that they might make the Government think again. The ILO convention on the right to organise and collective bargaining, convention No. 98, was ratified by the United Kingdom in June 1950. I do not know whether we are withdrawing from it, but I should like to read out two of its articles. I shall be brief, but I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) will pursue the subject at greater length later.

Articles 3 and 4 state:

"Machinery appropriate to national conditions shall be established, where necessary, for the purpose of ensuring respect for the right to organise as defined in the preceding articles.

Measures appropriate to national conditions shall be taken, where necessary, to encourage and promote the full development and utilisation of machinery for voluntary negotiation"—

the reference is to voluntary negotiation, but the word "negotiation" is still there—

"between employers or employers' organisations and workers' organisations, with a view to the regulation of terms and conditions of employment by means of collective agreements."

I could say a lot more, but it does not need saying. The four articles that I have read out are clear and succinct. The interpretation of them by any reasonable man in the street——

Ms. Clare Short: What about the women?

Dr. Marek: I apologise to my hon. Friend. In this House, the man includes the woman, and the woman includes the man.

Any reasonable man or woman in the street would think that clause 1 runs counter to the spirit of the ILO conventions, and perhaps to the letter of the law and to conventions that the United Kingdom has signed in times past. I shall be interested to hear what the Secretary of State has to say. I hope that he will answer some of our points honestly and that he will not do what some Ministers do, in shifting the argument sideways and producing statistics that do not meet the criticisms made.

I hope that he will not try to acquit himself like that, but that he will be honest and will tell us if some of our arguments have merit.

Mr. Nellist: I do not wish to truncate this important part of my hon. Friend's speech on the ILO conventions. However, it occurred to me that other international treaties or obligations might be abrogated by the clause, especially if it is not amended. I was thinking of the European social charter. Does my hon. Friend have any material on that, so that he can at least enlighten Opposition Members?

Dr. Marek: I do have some material, but I am sorry to say that it is not with me. Earlier, there must have been 14 or 15 Tory Members in the Chamber and only about six or seven Labour Members, but there are now so few Tory Members in the Chamber that a Labour Member has had to go and sit on their side in order to make up the numbers. I do not know whether that means that some Conservative Members are not interested in having a decent system of education. It is a great pity that so few Conservative Members should be present.

Amendment No. 2 is merely consequential, but amendments Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 also appear on the Order Paper. The Secretary of State has no doubt read them and taken them into consideration. As my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) said, those amendments would not introduce a form of negotiation, but they might open the way for that.

Amendment No. 8 states:

"(1A) Subsection (1) of this section shall come into effect after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State, and no such Order shall come into effect until after such period of consultation as appears to him to be reasonable following publication of proposals in the form of a White Paper as to arrangements for determining the remuneration of teachers.".

Proposals for the remuneration of teachers could no doubt be agreed between the professional organisations concerned, and between the local education authorities. I know the Government's complexion, so I am not asking at this stage for free negotiations between the different parties. However, amendment No. 8 would allow an element of negotiation or at least, perhaps, consultation so that the professional organisations are heard and partake in any decisions.

If the Secretary of State does not like that amendment, there is always amendment No. 9.

Mr. Cohen: That is a good one.

Dr. Marek: I agree with my hon. Friend, it is a good one. It states:

"(1A) Subsection (1) of this section shall come into effect after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State, and no such Order shall be made until after the coming into effect of an agreement with respect to the remuneration of school teachers (and such other matters as the parties to that agreement may determine) agreed between organisations representing school teachers and their employers.'."

I prefer that amendment. It may be that the Secretary of State prefers the previous amendment. I would be happy with the previous amendment if he thinks that amendment No. 9 goes too far.

If the Secretary of State does not like those two amendments, there is amendment No. 10.

Mr. Fatchett: Will my hon. Friend be negotiating with the Secretary of State?

Dr. Marek: I am hoping to concentrate his mind on this matter. There is a serious point here. We have had letters and a lobby this afternoon and Labour Members have had much comment from their constituents and have received many letters about the state of our schools and the education system.

Amendment No. 10 states:

"No such Order shall come into effect until after the publication of a report by the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service as to arrangements for the remuneration of teachers.'."

I will not say too much about that, because we can discuss it with the next set of amendments. It is an important amendment. Let us see what ACAS has to say about it. ACAS is a body that I think has earned the respect of employees and employers. I hope that Conservative Members will agree with that. It is an extremely good body. Why not let it do something about this matter? I would be prepared to go so far as to let the Secretary of State give ACAS the terms of reference, but let ACAS see what it can produce in order to bring about an acceptable solution between the employers in one corner, the employees' organisations in the other and the Government in a third corner.

If the Secretary of State does not like amendment No. 10, there is amendment No. 11. It was tabled, again, by my hon. Friends on the Front Bench. It states:

"no such Order shall come into effect until after the laying before Parliament of a report by a Parliamentary tribunal of inquiry appointed to examine and report on arrangements for determining the remuneration of teachers.'."

I would need to be persuaded that that would be the best way forward. I do not know whether parliamentary tribunals of inquiry would come up with the beef at the end of the day. I would prefer the ACAS solution or amendment No. 9. We do not know what is in the Secretary of State's mind. It may be that he would like amendment No. 11 so that he could have a quick, short, sharp parliamentary tribunal of inquiry which could produce a solution.

[Dr. Marek]

If the Secretary of State does not like that, there is amendment No. 12. It contains another suggestion. I shall not read it all, so that I do not detain the House too long. It states:

"no such Order shall come into effect before the conclusion of consultation with associations of local education authorities, such organisations representing school teachers as appear to him to be concerned, and any local education authority with whom consultation appears to him to be desirable, and the laying before Parliament of a report of the results of such consultation.'."

That in no way seeks to tie the Secretary of State's hands. it says that he can consult those whom he thinks are interested parties. Therefore, he can decide with whom he consults. It does not dictate to him in any way whatsover. Why can he not do that? He can consult and then he would have to lay before Parliament a report of the results of that consultation.

I am not very keen on amendment No. 12. It is better to have amendment No. 12 than no amendment at all, but I would prefer some of the earlier amendments.

Ms. Clare Short: Amendment No. 9.

8.45 pm

Dr. Marek: Yes, I think that Opposition Members consider amendment No. 9 to be the best so far.

If the Secretary of State does not like any of those amendments, there is amendment No. 13. — *[Interruption.]* It is to clause 1. Again, I shall not read it all. It makes another suggestion as to what the Secretary of State could do. It states:

"no such Order shall come into effect until after the laying before Parliament of a report by an independent inquiry into arrangements for determining the future remuneration of teachers whose members shall be appointed in equal proportions by the Secretary of State, organisations representing school teachers and associations of local education authorities."

I do not think that the Secretary of State can plead ignorance about what to do, because there are plenty of amendments to choose from. I am not particularly keen on amendment No. 13. It would be a little bit stilted and could produce an ungainly sequence of events. Having said that, I would rather have amendment No. 13 than no amendment at all. My preference is still for amendment No. 9. I expect that the Secretary of State would not want that one, as I recommend amendment No. 10. That is probably the professional amendment that he could go for in his capacity.

If he does not like amendment No. 13, there is amendment No. 14. It is slightly different. Whatever the Secretary of State does, an order should be laid before the House and approved by resolution of both Houses. I do not mind whether he does that, but he should do something along the lines of one of the amendments I have mentioned.

There are many other amendments in the sequence that we are discussing. Amendment No. 17 is very clear to hon. Members who have read it. It states:

"leave out lines 7 to 12 and insert ', together with conditions of employment, by measures which encourage and promote the full development and realisation of machinery for negotiation of terms and conditions of employment between local education authorities and teachers' unions and associations, or by such other methods as will allow representatives of such unions, associations and local authorities to participate in the determination of these matters.'."

It is an extremely important amendment. The Secretary of State must do something that would allow professional teacher organisations and LEAs to be able to negotiate.

We must remember that at the end of the day it is the local authorities that provide most of the money in the teachers' pay bill, not the Government. It used to be different, but Government policies, such as they are, change. It is now the LEAs that pay the most. If we could change the local government system so that if LEAs want to pay over and above the odds they have to find the money from their own rate income, it would get rid of many problems. I recommend amendment No. 17 to the House. It is an eminently suitable amendment and I hope that it is passed.

Amendment Nos. 18 and 19 are basically in the same tenor. Amendment No. 18 states:

"no such provisions shall have the effect of altering the terms of any agreement as to remuneration or other matters between employers and organisations representing teachers agreed before the passage of this Act.'.

That would be sensible, because the Bill will already do a lot of damage and there is no point rubbing salt into the wounds by retrospectively altering terms and conditions. Teachers do not know what the Secretary of State will do. The Bill gives him so many overriding and arbitrary powers that he can do almost anything. Clearly an amendment along the lines of No. 18 is very necessary. I hope that we will have a separate vote on that amendment as it is one of the most important amendments before us.

Amendment No. 19 states:

"line 11, leave paragraphs *(a)* and *(b)* and insert 'in the cases of school teachers and teachers in further education, by provisions agreed between, or settled in a manner agreed between teachers and their employers.'."

I shall not say any more about that. It is a simple matter of trying to get agreement, consultation, participation and negotiation between the different parties. That is the only way that we will make progress in a civilised society. We ought to have moved from the slave state where one has people who dictate to others. We have moved on, I hope, at least in Europe, from the age of dictatorship. That was 40 years ago, not so long ago, but we should have moved on. We should move on now from the age of dictatorial Secretaries of State for Education and Science to having Secretaries of State for Education and Science who see their role as that of mediators, to guide, persuade and educate and to get the agreement, grudging or not, and voluntary co-operation of the parties involved. Unfortunately, we do not have that.

Amendment No. 20, which is very short, is in the same vein and I commend it to the House. No doubt my hon. Friends will wish to comment on that important amendment in their contributions. I shall also not comment on amendment No. 22, which is on similar lines.

If the Secretary of State does not like any of the amendments, there is new clause 7 or new clause 8, which is quite comprehensive. New clause 7 states:

'Subject to the further provisions of this Act the remuneration and conditions of employment of teachers shall be in accordance with provisions agreed between or settled in a manner agreed between teachers and their employers.'.

That is a straightforward statement of what we all want, but although it is only three lines it is probably too big for the Secretary of State to accept. Nevertheless, he should at least accept the principle and put down a properly drafted amendment giving reality to that principle at a later stage.

New clause 8, which I shall not read out, offers another possibility if the Secretary of State does not like any of the amendments. I pay tribute to my hon. Friends on the Front Bench for tabling so many amendments and

offering the Secretary of State so many possibilities. There is certainly plenty of material in new clause 8 that the Secretary of State could usefully consider. I am sure that he has read it—it would be rude to suggest that he has not—and I shall be interested to hear his views.

I have dealt at some length with the arguments against this draconian Bill. I have been a Member of Parliament for only three and a half years or so——

Ms. Clare Short: It seems like a lifetime.

Dr. Marek: —and I have never seen a Bill with such arbitrary and draconian powers. It might almost be described as Stalinist. The Secretary of State cannot wish to go down in history as one who acted like a dictator from the middle years of this century or a slave owner from an earlier stage in the development of civilisation. He ought to want to be remembered as the person who brought peace to the teaching profession, improved standards of education, raised the morale of teaching staff and improved the quality of equipment for our children, but so far I have heard nothing to suggest that that is his wish. What is wrong? Can he not think on his own rather than taking the Prime Minister's advise all the time? Will he not think of the children and of the teachers who want to serve those children and accept at least one of the amendments?

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: I shall be brief. I do not intend to emulate the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) who spoke for about an hour and a half.

Conservative Members have full confidence in the Secretary of State and in the Bill. We also have full confidence in the Secretary of State and in the Bill. We also have full confidence in the parents and in the children who will be going to school to be taught by teachers who will be better paid and have better promotion prospects, greater incentives and a genuine career structure, which the hon. Members for Wrexham and for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) seem to want to knock.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Bruinvels: No. I have not been surprised by the cant and complaints from the Opposition——

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Sir Paul. You will recall that a number of points of order were raised at the beginning of the Committee. The Leader of the House said that there had been difficulties at the printers so that the amendments were not available for members of the Committee until 11.30 am today. I should be most grateful if you would make inquiries to see what the printing situation is tonight. Hon. Members will clearly be anxious to have copies of *Hansard* available at the correct hour tomorrow morning so that everyone can read the excellent speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek). We shall also require further copies of amendments that have not been debated by them. Perhaps you could intervene to brief us on the printing situation, as it is clearly a matter of great concern to the Committee.

The Second Deputy Chairman (Sir Paul Dean): The hon. Gentleman answered his first point when he said that the Leader of the House had dealt with the position regarding the amendments which are available. I am sure that the *Official Report* will do its very best to keep up with our proceedings. I cannot add to that.

Mr. Bruinvels: The hon. Member for Durham, North and his hon. Friends have introduced the Opposition amendments, none of which I or, I believe, any of my hon. Friends support. Nevertheless, it is the right of the Opposition to bring forward amendments for debate.

What depresses me is the negative, defeatist way in which they have done so. Their attitude mirrors that of the NUS—[HON. MEMBERS: "Who?"] The National Union of Students has also always used bully-boy tactics. The National Union of Teachers, for which the Opposition seem to be the mouthpiece, wants peace on its own terms rather than on terms that will help the majority of teachers. The NUT has only 216,000 members while the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers has 122,000 and the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association has 118,000, so the NUT no longer represents all the teachers.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Bruinvels: After the events in Nottingham and Coventry, it is clear that all the amendments before us have been tabled in conjunction with the NUT in a bloody-minded attempt to prevent any kind of agreement being reached. As my hon. Friend the Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) implied earlier , it is obviously a campaign to gain electoral advantage. They will not win. In all the leaflets that, unfortunately, have been quoted by the hon. Member for Wrexham including one called "The Right to Negotiate", there was not one reference to the children. That is what annoys me most.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned Mr. Fisher, the Minister for Education; but Mr. Fisher immediately went on to say that we all want peace in our schools. Leaving out that reference does not fool me because the attitude of the NUT is not likely to lead to peace. I want our schools to be free of union battles on school ground. While Labour Members continue their disruptive campaign, there will be nothing but continued unrest. Our children are suffering.

There have been negotiations at ACAS, but it has not been helpful to us. The Government put forward five allowances, yet ACAS put forward only two. The great concern is that ACAS could not formulate the important salary structure that we need with adequate financial incentives for all teachers to ensure that each teacher has genuine promotion prospects. There is nothing wrong with that and we should be encouraging that. Therefore, the problems are to be blamed totally on the teachers' unions and the local authority employers. The negotiations have taken two years, during which there has been recurrent disruption in the classrooms.

9 pm

ACAS came in because a Burnham committee agreement could not be reached because the NUT held the majority on the committee. I am glad that Opposition Members accept that Burnham has broken down, although if they did not like it, why did they not put forward an alternative? A statutory body is required, and my right hon. Friend will introduce that. We want the work of ACAS to be looked at again. We want to be sure that any extra spending put forward is the result of careful thought.

As I said on Monday, the most important thing is that £600 million is on the table. If the hon. Member for Durham genuinely cares about a peaceful solution, he should encourage and support the Government's proposal. There would then be no need for these

[Mr. Bruinvels]

amendments. Indeed, I hope that there will be no need for the Bill. Certainly, the second largest teachers' union—the NAS UWT — has been very unhelpful in its approach. My right hon. Friend's package gives a genuine long-term pay structure which guarantees adequate differentials and a clear definition of professional duties.

The Labour party calls for free collective bargaining, but on whose terms? We all believe in free collective bargaining, but that would not happen because the NUT would try to dominate and we would not achieve as good a settlement as is now on the table, and which the parents in my Leicester, East constituency totally support. The Opposition are working the whole time with the employers deliberately attempting to undermine the Government's proposals. They never think about the children. I am prepared to give way to the hon. Member for Durham, North if he can tell me exactly how and in which way his negotiations with the employers' organisations took place and to what purpose. I know that the last time that he was challenged on that point he left the Chamber. It is a worrying matter.

We need a speedy solution, but that will come about only with the co-operation of the Opposition. It is not simply a question of passing the Bill—all Governments depend on good co-operation from Oppositions. I would have thought that the time was right for the Opposition to withdraw their amendments. They must realise that there is no point in altering the terms—it will not work, because they no longer have the total support of the teachers' unions. We know the ACAS result and the position of parents. Letters have come from parents who want a speedy settlement.

I have had only two letters from teachers in my constituency during the whole of the dispute, which shows that the majority of teachers in my constituency are happy with the terms on the table. They would be surprised to hear that the Opposition are trying to keep the House up throughout the night, trying to put forward a number of amendments that will result in the opposite to what Conservative Members want, which is peace and the guarantee that our children will be better taught and our teachers offered better promotion prospects.

As for new clauses 7 and 8, I do not trust the unions to bring forward a genuine negotiated settlement which the Government can afford, which teachers genuinely want and which will guarantee the promotion prospects that we want. It is possible for unions to tell us what to do. That was the order of the day when Labour was in power. The headline, "Turning the Clock Back" on the NUT document describes precisely what will happen if we fail to pass the Bill.

We need the Bill so quickly because Burnham did not work. We have here the legislative details necessary to introduce a new negotiating structure. The Bill will enable the Secretary of State to set teachers' pay and conditions of service by regulation. These are wrecking amendments which will do nothing but harm to children.

Mr. Dixon: On a point of order, Sir Paul. The hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) has said that these are wrecking amendments. Is that not a reflection on the Chair?

The Second Deputy Chairman: I do not think that the hon. Member was intending to reflect on the Chair and I am sure that he might wish to rephrase his remarks so that it is quite clear that there was no such reflection.

Mr. Bruinvels: There is no reflection of my making any such allegation. It is the speeches of Opposition Members which are wrecking the Bill.

The Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 needs to be repealed, and the interim advisory committee should be put in place immediately so that we can have peace in our schools again. It is a sad reflection on society that, for political advantage, certain elements are deliberately undermining the professional attitude of teachers and their special relationship with children. Such a cheap political advantage will not be acceptable to the vast majority of parents.

The level of pay is clearly determined by the Bill, and it provides a proper salary structure for all teachers. The Bill's temporary nature has been missed completely. The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Barnett) certainly missed it. The Bill repeals the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 and makes temporary provision with respect to the remuneration and other conditions of employment of school teachers, and it extends only to England and Wales. It is clearly temporary and has been introduced because of the callous approach of Opposition Members. *[Laughter.]* The truth always hurts. The Opposition have failed to encourage a satisfactory settlement. Under the Government's proposals, 50 per cent. of all teachers will be eligible for promotion and incentives. That must be the best way forward.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: I am sure that my hon. Friend and the Opposition are aware that, at the moment, there are 105,000 promotion posts, that under Labour's proposals there would only be 85,000 and that, under ours, there would be 140,000. Our proposals provide incentives for people who will be heads of department and for good classroom teachers who want to remain classroom teachers.

Mr. Bruinvels: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The proposals advanced by the employers and the unions will enable only 80,000 teachers to receive promotion.

Mr. Frank Cook *rose*——

Mr. Bruinvels: Under our proposals, 140,000 teachers will be eligible for promotion. That will end two years of misery and guarantee peace in classrooms. Moreover, our proposals will encourage career development, particularly in primary schools which the NUT proposals leave out altogether. Over 20 months, teachers will get a 25 per cent. salary rise, which is £600 million extra, in incentives to ensure that our children will be properly taught, to reward the good classroom teacher, the teachers who are prepared to take on extra responsibility, those who have skills and qualifications that are in short supply and those who move into jobs in particularly difficult schools.

There has been criticism of the idea that there should be some special arrangement for those schools in difficult areas. I do not know why the NUT is opposed to this. It is terribly important to get the better——

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman is now anticipating a later amendment. While a wide-ranging debate is in order on this group of amendments, that point will be covered later.

Mr. Bruinvels: My main purpose was to look at the main negotiating machinery and to show how the Bill, particularly clause 1, which will abolish the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1969, will guarantee important incentive posts to secure the jobs of professional teachers and ensure peace in our schools. I bow to your guidance, Sir Paul.

Mr. Frank Cook: On a point of order, Sir Paul. While you are kindly offering advice and guidance to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels), will you remind him that this is the Committee stage of the Bill's proceedings, and that it is customary in Committee to give way to Opposition Members who wish to make points that are relevant to what is being said? This is not a Second Reading debate, and it is a abuse of the procedures of the House for the hon. Gentleman to act as he is. I should like your guidance, Sir Paul.

The Second Deputy Chairman: This is a matter for whichever Member has the Floor, whether we are in the House or in Committee, and the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) appears not to wish to give way. Perhaps the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) will try again.

Mr. Fatchett: Further to that point of order, Sir Paul, I would not wish to challenge your judgment, but we run the House on the basis of a certain consensus and a set of conventions, and it is normal in Committee for hon. Members to give way to others who wish to make points and develop arguments. This is what we are trying to do. The hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) has already given way to one of his hon. Friends and surely, as a matter of courtesy, he should also give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook), who has sat here through the debate and is keen to intervene on this point. You will have noticed, Sir Paul, that during the debate Labour Members have given way at all times at every request from the Conservative Benches. Surely, under the conventions of the House, it is necessary for Conservative Members to give way now.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: Further to that point of order, Sir Paul. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) is being extremely economical with the truth. The hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) was not here for the major part of the debate. He has only just come in.

The Second Deputy Chairman: I am sure that the Committee knows that it is a matter for the Member who has the Floor to decide whether he gives way.

Mr. Madden: Further to that point of order, Sir Paul. Will you confirm that there is no qualifying period for an hon. Member to attend the Committee before he is allowed to speak, intervene or make any other contribution?

The Second Deputy Chairman: I think hon. Members are seeking to make debating points rather than points of order for the Chair.

Mr. Bruinvels: I was not giving way, because I have been sitting in the Chamber since 2.30, and many Labour Members have been here for only a short time. If the debate were held in the quietness in which it should be held, because it is a serious matter, my attitude to giving way would be different. This is an important debate. We are talking about the future of our schools and we are not here to make cheap, party political points.

As I come to the end of my contribution, Sir Paul, it is only right that I should place on record the fact that the amendment and the negotiating machinery proposed by the hon. Member for Durham, North will not help the Bill. I want peace in our schools. I hope that one day the Opposition will also aspire to that aim and contribute to what I would call a concordat to achieve the best possible deal. I believe that the best possible deal has arrived with this Bill.

It is important that we get the maximum money possible into the schools as quickly as possible to ensure that the unions curb their industrial disputes and that teachers are properly promoted, better paid and have the best possible promotion prospects. We must ensure that the children are not forgotten and that there is peace in our schools. We must ensure that children will no longer be a political football to be used by the Opposition.

9.15 pm

Mr. Nellist: It is incredible that any Tory Member of Parliament, and especially the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels), can assert that he is not here to make cheap party political comments. I counted nearly 23 such comments in the hon. Gentleman's speech, and I shall refer to two of them. At one point, the hon. Gentleman blamed the teachers for the deterioration of their pay and conditions. He said that it was all their fault. Precisely the opposite is the case.

The Government have turned education into a lottery, and schools in the midlands and other parts of the country have to hold raffles and collections for the most elementary necessities, such as books, before they can begin to think about transport and out-of-school activities, which some Tory Members describe as luxuries. The Government are responsible for driving education into that position. The hon. Member for Leicester, East said that he believed in free collective bargaining, yet tonight he is opposing amendments and supporting a clause which is designed to remove the very essence of free collective bargaining from the relationship between the teachers unions and the employers.

If the clause had tried to emulate for the majority of children in the state sector the level of services and the teacher-pupil ratio that exists in Eton — a school attended by many Tory MPs, where the ratio is eight children per teacher — perhaps we could have had a serious debate. There might have been "bipartisan agreement" to bring such a measure forward. If the Bill had been designed to control not the salaries of teachers, but those of the spivs in the City who earn £500 an hour, or £8 a minute, to rook people of their livelihoods through speculation and share swindles, there could have been a "measure of agreement" in the Chamber on a means to control such salaries.

The clause specifically attacks workers in some of the most arduous and demanding occupations in Britain today. A friend of mine who is a teacher once described teaching a class of 25 or so as education. He described teaching a class of 35 to 40 as crowd control because there is no time to develop the potential of each and every child in a class of that size.

Those are the problems that should have been addressed by the Bill. Instead, the Bill removes the control of negotiations on conditions and wages from the hands of joint negotiating machinery and puts it into the hands of the Secretary of State. The Bill will do nothing to

[Mr. Nellist]

motivate children in Coventry or elsewhere, who face a difficult enough position already. Although it is the teachers' job to motivate the youngsters, they know that a goodly proportion of them are being motivated for the dole queue.

That point was perhaps most graphically illustrated in *Today*, a newspaper from which I do not particularly like to quote, given its record over the past few weeks and its comments on the Labour party and the Labour movement. During the Knowsley, North by-election, a reporter from *Today* spoke to a group of 10-year-olds and was shocked to hear from one that he saw no reason whatsoever why he should carry on working to pass examinations purely to increase the intellectual level of dole queue chat. Any Government who reduce the aspirations of youth to that level of cynicism ought to be condemned for their hypocrisy.

Instead of addressing the problem of cynical youth, unfortunately we have to deal with the attempt by the Secretary of State to remove the right to negotiate pay and conditions. That right has been guaranteed, as hon. Members have said, for 67 years by previous legislation. The clause will remove that right and allow the Secretary of State to appoint an advisory committee. That is not surprising. Even during my short term as a Member of Parliament I have seen moves in that direction. The Secretary of State for Social Services appoints 3,000 members of family practitioner committees as well as those who run the district and other health authorities within the Health Service. The Prime Minister has the power of patronage to appoint thousands of people, such as bishops and the heads of the BBC. The Lord Chancellor has within his patronage tens of thousands of various judicial appointments. We are not surprised that the essence of clause 1 is that the Secretary of State for Education and Science wants to get in on the act and have his own power and patronage in appointing new committees.

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend could also refer to the residuary bodies in local government. They take away democratic rights. The members are also appointed by the Secretary of State.

Mr. Nellist: I am cautious about how far I can stray from this group of amendments. For many months, my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds Central (Mr. Fatchett) and I served together on many evenings such as this, stretching into many mornings such as tomorrow, considering the local government legislation which abolished the GLC and metropolitan councils.

The clause is not, as was said by one or two Tory Members, about ending the teachers' dispute which has continued for the past two years. That would require far more resources than the Secretary of State has so far been able to release. It is about applying to the education service in 1987 the draconian measures that were taken against the workers of GCHQ a couple of years ago. Why does the Secretary of State believe that all members of the NUT are spies and, therefore, should be treated in the same way as he attempted to treat the workers of GCHQ? Not all of them went to Cambridge. Not all of them went to the same university as those who have have been picked up for taking part in that side occupation, most of whom, I suspect, are card-carrying members or sympathisers of the Tory party, anyway. The attack on GCHQ has been emulated in education because the Secretary of State has been unable to convince the majority of teachers of the arguments that he has put forward to end the dispute.

I notice that there has been a recent ballot of teachers in Scotland. Some 89 per cent. of teachers took part, 84 per cent. of whom rejected the current deal on offer. From discussions today with representatives of the Coventry branch of the National Union of Teachers, I suspect Coventry will emulate those precentages in turnout and rejection in the ballot this week. The Secretary of State, unable to convince the majority of teachers of his arguments, intends, through this clause, to abolish their right of negotiations, just as he did with the GLC and metropolitan authorities. When the Secretary of State was an Environment Minister, he restricted the democratic right of election to those local govenment bodies.

Clause 1 abolishes the existing machinery contained in the remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. It gives powers to the Secretary of State to impose any pay structure and conditions of service that he likes on teachers in England and Wales. Later amendments and clauses will deal with the advisory body. This clause is the response of the Secretary of State to his inability to force agreement from teachers.

It is important to ask why the right hon. Gentleman has been unable to gain such agreement. Everything on offer to the teachers will worsen their conditions of service and will fail to maintain their existing standard of living. The legislation does nothing to re-establish the Houghton parity that existed in the early 1970s. To achieve that, in today's language, a teacher at the top of scale 1 would need to earn £16,000 a year. The Nottingham agreement, which is under discussion, would mean that a scale 1 teacher would not reach an income of £15,000 until 1996. Many people, including some who are personal acquaintances of mine, have been teachers for many years but still take home only £100 at the end of their demanding working week. It will be 10 years before they are close to where they should be this year in terms of parity with Houghton. They are chucking that agreement out of the window. The Secretary of State has not convinced them. He knows the background to the situation, so he is trying, from above, arbitrarily to impose these provisions.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: I am sure the hon. Gentleman is aware that the proposals of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State bring back Houghton in real terms. A graph of the number of teachers leaving the profession in the past 20 years shows that the problem occurs when teachers, especially males, are between 26 and 28, when they are beginning to acquire family responsibilities. It is important to give the money not just to those who are starting in the profession — they have the least responsibility — but to those who are beginning to acquire more responsibility. My right hon. Friend's proposals will provide incentives to those 26 to 28-year-olds at the time when they need them most, to keep them in the profession where they are of most value and when they have become nicely accustomed to the job. We do not want to lose them then.

Mr. Nellist: The hon. Lady began by saying that the deal of the Secretary of State restores real levels in the Houghton pay structure, which it does not. It certainly does not do so for the whole teaching profession, except over a considerable period. That is why those at the

bottom of the scale are most likely to be the ones who most strongly reject the offer on the table. The hon. Lady is at liberty to develop her point further. I do not regard the deal as a basis for adequately rewarding young teachers, whether single or married, in an arduous profession.

The deal on offer is a productivity deal. It gives, for example, the head teachers in schools more power to rewrite job descriptions annually, or more frequently if required. It links appraisal to pay—a link that teachers have resisted for years. They have not been unwilling to discuss appraisal, but they do not want it in the same package as the restoration of pay levels. The appraisal provision gives authorities the power to withhold a pay rise for a year if the previous year's record of service was unsatisfactory. It is a pity that there are not similar pay arrangements for Tory Members of Parliament. We could judge them by unemployment. Their pay levels would have declined savagely in the past seven years as unemployment has risen.

I do not have time to develop other aspects, such as the attempted clawbacks on cover and supply and the increase in the working year. In summary, set against an average 8 per cent. increase in salaries, and a 10 per cent. increase, on a contractual basis, of the hours that teachers are expected to work, the offer gives a pay cut. I do not condemn any teachers who reject such an offer. Having failed to convince teachers of the merits of the argument, the Secretary of State is attempting arbitrary imposition from above. He is not willing to concede the necessary £1,700 flat rate increase for 1986-87 which will be necessary to satisfy teachers' claims. Of course, the right hon. Gentleman follows in the footsteps of the former Secretary of State for Transport and the present chairman of the Tory party in seeking, in clause 1, effectively to fragment, neuter and castrate the teachers trade unions.

The Secretary of State does not want active and capable trade unions which are competent and able to defend the interests of their members. The Bill is also an indicator of the failure of the economic system which the Secretary of State defends. The Government cannot give reasonable pay and conditions to a large percentage of the public service work force and therefore fear the continuation of the defence of those workers by their trade unions. Therefore, clause 1 attacks the role of the trade unions.

9.30 pm

The Secretary of State will not succeed. He is already not succeeding and the Bill is only days old. The Bill is drawing the teaching unions together again, when during the past three or four weeks they were perhaps divided on tactics and on which form of deal to accept. It is escalating the radicalisation of the rank and file in ordinary teachers associations throughout the country. If, during the next two weeks, there was a political fund ballot in the teaching unions, as there has been in 40 unions under the Trade Union Act 1984, I would not put money on which way that ballot would go.

It is worth making one small point about the radicalisation and the effect of such a draconian measure on the entire profession and on the youths and students in education. Twenty-two miles is not that great a distance for youth in Britain not to be aware of the struggle that has been going on during the past seven or 10 days against a Tory Government across the water who attempted to introduce parallel draconian measures against the university sector in France.

I do not discount the fact that many lessons may be learnt by people in the profession and by the youths and children who are studying or being taught. Lessons will be rubbing off from the experience of the past seven or 10 days of the action of the ranked mass of students in France against the French Tory Government and their attempt to introduce new laws. The Government should be aware that if they continue down the road of attacking education, the Health Service and the welfare state in general, they run the risk of similar disaffection spreading among working-class people and youth in Britain.

The Government have been claiming that Burnham as a negotiating machinery is not working, but instead of having discussions to extend or change the existing machinery, the Secretary of State is rather like a child who has an argument in a playground—he is taking his ball home. He has decided that he will alter the rules of the game by eliminating that level of negotiation. He is attempting in two days of parliamentary time entirely to abolish the existing system of negotiation.

I do not necessarily complain about the short time that the Secretary of State is taking. I am not all that fussed —although I shall be here all night if he wishes to stay — by his taking only two days to try to shove this measure through Parliament, because in earlier incarnation, when he was a Minister at the Department of the Environment, we spent a few months together discussing the abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan county councils.

I learnt a lot from the Government and the Secretary of State, as he now is, from that Bill. I learnt, for example, what enabling legislation was all about from the last six sections of what is now the Local Government Act 1985. It means that the Secretary of State can come in with a two or three-line statement to establish a principle and follow it a few months later with an Order of some description to put flesh on what he intends to implement. It would be useful for a future Labour Government to consider, for example, the abolition of the House of Lords, or the sweeping necessary extension of public ownership in Britain, based on the enabling legislation clauses in the last quarter of the Local Government Act.

Similarly, I am not that fussed that the right hon. Gentleman is trying to get the Bill through in two days of parliamentary time, because I can envisage occasions under the next Labour Government when we can use the precedent of the speed at which the Secretary of State wishes to proceed today with this anti-working class measure to enact Socialist legislation—for example, on a national minimum wage, on shorter working hours, on lower retirement age or other measures to reduce unemployment or increase the living standards of working people.

I and many others believe that this clause paves the way for us to adopt the same sort of attitude to Conservative policies as the Government have towards the people whom we represent.

We must also watch carefully to see whether clause 1 will pave the way for attacks on other workers in the public service and in nationalised industries. In that I include doctors, nurses and other workers in the Health Service, the bin men, the social services and housing staff on local authorities, people in the ambulance service, the fire service and the other services which my hon. Friend the Member for Hexham—*[Interruption.]* I mean my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek). The right

[Mr. Nellist]

hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) is the one with 35 jobs. As far as I am aware, my hon. Friend has only one job—as a full-time Member of Parliament.

Will the people on his list and the short list that I have read out be the next to be attacked by the Government? Those workers should be supporting the teachers in their battle to defend their present system of free negotiations.

Mr. Greenway: On a point of order, Sir Paul. Is this speech not extremely wide of the amendment and out of order?

The Second Deputy Chairman: This is a very wide debate on a series of amendments dealing with consultation and procedures. As yet, I have heard nothing out of order.

Mr. Nellist: Thank you, Sir Paul. I shall leave a couple of points that I had planned to make and return to them later. It will be a long evening.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend makes an extremely important point. We are at the top of the slippery slope. If we allow the teachers' negotiating rights to be swept away, who will be next in line? The precedent is being set by the most centralising Government this century.

Mr. Nellist: I agree with my hon. Friend. Not only the hon. Members who are listening to the debate and the few people in the Galleries at either end of the Chamber, but those who read the report of the debate when it is published, probably on Friday morning, should take heed of my hon. Friend's point about a waiting list. It is rather like one of Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas. The Prime Minister "has a little list"—only it is a long list—of unions and public services which she wants to take on, using this Bill as a precedent. They include especially the public service workers whom my hon. Friend and I have tried to name.

The clause is an attack on the basic democratic right of free collective bargaining. As a worker and active trade unionist in British Leyland in the late 1970s, I opposed a similar attack when the Labour Government mistakenly took the road of an incomes policy. I am equally opposed to it today. The right of free collective bargaining, like the right to strike, the right to vote and every other right in what is supposed to be a democracy—in so far as it can be a democracy under a Tory Government in the late 1980s—has been won by the struggle of generations of trade unionists, stretching back at least over a century. For a Tory Government to abrogate one of those rights is an attack on a central feature of democracy.

I understand that the National Union of Teachers has lodged a formal complaint with the International Labour Organisation that the Bill breaches at least conventions 98 and 151, together with the others mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham. It is a good idea to launch such a formal complaint and to draw attention to the fact that the Government are trying to abrogate their duties under the conventions, but they did the same a year ago with ILO convention 26 when, at a stroke, they decided to remove the right of all workers aged under 21 to a legal minimum wage. Britain was the first industrialised country to do that. I suspect that they will do that again with this Bill, and equally arbitrarily.

The trade unions, particularly their leaders, should draw attention to that abrogation, but they must also gear up trade union members to oppose the Bill's implementation throughout Britain. The Government do not care about their international obligations. This is the Government who have been taken to the International Court of Justice in the Hague at least a dozen times for reneging on international conventions. This is the Government who rewarded the Commonwealth's stand, such as it was, on South Africa and sanctions by introducing visas for citizens of Commonwealth countries. This is not a Government who particularly worry about breaking international conventions if to do so assists in breaking the strength and cohesion of Britain's trade union movement.

I have no doubt that the Minister's advisers discussed the Bill and thought of it as a way of emasculating the teachers' organisations and putting them under the control of the Secretary of State. I hope that the Secretary of State will consider the obverse of that coin. All the feeling of grievance and disillusion will grow if teachers' morale is not raised by a proper level of remuneration, and that will no longer be directed towards any form of semi-independent negotiating machinery. It will all be directed at the Secretary of State, because he will be seen as the person in charge. He will be the one who is saying, "The buck stops here." That is hardly a recipe, should he want it, for the depoliticisation of the teachers' dispute. It is the opposite.

The Bill, particularly clause 1, removes the basic democratic right to free collective bargaining. Instead, it substitutes direct control by the Secretary of State. In that sense clause 1 is an undemocratic and reactionary clause in an undemocratic and reactionary Bill. But then again, that is well in line with general Tory philosophy.

The Bill may well go through the House of Commons. I suspect that that will not be tonight or tomorrow morning, but, given the Government's 140 majority, it will go through, but its only success will be in radicalising and politicising more teachers, taking them away from any support that they, as individuals, may have given to the Tory party and its candidates at election time. In that sense, if what the Secretary of State intends by clause 1 is a solution to the teachers' dispute, it will be counter-productive. In the Lobby tonight I shall support the amendments put forward by the Opposition Front Bench and oppose the Bill through all its stages.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Sir Paul. I regret that I have to raise a point of order at this stage when the Committee clearly wishes to move towards a vote on the amendment. However, I am concerned that the Committee has now been in session for over five hours and the Press Association reports that the Committee could well sit all night and well into tomorrow on amendments tabled by the Labour and alliance parties, yet during those five hours not one Member of the Social Democratic party has stayed in the Committee for more than a few minutes, and the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), apart from one brief intervention in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) asking how long he intended to speak, has made no contribution at all. The alliance Members have asked for the microphones to be shifted, and so on. Are we to hear from alliance Members during the debate?

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows well that that is a matter for debate, not for the Chair.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I can only say that some false points of order are better than others and I very much echo what the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) has said as a point of debate rather than a point of order.

The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) rightly reminded the House that the last time that we were on a Committee together was when we considered the Bill that I took through to abolish the GLC and other metropolitan county councils. I remember him saying that we would get that Bill through the House of Commons but that we would never get it through the other place. I was also told by him that as soon as those councils were abolished, civilised life as we knew it would disappear in the cities. Those county councils have been abolished for nine months and no one has noticed that they have gone.

Mr. Nellist: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Baker: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that it will not be the policy of the Birmingham Labour party to bring back the West Midlands county council. It was glad to see it go.

Mr. Nellist: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Baker: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I shall not. He spoke for 20 minutes.

Mr. Nellist: Will the right hon. Gentleman please give way?

Mr. Baker: Very well.

9.45 pm

Mr. Nellist: Does the Secretary of State accept that I never said in Committee—he can check this in *Hansard* —that he would never get it through the other place? Furthermore, I never predicted the right hon. Gentleman's apocalyptic scenario. However, I referred to the fact, when dealing with services such as transport, that the deregulation of buses and the abolition of the metropolitan county councils would lead to the severe rundown of transport services. The Secretary of State can in no way deny that there has been a rundown of those services.

Mr. Baker: I, too, refer the hon. Gentleman to *Hansard*. He made dreadful forecasts about what would happen if there were no metropolitan county councils, including the West Midlands county council.

The hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) made what could be described as a memorable speech. It consisted of reading the contents of my in-tray. I thought of writing a letter to him, but that would just encourage him. I thought, too, that he was getting into training to be the next general secretary of the Post Office Engineers' Union. The hon. Gentleman and I—I hope that this will not irrevocably damage his career in the Labour party—have occasionally played bridge together. Might I suggest that, if he could find another three to make up a four, he would find the next few hours very enjoyable—and so would we, if he were successful.

The hon. Gentleman referred thoroughly to the amendments. That, at least, was original in this debate. All of them have a common theme, as was admitted by the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice). In one way or another, all the amendments are dilatory and would delay the repeal of the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. Amendment No. 8 asks for a White Paper; amendment No. 9 says that nothing should happen until there is an agreement; amendment No. 10 asks for a report from ACAS; amendment No. 11 asks for a parliamentary tribunal of inquiry report; amendment No. 13 asks for an independent inquiry.

The hon. Member for Durham, North rightly said that the object of these amendments is to delay progress on the Bill until certain things have happened. These amendments would create a plethora of delaying devices and would lead to indecision. We have heard a great deal about the new negotiating procedures involving the Secretary of State, but new clause 7 does not involve the Secretary of State: "All we want is an agreement between the trade unions and the employers." New clause 8, as I interpret it, transforms the interim advisory committee into an arbitration tribunal.

These amendments would cause delay. The Government believe that early action is needed if there is to be a sensible resolution of the problems in our schools. The Opposition seek to prevent such a resolution by placing all kinds of difficulties in the way of repeal of the 1965 Act. The amendments are not needed in order to provide for teachers' pay to continue until the existing arrangements are superseded by new provisions, as provided for in clause 1(2). I have made it clear to the House that I am willing to continue discussions with the local education authorities and the unions in the hope that a sensible result can be agreed. I told the House on Monday last that, if an accommodation can be reached within the financial framework that has already been announced, which provides for a proper careers structure for all teachers, I should be delighted to lay the necessary order before the House giving effect to that agreement.

Ms. Clare Short: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Baker: I shall give way in a moment.

There is no need for these amendments. The Government will act quickly to give effect to an acceptable conclusion. One union has asked to see me this Friday and another union has asked to see me next week. The Government will act quickly to establish the interim advisory committee that is so necessary if we are to avoid a repetition of this damaging and unnecessary dispute.

Several of my hon. Friends referred to the collapse of the Burnham negotiating committee. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) referred to the inevitable consequences, following the breakdown of a system that is inherently unstable. My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) talked of Burnham blunted with abuse. My hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) urged me to act in the interests of the children, as did my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels).

Ms. Clare Short: I hope that the Secretary of State will refer to the ILO convention. I should be interested to hear what his legal advice is on whether the Bill breaches the convention, and if so, the position in which the Government have put themselves. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist), I was on the Committee on the Wages Bill. The Government had to resile from a convention before they could introduce that Bill. Why is that not so in this case?

Mr. Baker: I do not accept that we shall be breaking the ILO convention. It provides that representatives of

[Mr. Baker]

public employees shall participate in the determination of terms and conditions of employment. That does not have to be by direct negotiation. The teachers' unions will continue to participate, and I shall come to that. They will submit evidence and representations to the advisory committee, and I shall consult them before making any order.

I should like to give the history of Burnham and its collapse. It is a sorry chapter. This episode started in 1981 when there was an agreement in Burnham to set out on the road —it was hoped to be a shorter road than it has turned out to be—to reform the salary structure. There was little progress until 1984, when my predecessor said that if there was an affordable, acceptable and negotiable package, he would take it to the Cabinet. In November 1984, the employers outlined a package linking pay and duties. That was progress, and I recognise that, in that pay and conditions were being debated and discussed for the first time, because under the 1965 Act there were two separate negotiating discussion groups.

In the next month, December 1984, the NUT walked out of the talks. After the local election, results in the spring of 1985, when control of the employers' side passed to Labour, and Labour tore up the concordat——

Mr. Radice: Backed by the Tories.

Mr. Baker: The tearing up of that concordat changed the balance fundamentally. I have a copy of the concordat, which runs to only one page. It operated for the better part of 20 years and ensured that the Secretary of State had not only a number of votes in the negotiations but an effective veto over the amount of money that was available. That was torn up.

Following that, in August last year my predecessor announced that he would make £1·25 billion available over four years. There nearly was a deal on that basis. In September 1985 the employers put forward an offer consistent with that, but the teachers turned it down in 20 minutes. In January this year, in order to try to resolve the problem, some of the parties agreed to call in ACAS, and then the ACAS negotiations started. Alas, that was not accompanied by the end of all trouble and disruption in our schools. There has been intermittent trouble all through this year and it has continued in some of our towns and cities. I regret that.

Mr. Radice: The right hon. Gentleman is making a good case for reforming Burnham, with which we agree. However, neither on Second Reading nor at any stage of the debate has he made the case for abolishing collective bargaining, as is done in the Bill. Is the right hon. Gentleman in favour of collective bargaining? Does he think that it should be restored after 1990?

Mr. Baker: I have said that I am in favour of collective bargaining, provided that all the parties are involved in it and, in a matter of such importance to the general economy, the Government of the day have some sort of control over the total amount involved. I am not asking for anything that has not been asked for by my Labour predecessors. I have quoted in the House before the words of Lord Stewart in the debates that set up Burnham:

"I doubt whether any Government in any set of circumstances could put itself in a position where it could hand over the power on the global sum to someone other than itself." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee B*; 1 December 1964, c. 20.]

The whole idea of the Burnham committee was that, after the global sum had been determined by Government, the various negotiations would deal with the details. The hon. Gentleman has argued for a joint negotiating council, but that would be, in effect, a continuation of the Burnham procedure.

Mr. Radice: No, it would not be.

Mr. Baker: Paragraph 7.1 of the ACAS agreement refers to setting up a joint negotiating council and paragraph 7.4 states that the parties would like to discuss the Secretary of State's role with him. As I have made clear, the Secretary of State's role is central to the resolution of these matters. It seems as though my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) made his speech yesterday, it was such a long time ago, but as he said, there was precious little bargaining in the Burnham committees, because until this year the NUT outnumbered all the other unions. In effect, it represented the teachers. That cannot be right. It dominated the other unions, and that does not strike me as being very free or collective.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham East (Mr. Moynihan) pointed out that some of the unions and some of the employers wish to impose their proposals on me. We do not believe that any continuation of the existing system, with joint negotiations with employers and the unions, and using the procedures of the past five to 20 years, could be an effective replacement. Consequently, we recommend an interim advisory committee. I should stress the interim nature of our proposals. We believe that such a committee would provide a better and fairer chance of a solution.

Several hon. Members have asked how the unions would be involved. Both they and the local education authorities would have the clear right to make representations to the committee. Obviously, they would exercise that right. They may do it conjointly, having first negotiated a joint position. After the interim advisory committee has made its recommendations, I am empowered, and indeed obliged, by the Bill to consult the unions and local education authorities. After that, the House will be asked to support or reject the proposals that I put forward in the form of a statutory instrument. I believe that there are checks and balances in that.

As several hon. Members have said, the unions are also strong. They will be able to organise and they will not be pushed over by this process. They will still be able to advice their members to accept, or to take such action as they think necessary. Consequently, I strongly commend the major proposals contained in the Bill. I believe that they are a vast improvement on what is available now, and that the House should be prepared to accept them as a way forward towards resolving a dispute and negotiating procedure that has failed for more than five years to produce a resolution.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I am sure that it will be for the convenience of the House if we conclude the debate by 10 pm.

The central point is that the Secretary of State has not said whether he believes in collective bargaining. He has ducked that question. The answer must be that he does not believe in it, because if he believed in it, he could have used

the time on Monday when the Bill had its Second Reading, and could have used the time today, and probably tomorrow, to meet the unions and the local authority representatives. In that time, any Secretary of State worth his salt could have produced a negotiated settlement, especially as the parties are now so close together. The right hon. Gentleman has therefore made it clear that he does not believe in collective bargaining and is determined to remove that right.

Consequently, I invite my right hon. and hon. Friends to join me in the Lobby to vote in favour of amendment No. 2. At a later stage, I hope that we shall also be able to vote on new clause 8.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton) *rose——*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The Committee proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Cohen *(seated and covered)*: On a point of order, Sir Paul.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I will take a point of order at this stage only if it is to do with the conduct of the Division.

Mr. Cohen *(seated and covered)*: As you are aware, Sir Paul, I was on my feet about to speak in the debate. We are in Committee, so all hon. Members can speak more than once. I have not spoken at all, despite the fact that the two Front Bench spokemen have wound up.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I have heard the hon. Gentleman's point. I saw no hon. Member rise when the Secretary of State sat down, so I put the Question.

Mr. Cohen *(seated and covered)*: Further to that point of order, Sir Paul. I rose after the Secretary of State, as there was a point to which I wished to reply, and I rose after my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) had sat down. In those circumstances, I should be given an opportunity to speak and there should not be a Division without a closure motion.

The Committee having divided: Ayes 173, Noes 228.

Division No. 25] [10.00 pm

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Livsey, Richard
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Don Dixon and
Mr. James Hamilton.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bitten, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Bulmer, Esmond

Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Silvester, Fred
Spencer, Derek
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'lch N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Watson, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Whitfield, John
Wilkinson, John
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Gerald Malone and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

Question accordingly negatived.

10.13 pm

Mr. Bob Clay (Sunderland, North) *rose*——

Mr. Nellist *rose*——

It being after Ten o'clock The CHAIRMAN *left the Chair to report progress and ask leave to sit again.*

Committee reported progress.

It being after Ten o'clock, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded to put forthwith the Questions which he was directed to put, pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2) of Standing Order No. 53 (Questions on voting of estimates, &c.).*

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1986-87

Resolved,

That a supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,206,135,000, be granted to Her Majesty to defray charges for Defence and Civil Services which will come in course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1987, as set out in House of Commons Papers Nos. 8 and 43.

ESTIMATES 1987-88 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT)

Resolved,

That a sum, not exceeding £44,907,033,000, be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund, on account, for or towards defraying the charges for Defence and Civil Services for the year ending on 31st March 1988, as set out in House of Commons Papers Nos. 2, 5, 7 and 54.

Bill ordered to be brought in upon the foregoing Resolutions by the Chairman of Ways and Means, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. Norman Lamont, Mr. Ian Stewart and Mr. Peter Brooke.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BILL

Mr. Norman Lamont accordingly presented a Bill to apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the years ending on 31 March 1987 and 1988: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 14.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Motion made, and Question put,

That, at this day's sitting, the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Sainsbury.]*

The House divided: Ayes 219, Noes 167.

Division No. 26] **[10.17 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael

Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Silvester, Fred
Spencer, Derek
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Watson, John
Whitfield, John
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'rmline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hilth'd)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted

Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Livsey, Richard
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. James Hamilton and
Mr. Don Dixon.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I saw on the Tapes downstairs the announcement that the Government propose immediately to suspend further consideration of the Bill. I do not know whether that report is accurate. It seemed to delight a rather large number of Conservative Members. If this is an official pronouncement from the Department of Education and Science, it must be a profound discourtesy to the House for it to hear of it in that surprising way. The Secretary of State should immediately make an explanation to the House about his further intentions.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The hon. Gentleman should not believe everything that he reads. I have no intention of suspending consideration of the Bill. We have just started. We have just dealt with the first set of amendments. The debate is just beginning, it is just warming up, and we should proceed.

Mr. Clay: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I shall not take any further points of order for the simple reason that the House has just passed the 10 o'clock motion, so we should now get on with our business.

Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill

Again considered in Committee

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Sir Paul. I wish to raise a point that I mentioned during the Division about half an hour ago. As I understand it, we have just voted on amendment No. 2, which was essentially a paving amendment for amendments Nos. 8 to 14, any one of which could have been introduced if amendment No. 2 had been passed. As the Committee has not accepted that amendment, I assume that we cannot vote on amendments Nos. 8 to 14.

Amendments Nos. 17 to 20 propose a substantially different approach from that of making an order. Would it therefore be possible, provided that his remarks are germane to amendments Nos. 17 to 20, for my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) to make a contribution to the debate? [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I am not asking hon. Members; I am asking you, Sir Paul. My hon. Friend was unable to catch your eye when the Division was called.

May I request that the Committee be given an opportunity to vote on amendments Nos. 17 and 18? If that is possible, how shall I do that? There is a difference between the machinery for negotiation mentioned in amendment No. 17 and the retrospective nature of amendment No. 18, neither of which has been properly covered in the options that have fallen because we did not pass amendment No. 2.

The Second Deputy Chairman: I assure the Committee that the Chairman of Ways and Means considered these matters very carefully before the proceedings began. The occupants of the chair, of course, have been following the debate carefully. The ruling is that I am not prepared to allow another Division on the group of amendments that we have discussed. The Chairman of Ways and Means will consider the request by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) as to the possibility of a Division on one or other of the new clauses which have been discussed with that group of amendments. That is made with no commitment. That matter will be considered and, if it is decided that a Division can be held on one or other of the new clauses, it will, of course, take place at the appropriate time, according to the Amendment Paper.

Mr. Clay: On a point of order, Sir Paul. Before the Division on amendment No. 2, my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) was on his feet. I was sitting less than a yard from him. I accept that it is not always possible for the occupant of the Chair to notice those hon. Members who are standing, especially down this end of the Chamber. As I understand it, in Committee proceedings if an hon. Member is standing and he or she catches the eye of the occupant of the Chair, the only way in which he or she can be stopped from speaking is by a closure motion. That motion was not moved before the Division on amendment No. 2. I ask, in case this happens again to any hon. Members including my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton, who are standing and wishing to speak—after all, my hon. Friend had not spoken in the debate until then, but he was clearly standing and hoping to catch the Chairman's eye—that you will cast your eye in various directions, especially this one, as the night continues, so that hon. Members are not again denied the opportunity to speak on matters that they think are important.

The Second Deputy Chairman: I think that it will be clear to the Committee that there is a wide range of amendments still to be considered. I shall be very disappointed if any hon. Member on either side of the Chamber does not have an opportunity to catch the Chairman's eye at some time during the coming hours.

Mr. Radice: I beg to move amendment No. 4, in page 1, line 5, at end insert

'and is replaced by a negotiating machinery as set out in the document agreed under the auspices of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service between representatives of the local education authorities and of the teachers' unions.'.

The Second Deputy Chairman: With this it will be convenient to consider the following: Amendment No. 5, in page 1, line 5, at end insert

'and school teachers' pay shall be determined by the agreement reached at the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service between the local education authorities and the teachers' unions'.

New clause 1—*Pension arrangements*—

'The Secretary of State shall ensure that, for the determination of pension arrangements, the agreement on pay reached under the auspices of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service on 21st November 1986 shall be deemed to have effect from 1st January 1987.'.

Mr. Radice: This group of amendments centres on the role of ACAS and the agreement negotiated under ACAS auspices between employers and unions representing well over half the teachers. Before any Conservative Member says that this does not have the support of many teachers, I remind them that the NUT and the AMMA between them include well over half the teachers. Hon. Members will have seen the preliminary results of the AMMA ballot, which show that the majority of AMMA members favour the agreement. I suspect that the same is true of the NUT. The claim which is continually made in trying to undermine the agreement — that it does not have the support of the majority of teachers—will be seen to be unfounded.

I remind hon. Members that the immediate background against which the Bill is being introduced is more promising than it has been for a number of years. As I said on Second Reading, the public are paying much more attention to education, and this in part, is related to parents' anxiety to have a long-term settlement of the issue. We must all work towards that end.

I recognise that the Government have at last switched policy. We have said several times that it is a pity that it did not happen before. If money on the scale that is now being offered had been offered two years ago, there would not have been a teachers' dispute. However, we recognise that the Government have shown a new willingness to fund a reasonable settlement, and that creates the possibility of settling the issue.

The third encouraging feature is that the local authority employers and unions representing the majority of teachers have agreed to this far-reaching package, covering pay and conditions. Even the Secretary of State, albeit reluctantly, has had to admit that the talks have made useful progress.

Most hon. Members would agree that a lasting solution to the problem of teachers' pay and conditions must tackle four issues. The first is that teachers' pay has fallen behind that of comparable groups of professionals. That is the relative criterion by which we should judge teachers' pay. No one would challenge that statement.

Secondly, the existing pay structure which links promotion opportunities to pupil numbers at a time of falling rolls has locked the great bulk of teachers on to the bottom two pay scales. We must do something about that. Thirdly, there is a need for a clearer definition of teachers' professional duties and for improvements in the conditions of service. Again, there is not much quarrel about that. Fourthly, we need an overhaul of the present arrangements for dealing with the determination of teachers' pay and conditions. Again, there will be no quarrel about that.

I argue that the deal reached by the local authorities and the unions representing the majority of teachers tackles all those issues. It will ensure that all teachers receive a significant salary increase, especially the low-paid workers, and, by replacing the present system of pay scales by a single main professional grade, it offers every teacher the prospect of a steady improvement in earnings as their careers progress. The new main professional grade offers all teachers the prospect of their salaries rising through 13 increments from £9,970 to £15,058. That is a professional career structure, leading to professional salaries.

By contrast — this point has not been made sufficiently strongly — the Government's proposals will put a ceiling of £12,700 on the earnings of an unpromoted teacher. The problem is that many teachers will reach that ceiling after only a few years' service. The pay structure favoured by the Government does not offer enough teachers a decent salary scale, whereas the new salary level and structure will ensure that teaching recruits and retains people of the highest ability and motivation.

I know—no doubt we shall argue about this—that the Government believe that there should be more promoted posts and additional increments. I hope that the Minister of State will comment on the fact that the NUT has said repeatedly that there is a case for an allowance additional to the first two allowances. I understand that the Government favour five additional allowances, so we are beginning to enter an area where compromise is at least possible. The Government have not recognised that sufficiently, and when we are away from the hurly-burly of the hustings later tonight—when serious professionals get down to discussing the details—I hope that we can agree that the gap between the two sides is not too large.

The agreement incorporates a list of 13 duties, setting out teachers' professional obligations, including participation in schemes of appraisal and consulting parents. I do not want to read out the contractual duties of teachers, although no doubt some of my hon. Friends will want to do so as the evening wears on. I have a list here which I can lend them when the time comes. But that is relevant, because the Government have said that those duties should be in a teacher's contract. They are already in the ACAS agreement and we have not had sufficient recognition of that from the Government.

10.45 pm

The last point that needs to be recognised is that the Nottingham/London agreement acknowledges the need for a radical overhaul of the Burnham committee. Again, the Government have not sufficiently accepted the progress that has been made. The agreement recognises that pay and conditions of service need to be dealt with together and that the Government should be involved in collective bargaining. In the previous debate the Secretary of State made much of the fact that the ACAS agreement had merely spelt out in principle the role of the Secretary of State and said that his role should be discussed with him. He pooh-poohed that, when instead he should build on it in order to obtain a satisfactory solution, so that the fact that the Government pay at least 46 per cent. of the

[Mr. Radice]

total teachers' salary bill can be recognised in the negotiating structures. That is something on which both sides of the House agree.

If we can get that, the Government should be seizing on it. They should accept that there is a great movement forward here. If we can get an agreement covering all those aspects, there is no need for the Government to move in the way that they have on the Bill.

This is basically a good agreement between the employers and the unions representing the majority of teachers which should be recognised as such by the Secretary of State. The differences between the Government's position and that reached at Nottingham and London are not all that great. I have heard a lot about the cost, but I repeat that that is no unbridgeable divide. Everybody is well aware that a month's delay in implementation saves at least £40 million. That is a pretty big move towards the £80 million we are talking ab ut.

As I said on Second Reading, if the Secretary of State wants an agreed package, there is one there for the asking. It really is up to the Government to make up their mind. Do they want an agreed settlement, with all the benefits that that is likely to bring in acceptability and in creating peace in the classroom, or will they risk the gamble of imposing a solution which could well be unpopular and could lead to renewed disruption—although I hope that it does not? The Secretary of State will have the added problem that he will be blamed directly for what happens. If he steps in in this deus ex machina role he will be blamed if things go wrong.

In the circumstances, the sensible position for a Government, particularly in the run-up to an election, is to work hard and get an agreement, which I believe can be obtained, between the employers, the Government and the teachers, based on the London/Nottingham agreement and taking into account the points that the Secretary of State has made.

The purpose of our amendments is to remind the Secretary of State just how great is the progress that has been made, how small the differences are and how sensible it would be to grasp the ACAS agreement and for the Government to make it their own.

Mr. Greenway: The position adopted by the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) is both encouraging and discouraging. He knows that I am of the opinion that, if humanly possible, a compromise should be reached. He also knows that I believe that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State makes a compelling point when he says that there must be a sufficient number of differentials to cover those who have heavy, medium and little responsibility.

Mr. Radice: I know that the hon. Gentleman believes in a compromise solution and he has made that clear in the House. I respect him for what he has said. We listen with great respect to what he says about educational matters. However, how many additional posts does he think are required?

Mr. Greenway: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's solution, in terms of the number of posts required, is very much nearer to what is required than the ACAS agreement. There should be four or five differentials. To have fewer would lead to the position that I knew when I began to teach 30 years ago, and it is not a position to which we should return. In that school 30 years ago there were about 30 staff, only one of whom, besides the head and the deputy head, was paid for additional responsibilities. It did not allow that school to be run adequately and efficiently. In schools of that size today there are 12 or 14 posts of responsibility. That is near to what is envisaged by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and it would be in the interests of the teaching profession. We must make it possible for people to gain promotion.

I remember the very first strike of teachers at the William Penn school. They were members of the National Association of Schoolmasters. They went on strike to gain a place on the Burnham committee. The next strike involved NAS members throughout London. The attitude of teachers to strikes has changed completely within the space of only a few years.

The hon. Member for Durham, North said that he thought I was right when I said that a compromise ought to be the aim, but he has moved an amendment that asks the Committee to accept the ACAS deal. Such inconsistency is unacceptable. The 13 conditions in the ACAS agreement cover much valuable ground. I appreciate that the unions have made progress on devising a respectable contract for teachers. But somebody needs to speak up for those who have to run the schools. Not to have a clause that requires teachers to carry out the reasonable duties that a head teacher requires them to carry out is a very serious ommission. I do not support dictatorial heads, but they must be able to say to their teachers that something has to be done and that they must do it. It is a serious omission, and for that reason alone I could not vote for the ACAS agreement.

Mr. Radice: The preamble to the 13 duties reads:

"Under the reasonable direction of the head teacher."

I should have thought that that was very clear.

Mr. Greenway: I am not satisfied about it; it needs to be tightened up. I have studied the matter and discussed it with those who are responsible for running our schools.

Under the agreement in the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Durham, North, teachers with small responsibilities will get a whacking increase. Other teachers with heavy responsibilities who are bearing the heat and burden of the day in a way that only those with top responsibilities in schools can will get little. That does not seem to be equitable. A great deal more talking needs to be done to produce a compromise that is fair and in the interests of all sections of the profession.

Mr. Dormand: It has to be said at the outset, that while there are some differences of opinion among teacher unions about the negotiated agreement, there are no divisions whatsoever on negotiating machinery. I respect very much the experience of the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) in teaching and the responsibility that he had, but I am surprised that he made no reference to that at all. I hoped that he and other Conservative Members would realise that that is the crucial thing with regard to ACAS, but there are other matters to which I shall refer.

The unions have already agreed to replace the Burnham committee with a national joint council for dealing with pay and conditions of service for teachers and, in so doing, acknowledged the need for a role for the Secretary of State in the new negotiating machinery. That is important. On

Second Reading on Monday, I was astonished at the ignorance—I think that that is the correct word—shown by Conservative Members in some of their speeches——

Mr. Radice: About what was in the Bill.

Mr. Dormand: Indeed. That is absolutely right. But I am referring in particular to the Burnham committee. At least two Conservative Members assumed that the committee was still supported by ACAS, the unions and everybody else. That was not so. It was astonishing, in a Second Reading debate on an issue of such importance, to come across such a lack of knowledge.

Mr. Frank Cook: They believe what they want to believe.

Mr. Dormand: That is absolutely right. Nobody is showing more evidence of that than the Secretary of State. He is overriding the normal democratic processes. Some of us had considerable respect for the Secretary of State. I think that I am right in saying that this is his second term in the House of Commons. In 1973 I heard what I considered to be a good speech by the right hon. Gentleman. I said how good I thought it was but that he had better be careful because he might get the reputation of being a smoothie. I am not the only one who refers to the Secretary of State nowadays as a smoothie. It appears that that is the reputation that he is getting. But a "smoothie" seems to suggest something fairly superficial. My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) has made a more devastating criticism of the Secretary of State, with which I agree. It was widely reported in the press after his speech on Monday.

The unions and Labour Members accept that there is a role for the Secretary of State in the negotiating process. I say that because the impression is given constantly that that is not so. I am at a loss to understand that. I do not see that any mileage or kudos are to be gained by that. Labour Members and ACAS—apparently everbody but the Government recognise that there is a role. Indeed, it is an important role.

Mr. Radice: There has to be.

Mr. Dormand: That is right. The reason is, as the Secretary of State has said properly on several occasions, that he represents the taxpayer. That is right. There is nothing wrong with that. However, I have to say that that is a role that has been played by the Secretary of State under Burnham for all the years that that system has been in operation. Why should there be criticism, or inferred ciriticism, from Conservative Members on that point. What is to be gained by trying to give that impression?

11 pm

The principle that any new machinery for teachers' pay and conditions of service should include direct negotiations — I repeat, direct negotiations — is absolutely fundamental. Unless the Government or even the Opposition, recognise that, they are doing the education service a grave injustice. The advisory committee is a direct and total denial of that principle. I have done some research in the Library on this and I know of no other country, at least in the western world, where such complete denial is part of the process of determining such matters. After all, there are few things more important than the pay and conditions of any category of society, including the vital service of education.

The agreement provides for a national joint council to deal with pay and other conditions of service for teachers and in doing so it acknowledges the need for discussions with the Secretary of State on his role in the new negotiating machinery. Having said that, I fail to see how anybody, except perhaps one or two Conservative Members can fail to be disillusioned by the provision for consultation in the Bill. It is no more than a farce. It has been said on a number of occasions that it is a facade. If that is not recognised then, frankly, the Government and Conservative Members are not doing education a service.

The Secretary of State and Conservative Members frequently refer to the division among teachers' unions. On the question of negotiating machinery, the Secretary of State has had a clear and unequivocal joint letter from the NUT, the NAS/UWT, AMMA and the Secondary Heads Association. I believe that some hon. Members have received a copy of that letter. I shall quote from the letter because I think that it is important. It states:

> "We are united in our opposition to your Bill which removes from teacher organisations the right to direct negotiations. We urge you to reconsider your position and to accept the principle that any new negotiating machinery for teachers' pay and conditions should include direct negotiation."

I hope that I am not wearying the Committee by the use of the words "direct negotiation", because, after all, that is the nub of the problem. As I and some of my hon. Friends have said, we know of no other country where that is denied. It is a brushing away of the democratic process in 1986. The quotation sums up in the clearest terms what the amendments are about. They have the support of the vast majority of teachers.

I have referred to the unions, but, of course, there is the same kind of support from the employers' organisations. All hon. Members have had letters from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and the Association of County Councils. I was particularly interested to read the views of the Association of County Councils. It said that it has argued for many years for the repeal of the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 which, it feels, has inhibited proper negotiations concerning teachers' salaries, and effectively blocked the sensible possibility of negotiating pay together with other conditions of service for more than 20 years. I do not agree with that view. I think that the association has gone over the top. There is some substance in it but that is not the issue. We are talking about the consensus between everybody concerned, and the Government are simply not recognising that. There is a wave of protest and the Government still fail to recognise and deal with it.

I repeat what I said on a previous occasion. I am deeply concerned that the Government have not recognised how far the unions have moved in agreeing to include conditions of service in the negotiations. It is yet another example of the Government being out of touch with the realities of the world of education and of teachers in particular. They had better be aware of the resentment that that is causing among teachers and employers. The Association of County Councils states:

> "The majority of teachers' representatives had generally, and until recently, opposed any changes which would have allowed effective negotiations. They have now, under the aegis of the ACAS talks, agreed a new framework for negotiations with the employers which would enable those changes to take place."

Other hon. Members will be aware of how long the ACC has been trying to bring about those changes. I do not

[Mr. Dormand]

want to make you blush, Mr. Armstrong, but you were one of the most distinguished headmasters that our county had and your reputation lives on. Part of that reputation was concerned with what I have just said. I hope that Conservative Members will bear that in mind because it is of fundamental importance.

It is no wonder that the ACC enthused so much about what it considered to be a fundamental change of heart, but the employers' joy was soon extinguished because the Bill removes from them any decision-making at all. That has been one of our constant criticisms. Under the Bill, the Secretary of State hogs all the decisions on basic pay and conditions. He will decide what is to be discussed and what is to be referred to the advisory body.

We are not likely to get an answer on this, but my hon. Friends and I would be interested to know how many objections have been and will be made by Tory councellors. [HON. MEMBERS: "The Minister is not listening."] I appreciate that the Minister has important matters to consider——

Mr. Frank Cook: Her car is coming. She is on her way to Annabel's by the look of it.

Mr. Dormand: How many objections have there been from Tory councillors? The agreement was clearly reached with the assent of all or most Tory councillors. It will also be interesting to see how many objections there are in the future because this measure will sweep away the powers of Tory councillors as well as those of the Labour persuasion.

When I collected my late mail between the two Divisions a short while ago I certainly did not expect to find a letter from the employers' chairman of the management panel of the Burnham primary and secondary committee. It is a short letter, but it is the most important that I have received so far on this controversial Bill. It says:

"As you will know the Government has introduced a Bill to repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 and establish, initially on an interim basis to March 1990, an Advisory Committee which will make (non-binding) recommendations to the Secretary of State on teachers' pay and conditions within pre-determined financial constraints.

I have written to the Secretary of State (as attached) calling upon him to reconsider his position.

The Government's Bill would, if enacted, have the effect of excluding both the employers and the unions from decision-making on the most expensive element of the education budget."

I break off the quotation there because that epitomises my argument and that which my right hon. and hon. Friends have made and will continue to make for the rest of the debate. The letter continues:

"Even leaving aside the unilateral nature of the Bill, the implications of the proposed Advisory Committee clearly stretch beyond issues of teachers' pay and conditions in such a way as fundamentally to call in question the balance between LEAs and the DES."

I do not think that any Conservative Member can deny that that is absolutely correct. The letter continues:

"I am convinced that the Government's Bill will, far from achieving its purported objective, make the situation in the schools even worse than it has been. Moreover, it is in itself retrograde and undemocratic and should for that reason alone be rejected.

I would be very willing to discuss these issues with MPs either singly or collectively."

The issue must be considered important if he is prepared to discuss the matter singly. I should like to repeat the penultimate sentence which runs:

"Moreover, it is in itself retrograde and undemocratic and should for that reason alone be rejected."

That is the nub of the argument. If the employers' chairman from the management panel of the Burnham primary and secondary committee has added his weight to the letters, objections and telephone calls that we have received and still the Government will take no notice, when will they take any notice of any argument? We know, of course, that they are autocratic.

I could refer to many other documents, but I know that other hon. Friends wish to speak. The amendments are simply a recognition of present circumstances in the world of education. They are a recognition of the fairness which everyone except the Government appreciates is essential if stability and progress are to return to our schools. I repeat what my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North has said often, and has repeated again today — we are as anxious as anyone that peace and stability should be restored to classrooms.

The Government could be hardly more wrong than they are to try to impose what they call a solution in the form of the Bill. The amendments recognise the balance and compromise which are essential ingredients in a sensible solution, especially in the present inflamed situation. I give the amendments my wholehearted support.

Mr. Flannery: Tuesday's *Guardian* carried the heading:

"Government determined to close this sorry business — Baker hardens stance on forced teachers' deal"

The report said:

"The Education Secretary, Mr. Kenneth Baker, has hardened his stance in the teachers' dispute, telling MPs yesterday they must be in no doubt about the Government's determination to 'close this sorry business.'

Throughout the Commons second reading debate"—

many of us were involved in that—

"on the bill to abolish the Burnham teachers' pay negotiating machinery, Mr. Baker made plain his willingness to use its powers to impose his own solution to the two-year dispute."

The negotiating process has been built up over many years. Any hon. Member who has taught, as quite a few have, knows how teachers gradually learn about the process of democracy in negotiations, especially between a local education authority and its teachers' organisations, and how that education authority is itself democratically built up, and what there is in the authority. There are elected representatives, usually with long and detailed experience. Not everybody can do the job. It took me years to get on to a local education committee.

Mr. Greenway *indicated assent.*

11.15 pm

Mr. Flannery: I can see the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway), an ex-teacher like myself, nodding in agreement.

We all know what it took. The type of person who can go on an education committee does not grow on trees. They are people with long experience, who have devoted themselves to this and have proved themselves. They come from both sides and there is a core of elected people and a little group of co-opted people. Through the years, they get to know one another. A rapport develops — an integration born of democracy and of long years together.

Side by side with these committees are the teachers' unions. None of us wants the teachers' unions to be disparate and split. We would like them to be unified, just as the authority is unified. In all areas—for example, big cities—there are joint committees of the teachers' unions. On the committee on which I served for many years, head teachers were represented, with their members changing at two-year intervals. Each of the teachers' unions was there, working together, and they formulated their conclusions about what they needed to negotiate on. They went back to their organisations, returned to the joint committee and then on to the local education authority as representatives of the unions. All this was a natural process of democracy being built up with patience year after year.

To override this because of frustration will not solve the problem of teaching our children, a problem that has come about over this long, weary, tiring, but still democratic, process. It is untidy, but it is the best that we have got, as Churchill said. It is a process whereby people get together, and no matter what difficulties they have, they attempt to come to a consensus or a compromise, and go on with the education of our children.

Everything that went on in that process came from the hard work of democratic people and through organisations built up patiently over 100 or 150 years by the people who worked in them. That process of patient, built-up democracy is so precious that to destroy it by a hasty move is not in the interests of the people who would take such action. At a later stage, the short cut that they are taking will find them out, just as any diktat, anywhere, made by the the Right, the Left or the centre, will not work, but will promote its opposite.

Democracy, which is a steady, on-going process, will ultimately prevail. Those who take the short cuts embodied in the Bill are ploughing the ocean. It will swill back over them at some stage, just as it has swilled back over Chirac in France, after the nonsense that he tried to put into the French educational system, having been warned by the President not to do it.

The Bill is born of frustration. The Government no longer have the patience to go on with the democratic process. They are angry, hurt and upset and no longer willing to go on arguing. The Government created the situation because they did not provide enough money to pay for the educational system that had been patiently built up over the years. They have allowed our schools to get into a mess and they sought and finally found a short, quick way out.

Our amendment seeks to replace the Burnham committee. We admit, many of us against our will, that the work of that committee has come to nothing, but that is because the Government failed to provide the money to keep it in being. We accept that, democratic as it is, the committee is not acceptable to this powerful Government with their overwhelming voting power in the Chamber and a paucity of arguments. The Government did not know what to do and finally took these draconian measures. It saddens me to find many democrats on the Government side bowing their heads to this draconian process.

We say in the amendment that the Burnham committee should be

"replaced by a negotiating machinery as set out in the document agreed under the auspices of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service"—

that is ACAS—

"between representatives of the local education authorities and of the teachers' unions.".

Together with the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway), I am one of the longest serving members of two Select Committees. We have been to other countries to study their education systems. I see in the Chamber hon. Members who have gone with me to Northern Ireland, and they know that what I am saying is true. We looked at education systems and in our private conversations we proudly agreed that none of them is as good as ours.

Just over a year ago I was in Germany with members of a Select Committee, and I can say categorically that the system we saw there is not nearly as good as ours—in spite of Germany's advances in trade and industry. Our failure in those fields is due to the failure of the Government's policy of monetarism and because Germany has invested money in its industry. It has nothing to do with the education system.

In Germany, there are no television sets in primary schools. We were told that there were some in the secondary schools, but when we checked we found none. The schools there are not as well equipped as ours and our schools are more relaxed and better in every way. In France, before a teacher can be moved from one school to another or placed in a school, permission has to be sought from Paris. I think the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Brinton) was with me when we went with members of a Select Committee, and he knows that that is true.

Mr. Tim Brinton (Gravesham): The hon. Gentleman says that I was a member of a Select Committee in the last Parliament and that I can confirm all that he says. I am afraid I cannot do that, because as a television practitioner I would not worry too much if there were no television sets in schools. There is one difference between us.

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman is a friend and we had the occasional drink together after meetings. He says that television in schools is not a good thing. I suspected on occasion that the hon. Gentleman was reactionary when it came to television in schools, and now I know that that is true. Anybody who does not realise that if it is used intelligently television is a great instrument for advancement is detached by a few years from today's reality.

We wish to insert the following:

"and school teachers' pay shall be determined by the agreement reached at the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service between the local education authorities and the teachers' unions."

We are speaking against the background of a democratic process that has taken many years to evolve, a process that was hard-born and difficult, and the Government have failed properly to maintain the education system because they have not made enough money available to pay teachers adequately. They have become frustrated and have sought escape by taking the most draconian route open to them, a route which bypasses the democratic process. They have opted for a system which is unacceptable to those who have to teach in the schools, and without those people we cannot have education.

Teachers are massively dissatisfied with the Bill, which is unifying them against the Government. The Bill will bring about a struggle, and teachers will be agonising over whether to unleash another struggle. They will be agonising over what they should do. They will be discussing these matters with one another and asking themselves, "Do we engage in another struggle or do we bow our heads?" I have heard some teachers saying in this

[Mr. Flannery]

place this evening that if they bow their heads they will get nowhere and if they struggle they will be accused of unleashing further conflict.

There is a struggle taking place that involves the maintenance of democracy in education and an anti-democratic short cut, and the short cut will be upheld by the Government's voting power in this place, despite their paucity of argument. The amendments are hard thought out. They are in favour of democracy in education and against a process of anti-democratic short cuts and diktat. If the Government's anti-democratic actions unleash a further struggle, be that on their conscience. They must understand that at some stage people will fight back against diktat, and that is the position we are reaching.

Mr. George Howarth (Knowsley, North): ACAS is a fine body, and I am sure that at least my right hon. and hon. Friends have had occasion to use it. It is a sensible, even-handed organisation which is respected by industry generally. It often solves complex problems in an imaginative and intelligent way that is acceptable to both sides of industry. I shall try to relate the role that ACAS could play in the teachers' dispute to the many interested groups in the education system. I do not think that there can be disentanglement without consideration being given to all the interested parties.

I am a parent, and I represent many thousands of parents in the part of the Knowsley which comes within my constituency, an area that has a high school-age population. It is of great concern to me and many other parents that we should get the education system right. We must achieve a lasting partnership between all the forces within the system, that will enable us to build for the future and provide a proper education system for our children. I accept that to some extent the Secretary of State has sought to achieve that in some of the actions that he has taken, but he has not succeeded.

Local education authorities are part of that which we call education, and we have seen Conservative Members beating them across the head with a big stick over the past few weeks. Conservative Members must understand that local authorities are elected democratically through the ballot box to look after the interests of local people. As such, they have a legitimate interest in the education system, and we cannot dismiss the role played by local authorities or feel that they have nothing to say on the subject, because they do. They are democratically elected and are an important ingredient in the whole equation.

Many parents are deeply concerned that the education system has gone sadly wrong because of recent events. Relationships have been soured and the whole process has been disrupted. None of these things has improved relationships within the schools, between teachers and education authorities, between teachers unions and the Government and between parents and teachers, all of which are in danger of going seriously sour.

11.30 pm

I have been a school governor for many years. It is now in vogue to say that there should be more parent governors with more powers, but my experience during the lifetime of this Government has been that many governors are extremely confused about their existing role and what is happening to the education system. The Bill will add to their confusion and make them even more worried about the process in which they play a part.

We have heard about head teachers, and you, Mr. Armstrong, were referred to with some distinction by my hon. Friends. I have talked to head teachers in my constituency and elsewhere, and they feel that the process within which they are involved, the relationships within their schools and their relationships with the wider community are seriously in jeopardy because of a failure over a number of years to resolve these problems. They are especially concerned that factors such as the career structure and the recruitment of younger teachers have not been well served.

We must also talk about the teaching profession itself. In the early days of this Government I was a teacher in the further education sector. I shall be honest with the House. I left the teaching profession to work in the co-operative movement because, like my colleagues, I could see the way things were going. We felt that although there were growth sectors that could create new employment, the Government were not behind the education system. That process, which began in 1979, has merely accelerated to the extent that we are now in this sorry mess.

We must forge a new consensus that will give people in the profession — parents, teachers, local education authorities and others—some confidence that we know what we are doing. Above all, it should be a consensus which, unlike the Bill, does not alienate the teachers.

It is no good me or anyone else talking about partnership, consensus or a future for education if the end result is a disgruntled and unhappy teaching force. Education is a delicate balance between a number of interests that should not be seen as competing, because they are all to do with educating young people for a better future. That balance is totally destroyed by alienating the professionals in the way that the current process has done.

I have already referred to, and praised, the services of ACAS. Why not let a balanced body that is respected by everyone mediate in this matter and come up with a solution? My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) referred earlier to the contractual duties of main professional grade teachers, which, I understand, were agreed under the auspices of ACAS. An example of what can be achieved in the long term is the fact that several points have been agreed that should be highlighted.

The second point agreed stated:

"Promote the general progress and welfare of a class or group of pupils; to provide initial guidance counselling on educational, social and career matters and record and report on these matters and on the personal and social need of pupils; liaise and consult with parents and outside agencies, and attend meetings arranged for these purposes."

We should expect teachers to perform such duties, but that is being put in jeopardy today.

Another duty is to

"Advise and co-operate with colleagues on preparation and development of courses of study, teaching materials team planning teaching programmes, methods and pastoral arrangements."

That is honourable and proper, but it is jeopardised today.

The document also says that another duty is to

"Co-ordinate the work of other teachers"——

Mrs. Rumbold: I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman. He is reading a list of duties for teachers which were agreed in recent negotiations with ACAS and at

Nottingham. Is the hon. Gentleman aware that those agreed duties are the duties originally proposed by my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State?

Mr. Howarth: I repeat that one of the duties is to

"Co-ordinate the work of other teachers and undertake a defined role in the review, development and management of assigned curriculum, pastoral and organisational activities."

Fine points have been agreed, but they are being jeopardised.

Mr. Fatchett: The Minister's intervention makes our argument for us. The unions have moved towards the Government. Is it not about time that the Government moved towards the unions and bargained voluntarily with them? They are not prepared to do that.

Mr. Howarth: That is the precise point. We are in danger of alienating the good will that emerged during the discussions and allowing the process to get out of hand.

I have some suggestions about what the Government should concentrate upon. We should be trying to wring out positive things from the education system. Many teachers are concerned about this. They are concerned not only about salaries, but about status and career structures and how they relate.

I am prepared to give the Government credit where it is due. They have achieved something with the police force, although that is unrelated to our discussion. Many of us take issue on some aspects of policing, but the police have a career and salary structure which builds for the future and for a high quality policy force. I accept that some benefit will be derived from that. If we can do that for the police force, why can we not do it for education? Why can we not trust in the goodwill and co-operation of an organisation such as ACAS to help us? Do the Government not believe that children deserve to be taught properly by a settled profession? The Government are not contributing towards the establishment of a settled profession.

What are parents to think of an education system which is in disarray and which we think is about to enter a period of disruption and problems? As a parent, I know of all the problems involved in educating children and in the balance of people's domestic lives when they try to cope with the sort of disruption that is almost certain to follow the passing of the Bill.

Children's futures will be damaged. Education opportunities will be missed and the potential to improve teaching and the running of our schools will be lost, because goodwill will be lost. The future of education will be undermined and the future of some children may be jeopardised.

Local education authorities are dismayed by the Secretary of State's apparent obsession with the books that ILEA is worried about. He seems more interested in that topic than in what goes on in schools. The right hon. Gentleman is corresponding with the chairman of the education committee in Knowsley about whether there will be a city technology college in the area, and the chairman of the education committee has said that we in Knowsley are concerned with children

"who have little or no support in the home and who are victims of other kinds of economic and cultural disadvantage".

Those matters should be given more weight. They are not receiving the attention that they deserve because there is trench warfare between the unions and the Government.

I suggest that local authorities would be delighted if the dispute could be settled through ACAS in a sober, considered and thoughtful way so that we can get on with building up the education service. Many, probably most, teachers would accept that that would be an intelligent way forward. Once the agreement is settled and secure they can get on with the job that they trained for and aspire to —teaching children.

The ACAS option would also give the profession the opportunity to settle matters for a generation or more. As with the police, new entrants would know what future and what pay scales to expect. I am sure that the profession would accept the ACAS option as a viable one. Once matters were settled, head teachers, who are another important ingredient, would welcome the chance to get on with organising the education of our children.

The amendment would give all interested parties the opportunity to consign the recent past to history and to concentrate on the many issues that would still be outstanding. For example, what do we want from our education system and from our teaching profession in helping to deliver those objectives? How can we ensure that curriculum developments and teaching methods enable our children to realise their potential? I feel strongly about that matter, because I lived in an area where many of my contemporaries who were bright and had great potential did not get the chances to realise it. To a great extent, that is still true in my constituency.

How do we involve the wider community? I am talking not of a trivial or flash-in-the-pan approach, but of involving the community, local government, the profession and parents in building a consensus in education. It is important to build on that consensus. We are talking about a partnership in which due weight is given to all those involved, and in which staff in the education system, parents, local education authorities and the wider community consider that they have a stake in the education service.

By solving the vexatious and highly charged problem of pay, conditions and structure through ACAS, we shall open a road that will lead to new opportunities and to a new age in which we may properly discuss the problems of educating our children.

11.45 pm

Mr. Dormand: All hon. Members will agree with my hon. Friend's view. His speech has not only been eloquent and passionate, but very informed. His last point about partnership is crucial. Does he agree that, since they were elected in 1979, the Government have placed great importance — some may say they have had a fetish about it—on non-interference in local affairs? They have placed a great deal of importance on autonomy and letting local people get on with the job. My hon. Friend referred to the role of governors. He is right about that matter. The Government have made great play of the fact.

Mr. Dunn *indicated assent.*

Mr. Dormand: The Minister has shown his agreement. Since 1979 the Government have placed great importance on the role of governors. This is a draconian Bill, as my hon. Friend said, which represents complete and utter interference from the centre. I hope that my hon. Friend will agree that we must continue to repeat this fact. I suspect that Conservative Members know it, too, but are afraid to say so.

Mr. Howarth: I take my hon. Friend's point. The Government pledged themselves to take the state off the backs of the people but they have put heavy burdens on the backs of many people, particularly those in the education service.

As a former councillor, I believe that the autonomy of local government has been seriously jeopardised. That is reflected in the education service. A wealth of evidence has been produced by bodies such as the AMA and the ACC as well as by independent bodies. The Audit Commission has made criticisms. The evidence is so strong that we are sure that local autonomy has gone out the window. The Bill is one more example of that process.

I referred to the crisis in the education service, which seems about to deepen. The forces to which I referred are likely to be even more disgruntled, worried and concerned. If right hon. and hon. Gentlemen fail to recognise that this is happening, in the short term there will be damage to the future chances and education of our children. In the long term, children will not achieve their aims. That is a serious concern of Labour Members. In the long term—Labour Members hope it is not too long—the Bill may be one more nail in the snug-fitting coffin that is being prepared for the Conservative Government.

Mr. Cohen: I was disappointed that I was not called in the debate on the first group of amendments. I shall not go over them—[HON. MEMBERS: "Go on."]—although I am being egged on by my hon. Friends. I wanted to raise the issue of the breaches of international law that could occur under this legislation. The debate on the first group of amendments provided a good opportunity to consider International Labour Organisation conventions 98 and 151, to which the Government subscribed, yet they are now breaching them. That is a serious matter. As we know, the Government are relying heavily on international law to fight terrorism. Although this issue is not on the same scale, once international law is breached, no matter how small the breach — it is not small to the teachers — Britain's role in other important international matter is weakened. This debate is not the right time to make a point on that, but I hope that there will be opportunities later to debate possible breaches of international law under this legislation. I would welcome that, because the Chamber is full of lawyers, and it would be good to take advantage of informed legal expertise.

The Government's continuous mishandling of this long-running dispute has been damaging to the teaching profession and to schoolchildren, who are being denied their fundamental right to education. Parents are increasingly angry about the Government's role in exacerbating this long-running dispute. It will be brought home to parents that this legislation will exacerbate the discontent in schools and the dispute. Parents will become wise to the Government's actions and will be very annoyed.

Above all, the Government have shown their contempt for teachers. They have totally disregarded the role of ACAS in settling the teachers' dispute and in forming the framework to deal with future disputes and negotiations. I know that you have let the debate become a little wide-ranging, Mr. Armstrong——

Dr. Marek: No.

Mr. Cohen: I bow to my hon. Friend's greater experience in these matters. ACAS has a valuable role to play.

ACAS has made recommendations regarding the replacement of Burnham. Those recommendations are contained in a Library briefing paper, which is an excellent summary. The document states:

"The ACAS Agreement between the local authority employers and the teachers' unions (drawn up on 21 November 1986) proposed a new negotiating machinery in the form of a National Joint Council composed of representatives of the LEAs and the six teachers' unions to negotiate pay and other conditions of service for all teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales along the following lines."

It is interesting to note that ACAS wished to involve the teacher unions and the employers directly in the national joint council. Just compare that with the Government's denial of such an effective role to the employers and the unions.

The document continues by detailing the arrangements:

"National Joint Council. The parties will establish a National Joint Council for the purpose of negotiating pay and other conditions of service for all teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales. Delivery of agreements. The parties will seek the introduction of a legislative requirement obliging LEAs to implement the salary scales agreed by the NJC. Otherwise, the agreements of the NJC will be made binding both on LEAs and on teachers through incorporation by the LEAs of national agreements into the contracts of individual teachers."

Therefore, a formula is available to settle disputes.

The document continues:

"Composition of the NJC. The NJC will be composed of representatives of the local education authorities in England and Wales and of the six unions presently represented on the Burnham Primary and Secondary Committee. The balance of the representation on each side will be determined with the assistance of ACAS."

That is much fairer than the Government's advisory committee, to which the Secretary of State will appoint whom he wants.

On the role of the Secretary of State, the document states:

"The parties will seek discussions with the Secretary of State on his role in the new machinery."

By introducing this Bill, the Secretary of State is saying that he is not interested in getting round the table and working out a formula whereby everyone is involved in the negotiations. The document continues:

"Local disputes. In drawing up the detailed constitution of the proposed NJC the parties will make arrangements for dealing with local disputes over the determination and application of national agreements and for access to those arrangements."

I read that document because I think it is important to know what ACAS has said it recommends as the replacement for Burnham. It must be compared with the Secretary of State's proposal for replacing Burnham. He does not propose an integrated, detailed and fair formula which involves all the parties. He has said, "Burnham is no good; it will be replaced by me." ACAS has been constructive; the Secretary of State has been singularly destructive in this matter. ACAS has sought democratic solutions in replacing Burnham; the Secretary of State has made singularly undemocratic proposals.

In reply to the earlier debate, the Secretary of State said that the parties had sought to impose their agreement, reached by the employers and the trade unions, with the help of ACAS, after very hard negotiations, upon him. In every other walk of life, employers and trade unions get

together, negotiate and make agreements that eventually stick, but the Secretary of State says that that is not good enough in this case. He is the odd man out in this process. He has put a block on the agreements that were reached after such hard negotiation. He is imposing his will upon the teachers and the employers.

There will be great anger, not only among the teachers but among the parents as well, when it is realised that agreement was reached, yet that has been denied by the Secretary of State. In its place he has put his own wide-ranging set of impositions and powers. He is removing the right of teachers to negotiate and have a realistic say in the negotiations of their pay and conditions of service. The Bill gives the Secretary of State the power to impose any level of pay and conditions of service that he wishes on teachers in England and Wales. The Secretary of State will pick all the members of the advisory body and instruct them on what matters they can and cannot look into. He will tell them what money is available and what settlements cannot be made.

12 midnight

After all that, if the Secretary of State does not like what the advisory body says, he will have the power to over-rule any of its recommendations on his own. On top of that, he can make differential salary awards for different areas of the country and for teachers of different subjects. He has taken all those powers unto himself with no real democratic control upon him, and certainly without the people in the profession having a realistic say. He will be the only arbiter on pay and conditions of service of teachers and can modify or even ignore the advice of his own self-appointed advisory body.

The Secretary of State is adopting a fundamentally undemocratic approach in the Bill. Teachers' rights are being ridden over roughshod. Free collective bargaining is to be denied and the valued ACAS role, to which I and other hon. Members have referred, is also to be ridden over roughshod. There is to be no place in the Secretary of State's scheme of things for ACAS in bringing the parties to the table to reach the necessary agreement.

ACAS has not been lightly involved in these matters. Time is short, and nobody is interested in delaying these matters unduly, and other hon. Members want to speak, so I shall not read in detail the agreement that ACAS reached. However, let me read the list of contents of that agreement to show how serious and detailed has been the role of ACAS in obtaining that hard-won agreement.

First, on the duties of teachers, the document lists their basic contractual requirements, the school-based job description and the voluntary activities. On the working time of teachers, it lists the days per year, the hours per week, the working time of head teachers and deputy head teachers. On the contractual limitations on teachers' workloads, it lists the class size and teaching support time, cover for absent colleagues, entry grade teachers and, teacher supply, On grade structure, it lists the general description of the new structure, the implementation from 1 September 1987, and the interim arrangements. On pay, it lists levels applicable from 1 September 1987, assimilation at 1 January and 1 September 1987, special education, starting salaries and incremental progression. On appraisal, it lists the ACAS working party report which was agreed easily by both sides.

Mr. Freud: Will the hon. Gentleman tell the Committee, because he felt aggrieved at not being called to speak on the last group of amendments, whether this is the speech that he would have made on those amendments or whether it is a completely new speech?

Mr. Cohen: This series of amendments is about the role of ACAS. That is why I am referring to its role. If I had spoken in the debate on the previous group of amendments, I should have referred to the international law issue, to which I hope we shall return at a later stage.

Dr. Marek: At this stage it might be appropriate to read out amendment No. 4. It says:

"Clause 1, page 1, line 5, at end insert 'and is replaced by a negotiating machinery as set out in the document agreed under the auspices of the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service between representatives of the local education authorities and of the teachers' unions.'"

The purpose of my question is to ask my hon. Friend to confirm that he is quoting from the document that is mentioned in amendment No. 4.

Mr. Cohen: Yes, that is the document from which I am quoting. The list is extensive and covers a wide range. Earlier in the debate the Minister of State said that her right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wanted to impose some of these conditions in the first place. That cannot be right, when so many new elements were agreed around the negotiating table between the parties.

As for special education, the agreement says that teachers who are currently in receipt of special class allowances—those on existing scales 2S and 3S—will from 1 January 1987 receive an allowance of £855 and will continue to receive it. Assimilation into the main professional grade of an existing scale 2S and 3S will be on the basis of the equivalent incremental point on scales 2 and 3, as the case may be. That is not an unreasonable increment for special education teachers. We do not provide sufficient salary incentives to attract teachers into special needs education. If the Secretary of State throws out the ACAS agreement he will also throw out the minimum additional element that ought to be paid to those who teach children with special educational needs.

As for class size, the agreement says that the overall class size limit of 33 shall be implemented as soon as possible and not later than 1 September 1987. It also states:

"It is further agreed that an overall class size limit of 30 should be the first priority for implementation after the 1990 review".

I think that classes of 33 are still enormous. Proper education will not be given to the children in the way that we would like. That is the very minium. It is probably below the minimum that should be accepted in our schools. I bet that in the private schools, there are not classes of 30 and 33. Why should the schoolchildren in the state schools have that number in classes? It is wrong. Again, the Government are throwing out that proposal. Apart from not wanting to put up the money to pay the teachers, I suspect that that was one of the reasons in the back of the Government's mind for not wanting the agreement. They are prepared to see classes well over that number continuing for a good time yet. It is a shame that that has gone out of the window.

That is all that I want to say on the ACAS agreement — [HON. MEMBERS: "Good."] — directly about the agreement. If I had wanted to delay the Committee, I could have read many other passages from it. I am not keen to do so. Almost uniquely, the teachers are being

[Mr. Cohen]

hammered by the Bill taking away their rights. Since 1919 they have had the right to negotiate their salaries and conditions of service. It has been enshrined in legislation since that time. The new proposal in the Bill which takes that away from them is unique in the history of public sector pay negotiations. No other group has been subjected to such authoritarian treatment by the Government. Other public sector groups with wage-fixing negotiations and agreements and independent review bodies could also suffer.

The teachers should not have fewer rights and less protection against unreasonable and arbitrary behaviour by the Secretary of State or any Government than other groups of workers that have independent review bodies and negotiation machinery. On what possible justification can the Minister say that teachers should have fewer rights than those other groups? A precedent will be created.

Dr. Marek: The only justification that the Secretary of State has is that he has a large majority. If the Government did not have that, and if there was a small majority, we would not have seen this legislation. There would have been no chance of it. After the next general election, there will be no chance of it. At the moment, the Government are in a fortuitous position. They thought of something that they could do to hammer the teachers even more, as my hon. Friend says. I cannot honestly think of any other reason why they are singling out the teachers in that way.

Mr. Cohen: I agree with my hon. Friend. It is not morally justified and cannot be justified on any grounds of reasonableness.

The Bill represents a precedent for other employees and employers in the public sector with the end of their role in free negotiations between the employees and employers. The negotiating machinery and the review bodies that all the other public sector workers have will inevitably be at risk following the precedent set by the Government against the teachers.

Let me give some examples of all the other groups of workers who will be affected. There are loads of other bodies and negotiating machinery. The teachers in further education could suffer. About 700,000 professional, technical and clerical staff in local authorities could lose their rights if the precedent in set under the Bill is extended to them. Local authority manual workers have a national joint council and could suffer. There is the building and civil engineering NJC. Engineers, electricians, chief executives, chief officers, the probation service, magistrates courts, justices clerks, municipal airports and local authority fire brigades could suffer. The industrial Civil Service has a joint co-ordinating committee and could suffer. The non-industrial civil servants have a national Whitley council and eight Whitley councils cover the staff of the National Health Service such as ambulancemen, ancillary staff, dental services staff and many others. All those are at risk under the precedent that the Government are setting in teachers' pay negotiations. On top of that, as has been said, the police could be at risk from the precedent. Clearly that is quite wrong.

12.15 am

The precedent does not start with the teachers. It has been set before under the Government with the GCHQ dispute. The Government denied trade unionism and basic civil liberties to the workers there. The Government are in the process of extending that. It is now the turn of the teachers and after that perhaps it will be the NHS workers or other groups of workers. The Government are adopting salami tactics in terms of their anti-civil-liberties, anti-democratic and anti-trade-union approach.

The truth is that the Secretary of State and his predecessor had ample opportunity to settle the long-running dispute, but they blew it because of their prevarication and refusal to settle and provide the right resources when they had the opportunity to do so. Now, they are blowing it because of their authoritarian presumptions and the tendency to take all powers to themselves. The Government are blowing it because of the 19 conditions that the Secretary of State sought to impose without any flexibility and because they are riding roughshod over the negotiating machinery. The Secretary of State could have settled the dispute, but he is now in danger of it running on and on.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend mentioned GCHQ. The Government have not been very successful there. I wonder whether there are lessons that should be learnt by GCHQ and whether they should not be making the same mistakes as they appear to be about to make with this Bill.

The First Deputy Chairman (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. The hon. Gentleman should not follow that line. We must stick to the amendments before the House.

Mr. Cohen: I accept that, Mr. Armstrong, and that is what I have been seeking to do. I shall not respond to that point.

Free collective bargaining and recognising the role of ACAS in settling a protracted dispute must be better than the Secretary of State taking all power to himself. The negotiated ACAS agreement shows that that formula works. That agreement introduced a system of appraisal of teachers for the first time, provided a detailed conditions of service agreement where none existed before, established a new negotiating machinery to replace Burnham, created a new salary structure for the profession and increased the salary levels to reward effective teaching. All that was in the ACAS agreement. It shows that free collective bargaining and ACAS involvement can work. That should be the approach adopted.

ACAS is essential. Calling in ACAS does not mean that the teachers will refuse to settle unless they get the kind of handouts that take place in the City. *The London Evening Standard* of 6 November states:

> "Former defence secretary Sir John Nott, chairman of merchant bankers, Lazards, doubled his salary to £366,436 last year."

I am sure that the teachers would settle for less than half that figure. Indeed, I am sure that they would settle for far less than the golden hellos of more than £100,000 that are now commonplace among merchant banks buying stockbrokers, jobbers and so on.

New clause 1 refers to the role of ACAS in determining pension arrangements. In answer to a written question recently, I was told that top civil servants now receive a pension of £26,000 and a lump sum of more than £77,000. One wonders what the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, will get when he goes. He may talk about economy with the truth in Australia, but there will be no economy with the public purse when he goes. No teacher

expects a salary, let alone a pension, like that, but ACAS should at least be able to help teachers in determining their pension arrangements.

The Secretary of State may impose his will this time round, but the dispute will still be brewing and boiling in the schools. The teachers' strong feelings about being underpaid will be compounded if the lid of the pressure cooker is screwed down and they are excluded from the negotiating process. That is bound to cause discontent and resentment, and I believe that further industrial action will be inevitable. The teachers themselves make that clear in their briefing to Parliament, when they say:

"The Bill would seriously damage industrial relations. The Government is presenting this measure as a means of resolving the long-running teachers' pay dispute. Yet intervention of this kind is guaranteed to create disillusion in schools. With no avenue open for teachers to formulate aspirations and air grievances, this disillusion would simmer away in schools, leading to a de-motivated, unenthusiastic and uncommitted teaching force. If teachers are denied proper channels to enable their complaints to be redressed, such feelings would in due course be more likely to lead to increased disruption than any dissatisfaction that could arise from negotiating machinery."

Clearly, further industrial action is likely to result from the Government's treatment of teachers in the Bill.

The Government are being thoroughly cynical. They know that further industrial action is inevitable as a result of their proposals. They just hope that the Bill will delay it until after a general election. They will not have to worry about it then, because they will be in opposition. The only way forward must be direct negotiations and agreements freely reached with the help of ACAS. That is the only way in which our teachers and schools can get on with the essential job of educating the next generation for the benefit of the country. The Government's formula is one for chaos.

Mr. Clay: One of the fascinating things about this debate is that it is not that long ago that many of the arguments that are being advanced by Opposition Members were being made by Conservative Members. The debate is about an amendment concerning the role of ACAS and the Government's refusal to accept its role and the settlement negotiated through it.

I am on the moderate wing of the Labour movement, as my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) can testify, because I sat on his general management committee for quite a time. He can vouch for the moderation of my views. There are people in the Labour movement and the trade union movement who, especially when they have been caught in a bitter dispute, have taken the view that ACAS is not necessarily always the best thing since sliced bread.

That view is probably less popular than it used to be, but some people think that agreements negotiated through ACAS are sometimes not as good as those that can be achieved by slogging it out with the employer. We do not have to look back far to discover how much the Government's attitude has changed. The only recent dispute which had a bigger impact than the teachers' dispute on British society was that of the National Union of Mineworkers. After a certain point in that dispute, Ministers argued time and again that the NUM and its supporters ought to take up the agreement negotiated through ACAS by the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers. What a change there has been!

Not long ago the Government were begging people on strike to accept an agreement that was negotiated through ACAS, as though it was the final arbiter of proper procedure and wisdom in disputes. In the Government's mind, its role was almost God-like. One could argue that the NACODS agreement has turned out to be worthless when it comes to stopping pit closures or, indeed, anything else, but the Government, who backed the National Coal Board, argued that people should accept what was negotiated through ACAS. Here, the Government are trying to deny what has been negotiated. They are even opposing an amendment which would recognise the work of ACAS and write into the Bill the negotiating machinery that ACAS was instrumental in negotiating.

As I am a moderate person, I have some knowledge of the way in which some people in the Labour movement think. It occurs to me that if I was a wild Trotskyite revolutionary who wanted to do a lecture at a weekend school for young comrades on the illusions of the parliamentary road to democracy, I could take as my text for the whole weekend the Government's conduct on the Bill and their attitude to the amendment. It would be a marvellous opportunity to argue that there is a great deal of cynicism about parliamentary democracy.

The Secretary of State was earlier abusing Burnham, as he usually does, saying that it was unsatisfactory that at one time the NUT had a clear majority on it, and asking what sort of way that was to do business. That is an interesting point. The Government have a majority in the House of Commons, and it is extraordinarily cynical of a Government who claim that Labour Members are subversives and do not respect parliamentary democracy, to say in effect, "Who cares whether someone has a majority? What does a majority matter?" If a majority does not matter, the Government have no legitimacy. This is an illustration the Government's attitude towards democracy.

12.30 am

In my experience as a trade unionist, I learnt that ACAS can be an extremely useful and important body, sometimes even if it is never involved in the dispute. Often, when trade unionists are faced with a problem they say, "Let us involve ACAS," just as employers often say that. However, if one cannot involve ACAS, and the possibility of ACAS solving the dispute is discredited, that will have not just the effects about which Labour Members have talked, in teaching, schools, industrial relations in schools and so on, but a much wider industrial effect.

In the future, anyone who suggests that ACAS does not have a solution and cannot settle the dispute, and perhaps it would be better to hold out for a different solution, will have a powerful argument. He will be able to say, "What is the point? After all those meetings, dragging through the weekends in London and Nottingham, balloting, conferences, and, finally accepting a negotiated agreement through ACAS, the Government just ripped it up and would not have it. What is the point of going to ACAS when the Government can deny and negate its efforts?"

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will my hon. Friend accept that in most trade unions there are differences of opinion within the executive, with one group wanting to negotiate, and one group not wanting to negotiate? My hon. Friend is illustrating the way that the Government are giving extra strength to those within an executive who may not want to negotiate through ACAS.

Mr. Clay: I thank my hon. Friend for that point, because it will help me to move on. I do not want to take too much time. I was coming to that point.

There are differing views, not only within the teaching profession, but within the different teaching unions, about the agreement. No hon. Member would have to go far to verify this. One could do so by walking into a school and talking to the teachers there. I can remember being in a school the day after the agreement was reached and asking teachers what they thought about it and the division of agreement within that staff group. Some teachers—I am not saying that I endorse their attitude—felt that the employers' agreement was not sufficient and that after all the struggle, the fundamental demoralisation, the agony that had been caused, the disruption and the cruelty of the Government towards education, something better should have resulted.

I remember some people saying, "With a bit of luck, Baker will be daft enough to try to impose his own settlement on the profession and then we will be back in business, because he will not get away with it." I do not take any view about whether or not that is helpful, but by taking the attitude that they have done and by trying to discredit what ACAS has done, the Government are in many ways strengthening the hand of those who think that the employers' agreement was insufficient.

The Secretary of State, and indeed no Minister or Government Member, is naive enough, or, for that matter, cynical enough, to say that because of the closeness of the vote in the NUT those who voted against were in a sense saying that the employers' agreement gave them too much. Those who voted against the agreement were clearly saying that even the agreement reached with the employers with the assistance of ACAS was not sufficient. The Government are strengthening the hand of those people, and in a sense one could ask why we should intrude on that grief when the Government are taking that attitude.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) said, democracy is at the hub of this argument. This is a fundamentally undemocratic measure. It relates to the wider question of democracy in society and the legitimacy of Parliament, and seems an extraordinary way to deal with legislation. My hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) and some Government Members quoted the details of the agreement, and my hon. Friend spoke about what is denied by this clause. Those denials could be replaced if our amendment were accepted. Those speeches demonstrated the complexity of these negotiations and the sensitivity of industrial relations in education. It seems quite extraordinary that, in the light of all that complexity, the Government can legislate on a historic and constitutional matter without a White Paper or a Green Paper.

As an example for the class that one might hold if one were some wild-eyed revolutionary Trotskyist trying to demonstrate that in many ways the parliamentary process is a farce, one could have no better legislation. All that one would need to say was that when a Government are up against the wall and cannot get their own way, out goes all the nonsense about Green Papers, White Papers, consultation, hours during the night in Committee and lobbying. In two or three days flat, they just roll out their majority and steamroller the legislation through without consultation.

That attitude is increasingly consistent with other activities of the Government and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton said, it is in the tradition of what the Government did at GCHQ. I know that we must not stray into that, but the action of the Government there is relevant to the amendment, because the Government are taking away not only the right of local authorities to negotiate, but their financial freedom so that they cannot spend what they want on education.

In many ways, the Government have removed the freedom of speech. One of the interesting matters raised by the clause and by our amendment is that when one looks at the Government's employment legislation, one finds that the actions of many trade unionists in Britain will become more directly political. If the Bill is passed, the teachers unions will have no option other than direct conflict with the Government. If those unions are in dispute with the Government, they can either take strike action, causing disruption, or say openly that the Government are not prepared to deliver the pay and conditions that the teachers find necessary and call for the removal of the Government.

If the Bill is passed, the teachers unions will quickly organise political fund ballots. The teachers will probably vote overwhelmingly for such ballots because, as a result of other Government legislation, those unions will be unable to say anything in negotiations, because any disagreement with the Government could bring them in contempt of the employment legislation that has already been enacted. That is another interesting example of the Government's cynicism.

When the Government came to office they talked about rolling back the frontiers of the state. No Government have rolled in those frontiers more than this Government have done. My hon. Friend the Member for Easington said that there could not be anywhere else in the Western world where a Government could impose pay and conditions on trade unionists so directly without any proper consultation or negotiation. That may be so, because I have not studied the Western world in those terms, but I suspect that it is necessary to look to the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union, Hungary and other such countries for parallels. Some of my hon. Friends may disagree with me, but I am a moderate on these matters.

There is a word which is often used loosely between those on the Left in Britain, but it is appropriate to describe the nature of the Government and what they are doing. The word is Stalinism. The Government's aim is centralised state bureaucracy. The Conservative party deluded sufficient of the electorate to make them believe that it was opposed to such bureaucracy and that the Labour party and Labour-controlled local authorities stood for it. The Government have rejected ACAS, which is recognised as an impartial arbiter, a pressure valve and a means to avoid conflict. They have decided to impose pay and conditions willy-nilly, and they must be described as Stalinist.

There are many lessons that will be learnt from the Government's conduct. If they get away with the Bill, I dread to think——

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): To judge from some of his recent comments, I agree that my hon. Friend is becoming dangerously moderate in his views. Does he agree that there are many Members in this place, primarily Labour Members, who believe that the Conservative party will go along with parliamentary

democracy only if it serves its interests, and that as soon as it appears to threaten the interests of the class that it represents, parliamentary democracy will be cast aside? Will he accept that there is an element of that attitude in the Bill?

Mr. Clay: My hon. Friend has made a useful intervention. It is not for me to refer to various political schools in explaining that view. It is extraordinary that the Government have provided such a classic textbook example to prove the validity of my hon. Friend's analysis of how society and this place work, how forces in society conflict and how conflicts are resolved, or not.

The Government are not entirely philosophically consistent. They want to impose state direction on teachers, yet at the same time, being the opportunists that they are, the Secretary of State for the Environment is saying to certain local authorities, "Why do you not tear up the national agreements with your employees other than teachers and negotiate locally?" How can a Government be so inconsistent in wanting to impose central pay and conditions on teachers, while encouraging local authorities to tear up national agreements? The answer lies in the balance of forces and not in a consistent industrial relations philosophy. It is about taking whatever opportunity is best to break trade unions and to impose the lowest possible pay and conditions.

12.45 am

If the trade unions can be opposed and broken on a local basis, that is what the Government are in favour of. If they have to take on the job themselves, they will do it in a central and state bureaucratic manner. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) is quite right. This is about the Government using legislation only when it suits them to impose things that are in the interests of their class.

Mr. Banks: Does my hon. Friend agree that as soon as parliamentary democracy stands in the way of the Conservative party, parliamentary democracy will go out of the window?

Mr. Clay: Indeed. Before my hon. Friend intervened I was about to make that point. If the Government get away with this, I dread to think what will be next. People have said of the Government, "They could not do that," yet a year or two later they have done it. People have then said, "Well, they have got away with that, but they would never go that far," yet they have. My hon. Friend is absolutely right. If this Government are elected again—I am quite sure that they will not be—and if the present crisis conditions continue, many of which have been made worse by their own conduct as a Government, there are no lengths to which they will not go to impose their will in the interests of their class.

Mr. Banks: That will be so if the worst of all possible currencies takes place and the Conservative party wins the next general election. However, the more likely possibility is that the Labour party will win the next election. We shall then have an elected Socialist party committed to Socialist policies, and the Conservative party may attempt to undermine it. Are there not indications in the Bill that that attitude to a democratically elected Socialist Government would lead Conservatives to try to undermine them?

The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I hope that the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) will not be tempted to go too far down that road, as we are now straying too far from the amendment.

Mr. Clay: I accept what you say, Sir Paul. I realise that to give a full answer to the fascinating question posed by my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West would be to stray a little too far from the Bill. I shall therefore restrict my reply.

If, after a long dispute, an agreement between employers and trade unions negotiated through ACAS — which included future negotiating machinery that replaced the machinery that the Government wanted to see the back of—was ripped up by the Government, who said, "We shall impose our own settlement," many people would say, "Even Tories do not do that." We have learnt that they do. Therefore, the point made by my hon. Friend is very worrying. He is saying that if this Government were re-elected—which is totally improbable—we would see quite terrifying things, and this Bill is terrifying enough. It sends a cold chill up one's spine to think that this Government have such contempt for democracy, as exemplified by their attitude in the Bill, that even when we have a Socialist Government who are trying to undertake a Socialist reconstruction of society they are likely to get up to such antics.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I am sorry that I did not hear all the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay), or that of my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen). I have just returned from the picket line at the Wapping print dispute——

Mr. Forth: Are they still there?

Mr. Corbyn: I witnessed an example of oppressive government. The Government pay thousands of police to keep 5,000 people out of work. They have such inadequate industrial relations legislation that a private sector employer is allowed to dismiss people at will.

The Government's attitude to ACAS over the teachers' pay dispute, and over education disputes generally in the last five years, shows that they are trying to establish the rule of the jungle in the public sector. They openly applaud the rule of the jungle in the private sector and they are prepared to pay for a private army—the police force—to support the likes of Rupert Murdoch.

Mr. Clay: I take the point. My hon. Friend is saying that there is nothing consistent in the Government's attitude other than their wish to oppose trade unionists and to strengthen employers' hands. They argue that black is white on one occasion and that white is white on another. Not long ago Ministers and Government Back Benchers asked us, "Why do you not accept ACAS? Why do the miners not accept the NACODS agreement?" That agreement was negotiated through ACAS. The Government said that it was the most wonderful agreement then, but it was not worth much. Not long ago the Government said that ACAS had achieved a wonderful agreement—although it was worthless—and now the Government say that they are not interested in the agreement. They want to keep ACAS out and to have the right to impose conditions directly.

I return to what I was about to say when my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West made his helpful intervention about more philosophical matters.

[Mr. Clay]

The Bill is a classic illustration of the Government's cynicism. The parliamentary system is shown to be worthless when the Government put on their big boots and put the boot into the trade unions. It is a classic text for those who argue that the issue is about the class war. This Government use this place as a convenience so that they can put rubber stamps on aims which they cannot achieve by other means. It is ironic, but that is a lesson to those who argue that that is the nature of society.

If I were the Stalinist that I described earlier, and if I did not take the view that I do of places such as the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland I would suggest that we have heard much about spies, KGB agents and double agents in recent weeks, and I believe that we would be talking not only about the former head of MI6 and Lord Rothschild, but about people on the Government Front Bench. They have, in many senses, justified the Marxist analysis of class war more successfully than any of my hon. Friends could have done.

Mrs. Rumbold: It may be convenient if I intervene now. We have had some interesting speeches, including that of the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay), though his contribution was slightly inaccurate.

The hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) raised four issues. He said that we were discussing ACAS negotiated agreements which were brought about, in part, because the pay of teachers had fallen behind that of other groups. The Government have largely recognised that. There is on the table an average pay rise of 16·4 per cent. on top of the 7 per cent. awarded at the end of March. Together they add up to a rise of 25 per cent. for the 18 months to October 1987.

No one has objected to the additional sum of £600 million for teachers. It seems to be a generally agreed and acceptable figure. It is helpful to point that out. However, my right hon. Friend has said—and I believe that most people think that he is being reasonable — that there must be something in return for that large sum of money.

For a number of years I and others tried to get conditions of service discussed at the same time as pay rises. Conditions had to be brought into the package and a clear definition of a teacher's job and a structure with sufficient incentive posts seems a reasonable return for that money.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): Will the Minister explain what detailed differences she sees between the 13-point agreement at ACAS and the 19 points that the Secretary of State insisted on? We might then be able better to understand what more she feels should be given in return for the £600 million.

Mrs. Rumbold: I was about to come to that matter. My right hon. Friend has recognised that useful progress has been made in recent months during the long, drawn-out negotiations between the employers and the unions. He has made that plain to the House on a number of occasions and did so on Monday this week and on 27 November. We welcome the emergence of a clear definition of the teacher's job.

Mr. Hunter: I greatly welcome what my hon. Friend is saying. It is worth stressing, because the Opposition often say that if the money now on offer had been made available some months ago we would not have reached the present situation. However, the essential point is that if we had injected that money some months ago we would not have been able to renegotiate the contractual side of teachers' obligations. The money is on offer because there has been movement in the negotiations on contracts.

Mrs. Rumbold: My hon. Friend is exactly right. He makes an important point, because teachers need to know what is a reasonable expectation for their day-to-day work, head teachers and local authorities need to know that there is no doubt about what can be expected from teachers under their contracts and parents need to be assured that teachers will be fully committed to the education of their children.

The teacher's working year was agreed at 195 days, which gave days five more than the pupil year for in-service training and other activities that are essential to the smooth running of schools and the career development of individual teachers. It has also been agreed that teachers should be available for work at the direction of the head for 1,265 hours a year. That is not a full statement of the professional teaching commitment, but I am told, and I believe, that many teachers devote many more hours to pupil assessment, lesson preparation, and so on. The 1,265 hours represent the amount of time during the year when head teachers will be able to call upon teachers for teaching, meetings, pupil supervision, and other activities that necessarily may have to be undertaken at specified times.

1 am

The Bill represents an extremely positive set of benefits for employers, teachers and schools. My right hon. Friend has fully recognised that fact. There are no differences. As my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) said, it is significant that the Bill has come about through a long, drawn-out period.

Mr. Radice: Negotiation.

Mrs. Rumbold: Not really negotiation. One has to remember, as I tried to remind the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth), that the original suggestions for a set of teachers' conditions came from my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) some months ago.

Mr. Radice: No, it did not. It came from the employers long before that.

Mrs. Rumbold: The 19 points that my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East put on the table essentially became the points that were worked on by the employers and the unions during many discussions over some years.

Mr. George Howarth: I did not disagree with their origin. Others would know better than I do. I pointed out that the Bill prejudices the potential for agreement.

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall refer to that point. It is important for Opposition Members to recognise that this has come about not because one or two people sat down and thought about this matter over the past six or nine months. It has been a long, slow, drawn-out process of drawing the unions, I regret to say, to the point at which it had to be agreed that the conditions of service must be included in the discussions about pay.

Mr. Radice: Of course it has been a long, drawn-out process. It is a process of negotiation and acceptance. It is true that the trade unions have moved a long way. I acknowledge that the former Secretary of State played a part. I think the hon. Lady mentioned the fact that, in 1984, the local authorities put forward their own opinions about what they thought should be done by teachers. Their 13 points have been accepted in the ACAS agreement. I am sure that the hon. Lady will agree with that.

Mrs. Rumbold: The conditions of service have been worked out over a long period. They were worked out by employers, by my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East, and also, to a certain extent, by trade unions. There is no disagreement about this matter or about my right hon. Friend being grateful and glad that this has come to pass. Because he has a duty to provide sensible education, he must secure for the teaching profession, to his satisfaction, not only conditions of service and reasonable pay, but something that he considers essential — a clear definition of the structure with sufficient incentive posts.

We have heard a great deal of discussion about the imposition of the ACAS agreement. Amendment No. 4 seeks to replace the discredited Burnham machinery. We have heard from many hon. Members that the Burnham machinery was no longer satisfactory. I remind Opposition Members that the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) said that on a number of occasions the Remuneration of Teachers Act was placed before various Secretaries of State. It was suggested that they should carefully consider the machinery, because it no longer seemed to work. Indeed, I remember leading such a delegation to one Secretary of State and suggesting that the Remuneration of Teachers Act was no longer a suitable way of negotiating pay and conditions of service because, in those days, we could not touch the teachers' conditions of service. We are not talking about anything new.

The amendment seeks to replace the discredited Burnham machinery with what is contained in the ACAS agreement, which, we are told, has been signed by a majority of the employers and four of the six unions. Of course, the Committee is aware that two of those signatories — the Secondary Heads Association and the Professional Association of Teachers — have pulled out of the deal. The National Association of Head Teachers was not a signatory. Both head teachers associations, representing those who have to manage the schools, have less faith in the structure which is being considered than Labour Members, who will not have to suffer from it. Two of the six unions remain inside the ACAS agreement. Even if the hon. Member for Durham, North is correct in assuming that balloting of the AMMA and the NUT will make it possible for them to say that a majority of teachers favour the deal, the majority of unions are clearly not in favour of it.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made clear to the Committee why the Government find the proposals which are on the table unacceptable. Our reasons are centred on cost and the absence of a proper promotion structure for the teaching profession.

Mr. Fisher: If the hon. Lady is so confident about the views of teachers on the Government's proposals, will she or the Secretary of State ballot all teachers and let them judge whether the Secretary of State has got it right? He will not, because he knows that teachers would overwhelmingly reject his proposals.

Mrs. Rumbold: Sadly, my right hon. Friend does not have the power to ballot the teachers. Only the trade unions have that power.

Mr. Radice: Do not disparage their ballots.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has just been challenged to ballot the teachers. I have no doubt that, if he had the power, he would be only too willing to ballot individual schools. That would be much to his liking and would be very much in the interests of the world at large.

Mr. Fisher: There are plenty of opportunities in this place, or in another place, to table a new clause to give the Secretary of State powers. The Opposition would not oppose such a new clause. We would be extremely interested to see what a ballot on this issue would reveal. We would assure a fair hearing and passage for such a new clause. I challenge the Government to table that new clause if they are so confident of their views.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would love to challenge me to table all sorts of new clauses, but at the moment I am busy answering the debate. It would probably be beneficial if I continued to do so.

There are cost difficulties. There is a substantial sum which the agreement includes and which is not acceptable to the Government. There are several other loose ends and obscurities. The key points of the proposed new negotiating machinery are not clear. The largest head teachers union favours separate arrangements for the head teachers. That is not directly dealt with in the ACAS document. Pay is to be statutory, but apparently conditions are not. That risks plunging us all back into the morass of local disputes on conditions of service. Local authorities are to incorporate the new conditions of service in teachers' contracts, but there is silence on the enforcement of contracts by the local education authorities. To put it at its lowest, there is room for doubt over local negotiation of elements of the proposed contract.

The major omission in the ACAS document is the role of the Government. Paragraph 7.4 of the ACAS document states:

"The parties will seek discussions with the Secretary of State on his role in the new machinery."

But paragraph 7.3 of the document states that the national joint council proposed by ACAS would be composed of employers and unions. "Employers" means the local authorities, so it is hard to see what significant role is envisaged for the Government. In a sense, the Government have a role, because they fund the local authority employers to the tune of 46·4 per cent. That may not seem an enormous proportion to some people, but it represents a substantial proportion of the total amount that is spent by local authorities on paying teachers. Since we are talking about the amount of money that is spent by local authorities on the education service, I suppose that it is not disputed that a substantial amount of the rate support grant given to local authorities goes to the education service.

It is well known that the education authorities absorb an enormous amount of the rate support grant. That is perfectly acceptable, but it is a fact that must be

[Mrs. Rumbold]

recognised. It must also be recognised that the Government, who foot the bill, should have a firm and clear role in any negotiating machinery that decides on the pay of teachers. A role confined to picking up the tab for any agreement is not acceptable. Since 1944, Governments have had power to contain the cost of school teachers' pay, which is now well over £5 billion. I doubt whether any Government would be willing to cede their right to have a voice in a negotiated agreement on the year-on-year arrangements for teachers' pay.

From 1965, a concordat between the Government and local authorities operated, giving the Government a weighted vote on the Burnham management panel and a veto over total cost. That operated very well until 1985, when it was unilaterally repudiated by the employers. Since then we have had 18 months of unsatisfactory negotiation and unjustifiable disruption in our schools. This wonderland of unrealistic negotiations simply cannot continue. The Bill restores a proper role for the Government in teachers' pay negotiations and links that to the duties and responsibilities of teachers for the first time.

The amendment is a recipe for further chaos picked out from the ramshackle agreement, which commands limited support, and which has been swallowed lock, stock and barrel by Opposition Members. In the interests of the children in our schools, I urge the Committee to reject the amendment.

Mr. Madden: At the heart of tonight's debate, as at the heart of all our debates on education during the past two years, lie the proper salaries needed to recruit, retain and motivate teachers. Like many hon. Members, I have had conversations with teachers. One—a head of an upper school in my constituency—was deeply worried about the education that he could offer the children in his school. He contrasted two appointments: one for a managerial post in the youth training service in Bradforrd, which attracted more than 80 applicants, and two teaching posts in his school, both of which were nationally advertised. he received one application for one post and no applications for the other. Both those posts carried salaries of about £7,000 a year.

The second conversation that I had today was with a teacher who was an NUT representative, who told me bluntly that if the Government and those who support them in their activities think that they will bring early peace to the classrooms of Britain, they are not only fooling themselves, but attempting to fool Britain's parents and public.

1.15 am

I believe what my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) and many others have said about the corporatist nature of the Bill. Mussolini would have been proud of it because we have here a Secretary of State, a Minister of the Crown, seeking to take unto himself highly centralised powers over the education service. We have a Secretary of State who wants to end the bargaining rights of teachers to negotiate their salaries and conditions of service. We have a Secretary of State who only a few days ago was talking about his ambition to set a national curriculum for the children in Britain's schools. We have a Secretary of State who recently announced 20 city technology colleges which he hopes to establish in inner cities throughout Britain. Those colleges, if they come, will cream off the most talented children and staff and in my part of the world they will find great difficulty in getting private industry to find the millions of pounds necessary to establish those colleges.

My constituents want the Government to put available resources into the maintained sector. They want pupil-teacher ratios reduced. They want the fabric of the schools improved and the quality of education substantially improved. They do not want this highly centralised corporatist legislation which will not bring peace to our schools and will do nothing to improve the quality of education which our children receive at school.

The Government are deliberately seeking to provoke substantial numbers of parents into declaring war on teachers. That is what they have been about. It was revealed earlier today that the Government are so fearful of teachers because they have launched sustained action over two years in pursuit of reasonable salaries to recruit, retain and motivate teachers.

The Government are confused and frightened and do not know what to do in the face of the challenge that they have received from Britain's teachers. Therefore, the Government have chosen to use the legislation to intimidate teachers, to drive them to accept an enforced pay settlement.

Mr. Hunter: As a former schoolteacher, I feel obliged to dispute profoundly the hon. Gentleman's underlying point. What the Government are now doing is precisely what he demanded in his opening comments—to attract, retain and motivate teachers. That can only be done by the sort of measure that my right hon. Friend is seeking to implement.

Mr. Madden: This is the second occasion——

Mr. Hunter: The fourth.

Mr. Madden: This is the fourth occasion on which the hon. Gentleman has intervened and on each occasion he has reminded us that he was a teacher. I understand that he was a teacher at Harrow.

Mr. Hunter: I remind the hon. Gentleman that during my brief interim at Harrow school the staff did not benefit from Burnham scale salaries.

Mr. Madden: The hon. Gentleman's intervention epitomises the lack of understanding by this Government and the Conservative party of the education that the majority of children in this country receive. It stems from the fact that the Conservative party does not understand or use our education system. Therefore, it is fundamentally uninterested in and disregards the education that the majority of our children receive. The Opposition want to give children the most decent start in life that we can provide for them. That is why we oppose this measure. It will do nothing to improve the quality of education for the vast majority of our children. It will not help to recruit and retain teachers and motivate them to provide the best possible education for our children. The Government are confused and frightened. They do not know how to handle the situation with which they are confronted.

Mr. Corbyn: I agree with my hon. Friend about the effect on the teaching profession and upon teachers in general, but does he not agree that this is a very serious matter? The Government are taking centralised control over an industrial dispute. It is exactly the kind of control

that they could take in any other circumstances, if they were allowed to get away with it, by imposing wage settlements, in just the same way as they have taken away the safety net of minimum wage legislation. It will have serious consequences for industrial relations in every industry and in every profession.

Mr. Madden: Indeed. Because of the factors to which my hon. Friend has referred, very many other workers in the public sector are extremely concerned about this measure. They regard it as a threat to them. They, too, fear that their bargaining rights will be taken away. It is no use the Government saying that that is a fanciful suggestion. We need only to look back to GCHQ where the Government took away the right of people to enjoy trade union membership.

In this measure the Government are displaying their anti-trade union posture. This Secretary of State for Education and Science will seek publicly to deny that. Many references have been made to the Secretary of State as a man of sweet reasonableness, as the man with the smiling mask, but behind that smiling mask is a person with centralist ambitions. He wants to set a national curriculum, and before long he will want to appoint every headmaster and to take more and more powers unto himself. That is how this Government seek to control something which they do not know how to handle.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On my hon. Friend's point about the so-called sweet reasonableness of the Secretary of State for Education and Science, does my hon. Friend realise that there is something else about this Bill that has to be noted? Having made a minor improvement to his standing inside the Tory party, the Secretary of State—looking to the time when the Prime Minister has gone, and coming from what is loosely regarded as the "wet" side of the Tory party, although many of us on this side of the House would say that there is not a gnat's whisker between any of them—is using the Bill to impose a settlement in order to try to improve his virility symbolism within the Tory party so that he will get the votes after the Tory party has got rid of the Prime Minister. The Secretary of State is prepared to scupper the Burnham negotiating machinery in order to try to look after No. 1 at a later date.

Mr. Madden: As always, there is a great deal in my hon. Friend's speculation on this point. Parents recognise that although for two years the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) told us that absolutely no money was available to resolve the teachers' dispute, this Secretary of State remarkably quickly found substantial additional resources to offer the teachers. Unfortunately, instead of adding a little bit to those additional resources and allowing proper negotiations to proceed, he has sought to confront the teachers by introducing the measure, which has been deliberately designed to enable the Secretary of State to enforce a pay settlement upon the teachers.

Mr. Corbyn: Is my hon. Friend aware that the charm of the Secretary of State may well have got through to a few journalists in the Murdoch empire, but I hear that it is fading fast in Mole Valley, where all this week the local newspapers have carried as a headline a statement by the prospective Labour candidate, Mr. Chris King, condemning what the Government are doing, and in particular the Secretary of State's role in attacking teachers in his constituency?

Mr. Madden: I said that the second conversation that I have had with teachers today included a warning that if the measure were enacted, and if a pay settlement were imposed, it would do nothing to bring peace to our classrooms. I should like to read an extract from a letter written by Ian Murch and Howard Roberts, both NUT executive members for west Yorkshire:

> "This 'realistic choice' that we are being offered is between having our throats cut by Kenneth Baker or agreeing to cut them ourselves. Under either plan we agree to the abolition of teaching as a profession in return for pitiful amounts of money. Weakness encourages bullies, and the 'realism' we are asked to endorse will encourage Baker to press on with the abolition of collective bargaining over teachers' pay and conditions rather than appease him.
>
> The real alternative is what it always was—a decent rise for the job that teachers do now."

That is a fair statement of the view held by a large majority of teachers. What they want is a decent rise for the job that they now do. They want a decent salary that will be sufficient to recruit, retain and motivate teachers. They want resources to be put into the education service so that the problem of the crumbling schools in my constituency and my city can be tackled urgently. They want more resources to be put into the education service so that more good teachers can be appointed and so that we can reduce the size of classes. We want more resources so that children in constituencies such as mine can be given the equipment that they desperately need, and so that they can be given a half decent start in life.

That is what the people want. That is what the parents want. That is what the children want. They do not want this corporatist nonsense that will put off the day to which we can look forward, when peace comes to our classrooms. The responsibility for that lies squarely with the Secretary of State and with the Government. If they steamroller the legislation through the House in the way that they now propose, I am certain that they will live to rue the day.

Dr. Marek: I listened with interest to the Minister as she wound up the debate. I noted four things that she said.

First, the hon. Lady said that the majority of the teachers might support the deal by ACAS, but the majority of unions do not. What type of democracy is that? I thought that the Conservative party would be committed to one person, one vote, but apparently that is not so. When it suits the Government, they are prepared to waive the rules a little and abide by some other rules.

The hon. Lady then said that at last there will be a proper role for the Government in the determination of teachers' pay. I doubt whether it will be a proper role. It will be the whole role, and no one else will have any role at all. The most interesting was thing that she said that the Secretary of State had no powers to order a ballot on the Government's 19 points and pay scales and that she would be delighted if the Secretary of State had that power because she was sure that he would like to hold a ballot. There are ways of organising a ballot without necessarily giving the Secretary of State powers to do it. We would have to oversee it to ensure that it was right, but a ballot could be arranged by all the teachers on the basis of one person, one vote, to see whether the Government's

[Dr. Marek]

preferred solution is the one that they favour, or whether they favour the ACAS deal. I somehow suspect that we will not get much from the Government on that.

1.30 am

Mr. Corbyn: What my hon. Friend is saying is interesting. From my knowledge of teachers in my constituency, I know that what he has said is correct, in that the teachers are extremely unhappy, worried and frustrated. The most interesting feature of the teachers' dispute in the past year and a half has been the unstinting support of large groups of parents around the country for the teachers' general case that they are underpaid, that they are being badly treated by the Government, that they are trying to improve the education service and that the real enemy of the education service is the Minister who was sitting on the Government Front Bench, but he has fled already.

Dr. Marek: That is a good point. I am sorry to say that my hon. Friend is absolutely right. If a big well opened up underneath the Government's feet and they all fell in, we would have much more success in education in this country.

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): Does my hon. Friend recall that the year before the six metropolitan counties and the Greater London council were abolished there was an opportunity for an election for councillors to those authorities which would have given the people living in those areas the opportunity to express a view about abolition? Does he further recall who was the Minister of State, Department of the Environment at that time and who led for the Conservative party on the Bill for abolition? It was the same man who has proved, once again, that he is not a democrat and that he is totally against the ballot box. He was against the ballot box for the abolition of the metropolitan councils and the GLC, and he has not been in favour of one person, one vote, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) has suggested, to enable the teachers to express a view. The people were not allowed to express a view then, and the teachers are not being allowed to express a view now. It is no coincidence that the Secretary of State for Education and Science was the Minister of State, Department of the Environment at that time.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I hope that the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) will not be tempted in extending the debate. We must stick to the Bill and this amendment.

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to you, Sir Paul, for your advice. I am also grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) for making that comment. In obedience to your strictures, Sir Paul, I shall say nothing about that, but the House has heard what my hon. Friend had to say.

The Minister of State said that the agreement is ramshackle. I have the agreement before me. It is quite lengthy and it goes into a lot of detail. I do not understand in what ways it is ramshackle. I am tempted to go through it in detail and invite the Minister at appropriate times to point out the ramshackle bits of it.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens South): Does my hon. Friend agree that the definition of ramshackle applies to the sections with which the Minister does not agree and which do not support her point of view? In those circumstances, the Government will seek to use any superfluous and almost asinine phrase in order to attack it.

Dr. Marek: I hope that it was just a throwaway phrase that was given to the Minister by her advisers sitting in the Box, without proper consideration.

Mr. Boyes: During the Minister's speech I was studying a certain part of the Bill because I shall be making a contribution to the debate. Therefore, I am not exactly sure of the context in which she used the word "ramshackle". It would help if my hon. Friend would remind us, because a few minutes have gone by since the hon. Lady sat down. Will my hon. Friend put the word into context?

Dr. Marek: The Minister was urging us not to support the amendment because it was based on a ramshackle agreement. The Minister nods, so that was the sense of it. I believe that that view is quite wrong, so it may be worth delving into the matter a little further.

Mr. Cohen: Does my hon. Friend recall that the Minister intervened earlier to claim that certain elements of the agreement were there only because the Government wanted them there as part of their 19 points? If that is so, the hon. Lady cannot then claim that it is a ramshackle agreement.

Dr. Marek: The more we consider the Minister's comments, the more we become aware of the inconsistencies in the Government's position. My hon. Friend is right. The Minister cannot have it both ways. As my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) said, the unions have moved a long way on this. In the light of what has been said, it may be useful to read out the Minister's 19 points and consider to what extent the agreement satisfies them.

Mr. Corbyn: It is clearly essential to go into the detail of the agreement. Is my hon. Friend aware that in education and in local government generally there are many other agreements between employing authorities and trade unions representing manual grades, white collar grades, teachers, and so on? If the principle behind the clause is the imposition of a pay settlement on the teachers, the same could be done for any other freely negotiated agreement between local authority employers and employees, giving the Secretary of State the power to veto any agreement over and above national agreements in those sectors. If the Bill goes through, chaos could ensue in industrial relations throughout local government.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The Bill will not solve the problems of the teaching profession. It will make them much worse.

I am conscious of the time that we have taken so far. We have taken about nine hours to get halfway through the second group of amendments. At that rate, we shall be here for another hundred hours.

Mr. Corbyn: It is going to be a cold night for the Minister.

Dr. Marek: I hope that we shall make more rapid progress as the night goes on. If not, we shall lose not only

Thursday and Friday's business but also the Consolidated Fund Bill debate on Monday. I shall therefore try to speed up my remarks.

The amendment seeks to replace the blanket powers given to the Secretary of State by some form of control. It is always dangerous to give blanket powers to one person. I should like to hear any Conservative Member try to defend the kind of blanket power that is given to the Secretary of State by the Bill.

Mr. Forth *indicated dissent.*

Dr. Marek: I shall be happy to give way if the hon. Gentleman can tell us how that blanket power is restrained or curtailed in the Bill, because I cannot see any restraint on it at all.

Mr. Bermingham: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Bill has been approached in a dictatorial manner, in that most Bills go into Committee upstairs, as will the Criminal Justice Bill tomorrow? The Government seem to want to take dictatorial powers and use their vast majority to deny ordinary Members the right to disagree at length and at leisure.

Mr. Forth: What is the hon. Gentleman doing now?

Dr. Marek: I do not know whether I can help my hon. Friend, because this is a Committee of the whole House.

I wonder why the Government are rushing forward now, after two years of delay as they put it. They have suddenly introduced this draconian Bill which gives the Secretary of State blanket powers. Apparently no more delay can be tolerated. The Secretary of State must have his powers, and he will not even think of accepting the amendment.

Mr. Nellist: My hon. Friend was present earlier when I touched on these matters for a few minutes. Does he remember my saying that we should be wary of being too critical of the fact that the Secretary of State is rushing the Bill through because it will be a useful precedent for a future Labour Government who want to tackle the problems of mass unemployment, decaying housing, low living standards and inadequate pensions? Such a Government may wish to get through in two sittings legislation which helps working people.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. We really must stick to the amendment.

Dr. Marek: In view of what you have said, Sir Paul, I shall not comment on what my hon. Friend has said, but the House has heard him.

What the Government are proposing is not a solution. Even 15 years ago, the teaching profession was held in high esteem. People looked up to teachers and thought that they were doing a good and necessary job that was essential if this industrialised nation was to stay at the forefront of technology. Is it not strange that teachers have lost that esteem and professional image? That would not be a party political point but for the fact that it has happened since the Government came to power. We now find that we are quibbling about hours of work outside teaching, dinner duties and marking homework. What have we come to?

There has been a sad decline, and I regret it. When I was at school, teachers did their job and were paid reasonably for it. If they were not, they did not complain. Hon Members may be able to explain that. There is clearly something wrong, and the Government cannot absolve themselves of responsibility, because they have been in office since 1979. They have not been a moderate consensus Government but an extremist Rightist Government .

Mr. Nellist: Raving Rightist.

Dr. Marek: I shall stick to "extremist Rightist" because that sums them up well. They have made their mark on how the country regards itself, its wealth and how much it can produce. As part of this, they have made their mark on the teaching profession and on the standards and quality of education.

I shall not run down the human race, and certainly not teachers, who battle against all the odds in trying to do a job, and now have to battle hard just to stand still. In many cases, because of the Government's actions, they are slowly being sucked backwards, in spite of their desire to do a proper job.

I should like to return to the situation of 10, 15 or 20 years ago, but the Government are not going about it in the right way. They would if they accepted the amendment, because ACAS would be concerned, and any agreement—if would have to be an agreement—going into the details of terms and conditions of work and remuneration would be freely entered into. If the Government do not accept the amendment, the Secretary of State will, by diktat, be able to impose his will. That will not solve anything.

1.45 am

ACAS is seen to be impartial, which is part of the ILO convention to which some of us referred. If it were involved in the talks, the teaching profession would be confident that it was not about to be sold down the river in any negotiations, that any agreement would be carried out fairly, and that there would be no hidden Government agenda. All too often, the Government have hidden agendas. We do not know what the Government intend. The Bill does not tell us what the Secretary of State intends.

To be fair, we have a press release from the Department of Education and Science, dated 31 October 1986, entitled, "Kenneth Baker's 16 per cent. pay offer to teachers." It is not about the pay offer, but is about the 19 points and conditions. I shall develop my argument about what will happen if the Government get their way over the Bill by referring to the salary scales contained in the press release and those in the ACAS agreement. My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North referred to them earlier.

With the ACAS agreement, the main professional grade starts at £9,970 and goes up to £15,058, whereas the Secretary of State's nine-point scale starts at £7,900 and goes up to £12,700. Clearly, teachers will not have as much job satisfaction from their remuneration if they accept the Government's scale. That starts about £2,000 lower and finishes about £2,400 lower.

Mr. Bermingham: Does my hon. Friend agree that if one pays peanuts, one gets monkeys? Is not the tragedy of the teaching profession that, by and large, over the past 20 or 30 years there has been a failure to recognise that teachers are a valuable part of our society and to remunerate them properly? Is the Secretary of State not going back to the poor law type state of the 1890s and 1910s, when teachers were improperly remunerated? This was further compounded by the Governments of 1951 to

[Mr. Bermingham]

1963, when the average pay for teachers fell far behind the general norm and people were driven, by sheer economic need, from the teaching profession, with the result that students and pupils were not given the benefit of the education facilities that were available. Until the Secretary of State recognises that a teacher is worthy of his hire and ought to be properly remunerated, our educational standards will continue to fall below those in Europe.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend is basically right. I am not sure that I agree that our teachers are monkeys, but I am sure that he did not mean that.

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): Disgraceful.

Dr. Marek: The hon. Gentleman who made that sedentary intervention can intervene or make a speech and I am sure that it will be interesting to hear what he had to say. I look forward to that.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): I shall not interrupt any longer than necessary the flow of my hon. Friend's admirable speech. He is right to identify the information given by the Secretary of State in his press release about levels of remuneration upon which he is likely to insist if the Bill is passed. Does my hon. Friend agree that the central problem with the Bill is that, although the Secretary of State has said what he is likely to do in the immediate future, we have no information about what he is likely to do after that? The Bill proposes to give him wide-ranging powers and there is no information about teachers' remuneration in the years to 1990 and possibly beyond.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend is right. This is basically an enabling Bill, which gives the Secretary of State total power. We have a hint of what will happen and I shall develop that in detail later. We can compare the two pay scales and make our own deductions about what is likely to happen.

Mr. Nellist: Is my hon. Friend aware that since this debate started, Labour has apparently gained five points in the opinion polls? Does he think that the late arrival of the Prime Minister shows some panic on the Treasury Bench?

Dr. Marek: I do not want to stray from the amendment, but the news about the opinion polls has cheered me up. We have been losing a few points recently and I am glad that we have got them back and a few more.

Mr. Skinner: There could well be another reason why the Prime Minister is here. Perhaps she has been tipped off that the closure is about to be moved. I hope that is not the case, because I want to speak. I hope that her entrance does not mean that we will shortly have a vote, but I notice that the Tory Benches have filled rapidly in the last few minutes.

Dr. Marek: Is my hon. Friend asking me to speed up?

Mr. Skinner: No.

Dr. Marek: I should like to return to the question of pay scales. The simple, straightforward main scales suggested in the ACAS agreement and those suggested by the Secretary of State are not at all the same. Of course, there are premium payments for teachers who take extra responsibilities and for teachers who do the job well, but I object to a system in which that plays a large part in how we pay a profession. Instead of trying to do the job well, the way they want to do it, teachers will look to the headmaster to see if he will recommend them for promotion or if he will give them some other sort of recommendation which will enable them to get an increase based on merit.

Mr. Bermingham: I thank my hon. Friend for giving way to me again. Does he accept that my earlier comment was the usage of an old phrase and in no way implied any disrespect for the teaching profession for which I have the greatest admiration? Does he agree that if we adopt a merit points system—*[Interruption.]* I hear the Secretary of State chattering. If he want to intervene he can do so. Leaving that aside, does my hon. Friend agree that a merit points system would tend to make teachers seek to please rather than seek to teach, which would be detrimental to the education system?

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend makes the point for me. That is a serious criticism that can be made of the Secretary of State's thinking, as far as he has gone, as set out in his press release in October. Surely we want a profession in which teachers are prepared to work extra hours if they feel that children need them to do so. We used to have a profession where that happened, and I am sorry to say that there has been a degeneration. That is because teachers are worried about the minutiae of conditions of service, employment and remuneration. This is sad, because the more time the profession spends worrying about such matters the less time it has to teach children. The more time it spends worrying about minutiae, the lower morale becomes.

The profession worries about these matters only when it thinks that there is cause for concern, when it thinks that remuneration is not what it should be, or when it thinks that terms and conditions of employment are not quite right, and when things are not quite right, teachers worry and their morale sinks. One of my criticisms of the Government is that they have caused that to happen to teachers and to many others across the public sector.

Mr. Corbyn *rose*——

Mr. Boyes *rose*——

Dr. Marek: I shall give way first to my hon. Friend the Member for Houghton and Washington.

Mr. Boyes: My hon. Friend may not be aware that for about a dozen years I worked in schools. I found that many extremely well qualified teachers were working hard and being under-remunerated. Since 1979, when I became involved in full-time politics, no other group of workers has lobbied me more than teachers, and it is clear that teachers' morale is at an all-time low. They have been messed around by the Government over pay and conditions. They have been asked to work in buildings that are virtually falling down. The Government have not provided money to improve our schools. Moneys for materials and the financing of new schemes have been cut. Teachers are fed up to the back teeth. The Secretary of State is back in his place——

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have not been away.

Mr. Boyes: The right hon. Gentleman was not in the Chamber when I reminded the House that he would not

allow elections to take place when he was abolishing the met counties and the GLC. It is clear that the Government do not like ballot-box democracy.

Mr. Corbyn *rose*——

Dr. Marek: I shall give way to my hon. Friend in a moment.

I wish to make two serious points. First, we do not want a teaching profession that spends its time worrying about matters other than teaching. Secondly, we want a profession that has high morale.

Mr. Corbyn: My hon. Friend is making an important and serious contribution. In speaking about the way in which teachers have to go about their work. His comments about their salaries and conditions of work are correct. Another serious problem is the condition of schools and the financing of education as a whole. This is not related exactly to clause 1 but it comes within the purview of conditions of work. There is an increasing involvement in financial administration and the social problems that come from the cuts——

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. This is a debate on the ACAS agreement and pay and not conditions in schools.

Mr. Bermingham: On a point of order, Sir Paul. Is not the question of conditions in schools inextricably linked with teachers' conditions, as they cannot teach without such conditions being involved?

The Second Deputy Chairman: I have made it clear that conditions in schools are out of order on this amendment.

Mr. Bermingham: Further to that point of order——

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I have given the hon. Gentleman a ruling and I hope that he will not dispute it.

Dr. Marek: You are quite right, Sir Paul, in that the ACAS agreement relates mainly to remuneration, but it also refers to terms and conditions of service. I take it that in referring to remuneration, you included the additional aspects mentioned in the ACAS agreement.

2 am

Mr. Corbyn: Is my hon. Friend aware that many teachers are extremely concerned about the prospect of conditions of service agreement being vetoed and national conditions of service being imposed by the Secretary of State because of the inextricable link with public spending cuts on education, the way they affect the schools and the difficulties in which teachers are placed because of those cuts?

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making that point. Of course the morale is interrelated, and everything affects the way in which a teacher carries out his job.

Mr. Boyes: I draw my hon. Friend's attention to paragraph 3.1.3(iii)(b) on page 3 of the ACAS agreement which deals with the contractual limitations on teachers' workload. It uses the phrase:

"and improve in particular physical standards of provision".

Surely my hon. Friend will agree that pay and conditions are relevant as they are included in the agreement, and I am absolutely sure that the phrase I have quoted opens the debate to include conditions in schools. I shall ask my hon. Friend to give way again on this very point after he has developed his argument further.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I am quite sure that the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) will accept my ruling and will stick to the amendment.

Dr. Marek: I do not intend to make a long speech, so I shall not reply to what my hon. Friend the Member for Houghton and Washington said. I hope that he catches the eye of the Chair later so that he can make his own speech and raise those points, which are pertinent to the extent that they are interrelated within the whole subject.

There is a problem about the different amounts of money available and the difference between the cost of the two schemes. My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North put forward a solution whereby the more expensive deal could be delayed by about two months so that the gap could be narrowed. Such a solution would be preferable to throwing away the ACAS agreement and relying on the Secretary of State's preferred scheme.

In drawing up his scheme, did the right hon. Gentleman speak to any teacher representatives or to any teachers? He might have talked to the National Association of Head Teachers. It would have been better if he had explained why he preferred his scheme to the scheme worked out by ACAS. If he talked only to the Treasury, there cannot be that much difference between us. The Secretary of State should not then mind implementing the ACAS agreement, possibly delaying it a month or two.

Mr. Bermingham: I am puzzled. How does my hon. Friend calculate a teacher's remuneration when the classroom is dripping? In my constituency some schools are cold because of heating problems and there is a shortage of books. How does one calculate rates of pay for teachers who have to work in such conditions, when for other teachers conditions are ideal? Working conditions must affect the knowledge that a teacher imparts.

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend is right. Environment has a bearing on performance. If the amendment were accepted and ACAS were able to dwell on such matters, we could take account of environment. I should like teachers to receive the same salary for the same job in conditions up to minimum standards. That is not possible at present, but that does not mean that it cannot happen in future. We should not be content with deteriorating buildings.

It is not in the interests of children to have teachers whose promotion relies upon their being nice to their headmaster. Their teaching will be coloured by their wish for promotion and salary increases based on merit. We should regard teachers as professionals, capable of doing a job. If in some weeks they spend only 42 or 45 hours teaching, that should not matter because in other weeks they will willingly spend 50 or 52 hours teaching and think nothing of it. That used to happen, but it does not now.

Mr. Boyes: I am at a disadvantage because of one of your rulings, Sir Paul. My hon. Friend is developing a critical and crucial argument. The final decision could hinge on his argument. I ask him to give way because I have an important point which will strengthen his already strong, powerful and convincing argument.

I ask you, Sir Paul, to turn to page 15 of the ACAS agreement. Appendix 1(b) is entitled "The Contractual

[Mr. Boyes]

Duties of Entry Grade Teachers". Paragraph 1.6 refers to "teaching and materials." I might be interrupting my hon. Friend during a vital part of his argument. I might already have spoiled the sweep of it for him. But I ask him to give way.

I have researched the document carefully, because I have served on Committees under your chairmanship, Sir Paul, and I know that you are a fair and honest man who makes rulings with the best of intentions and after taking the best advice. I have found another reference to materials. Will you rule me out of order if, when my hon. Friend gives way, I ask him about this aspect of the ACAS agreement? It worries me greatly and it is of paramount importance.

The Second Deputy Chairman: I will certainly not give a ruling on arguments that have not yet been advanced.

Dr. Marek *rose*——

Mr. Boyes: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Dr. Marek: In a moment. My hon. Friend makes a serious point and I hope that he will make a speech, because I should be interested to hear what he has to say.

We need management in schools, as everywhere else, and none of us is asking for an anarchic system, though we should like more co-operation and consultation and we are certainly asking for a system of negotiation and consultation on remuneration and conditions of work. Clearly the day-to-day running of a school would not work if the head were regarded in the way that we regard the Secretary of State. That would be a recipe for disaster and would lower morale even more.

Management and responsibility need to be rewarded, but it is anathema to me to give a management powers of patronage by allowing heads to give different pay increases to different teachers on the basis, at least partly, of the head's subjective view of merit. Most teachers would reject such a system.

The last point that I wish to make in seeking to persuade the Committee to vote for——

Mr. Boyes: My hon. Friend and I were trained in mathematical disciplines. A little while ago he mentioned the figure 19 and said that he would put on record the 19 points that the Secretary of State insisted on. Will my hon. Friend assure me that he will put those 19 points on record?

Dr. Marek: Yes, I shall. The Minister said that the ACAS agreement was a ramshackle agreement, but nothing could be further from the truth. My hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) read out the subject headings of the ACAS agreement and hon. Members are, no doubt, familiar with them. I do not want to waste time by reading them out again.

However, it would be appropriate for us to bear in mind the 19 points set out by the Secretary of State. The first was:

"Plan, prepare, determine and review as necessary personal teaching methods and work programmes."

That is included in the ACAS agreement. The second point was:

"Teach and ensure the discipline and safety of assigned timetabled classes and groups, with the different educational needs of pupils in mind."

The third point was:

"Set, mark and record pupils' work."

All those matters are in the ACAS agreement. I cannot see why the Secretary of State should say that it was a ramshackle agreement. It was not.

2.15 am

The Minister's fourth point was:

"Promote the general progress and welfare of a class or a group of pupils, and provide initial guidance or counselling on educational, social or career matters."

The fifth point states:

"Assess and record pupils' personal and social needs, development, progress and attainment; provide or contribute to oral or written assessments and reports on individuals and groups."

Again, that is clearly spelt out in the ACAS agreement. There is certainly no sign of the ACAS agreement being ramshackle. In fact, the ACAS agreement contains many of those points in much more detail. From that point of view, it is to be recommended. The Committee should vote for the amendment.

The Secretary of State's sixth point states:

"Contribute to and participate in formal performance appraisal and review, team planning, self-evaluation, in-service training and professional development in assigned areas of the curriculum, and pastoral arrangements."

The seventh point states:

"Advise and co-operate with colleagues on teaching programmes, methods, equipment and materials within assigned areas of the curriculum."

Again, that is spelt out in the ACAS agreement. Nothing in this agreement could be said to be ramshackle in any way. It is a pity that the Minister described the agreement in that way.

The eighth point states:

"Co-operate with appropriate specialist agencies and other appropriate outside bodies."

The ninth point states:

"Ensure the safety and good order of pupils by carrying out an appropriate share of supervision on pupils' arrival at and departure from school, on dispersal and assembly at the beginning and end of the midday break, whenever pupils are authorised to be on school premises—with the exception of the midday break — and elsewhere when pupils are the responsibility of the school."

That is a rather long, tortuous paragraph, and it is not clear. The remainder of the paragraphs are short:

"10. Consult and liaise with parents, attending meetings arranged for that purpose.

11. Participate in staff meetings and activities."

That is all in the ACAS agreement.

Paragraph 12 states:

"Undertake an appropriate share of the collective staff responsibility to substitue for an absent colleague when required, within limits as agreed."

If hon. Members examine the ACAS agreement, which is part of the amendment, they will notice a detailed table about when teachers should and should not cover for absent colleagues and when supply teachers should be brought in. The ACAS agreement is far better on this point than the vague wording of the Secretary of State's press release.

Mr. Clay: Is there anything in the Secretary of State's 19 points that is not in the 13 points? That seems to be the conclusion to which my hon. Friend is moving. In that case, I am puzzled. I understood that as a matter of comprehension, as it was called in my days at school, teachers skilfully teach pupils to be succinct, not to use too many words when few will do, and to subsume, under as few headings as possible, as much information and specific detail as possible. It seems that the Secretary of State has a nerve to make a list under 19 headings, when the

employers and teachers have managed to compile one under 13 headings. The Secretary of State says that he wants higher standards from teachers. He is not setting much of an example——

Dr. Marek *rose*——

Mr. Corbyn *rose*——

Dr. Marek: Of course I shall give way, but I shall be ruled out of order if I give way too early.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I cannot allow an intervention within an intervention.

Dr. Marek: To the best of my knowledge, I do not think that there is. If I am wrong on that point, I invite the Secretary of State to intervene and put the matter straight. I do not want the House to be misled in any way.

Mr. Corbyn: Is my hon. Friend aware that there is only one Liberal Member in the Chamber? The Liberals have been leaving rapidly. Will he give way if the remaining Liberal wishes to make an intervention so that we can hear the Liberal party's point of view on this matter?

Mr. Freud: On a point of order, Sir Paul. May I move that the question be now put?

The Second Deputy Chairman: No.

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to you, Sir Paul. I shall not delay the Committee much longer.

The document continues:

"13. Carry out an appropriate share of such administrative and organisational tasks as flow naturally from the above duties.

14. Take part in arrangements for presenting pupils in public examinations, and contribute expertise to the preparation and development of courses of study and teaching materials in response to changes in public examinations and assessment procedures.

15. Contribute as required to the appointment, induction, professional development and assessment of junior colleages, including new entrants to teaching.

16. Co-ordinate the work of other teachers, as required, taking a leading professional role in the review, development and management of assigned curricular, pastoral or organisational activities.

17. Supervise ancillary staff where designated to do so.

18. Order and allocate appropriate equipment and materials.

19. Carry out such other related duties and responsibilities at the school as may reasonably be allocated, as need arises, by the Head Teachers."

Those are the Secretary of State's 19 points. I shall not, because I would trespass too far on the Committee's time, compare them in detail with the ACAS document. I have looked at the document, although perhaps not in sufficient detail to enable me to answer every question, especially to answer categorically the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay). I believe that the document covers all these points in much more detail.

The Secretary of State may not like some of these points. I may not like some of them. I think that we could all offer different suggestions. But that is not the point of the argument. The Secretary of State should be in the general oversight and guiding role and leave the nitty gritty of the negotiations to the LEAs and to the teachers' organisations to sort out. Why does he concern himself so much with the little changes? Some of the changes that he wants to make will have disastrous effects. The remuneration change in particular means that teachers would always have to look over their shoulders to see whether they were pleasing their head master, perhaps not following their best educational instinct. The problem will not be solved because of the Secretary of State's involvement in all these details or because he is giving himself blanket powers—*[Interruption.]* I hope that the Secretary of State is thinking about this. That point has been made often by Labour Members, and there has not been a decent answer from the Minister. Indeed, the Minister said that this was a "ramshackle" agreement.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for putting these points on the record, particularly for the benefit of those of us who represent Scottish constituencies and who are not, therefore, involved in this extraordinary arrangement. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making that point about ACAS. Does he not think it odd that the Secretary of State for Education and Science for England and Wales has been so cavalier about ACAS? The position in Scotland is very different. We have the Scottish joint negotiating committee. Section 97B(3) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 states:

"Any such arrangements may include provision for the appointment of arbiters by the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service for the purposes of any reference under this section."

So ACAS is written into the statute that governs these matters in Scotland, yet the Secretary of State for England and Wales is excluding it totally.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. The Bill deals with England and Wales only. I am sure that the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) will not be tempted to discuss the position in Scotland.

Dr. Marek: You are right, Sir Paul. A small part of the Bill, towards the end, deals with the whole of the United Kingdom. But this part of the Bill deals only with England and Wales. I hear what my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) says. I only wish that the Secretary of State took account of existing practice elsewhere.

This document has 21 closely typed pages and it deals with employers' responsibilities, safeguards, social priority allowances, salary issues, the duration of the agreement, contractual duties of entry grade teachers and the duties and responsibilities of head teachers. It is an extremely detailed and comprehensive document, and it is a great pity that no Government has said in detail why it could not be accepted. The Minister did not even give a reasoned political argument as to why the document should not be accepted. She said that it was a ramshackle agreement, but she did not delve into it too much. She dismissed it at the end of her speech as a ramshackle agreement——

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The hon. Lady has a ramshackle mind.

Dr. Marek: I shall not delve into that. We shall have to wait and see as the debate develops.

Mr. Corbyn: Is my hon. Friend aware that, before the hon. Lady became a Member, she was prominent in local government associations? In that capacity, she reached many agreements with trade unions, and negotiated many agreements herself. Does she now repudiate the work of those local authority associations?

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend is right. That Minister has a local government background, as do I and my hon.

[Dr. Marek]

Friend. Agreements are never 100 per cent. right. They may be only 70, 80 or 90 per cent. right, but goodwill and much hard work went into drafting the agreement.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Sir Paul. The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), the Liberal spokesman, has made three interventions in the debate so far. The first was to ask my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) for how long he was likely to speak; the second was to ask my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) whether he was making the speech that he should have made earlier; and the third was to move the closure on these amendments. Now he is reading a newspaper article about smoking. Is that in order?

The Second Deputy Chairman: I shall assume that the hon. Gentleman is preparing himself for the debate.

Mr. Madden: Further to that point of order, Sir Paul. The article that the hon. Gentleman is busily reading is about smoking. I cannot see how that bears on the amendment.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Of course, it is not in order for hon. Members to read newspapers, but I intend to put a charitable interpretation on it. If the hon. Gentleman is reading something which has nothing to do with the debate, I am sure that he will desist.

Mr. Skinner: Further to that point of order, Sir Paul. I have not been reading a newspaper for the past three and a half hours. I have been doing what you suggested the Liberal Member should do—preparing myself to take part in the debate. I have here a copy of the amendments, the Bill and the list of amendments that have been selected. Having prepared all this material, I wonder whether I shall have a chance to use it.

The Second Deputy Chairman: If the hon. Gentleman looks, as he will have done, at the wide range of amendments that are available——

Mr. Skinner: I want to speak on this debate—on industrial relations.

The Second Deputy Chairman: —he should find opportunities.

Dr. Marek: This is an important debate on the two amendments and the new clause, because there is still time for the Government to have second thoughts. Even if they cannot accept the amendment, they could say that there is some merit in involving ACAS in the deliberations over the remuneration of teachers.

Dr. Godman: I hesitate to intervene as I represent a Scottish constituency, but I was educated in England at the Westbourne street boys' school in Hull. Is it not the case that, whether we are talking about teachers and local authority employers or about the Transport and General Workers Union and the National Dock Labour Board, there must almost always be a compromise in collective bargaining? Both sides of the negotiating table must make concessions. ACAS plays an important role in many areas of collective bargaining involving all kinds of employees and employers. Might not ACAS play a similarly valuable role in this area of collective bargaining as well?

2.30 am

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend is right. That point has been made a number of times, but it loses nothing from having been made by my hon. Friend yet again. I live in hope that the more times we make it, one or two Conservative Members might realise that there is more than a grain of truth in what we are saying.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Is it not weird that we have a Government and a Minister who, not too long ago, decided for their own purposes to create a union which would have ACAS as one of its advisers, yet now they are taking away the same right from another body of people because it suits their purposes?

Dr. Marek: My hon. Friend makes a pertinent point. The Government should resist their centralising tendency on this matter, as on many others. The country would be better for that. We would have a better education system and teaching profession if the Government were to show the country that they are prepared to let ACAS have a role, if nobody else, and that they will have a system which is impartial. seen to be impartial and which has a chance of obtaining mutual agreement between the two sides at the end of the day.

The Minister might think that he is impartial and fair, but not many other people think that at the moment. I say with the deepest of respect that at the moment people do not think that, and the teaching profession certainly does not think that. The Minister has a chance to put the matter right by bringing ACAS in, and I hope that he will.

Mr. Skinner: I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) raised the points of order about the Liberals. While I was meeting the teachers outside in the Lobby and some of my hon. Friends were speaking in the debate, I was not aware of what the Liberal and Social Democratic parties had been doing in the debate. I had to ask my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) what had happened. It should be put clearly on the record so that it gets outside that the Liberal party, even more so than the Tory party really, wanted to get the Bill faster than the Minister. The teachers should be told.

The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) stood in his place when my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) was manfully putting his points across, and moved, That the question be now put. That is usually the tactic of a Minister.

Dr. Godman: A Freudian slip.

Mr. Skinner: I don't think it was.

Mr. Freud: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for making that point. I know that we are galloping on in the Bill, but there are some 18 more groups of amendments. We have tabled 18 amendments. *[Interruption.]* Quantity does not make up for quality. It is only fair to explain that the sooner this particular group of amendments is debated, the sooner will the Liberals' voice be heard and their amendments put.

Mr. Skinner: The hon. Gentleman is now guilty of repetition. If he were appearing on "Just a Minute" he would be pulled up for repeating himself. He has said three times that the Liberal party wants to deal with these amendments. We have to show the teachers we met today in the Central Lobby that we mean business. My hon.

Friends have been honouring the pledges that they gave to the teachers. When I went out, Sir Paul, to meet the 600 or 700 people who were queueing to get into the building, they called upon us and on Tory Members of Parliament, if they could find them, to come into the Chamber and oppose by all legitimate means this dastardly measure that has been introduced by the Government. I do not know what Liberal Members of Parliament have been saying to the teachers.

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend did not have the benefit of attending the rally in Central Hall, Westminster, today, but Ann Sofer, speaking on behalf of the Social Democratic party and presumably also on behalf of the Liberal party, said that the alliance would fight the Bill at every possible opportunity. Does my hon. Friend consider that the behaviour of the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) is consistent with the pledge that was given by his SDP colleague?

Mr. Skinner: That puts the matter into proper perspective. A spokesperson told the rally what the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party intend to do, but after the rally Dr. Death had a word with them and said, "Now be careful. There are some right-wing parents in the south who want the Secretary of State for Education and Science to wield the big stick. Don't get up to any hanky-panky. Tell the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East to keep his trap shut, apart from trying to move the closure at every possible opportunity." It shows once again the two-faced nature of the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party.

Mr. Madden: This is most revealing. My hon. Friend will recall that the alliance has made a lot of fuss in the Chamber. It has demanded more rights and more opportunities to speak. Microphones have been moved. Does my hon. Friend not think that it is important that those outside should know that the SDP half of the alliance has been completely absent throughout the Committee stage, which started at just after 4 pm. It is now 2.38 am. Apart from some very brief appearances by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock), the SDP has been totally absent, leaving the almost mute spokesman for the Liberal party to carry these onerous responsibilities, although his only contribution so far has been to try to move the closure.

Mr. Skinner: I am pleased that my hon. Friend has referred to the public address equipment and to the microphones in this place. A special microphone was installed for the Liberals, no doubt to help them to take part in all-night sittings. It is a pity that they are not using it. I notice that another microphone has been installed on the other side of the Chamber. I believe that it has been put in for the leader of the Social Democratic party when he crosses the Floor of the House.

Mr. Harris: If the hon. Gentleman casts his mind back, he will remember that he and I protested about the installation of this microphone. I said that I did not need it, and jointly we said that we did not think that the leader of the Liberal party needed his, either.

Mr. Skinner: As I told the right hon. Gentleman at the time — he did not believe me then — I am pretty convinced what it is for. No doubt he will finally make his way across the Floor, and Liberals such as the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East will stew in their own juice. That is what the SDP leaders are about. They want to use people so that they can run the show. They tried to run the Labour party—I am just leaving this point, Sir Paul—and because they could not, they left, without a ballot, and they are now dominating the Liberals. That is why "Spitting Image" has got it dead right when it shows David Steel in David Owen's pocket.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is reaching the end of his preamble and is about to come to the amendment.

Mr. Skinner: I was distracted. I am trying to keep to the point, although I did not see the Serjeant at Arms' point, irrespective of what the Wapping press had to say. The Division took only 14 minutes, which is par for the course. The Chairman of Ways and Means was upset about that because one of the members of the Wapping press said that he was in the Chair when, as you know, Sir Paul, you were in the Chair——

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman is now straying into something else that has nothing to do with the amendment.

Mr. Skinner: I happened to mention it to the teachers outside. As they were still queuing, complaining about the fact that the ACAS agreement had been withdrawn by the Secretary of State, they were crestfallen because they could not find any Tory Members of Parliament or for that matter any Liberals to help them fight the Bill. I thought that I would tell them a few amusing stories about the palace of varieties to pass the time. I told them what the Labour party was doing, and I am certain that they felt pleased that on this occasion the Labour party, unlike the Liberals and the SDP, would be coming here today to use all legitimate parliamentary means to frustrate the Bill. That is important. That has been lacking in this Parliament. Nothing pleased me more than to hear my colleague the hon. Member for Jarrow and others like him in the Whips Office wanting to make sure that we fight in a more consistent fashion against some of these obnoxious pieces of legislation. We have found one here. It will strike a chord outside. Many people listening to the 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock news will be pleased to know that the Labour party is fighting the Bill line by line.

I hope that in the next set of amendments dealing with further education, some of my hon. Friends will deal with this matter—it is just a thought to pass on. In every textbook about politics, one reads about the way that one can use Parliament. One of the ways is to occupy time. The Opposition cannot do any more than that.

Mr. Corbyn *rose*——

Mr. Skinner: At this point, my hon. Friend wants to occupy time.

Mr. Corbyn: Does not my hon. Friend think that ACAS could be put to good use in liaising between the Liberals and the Social Democrats, or perhaps investigating exactly what attitude Liberal and SDP-controlled or led local authorities have taken towards the teachers' pay dispute, the argument over salaries and conditions and indeed, this piece of legislation? As there is silence from the Liberals and the SDP tonight on the matter—they are absent—there is a need for someone to tell us exactly where those two parties stand. Perhaps there are differing points of view beyond those two. Perhaps there are differing points of view beyond those two. There might be

[Mr. Corbyn]

two in Parliament, two outside or 200 outside. Or they might not have a clue and have no option to offer anybody.

Mr. Skinner: In fact, it was summed up in a previous debate about the teacher's dispute when there was a strike taking place in various schools up and down the country. My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) will remember. He took part in that debate and I listened. The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East, the education spokesman for the Liberal party, decided to make a speech on that occasion. He did not manage to get round to ACAS because I do not think that he thought for one moment that that was where it would finish up. In a nutshell what he said—my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough will confirm this—was that he was on the side of the teachers and on the side of the Government at the same time. I think that that adequately sums up the position of the alliance. In almost every contentious issue the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party back every horse that is running in the race.

2.45 am

Dr. Godman: Surely the reason for the stunning silence of members of the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party is their ignorance of industrial relations and collective bargaining. I would have thought that the essential thrust of the amendment is the role offered to ACAS. It seems, perhaps my hon. Friend will agree, that the employers and the trade unions would surely benefit from the guiding role performed by the experts in collective bargaining. The importance of the amendment is the role being offered to ACAS and, in turn, offered to both employers' and employees' representatives in these difficult and trying circumstances.

Mr. Skinner: That is a worthy point. One of the planks of Liberalism as I used to know it before I became a Member of the House was based upon the least Government interference in any situation. That is what Liberalism is all about. The Liberal party said at its conference this year as it has in previous years, that it believes in less Government intervention and in bodies dealing with industrial relations matters. Therefore, one would have thought that the alliance spokesman would have come here today and applauded the fact that ACAS got round the table and managed to come up with a 19-point resolution of the problem. [HON. MEMBERS: "13 points."] I heard my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) referring to 19, but I will accept 13. When I was outside today——

Mr. Freud: I would simply like to point out that it was the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party that tabled a reasoned amendment on Second Reading. That amendment was supported by the Labour party. To date, we have reached clause 1, page 1, line 5 and it ill becomes anyone to criticise one for silence when we have so far, in nine and a half hours of debate, covered five lines.

Mr. Skinner: The hon. Gentleman does not understand—he has been here many years—that it is the duty of the Opposition to frustrate a Bill that they deem to be wrong for the people to whom it applies and that everything that has happened today has been in order. The hon. Gentleman is suggesting that certain contributions have been out of order.

Mr. Freud: I am not.

Mr. Skinner: I do not know what the hon. Gentleman is saying, then. That is a reflection on the Chair. The Chair is dealing with the debate. At some later stage I might not be happy about the closure motions that are put and accepted by the Chair but, at this stage and after these hours when my hon. Friends have been speaking within the order of the House, I believe that they are doing a job that has to be done and that they are carrying out the promises they made to all the teachers outside. My hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) wants to make a valuable contribution.

Mr. Nellist: Before my hon. Friend was sidetracked by the almost unique intervention of the Liberal spokesman, he was answering a point from my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman). I hope that he will continue with that. In recent months, my hon. Friend and I have had the benefit of discussions with a former ACAS chairman, Mr. Jim Mortimer, who is now doing other things. Mr. Mortimer had certain views about his experience with ACAS and about the anti-trade union laws brought in by the Government in the past seven years. This is one of the few occasions when we can get to grips with those matters. Members who were not present for those discussions may benefit from some of the points that were made.

Mr. Skinner: Jim Mortimer had a somewhat chequered career, finishing up as general secretary of the Labour party. I shall not go into the pros and cons of that, because at that time he had nothing to do with ACAS. Nevertheless, he gained valuable experience with ACAS. I do not wish to offend my hon. Friend, but I have not exactly fallen in love with ACAS. It is as well to make that clear now. That is not to say, however, that ACAS could not achieve a more reasonable settlement than the Government on some occasions. That is what we are saying today. We speak from a position of strength when we say that although ACAS has done a bit of meddling in its time and sometimes come down on the side of the employers, and notwithstanding its somewhat Establishment make-up, it has still managed to make some sensible arrangements in difficult circumstances when there was a multitude of unions which somehow could not get their act together until the settlement was finally agreed.

Mr. Corbyn: I have a good deal of sympathy with my hon. Friend's comments about ACAS, but does he agree that one of its advantages is that the terms of its establishment mean that it is bound to promote collective bargaining on both sides and thus supports the principle of trade union organisation? The present Secretary of State is bitterly opposed to the very existence of trade unions. That is why a considerable number of trade unionists are in prison in this country for defying the legislation that the Secretary of State supports.

Mr. Skinner: I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to people like Terry French, or Mike Hicks, who was arrested on the Wapping picket line. That is part of the Government's policy. As my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) has said, it is a bizarre state

of affairs when the Government say that they wish to interfere with free collective bargaining, to have nothing to do with the ACAS agreement and to impose their settlement on the unions and especially the NUT whether they like it or not, when that very Government were elected on a mandate of non-interference.

Just before the 1979 general election, the Conservatives took part in a debate in the House about the Ford settlement, which was 17 per cent. The then Tory Opposition claimed that there should be no interference between Ford and its employees. My hon. Friends on the Front Bench will recall the forthright statements of the Tories on that occasion that we should not interfere in the Ford settlement. They put down a motion about it with the intention of embarrassing the Labour Government and setting the theme for the election of a Tory Government who could then claim in their election campaign that they were all for free collective bargaining. There were to be no incomes polices of the Liberal or SDP kind. There were to be no £6 or 10 per cent. pay policies. The ethos of their campaign was that, as a result of the Ford debate, when they were elected, there would be no interference. That is what happened for a long time.

Dr. Godman: The references to Liberal Members' contribution is something of an irrelevance, because they are an irrelevance in a debate about industrial relations and collective bargaining in England and Wales. I can understand my hon. Friend's suspicions, or even cynical, view of ACAS, but surely he agrees that it has played an important role in bringing about a peaceful resolution of several industrial conflicts. It does not always play to the establishment in collective bargaining. Sometimes, ACAS has nobly defended the interests of trade unionists who were powerless.

Mr. Skinner: My attitude to ACAS is coloured by what happened in the miners' strike. It had ample opportunities to find some form of settlement. I believe that the Government told ACAS what the score was and that they and MacGregor intervened and stopped ACAS, which was probably trying to find a solution or a halfway point. Because of the umbilical cord between the Government, some of the establishment, such as MacGregor, and ACAS, the Government were able to force their way and get the settlement that we have today.

I hazard a guess that ACAS has probably grown a bit since then and that, in regard to the teachers, it thought, "Here is an industrial problem. The teachers have been on strike on and off for about 18 months. It is not like the teachers to take industrial action"—*[Laughter.]* Oh, no. I visit most picket lines, and during my 30-odd years on the political scene I have not had to visit many teachers' picket lines until recently.

I believe that ACAS might have thought, "This is a bit different. Perhaps the Government have gone one step too far." Nobody is impartial, but looking at the problem from a more objective point of view, ACAS might have thought, "We must stand firm and come up with a resolution."

Mr. Corbyn: What my hon. Friend is saying about teachers becoming more aware of their situation is important. In the 1979 low pay dispute, the participation of teachers in support of manual workers in schools was minimal in many places—but not any more.

Does my hon. Friend agree that often, when local authorities reach agreement, the Government pull the money out from under the employer? That is true of the nurses' pay claim, which has not been properly funded, and of the local authority manual workers' claims. The Government operate double standards. They say that they are not interfering in collective bargaining, but they pull the strings from a distance to drive real wages down.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend is making the point that I heard earlier, that this is the thin end of the wedge, and the Government have decided that ACAS has come up with a resolution of a problem, and they do not like or want it because it places them in a predicament. It could be that the Government are saying, "Well, it happened to be the teachers, but it doesn't matter what it is—ACAS may come up with some other settlement, such as that for the nurses before the general election, and we might find that unpalatable." It could be that the Government have decided that ACAS deliberations cannot be accepted despite the fact that they could resolve the problem.

3 am

Dr. Godman: I point out to my hon. Friend that I said that I shared some of his suspicions about ACAS. However, he should remember that it is not some kind of mediating body that seeks to bring together two forces that are equally powerful. I would have thought that in any analysis of industrial relations in the United Kingdom, it is almost always the case irrespective of the industry, that the employer possesses much more power than organised labour, and despite what this doltish lot say about dockers and others, that is the case for just about every industry, including education.

Mr. Skinner: That is a fair point, and that is why we are here at three o'clock in the morning, addressing the position of teachers, and redressing the balance by calling on the Government to accept the amendment. We have spent some time discussing ACAS. We must try to influence the Government into accepting its role.

Today, I was talking to some teachers who had come here to lobby. They could not get in, but I managed to find a way to bring them in so that they could lobby Tory Members of Parliament. They were able to find Labour Members of Parliament to talk about ACAS and the amendments. One of them asked me, "Do you know where Parkinson is?" He obviously meant the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson). I said, "Probably not, because he has got 10 jobs." They could not believe me. I had to get the Register of Members' Interests from the Vote Office to show them. I thought that I did the right and proper thing by letting them have a copy for research and analysis.

One of them asked whether the right hon. Gentleman needed the money, but I do not know about that. They could not find the right hon. Member for Hertsmere, but I helped them by going through the list and telling them who was a Tory Member, because it does not signify whether they are Labour or Tory or sky blue or pink. They spent their time putting in green cards, which is an important function of this place, especially on a day like today. They referred to the Secretary of State, and they were livid that they could not see him. They sent a message through his Parliamentary Private Secretary, but they did not see the Secretary of State.

[Mr. Skinner]

These people were worried about the "Weekend World" programme, on which the Secretary of State appeared. Another Tory Minister appearing on another Tory programme. It is run by a Tory, Matthew Parris. It used to be run by another Tory who has now left the country and is living on much more than a teacher's wage somewhere in the Channel Islands.

The teachers said it was high time that somebody put the alternative point of view. I told them that a host of my hon. Friends were in the Chamber ready to explain the teachers' case when speaking to various amendments, including the one about ACAS. The teachers were pleased at that, even though we did not get the chance to appear on "Weekend World" and put their case. On that programme Matthew Parris plays pat ball. Many hon. Members are interviewed on television and worry about what the last question will be. We think somebody will drop us a cobbler. Tory Ministers, such as the Secretary of State for Education and Science, appear on that programme and for them it is like Christmas Day, Boxing Day and a birthday rolled into one. They cannot fail. If you, Sir Paul, ever get a chance to appear on that programme to talk about ACAS, ask for Matthew Parris and it will be a doddle.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. This may be interesting, but I cannot relate it to the amendment.

Mr. Skinner: If you get the chance, Sir Paul, to talk about the way you keep order in the Committee and if you are worried about whether you will be interviewed by Sir Robin Day or somebody who might put a few trick questions, settle for "Weekend World".

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): Kilroy-Silk?

Mr. Skinner: The hon. Gentleman mentions Kilroy-Silk. There might yet be a debate on the programme about ACAS, and it will probably be about the teachers, who knows? The viewing figures are terrible. There are fewer people watching that programme than there are hon. Members present in the Chamber. I do not know what will happen to Matthew Parris and I hope that no one can detect a smile on my face. He will probably have to ask ACAS to sort it out when he is threatened with the sack, but he will hardly get an all-night sitting on his behalf.

The teachers that I met were huddled in corners in the Lobbies trying to contact various hon. Members. I met them after they had met various people and they were overwhelmed with the support that they had from Labour Members. [*Interruption.*] It is not always the case. I explained to them that for the first time in a long time we would use legitimate parliamentary tactics to try to frustrate this piece of legislation.

There has been a poll since we started this debate and we have already narrowed the gap. There has been a five-point improvement since the debate began. My hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow will agree that the ACAS agreement was a good one.

In some respects, my hon. Friend and I have different views about ACAS, but we do not need to go through that again. Perhaps we do. From the speeches that I have heard in the debate, that agreement favours the lower paid more than the higher paid. That is an egalitarian agreement and must be supported.

The discussions took several days and the people who took part in them are to be commended. In spite of the pressures from some of the small teacher unions that represent the headmasters and people like that — the people mainly associated with the Tories — the discussions ended in proposals which shifted the balance in favour of teachers coming in at the lower end of the scale, and especially teachers who have to teach in dilapidated schools. To some degree, but not entirely, that must be a factor in favour of the settlement.

Mr. Edward Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): My hon. Friend has referred to Tory headmasters. The representations that I received today from Merthyr and Rhymney were from headmasters who are not Tories.

Mr. Skinner: That is even better. What will the next poll show? We are not here by accident; we are not here on a fool's errand. We are taking part in the debate because we know that the Bill is an injustice. Not all my hon. Friends who are in the Chamber come from the teaching profession. Many of us left school a long time ago, but we feel that the Tory Government are up to something that is wrong. That is why my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney is able to say, quite properly, that he has met headmasters who are not Tories. Perhaps some were Tories, but they have come to the conclusion that the ball has to stop now.

Mr. Alen McKay: My hon. Friend has spoken of fear and unease about the Bill. Some of us are thinking — this should be the thinking of those outside the House — that the Bill is the beginning of a scheme that the Tories have to mount a further attack upon the working class across the board. The Bill is the first of a series of measures to that end.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend is on the right lines. I would merely say that the Bill is not the first measure to attack the working class. The Tory Government have taken on a long list of workers over the past seven years. The teachers have acted spendidly in their own defence for 18 months and they are almost at the end of the line. They are probably the first of what we call, loosely, the professionals who have been tackled. I advise anyone who is a member of the National and Local Government Officers Association and thinking of voting Tory at the next election to watch out. He should understand that he is next in line. The Government have taken on some badly organised groups of manual workers and now they are taking on the teaching profession. The teachers are the thin end of the wedge. The Government will say, "We have dusted down the teachers and told ACAS to get lost. We can now move into another area," and who knows where it will end?

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): We know that some teachers voted Tory in 1983, and I spoke to two or three this afternoon who did that. When they did so they never believed that a Tory Government would remove their union's negotiating rights. The teachers who voted Tory in 1983 for short-term, selfish reasons have learnt their lesson. They will not make the same mistake at the next general election.

Mr. Skinner: I have no doubt that we have reached watershed. I know that that word is over-used, but we are speaking about workers who, by and large, have not been involved in industrial disputes. That was the position until

the Government were elected. I am sure that other groups, such as those that are represented by the National and Local Government Officers Association will be concerned, and we must use the debate subsequently to spread the message among other groups. We must explain that if the Government are prepared to rush this Bill through Parliament with their 160-odd majority, even though there is no need to do so, that spells disaster for many other workers. Perhaps one day they will get around to the solicitors.

3.15 am

Mr. Boyes: Exactly how many people are in NALGO? There are many votes to be had, and many of those people have already experienced one hard lesson. I apologise for referring to it again, but I feel so bitter about the way in which the Government treated the metropolitan counties and the GLC. Those bodies never got the chance of going to ACAS or of going to the ballot box and their employees lost their jobs. My hon. Friend raises an important point, because NALGO is watching the teachers very carefully. Does my hon. Friend realise that more than 1·5 million people belong to NALGO and that every one of them will see this Bill as a party political—

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. It is not in order to discuss NALGO on this amendment.

Mr. Boyes *rose*——

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I call the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

Mr. Skinner: The last thing we want to do is fall out with the Chair. That can be done on many other occasions. Although we may lose the vote, there is no point in infuriating Sir Paul when we are winning the argument. He has deemed that everything up to now has been in order —

Mr. Boyes: On a point of order, Sir Paul. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) has so touched me that I believe I might have offended you. I apologise for having strayed.

Mr. Skinner: There is no need to crawl.

Mr. Boyes: I had no intention of straying. But my hon. Friend has convinced me that it is necessary to apologise. I hope that you will accept my apology for straying outside the terms of the amendment. I should not have referred to NALGO or the abolition of the metropolitan counties and the GLC with the consequent job losses for NALGO members without recourse to ACAS. I assure you, Sir Paul, that I shall not do it again on this amendment.

The Second Deputy Chairman: I am very much obliged to the hon. Gentleman. I can assure him that he has not offended me. However, it is my job to ensure that the debate is in order. It is a wide debate, but I am being very tolerant as I recognise the important issues and the strength of feeling on them. We must, however, stay within the rules.

Mr. Skinner: One could say of your response to my hon. Friend's contribution, Sir Paul, that you have spoken just like ACAS and have come up with the solution.

Dr. Godman: I appreciate that there are some differences in our perceptions of ACAS, ACAS officials and the functions that they perform in collective bargaining. If the amendment were carried, ACAS officials would be able to provide a most useful function in collective bargaining on terms and conditions of employment without playing a direct interventionist role. In my view, ACAS could play an important educational role in industrial relations training. Many in the teaching profession had little or no experience of collective bargaining and had not been involved in industrial disputes until recently. ACAS might have an important educational role.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend knows a lot about ACAS. That is becoming apparent. My hon. Friend could make a valuable contribution to this debate. To be serious, in all his interventions my hon. Friend has tried to probe, to find out and to explain precisely the role of ACAS. That is why I am convinced that our debate on these amendments should not go by without a contribution from my hon. Friend.

On training, the Government are very unsure of their ground. They are not keen on training anybody, apart from Parliamentary Private Secretaries. There have been plenty of them. One is now asleep. Is it in order, Sir Paul, for a Parliamentary Private Secretary to be fast asleep? There is a limit. I see that the hon. Gentleman has taken out the matchsticks but it is coming to something when such lack of interest is shown.

The Government have a majority of 160 on paper—they did not have that majority in the last Division. The Government majority then dropped by about 100, and that says something else. People close to the Minister treat the House with comtempt when they think, "Let's get on with the vote. We shall win the vote. We don't care about the teachers. We don't make contributions apart from brief ones by the Minister."

Dr. Godman: I should like to ask a supplementary question about the training role of ACAS. I try to be a fair-minded, constructive critic of Tory Ministers, but it is fair to say that in terms of industrial relations training, earlier Tory Governments encouraged—albeit adventitiously—the development of industrial training.

The Industrial Relations Act 1971 came into force on 28 February 1972 long before I entered the House. That Act, with its industrial relations code which was approved eventually by ACAS, encouraged the development of training. I say that from experience because I was involved in the training of shop stewards and managers at Scottish and Newcastle Breweries. ACAS was involved. If the amendment were carried it would give a major impetus to the able work performed by ACAS. I say that despite criticisms by some of the hon. Friends. That was the point that I was trying to make.

Mr. Skinner: I am not opposed to the evolution of ACAS. Nothing is static and if I said — was it adventitiously?—a few moments ago that I was not too keen on ACAS generally, that is because I was coloured by its attitude during the strike. Is the word "adventitious" in order, Sir Paul? Is it mentioned in "Erskine May"?

As ACAS is evolving — my hon. Friend knows so much about ACAS that he must have been watching it evolve; it is almost as if he can see it grow. He could get a job there. Don't get me wrong. Some people come here and end up as bookies' runners, but my hon. Friend has

[Mr. Skinner]

shown some expertise about this ACAS institution and that has been helpful to all of us. It has been a sort of educational experience for some of us.

Mr. Dixon: ACAS night classes.

Mr. Skinner: Well, I am not sure that ACAS would call them night classes. It has probably got something to do with my background, but I have a feeling that ACAS would call them seminars. That is what worries me. I think that my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow is with me on that. I think that he has been with me all the way. He has not said a deal, but I keep looking at his face to make sure that we are on the same wavelength on this ACAS business. That shows the broad expanse in our party.

My hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) and I take an arm's-length position on ACAS, while accepting what it has done on this issue, and the Labour party also accommodates my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow who has studied ACAS, not only in relation to this matter, but in a wider form. He has been able to show the rest of us that it has possibilities. My hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow and I will watch this growth under the next Labour Government, because ACAS could get a little too close to the Establishment.

Dr. Godman: I should be grateful if my hon. Friend refrained from calling me an expert on ACAS. I suspect all experts and I am an observer.

Mr. Skinner: A better word.

Dr. Goodman: Yes, a much better word. I should like my hon. Friend to take on board the fact that if the amendment were passed — there is some doubt about that, because of the lumpen bourgeoisie on the Government Benches — the procedures established with the intervention of ACAS would force on employers and employees' associations training needs which would have to be met with sensible and realistic programmes for the training of trade union representatives. In a diffuse sense, ACAS has a training role to play in this area of collective bargaining.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend has put the matter in a better perspective. It was wrong of me to presume that, because he knew so much about ACAS, he was an expert. We do not always get hon. Members to acknowledge that they are not experts. Most people would jump at the chance to hear somebody call them an expert. My hon. Friend is modest.

Mr. Corbyn: My hon. Friend should look behind him.

3.30 am

Mr. Skinner: I do not think that the hon. Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) is the only one. He purports to be an expert on the law. One of my hon. Friends says that he is not, but I shall not go into that matter because it may open another can of worms. It may lead us to that Wright fellow in Sydney. I do not know whether ACAS could resolve that problem.

Would not things look up if this amendment were carried? Imagine what prospects would open for these people — ACAS, supported by my hon. Friend, as he observes them. They could then muscle in on all sorts of things. Not that I wish to see the Government rescued in respect of their spies and all the rest of it. We know where the spies come from, anyway. They come out of the belly of the Establishment. They have not caught a shop steward yet. The newspapers always suggest that the spies come from the Left, or ACAS. Most of them seem to come from public schools. That counteracts what ACAS has done. Perhaps my hon. Friend and others have forgotten that we have got to the kernel of the matter — the lowly paid.

I hope that hon. Members do not get me wrong on this point. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not wish to be misquoted, either, in future when there is a Labour Government. I am pleased that the Government have been multi-egalitarian in the way that they have distributed the available money. It is a type of harbinger for an incomes policy. Although ACAS has come up with this solution, I should not want anybody to get the impression that somebody from outside could tell NUPE laundry cleaners — people who are lower paid — that the only way to get a decent wage increase is to finish up at ACAS with this posh body. Although the collective bargaining procedures go to ACAS, we would rather see those people collectively bargain together — more joining NUPE, the General Municipal and the other unions that cover those trades — to try to get better wages. In that way, the two functions could operate together.

Dr. Godman: It must be noted that the amendment states:

"under the auspices of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service between representatives of the local education authorities and of the teachers' unions."

During the evolution of ACAS, over 10 years, it might be possible to give it additional powers that will enable it to redress, change or counteract the imbalance in power that exists between employers' organisations and employees' associations.

Mr. Skinner: So long as we understand that, as in this case, ACAS is free from any Government interference. The debate is about a Government who are imposing a settlement. In forthright terms, we do not want to see that development. We have had a conflict between the Government, who hold the purse strings, and the teachers' unions. As a result, they have found a way to ACAS. That is OK by me. That is a fairly sensible conclusion. We hesitate about the fact that, in future, ACAS might intervene in an area where it is not altogether welcome. That is a worthy matter to put on record as we utilise the arguments about ACAS. That prompted the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East to start writing.

Mr. Boyes: He is doodling.

Mr. Skinner: He is probably practising for his next radio programme.

The essence of the low pay argument is good in itself. Today, I heard the views of some teachers. They said, "Whatever you do, Dennis, you tell Harold Walker this, if he gets into the Chair." I said "He will, because he is always there. He will be there. He is the sort of Chairman who understands the issues — not that he can be anything other than impartial." He is not one to stop my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow from making a valuable contribution about the role of ACAS, as he has observed it over the years.

Mr. Dixon: Not during the miners' strike.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow observed it then. During the strike, ACAS was picked out

by the Government. Obviously, there were some ACAS personnel who were made of the right stuff to stand up to MacGregor and the Government. As I said earlier—my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow might not have been listening closely—those people believe that the teachers have been given such a raw deal that they have to assert themselves against the Government. This is because of the outrageous way in which the Government dealt with the teachers after they had lost so much money.

Mr. Dixon *rose*——

Mr. Skinner: I have been trying to get my hon. Friend to intervene.

Mr. Dixon: I have not intervened because I have a cold and can hardly talk. I agree with my hon. Friend's point about ACAS during the miners' strike. But we do not want to get carried away with ACAS. During the period I was involved in the trade union movement, I always considered that going to ACAS was like having a row with the wife and getting the mother-in-law to arbitrate.

Mr. Skinner: We have been discussing ACAS, completely in order, for about an hour, Mr. Walker, and I have been struggling to approach the matter in an academic fashion in order to fit in with my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow. I should not have done that. I should have resorted to my instincts. There, in a nutshell, is what I have been trying to say. The debate could have finished early. In some ways, our legitimate parliamentary tactics could have been frustrated if the throat of my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow had not been so sore. He could have jumped in straight away.

Mr. Dixon: I would not have moved the closure.

Mr. Skinner: You missed the best part, Mr. Walker, when the Liberals decided to speak for the first time today. They wanted to move, That the Question be now put. That caused a certain amount of hilarity, as you can guess, Sir — not that we should be totally amused about this debate.

Mr. Bermingham *rose*——

Mr. Skinner: No, we should not be continuously amused about the debate, because my hon. Friend is now going to make a legal point.

Mr. Bermingham: Does my hon. Friend agree that—now that we have had the mother-in-law join the mother and the wife, now that we have had the Liberals' retreat and now that we have had all the academics — the Secretary of State, in seeking to pour scorn on ACAS, shows his complete contempt for anyone who seeks to disagree with him?

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friends will have heard that, in a quiet unassuming fashion, How my hon. Friend from ferret land has intervened, only a second after my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow. The contrast! I talked about how this party embraces people who know ACAS inside out, people who do not trust ACAS and people who go to court about ACAS; yet here we are—and this is the significant point—all on the same side because we know that injustice is being carried out by the Government against the teachers.

Mr. Rowlands *rose*——

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend who comes from Wales wants to contribute.

Mr. Rowlands: I have been pondering my hon. Friend's comment a few minutes ago that all headmasters are Tories. I want him to withdraw the absurd slur that he has made on the many headmasters who are anything but Tories. Will he do that for me?

Mr. Skinner: I thought I had done it in a commendable fashion. I said earlier that we had all met people from the Lobby, and I said, off-the-cuff, that one headmasters' organisation, about which I had been reading in the newspapers, was supporting the Government. I might inadvertently have given the impression that I thought all headmasters were Tories. I am not sure about it. It is pretty clear that the headmasters are coming over to our side, and that is a good thing. So there is no doubt that——

Mr. Rowlands: Will my hon. Friend withdraw?

Mr. Skinner: No, I will not withdraw anything. No one has made me do it in 16 years, and I am not starting tonight. I have made considerable concessions tonight, but my hon. Friend should not ask me to travel down that road.

Mr. Godman *rose*——

Mr. Skinner: I give way to my hon. Friend the Member for ACAS.

Dr. Godman: Looking at the role that is envisaged for ACAS in the agreement, may I point out to my hon. Friend that I am not an uncritical admirer of ACAS? I approach ACAS in a fair-minded and constructive way. We must acknowledge that, in some instances, ACAS has defended the interests of workers who are badly organised. I remind my hon. Friend that if the amendment were passed and if ACAS were to play this role in collective bargaining in education, it might encourage the House to look afresh at ACAS and to give it greater powers. Those powers would have to be based on the premise that, in almost every case, the organised work force is less powerful than the employers. May I make one further point? I never thought that I would end up as my hon. Friend's straight man.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend has been making valuable contributions. He said that he was not an uncritical admirer of ACAS. It has all gelled at the end, has it not? As we come towards the end, a couple of us on this Bench are not quite in love with ACAS. My hon. Friend gave the impression initially that he was an expert——

Dr. Godman: An observer.

Mr. Skinner: He is an observer. Now he is not an uncritical admirer on occasions——

Mr. Flannery: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Skinner: I will when I have made this point, which is important. I do not wish to impugn the name of the Chair, Mr. Walker, and I do not say that we should have a minute's silence, but we should remember that you set it up and that you have played a valuable role——

Dr. Godman: I do not seek to curry favour with you, Mr. Walker.

Mr. Skinner: I give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), who has not been in the Chamber lately, but who spoke earlier.

Mr. Flannery: I am disconcerted about my hon. Friend's difficulties with this group of Welsh headmasters.

[Mr. Flannery]

May we enlist the good offices of ACAS to help him with this problem group who, although we are assured that they are solid Labour supporters, belong to an organisation that has been acting like a bunch of Tories? I refer to the National Association of Head Teachers. Could ACAS help him out of the dilemma?

Mr. Skinner: Looking at it objectively, as an observer, during the past week or two, I got the impression that that organisation was causing some trouble for ACAS. As my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) said, there are some Labour supporters in that organisation, but the body itself exudes a sort of bluish dye. It has frustrated to some extent the attempts made by the bulk of the unions, including the National Union of Teachers, to obtain this important settlement.

Mr. Nellist: My hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) talked about ACAS having to conciliate between employers and employees, particularly when the employees were in the weaker position. I hope that my hon. Friend will explain that in virtually every case the latent strength of workers, who are the only ones who produce wealth in society, is not fully realised, and that is where the trade unionism comes to the fore.

3.45 am

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) is well into his second hour on amendment No. 4 and since we have had a change of Chair, will he recap on some of his earlier points, at least for the benefit of Mr. Walker?

Mr. Skinner: I do not have to recap. I can give a summary. I shall only point out that it was Mr. Walker who set up ACAS.

In short, we have discussed the valuable role of ACAS and the fact that in 1979 the Government set out to get rid of it. Then they used it during the miners' strike. Then we tended to put forward the argument, with which I think that most Opposition Members concurred, that ACAS had asserted itself during the teachers' dispute and had come up with a kind of resolution. We also discussed the question of its evolution. Could it grow? Where and how would it grow? What kind of shape would it have in the future? Would it be more beneficial? There were also the dangers that it might interfere more in collective bargaining and some of us were worried about that. We have covered the landscape of ACAS and it has all been important.

Dr. Godman: If we examine the amendment and take on board the power that ACAS has acquired in education, despite its chequered history—I am not unmindful of what happened in the dispute in the coal mining industry—it could play a powerful role. Surely my hon. Friend will agree that it is entirely sensible to envisage an ACAS that is independent of a Conservative Government or a Labour Government, which acts on behalf of weaker groups in the industrial world.

Mr. Skinner: We could have a good theoretical discussion about what would happen if ACAS managed to grow in that fashion. I would rather tend to the view that it would militate against the growth of trade unionism. Some of us have the old-fashioned view that in industrial struggles which take place every day on the shop floor, or in this case in the classroom, the battle for trade unionism survives on the basis of a union being able to say to its members that it is in a position to fight. We would not want to see ACAS develop into a kind of cushion, making it a soft option, which would mean that joining a trade union was not all that important. That is the area in which we would have doubts.

Mr. Boyes: Let me ask my hon. Friend about those headmasters. I do not want to ask him to withdraw anything because even if the Serjeant at Arms had his sword pointed at my hon. Friend's throat he would not withdraw anything that he had said. However, many headmasters support the Labour party. Tonight's opinion polls show that the number of headmasters who support Labour is growing by every second. I hope my hon. Friend agrees that the rise of 5 per cent. in the opinion polls is not just because of today's debate. I hope he agrees that the 5 per cent. rise is also due to the announcement by the leader of our party that the Labour party will get rid of nuclear weapons.

The Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman must deal with ACAS.

Mr. Boyes: I am dealing with ACAS, Mr. Walker. I digress for just a second, because you were not in the Chair when we referred to Labour's 5 per cent. rise in the opinion polls. Ever since I became a Member of Parliament I have listened to every statement on education, and no hon. Member knows more about that subject than my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery). For many years he has championed the teachers' cause. Even though he says that the association is a little on the Conservative side, I know that he will not disagree with me when I say that many headmasters are members of the Labour party. Both of us used to be teachers and both of us were members of the Labour party then. We might have been headmasters by now, but we would still be Labour party members.

Mr. Skinner: At a meeting in my constituency about 10 days ago a headmaster was on the platform with me. We spoke to about 700 people concerning a dispute over the reorganisation of the schools. I took the side of the schools. The dispute may eventually reach Parliament, in which case we shall have to do battle with the Secretary of State for Education and Science. So I have been busy doing a little pre-electioneering. It was not bad to speak to so many teachers and parents. The headmaster stood beside me on that joint platform. People like him are in the right. The same will be true at Bolsover. When I speak there on Sunday the audience is expected to be about 1,000, and I shall again be talking about the reorganisation of schools.

I have made the point over and over again that there are always exceptions to the rule, but by and large this organisation has cuddled up to the Government during the dispute, particularly during its latter stages.

Mr. Nellist: I appreciate my hon. Friend's point, to which we shall no doubt return, but when we were discussing ACAS on the previous group of amendments I do not believe that any hon. Member mentioned that our principal objection was to the Secretary of State having the power to appoint an advisory body and then to impose a

pay structure and conditions of service. That is patronage. While we are dealing with this group of amendments, surely we ought to be discussing the Labour party's demand that members of the conciliation service ought to be elected.

Mr. Skinner: That must have been in Mr. Walker's mind when, as a Minister, he set up ACAS. Accountability is important. I am not averse to that. However, although we have supported ACAS in this dispute I think that we should be a little careful about how far we back it on every single issue.

Mr. Rowlands: My hon. Friend has referred continually to head teachers belonging to only one union. Will he accept that there are headmasters and headmistresses even within the National Union of Teachers and that he should not therefore refer to all headmasters and headmistresses as belonging to one union that tends to be Conservative-controlled?

Mr. Skinner: I think that the record will show that about an hour ago I made no reference whatsoever to all headmasters and headmistresses being Tories. The record will show that I did not say that. It will also show that I have not said that all headmasters and headmistresses are in that one organisation. I am getting a bit fed up of someone being so pernickety, when *Hansard* will show, when it is produced, that no such statement was made by me. I have no reason to worry about withdrawing because I said simply that the organisation that was named gave more than a little difficulty for the NUT and three other teachers' organisations while people were trying to resolve the dispute. Of course, there are headmasters and headmistresses in the NUT—a few. There are some in another organisation that has also played a part. But there is no problem about me withdrawing my remarks because they are consistent with with what I have just said. The report will show that.

Mr. Flannery: We are talking about ACAS and head teachers. My hon. Friend is absolutely right that some are also in other unions—very few. The secretary of the Burnham committee was a head teacher. He was helped there by people who are no friends of ours. After their antics, he was removed. He is not secretary any longer, and he had only his own vote on the committee.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend knows the issue inside out. In almost every education debate he has made a contribution and kept hon. Members informed about the conflict. There is no doubt about that. My hon. Friend referred to the component parts of the problem, and I tend to the view that generally he has got the facts right. So I hope that Labour Members will agree with my hon. Friend in his summing-up of what has been a side show. I said that now that the head teachers were coming over to our side, that was welcome, and it could mean that we get more support. My hon. Friend and I are saying, "Come over a bit more quickly. Do not play the Tory game, because when they have used you, just like the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, they will get rid of you. They will not be bothered about you after you have been used."

I was about to refer to the Government's fiddling on the issue. Their interference is another example of the fiddles with which they have become associated in every single Department of State. One can go through them all, and find their dirty pawmark on almost every single Bill, the unemployment figures, and the twisted trade figures. They have now increased the invisibles to £900 million a month. Nobody believes it. What about their attitude towards the City? Now they are fiddling the figures for the teachers. They have tried to argue that they will give more money to all teachers, when as a result of the fiddling they will give more money, with some exceptions, to those on the highest pay. That is another reason why we supported the ACAS resolution of the dispute as opposed to that of the Tories. My hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow had a sore throat earlier. I am getting the same complaint.

Dr. Godman: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend will speak, and he does not have a sore throat.

Dr. Godman: I sincerely regret intervening again but it may well be that where the amendment reads, "under the auspices" it might have been better if it had read, "with the assistance and advice of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service." For all its faults and despite its history, it is an advisory, conciliation and arbitration service and if it were to be introduced into the educational sector of England and Wales, far from weakening the trade union movement, it could be argued that it might well strengthen the trade union involvement in collective bargaining in the education world.

4 am

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend has made that important point before. It brings us back to the argument about the role of ACAS. I do not think that the teachers would want to see their collective bargaining eroded in any way by ACAS. I do not think for one moment that any of the teachers' unions, from whatever side of the fence, would necessarily want to say, "Let us get to ACAS at the earliest possible moment." They want to find a solution to the dispute so that their pay is increased, they are able to teach the kids better, they have improved facilities to work in, the pupil-teacher ratio is lower, and the extra space arising in some schools because of falling rolls is used to advantage. They want to do all those things and resolve them on their own without having to run to ACAS every five minutes, even though, on this occasion, ACAS managed to get a resolution of the dispute.

Mr. Frank Cook: I must apologise for my inability to catch my hon. Friend's eye previously when he was referring to the nature of the Department of Education and Science and its similarity with other Departments. He said that there were the same sort of pawmarks over this measure. My hon. Friend will recall the high regard in which I hold the animal kingdom and I wonder whether he would consider changing "pawmarks" to "palm prints".

Mr. Skinner: That is an indication of the way things change in one's own lifetime. It is an interesting aside. It is worth noting that when I became a Member of the House 16 years ago no one would have made that sort of contribution, yet now it has some relevance. It almost has a sort of ACAS imprint on it. If my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) will settle for "imprint", I am quite happy. Some of my family would share that view. I was brought up in a hurly burly environment where such a thing would not have been mentioned. Now it is part of the evolution that is taking

[Mr. Skinner]

place, as we see ACAS grow, ACAS develop and ACAS observed, and all the other things that are happening to ACAS.

Mr. Dixon: ACAS postponed.

Mr. Skinner: We see all those things and we see headmasters switching from Tory to Labour. That is welcome. Now we see that a greater interest is being taken in this place in the animal kingdom which, let us hope, does not have to go to ACAS to get its problems solved.

Mr. Michie: I should like to refer to ACAS—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] Because we do have some dilemmas. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) that ACAS does have a role to play but that it should not stem the growth of trade unions. However, if the Bill goes through and its results are reflected in other jobs and professions, ACAS will be useless anyway. Basically, we shall have dictatorship from the top. Arbitration will be out of the window because the Secretary of State will have all the power.

Mr. Skinner: We covered that point earlier at some length. We have had that valuable discussion which, I think will assist in shaping our own attitudes towards ACAS in the future.

Let us suppose that the Government remain in office for another 12 months. Personally, I doubt that very much. I think that the Prime Minister has already put March on the calendar. She is waiting for the first little patch of blue in the sky and then she will go. March is the first possible date. If there is no blue in the sky then, it will be postponed until May or June, and so on. I think that ACAS will be playing a role in various other disputes. For instance, local government officers now have a vested interest in joining the growing army of Labour voters in the next general election.

I come now to the philosophical point in the Government's attitude to free collective bargaining, because that is the kernel of the amendment. Last week, when the Secretary of State first announced his intentions on this, my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) and one or two others made their contributions. I thought that what I said on that occasion would form the basis of my speech today, but I have had to deal with ACAS at rather greater length, as the House knows. I had intended to follow up what I said to the Secretary of State on that occasion — that the Government were elected not to interefere.

The night before the Secretary of State made his statement there was a debate about 300 people sacked by J. E. Hanger. The Minister replying to that debate said that it was not for the Government to interfere between the artificial limb makers and the company that had sacked them. I wondered where this lot would end. We had the same arguement on the Silent Night dispute and in every Government statement under the sun, but the plight of the artificial limb makers struck home with me because they were dealing with thousands of disabled people. Yet the Government insisted time and again that they could not possibly interfere. The very next day the Secretary of State for Education and Science comes along and says that he intends to interfere with teachers' pay. That shows the Government's hypocrisy. It is hypocrisy on a grand scale. They could not intervene to save the jobs of the artifical limb makers at Roehampton, because the Government were in cahoots with the company that had sacked those 300 men and women.

That is why the teachers are so upset. Almost every one of them in the Lobby today was asking what was all this nonsense about interference when the Government had been saying for seven years that they could not possibly interfere with anything — including OPEC oil prices, though that was certainly a "kid 'em and cod 'em" exercise. The Government's philosophy has been non-interference—let the market place decide—but suddenly they decide that it is time to poke their noses into the affairs of 400,000 teachers and their families.

We are here tonight because we can see the hypocrisy of the Government's position. Let there be no mistake about it. Whatever the results of their little private polls, based on cobbled-up questions, a wider group than teachers will see that a Government elected on a mandate of non-interference with free collective bargaining are now dictated to 400,000 teachers what their wages should be. Moreover, they are tilting things in such a way that, by and large, those at the top of the scale will get more and those at the bottom will get less. That is injustice on a grand scale. That is why we have had to fight the Bill, and why we have kept in order. There is no question of our wanting to stray from the subject of the debate. We have used our opportunities today to try to satisfy the promises and pledges that we have made to the hundreds of people outside and in our constituencies during the past few weeks while the argument has raged. We would not be doing our duty if we did not try to fight the Bill line by line, clause by clause. There is a long way to go. I have not been on my feet for this length of time because I want to be, but because I have to make that contribution to the group who are fighting the Government.

Like many others, the teachers have taken part in the destabilisation of the Government. It must be destabilisation if the Government resort to the tactics that they said they would never use—intervention. The teachers have something to their credit. They have helped to destabilise the Government, even in their last few months in office. We have to support them until the Bill is concluded.

If the Government had any sense, even at this late stage they would withdraw the Bill. They would see the writing on the wall. We have heard hardly one speech from Conservative Members, and we noticed that in the Division on the previous group of amendments the Government could not get more than 219 votes—out of a total of 390 Members.

Dr. Godman: They are the lumpen bourgeoisie.

Mr. Skinner: They have had to give pairs and bisques, I think they are called—a type of absentee ticket—to some of their people because they do not have the stomach to fight. When their majority falls to 50-odd, as it did in the previous Division, the Government are being told something.

When the Government do not have the decency to acknowledge that, after all of their rabbiting on about ballots for all groups of workers, they will not allow the teachers to have the opportunity to have a ballot to decide the issue, that makes their hypocrisy even worse.

People see through such things. They might think that the spy thing is a bit complicated and be fed up with

reading about it, but there is an inconsistency in letting one lot of people print a book but not letting another lot print one. By and large, voters see the simple issues. They know where the Government stand on non-intervention and market forces and what the Prime Minister has said time and again about them, but here they are, in their last days, poking their nose in on a grand scale.

Teachers have an advantage over some groups of workers. They can communicate to a wider audience than even miners. Miners spend their days down the pit or at the pit top. They are in a closed community. To some extent, the same is true of steel workers. When they are tackled, the ripples to do not spread as far as they should, but teachers have to talk in their vocation—it is the essence of what they have to do. They also see through hypocrisy quickly.

The Secretary of State has turned round. I thought that he was about to bow like he did at the Tory party conference. I have never seen a bigger fool in Christendom than when he bowed. His head nearly touched the floor, he was so elated at the fact that he had been able to read for about 20 minutes from two of those boards that Reagan introduced. He has the cheek to tell teachers, with their difficult job, that he will regulate their pay, when they have a proper system of collective bargaining. He has the cheek to interfere on that scale. It is a form of unilateralism. He is a unilateralist on teachers' pay.

4.15 am

The debate has been essential as part of the several components that make up the details of the national debate. I do not want anybody to tell me that the settlement is too costly, and there is not enough money to find the extra for the teachers that the ACAS settlement will mean, when it is not much more than the Government have to offer. There is plenty of money in the country. The Prime Minister came back from the Common Market the other day, and she was not talking about non-intervention. She was trying not to talk about the fact that there will soon be a big fat bill for the Common Market gravy train. Those out there are living off the backs of teachers and the rest of them, and are producing little or nothing, but the Prime Minister comes to the Dispatch Box, in the very week when the Government are hammering the teachers, and says that she is to bring in Supplementary Estimates to bail out the Common Market. That is on top of the £6,000 million that has already been paid net by the British taxpayers, including teachers, to keep this crazy ship afloat.

Who are these people to talk about the teachers having assessments? Who has assessed this lot? Who decided that they were capable of running the country's affairs, when they cannot even keep their own spies in order? Who are they, when they can let the pound sink to the bottom of the Thames, they wreck business men and women and, the foreign reserves are lower than they are in Italy, after seven years of Thatcherism? Who are these people to tell the teachers that they cannot have an ACAS settlement because they know better?

Who assessed the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie), the Minister for foot and mouth? Who assessed them for pay? They all get the same money. An articulate teacher or headmaster might want to assess that lot, and make variations on the scale for these Ministers. What would they pay the Secretary of State? What is he really worth?

Mr. Bermingham: Not a lot.

Mr. Skinner: There are all those Tory party officials masquerading as Ministers. What would be the assessment of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster? He admitted from the Dispatch Box that he does only about 15 hours a month for his big, fat ministerial salary. What would happen to his salary if he had to be assessed in the way that the Secretary of State is telling the teachers that they should be assessed? He would not be rushing across to America without his passport. How does he do that? Not many other people could manage it. We do not want the Tory Government telling teachers that they should be assessed when they cannot even do their own job properly.

We are battling on behalf of the teachers as part of their campaign. That is why we met them today and we have kept our promise to battle on their behalf. Without exception, we in the Opposition—I cannot speak for the SDP and the Liberal party, because most of their hon. Members have not even poked their noses into the debate—are determined to put the teachers' case, about which they lobbied us today. If the Secretary of State had any sense he would take this bill back from whence it came.

Mr. Bermingham: My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) has accused me of speaking quietly. I hope that when I speak quietly I sometimes speak with some common sense. This dangerous little Bill and the amendment are important.

Before I speak about the Bill and the amendment, I shall correct my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover on another matter. By doing that I shall perhaps add to his fund of knowledge about Hangers and the disablement workers. He is probably aware that BTR owns that company and is trying to take over Pilkington in my constituency. I am worried and the people of St. Helens are worried about that, because we do not want to see happen to Pilkington what has happened to Hangers. I hope that I can rely on the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover when we fight the proposed takeover by BTR. I notice that he nods. I am grateful for his support.

I admit that I have immediately gone off track, but perhaps in my own quiet way I can return to it. I worry when the conceit of power reaches dictatorship. On the teachers' pay dispute there is conceit of power on the part of the Secretary of State. I do not apologise for calling the Secretary of State conceited in his belief that he has supreme ability to judge what a teacher is worth, what he or she should be paid, and how teachers' settlements should be arrived at. Who will decide? Will the Secretary of STate personally decide that a teacher in Cowley hill school in St. Helens will be graded 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, or will he put in one of his minions to do it. I worry about that.

Dr. Godman: My hon. Friend talks about the arrogance of Ministers taking power under this Bill. I was struck by what Louis MacNeice said over 40 years ago about Oxford dons. He said:

"They have charm without warmth and knowledge without understanding."

That charge can be levied against this doltish lot. Does my hon. Friend agree that this amendment is double-edged, in that it provides ACAS with a glorious opportunity to put its chequered history to one side and to develop in a much more independent fashion?

Mr. Bermingham: I agree with much of what my hon. Friend says. I listened with interest to his debate with my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover. Many of us have much to learn from that debate because it enabled us to see the two sides of the argument about ACAS. As my hon. Friend the Member of Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) is aware, ACAS grew from perhaps the first tentative discussions on industry by Professor John Wood in the early negotiations into which he was called, long before ACAS existed, to seek to resolve by conciliation. The idea of conciliation, diplomacy, discussion and resolution can be explored further in future.

I was referring to the Secretary of State and I used the word "conceit". I stand by that. I say "arrogance", and I stand by that, too. It is being said that if the Government do not like what two completely independent bodies arrive at by way of negotiation——

The Chairman: Order. I am having some difficulty in following the hon. Member, and that will continue to be the position if he persists in speaking while turned away from the Chair. It would be helpful if the hon. Gentleman were to turn more towards the Chair.

Mr. Bermingham: My deepest apologies, Mr. Walker. I hate the thought that you might miss one word of the pearls of wisdom that I seek to drop. I shall naturally turn to face you, Mr. Walker, and turn away from my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow. My hon. Friend raised such an interesting matter that I felt the courtesy of addressing him was necessary. I appreciate, Mr. Walker, that I should have addressed you.

When two parties reach a solution to a problem, it ill behoves someone else to walk in and say, "I don't like it. I shall destroy it. I shall take it away. I alone have the right to decide." Why is this happening? Why has the Secretary of State felt it necessary to say to the teaching profession, "You may negotiate with those who employ you, who are in day-to-day contact with you, but, if I do not like your solution, I shall do it my way." It is rather like a child in a school playground who wants to join in the ball game, and when he does not get his own way he steals the ball. That is the arrogance that has developed over the past seven years.

When people in society reach agreement and the Government start to steal the ball, thinking that they alone have the monopoly of wisdom, we are reaching a dangerous state. My great fear is that we shall return to the conditions that applied in the 1930s, which were summed up as follows:

"Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I was a Protestant so I didn't speak up."

We must remember how the quotation develops, which is as follows:

"Then they came for me . . . By that time there was no one to speak up for anyone."

The danger of the road that we are now treading is that the Government seem to believe that they have a monopoly of wisdom and that anyone who might take a slightly different view is utterly wrong. The teachers and the local authorities can no longer negotiate because they may not come to the answer that the Government want.

The Government say that the trade unions are wrong. They said that they were wrong during the miners' strike and they took away their rights. With the miners, they took away the pits. That was quicker. Where does this road end? When the Government debate an idea in the House, they work on the principle that they have a majority of 160 votes or more, that it does not matter what anyone else says and that they will steamroller through their policy.

The consideration of the Bill in Committee should not be taking place on the Floor of the House. The Bill should be considered by a Standing Committee in the same way as the majority of Bills. The Government's conceit and that of the Secretary of State is demonstrated by their view that they have some divine right to steamroller their policies through the House and to change the order, as it were, because that suits them. The Secretary of State leans back, closes his eyes and appears to be going to sleep. It does not matter what any of us say. He wants his Bill and the votes for it are to be found in the corridors and cubbyholes of this place. The only thing that we can do is to argue—at 4.29 in the morning—and we have reached only amendment No. 4.

Democracy is valuble. The Government are treading a very dangerous road by taking the view, "We do not care what anyone else says. We will get our way." That philosophy has destroyed more societies than any other in history. That philosophy destroyed the Roman empire and created the problems of the 1930s in Europe, and it is destroying this land. The conceit and danger that flows from the contempt for opposition creates dictatorship but does not sustain democracy. That is why at half-past four in the morning I ask the Government and the Secretary of State to think again. They should allow the Bill time. They should listen to what is being said and be aware of the dangers. There is no monopoly of wisdom in government or in the Civil Service. There is a right to dissent.

4.30 am

Under the International Labour Organisation agreements there is a fundamental right for an employee to negotiate with an employer. I know that the Government do not give a fig for international arrangements. I cite another simple example that will occur later today. In the Criminal Justice Bill, clause 22 flies in the face of agreed conventions on refugees. That again shows the conceit of a Government who tear up their international arrangements.

The people of this land—*[Interruption.]* It seems that someone has a hearing aid and we are getting a whistling noise. I get very paranoid. We have this Australian spy business. Apparently everything is bugged nowadays, and I am beginning to wonder whether one of us is bugged.

I come back to the point about democracy — *[Interruption.]* I think I know where the noise is coming from. It is in the Reporters' Gallery. Obviously a machine is going wrong.

There is a fundamental principle at stake—the right of a human being to try to negotiate his or her own conditions of service, but not with the all-powerful central state system. I can imagine what the Secretary of State would say if we lived in a halcyon society under a Labour Government who suggested that the education service should be run from London rather than by local authorities. The right hon. Gentleman would be screaming about a centralist society, extreme Left-wing views and so on. What is he seeking to do? Why cannot the Derbyshire, Cumbria, Hampshire or Norfolk county councils

negotiate with their own employees? Why must the Secretary of State take the power himself? There is no justification for what he seeks to do.

Very gently, I ask the Secretary of State to accept the amendment, because then there would be a litte fairness and a little less dictatorship. If the Secretry of State is a democrat, he will agree with me. If he is a potential dictator, he will disagree. I await with interest to see what he does.

Mr. Fisher: We have had a good debate, not least because we have had the benefit of hearing—apart from my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) — no fewer than eight of my hon. Friends making speeches and another 12 who have intervened. However, what has been lacking in the debate was any serious dialogue from the Government. The hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) spoke for six minutes and the Minister for 21 minutes.

We heard nothing from the Government about the principles behind ACAS and its useful role in the negotiations, or about our amendments dealing with ACAS machinery and the Nottingham settlement. I regret that, because these are vital issues. The House will regret that the Government choose to remain silent.

From the Liberal spokesman we had only an attempt to close our debate. The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) suffers from "speedophobia" and believes that we should rush our consideration of the Bill. He will agree that the issues are important and that the House has never had such a long discussion on ACAS machinery. I assure the hon. Member that all aspects of the Bill will be discussed. We are seeking to compress into a short time the scrutiny that would take five or six weeks in a Standing Committee. If we were upstairs he would not complain that we were still considering clause 1. We shall get through the Bill.

Mr. Freud: I am glad to hear that. I was concerned because the Bill has 200 lines and we have spent over 12 hours on the first five. Substantial contributions must be made on the other clauses. We on the Liberal Benches made it clear on Second Reading that we were content with clause 1. To remind us time and again that we are honouring our commitment on Second Reading ill becomes the party with which we have much in common.

Mr. Fisher: I take issue with the hon. Gentleman. There can be little in common between our parties if he is content with clause 1. He cannot have listened to the debate. We object to the arbitrary repeal of the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. We agree that the Burnham negotiating machinery should be reformed radically and we have tabled constructive amendments suggesting how it should be reformed.

It seems that the Liberal party is content with a Bill which abolishes the Remuneration of Teachers Act and replaces it with the Secretary of State. The first line contains a fundamental principle and if the hon. Member does not understand that fact, he has not been listening to the debate. A fundamental democratic right is being taken away from trade unionists and local authorities, and enormous, amazing powers are centralised on the Government. When we inherit those powers we shall repeal them and produce democratic, accountable collective bargaining machinery. That is the only way forward.

We have attempted, successfully I think, to put the arguments over the past few hours. My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North said that we would give the matter serious and detailed consideration and I believe that we have done so. My hon. Friends the Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman), for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) and for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) all have considerable industrial relations and trade union negotiating expertise. They spoke on those aspects and my hon. Friends the Members for Easington (Mr. Dormand), who was a chief education officer, and for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), who was a head teacher, gave us the benefit of their expertise.

It is difficult to select one speech from the debate, but I think that the Committee would feel it wrong not to pay tribute to my hon. Friend the member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth) who made a fluent, well-reasoned and effective speech in his first Committee contribution.

There is often not much new material in these debates, but my hon. Friend the Member for Easington produced one piece of new material when he read out the letter from the chairman of the employers' side of the management panel of the Burnham primary and secondary committee. Perhaps the Secretary of State and other hon. Members will receive the letter tomorrow.

The chairman said:

"I have written to the Secretary of State calling upon him to reconsider his decision . . . The Government's Bill . . . will make the situation in the schools even worse"—

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I am not surprised by that letter.

Mr. Fisher: Is the Secretary of State really saying that he is not surprised that the employers' side on the Burnham committee is making such statements? The chairman says that the Bill is "retrograde and undemocratic". If the chairman of the employers' side feels like that, who agrees with the Secretary of State? Only the hon. Member for Ealing, North, who knows something about education, has supported the right hon. Gentleman in the debate. His other hon. Friends have been conspicuously absent. They must know in their heart of hearts——

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): We know that it is a filibuster; that is the reason.

Mr. Fisher: Conservatives talk about a filibuster, but they were quite keen to talk in our first debate. When we discuss collective bargaining, ACAS and constructive alternatives for a negotiating machinery only one Conservative Member wants to support the Secretary of State. It is very interesting.

Mr. Flannery: Is it not clear that the Minister has an utter and arrogant contempt for all of us and that he has a special contempt for the chairman of the management side? Although local employers pay 54 per cent. of teachers' salaries, the Minister regards himself as the chairman of the management side and, indeed, does not want a management side. He will do it all himself.

4.45 am

Mr. Fisher: When my hon. Friend referred to the Minister having contempt, I am sure that he meant to refer to the Secretary of State. All hon. Members will agree that the Minister of State did not show contempt. She showed

[Mr. Fisher]

ignorance and a lack of coherence in her arguments at some stage. She made an attempt to justify the Government's position on this matter. As my hon. Friend pointed out in an intervention, yet again, as she and some of her hon. Friends did on Second Reading on Monday, she made a good case for re-negotiating and finding a better way of handling the negotiating machinery. She made a good case for reforming Burnham. We agree with her on that matter, and so will the unions and the employers—the local education authorities. She did not go on to make a case for replacing it. She basically came back to the one thing that the Secretary of State said ad nauseam since he stopped bad-mouthing the Nottingham agreement and calling it a fiasco.

The Secretary of State has changed his tack because he has realised that he was wrong about that matter. He has continued to say that there are not enough incentive points. He believes that there should be five. There are two in the ACAS settlement, and we refer to them in the amendments. The NUT has made it clear that it would be interested in talking about a third point. The hon. Member for Ealing, North, who knows a little more about education and has had greater experience in this field than some other hon. Members—though probably not more than the Minister of State—said that he recognised that five may be wrong and that perhaps we should talk about four. As my hon. Friend has said, we ask whether there should be five, four or three incentive points. That fairly fine difference—perhaps the difference between the two parties—is one incentive point.

The Secretary of State is prepared to take these extraordinary measures, constitutionally and through Parliament, and give himself extraordinary powers to take away democratic rights from trade unionists, teachers and local authorities — and from Conservative local authorities, many of whom object just as thoroughly as Labour-controlled authorities. They know what it means to education. That is all for the sake of, possibly, one incentive point.

Can the Secretary of State really be so petty and silly? That is what it comes down to. Parents will understand that. The difference between the two positions is probably one or two incentive points. It is not a matter of principle, it is a matter of detail to be negotiated. The Secretary of State knows that but he is too proud or too arrogant—may be he has other motives—but he will not negotiate or conciliate. He has not asked them to come and talk to him. Frankly, it is a disgrace to his office that he will not do so. He puts Parliament, the teaching profession and the future of the way in which education is negotiated in this country in jeopardy for such a small, fine point. He is standing on his pride. He wishes to see everybody crawl to him and accept his terms.

Time and again, the Secretary of State has said, in answer to questions, "They can come and talk to me, but on my terms. They must accept it. I can move no further." is that the way in which a pragmatist—a politician or somebody who wants to find an answer — should behave? Of course it is not. The teachers made that clear this afternoon. They were not all Labour supporters—they were not even all alliance supporters. Amazingly, there were probably some people who voted Tory at the last general election. Whether they will do so again after this remains to be seen. They know the reality. They know that the Secretary of State will not dare, and does not care, to negotiate. They will take that message back to their schools and talk to parents. Parents will understand that, too. Not only is the Secretary of State wrong in this matter, but he is making a stupid mistake.

If the Secretary of State considers that he is so right and so clever and that the country will believe his view of things, will he back that judgment and have a ballot of teachers? The Government are keen on ballots when they think that they will suit their convenience. The Secretary of State knows very well that, if teachers in all six unions —even the ones that do not like the ACAS agreement, such as the NAS and the NAHT—were asked whether they supported the Secretary of State's statement, they would probably give a derisory vote. I should be amazed if he got 10 or 15 per cent. of teachers to agree with him if he put it to a straight ballot. The Minister of State says, "Oh no, we cannot possibly do that." Of course, the Government can do that. They can table a new clause. They have given themselves amazing powers in the Bill, so they can certainly give themselves the powers to consult and ballot teachers. But they will not dare do that in this place or in the other place because they know the result.

The Secretary of State not only is not interested in conciliation, he is not even interested in hearing anyone's opinion but his. I am sure that he has the votes to railroad this measure through eventually, but he is wrong. He is making a terrible mistake and is certainly not making any friends.

The Minister of State talked about the role of the Secretary of State. Of course there is a role for the Secretary of State, whoever are in power. At the moment the Secretary of State rightly contributes 46·4 per cent. to the teachers' salary bill. Paragraph 7·4 of the ACAS agreement states that that will be discussed. There is a role for the Secretary of State, but not the arrogant, dominant role that he envisages. Surely, the right hon. Gentleman can understand that. He should think again.

The amendments are simple. They provide for the setting up of the negotiating machinery agreed at ACAS and for the determination of teachers' pay by agreement. Sadly, the Minister of State did not mention new clause 1 —I am sure that that was an oversight—on teachers' pension arrangements. I am sure that the Minister would agree that pension arrangements for teachers are important for those 400,000 workers. It is sad that that measure was not considered because it is important. We should like to vote on it separately at an appropriate time, Mr. Walker. I ask you to consider that, Sir. The pension arrangements for 400,000 workers are worthy of a separate vote.

The arguments have been well rehearsed, so I shall not go through them again. We have been through them all. The Secretary of State may say that his door is open—

Mr. Flannery: His mind is shut.

Mr. Fisher: —but, once the teachers get through it, there is nothing that they can say to him, except, "Yes, we agree with you." My hon. Friend the Member for Hillsborough took my line, although it was not a very original one. The right hon. Gentleman's mind is shut. I suspect that he was deaf to most of the debate as well. He can laugh. There have been many references to the right hon. Gentleman's smile. He is not being very clever. He is not being politically shrewd or wise in the Bill.

The Government have given no answers in the debate. They are, perhaps, drunk with their majority. Immediately after the last general election, the right hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Pym) lost his place in the Cabinet because he said that majorities of this size were not very healthy and that they led to trouble. The Government's majority has led to various sorts of trouble. The Secretary of State and the Government are so drunk with their majority, their rhetoric and hostility towards trade unions, industrial relations, local government, decentralisation and the public sector—in this case, the maintained sector of education—that it is leading them astray. People would call their actions idiocy. The Opposition would call it rank injustice. We shall certainly vote for the amendment and we ask for a separate vote on pension arrangements, Mr. Walker.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 31, Noes 131.

Division No. 27] **[4.55 am**

AYES

Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Clay, Robert
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Dalyell, Tam
Fatchett, Derek
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Freud, Clement
Godman, Dr Norman
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Livsey, Richard
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Michie, William
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Nellist, David
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rowlands, Ted
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Don Dixon.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Bruinvels, Peter
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayes, J.
Hickmet, Richard
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knowles, Michael
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Osborn, Sir John
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Spencer, Derek
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I beg to move amendment No. 6, in page 1, line 5, at end insert

'except as it refers to teachers in further education.'

The Chairman: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments: No. 16, in page 1, line 6, after 'of', insert 'school'.

No. 29, in line 13, leave out paragraph (*b*).

Mr. Bennett: The Opposition expect this to be a fairly short debate, compared with the earlier debates. Our intention is to probe rather than to criticise the Government. We are delighted that the Government have not decided unilaterally to abolish the right of collective bargaining to those who work in further education. However, we should like the Minister of State to explain why the Government are so pleased with the further education negotiations and would like them to continue in their present form although they believe that it is necessary to abolish collective bargaining for those who teach in schools.

Throughout the greater part of the negotiations the same negotiator has led both the further education and the schools negotiations and has striven to obtain a settlement. A fair number of unions and professional associations are involved in the further education negotiations. The local authorities and the teacher unions have conducted the negotiations under their own auspices and have not had to call in ACAS. As ACAS has been brought in only to facilitate the school negotiations, that is no reason for the Government's view that one set of negotiations should be dealt with in one way and the other set in another.

I accept that good progress has been made. Perhaps that is why the Government are pleased about the further education negotiations in September on structure and the new form of appraisal. However, the negotiations have collapsed. Is that why the Government are pleased? Are

[Mr. Bennett]

they pleased that the talks have collapsed? I hope that the negotiations will resume in January. If the talks are to make reasonable progress in January, the Government must say how much money is available for the further education settlement. The school negotiations continued for a very long time and they were unable to make reasonable progress because of the former Secretary of State's reluctance to tell the teacher unions and the local authorities how much money was available.

If there is to be any prospect of resuming the talks on restructuring further education and on appraisal, the Government must find about £160 million. I hope the Minister will be able to tell the Committee that that money will be made available, or that at least the Government will say when they will be able to inform the local authorities and the teachers' unions about how much money is to be made available. If they do not provide that information, the negotiators will be blindfolded and their job will be made extremely difficult.

Those who work in further education at all levels have slipped below average earnings by at least as much as the teachers, and in some cases they have slipped even further behind. For example, on a cash index of 100 in 1975, following Houghton and the adjustments to teachers' salaries at all levels, the income of lecturers in further education in 1986 has increased to 274. If that is compared with the average earnings of non-manual workers, both male and female, over the same period, the cash index has increased from 100 to 359. That shows that those in further education have slipped even further behind than school teachers.

I hope that tonight the Government will say something about part-time workers and the increasing number of people in further education who are on short-term contracts. Short-term contracts are a cause of considerable concern to those in further education, in particular to those who are on contracts financed by Manpower Services Commission funds.

The short-term funding in FE causes a great deal of concern and alarm. I hope that the Minister can throw some light on the Government's thinking about the negotiations with regard to the effect on the number of part-time and short-term contracts that are available in FE colleges.

We also ask the Minister to give serious thought to the anomalies that will develop as a result of the Bill in regard to pupils of 16, 17 and 18. Some will attend sixth form traditional schools, others will attend sixth form colleges, which will be under schools regulations, and teachers will have all forms of collective bargaining taken away from them by the legislation. Other pupils in the same age group doing exactly the same courses will be in FE or tertiary colleges where the lecturers will be under the Burnham provisions for further education and will retain the rights to collective bargaining and negotiations on their rates of pay. We welcome the fact that they are retaining those powers, but it is anomalous to take them away from one group and leave them with the other.

I press the Government to give us their views on the way in which the talks have gone on new structure and appraisal. Considerable dissatisfaction is felt by the local authority associations and the further education unions about the Burnham FE structure. It would be appropriate if a new negotiating body was developed, perhaps before some of the acrimony that developed in the last years of the Burnham negotiations develops in further education.

I hope that the Minister will justify to us the differences between the treatment of schools and FE and give us clear information about the current position of the talks and how much money will be made available to facilitate progress. Is she satisfied with the suggested structure? I hope that she will refer to appraisal, give her views on the problems of the short-term contracts, and above all, say how much money will be available to make the move forward. I hope that the hon. Lady can give us constructive answers. If we can make real progress, we might be able to have a fairly short debate.

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall address the amendments in the order in which they appear on the Amendment Paper.

Amendment No. 6 would repeal the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 only as regards school teachers' pay, leaving its provisions in force for the future determination of further education pay. The weaknesses of the Burnham system apply just as much to further education pay as to that of school teachers. There is an unwarranted dislocation between pay and other conditions of service in both cases. Everyone is agreed that new machinery is needed that brings both aspects together.

In further education, there is already a national joint council of local authority employers and unions, which is trying, albeit with limited success at present, to look at pay and conditions together. The Government are willing to leave determination of those matters to such a body for the future.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): Will my hon. Friend refresh my memory? Is it not the case that the Association of Polytechnic Teachers is not on that body? I have a terrible feeling that we are doing enormous damage to a union in the polytechnic world, of which we have always thought highly. As a result of this Government's measures it has been placed on the Burnham committee, but the provisions in this Bill deny that role.

Mrs. Rumbold: Although the Association of Polytechnic Teachers has a place on the Burnham further education committee, it has rarely been invited to sit in the negotiating chamber with the committee. The Government's present proposals would leave it open for it to apply to the national joint council. It represents a substantial body of interested people. We are told that both the unions and employers are reasonable and would be only too willing to accept representations from properly constituted unions. One would hope that we would have proof of that in the near future and that it will be made a full member of the national joint council, which we propose to leave in place.

Dr. Hampson: With respect, I do not think that many Conservative Members would accept that as sufficient. We all supported strongly the application of the Association of Polytechnic Teachers to have fair representation on Burnham. That teachers union felt badly discriminated against because of its strong position in the polytechnic world, as against the further education world in general, and it had problems with the other major union. We would like to hear that the Government will do something to guarantee that it will have a place in the new system immediately should these provisions come into effect.

5.15 am

Mrs. Rumbold: My hon. Friend makes a powerful case. I assure him that we are conscious of the fact that there is an injustice in the position of the APT, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will undertake to look carefully at its position.

Amendment No. 16 would limit the continuation of existing pay arrangements, until superseded, to school teachers. Unless other amendments were made, the pay scales and pensions affecting further education teachers would fall with the passage of the Bill, rather than when superseded by future agreements between employers and unions, as intended. The sub-paragraph provides that existing arrangements will continue until superseded by new provisions made for school teachers under the provision of the Bill and, for further education teachers, agreed between employers and teachers. The amendment would mean that the present further education pay scales and provisions would fall with the enactment of the Bill, whether or not new provisions existed to take their place. That cannot be sensible.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: If amendment No. 6 were carried it would make sense.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am not certain about that.

Amendment No. 29 makes it clear that further education teachers and employers are to be empowered to settle matters between themselves or in such other manner as they may agree. The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) asked about the money to be available for employers to negotiate the pay for further education teachers. My right hon. Friend has made it clear that any new money that the employers negotiate will have to be found from within their own resources. I believe that the employers are well apprised of that situation. If there are difficulties within the negotiations at present, I feel confident, as I am sure the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish does, since we have been hearing about, and extolling the glories, wonders and magnificence of, the national joint council, that things will be clarified in January when the talks resume and that a satisfactory conclusion will be found for the dilemma that apparently seems to exist within the national joint council.

I have covered the points that have been raised. All the negotiations, of course, are between the employers and the unions. All the matters which the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish raised about part-time teachers, teachers in tertiary colleges and so on are for those people to discuss in the joint council. I urge the Committee to reject the amendments.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): The amendments set one group of teachers against another. We need to see some unification in the profession, yet here we see the Government making attempts to split it. Teachers in the further education sector will apparently be the subject of negotiations under present arrangements, whereas those in schools will be subject to another set of rules. That shows a certain amount of inconsistency in the Government's approach to this matter. For example, teachers in sixth form colleges will be included in the arrangements, while other teachers will not. That is extremely divisive.

The subject of appraisal in the further education sector is of great interest to me, as I worked in that sector before coming to the House. The career structure in that sector is not at all clear at present and the differences in pay and conditions between L1 and L2 lecturers and senior lecturers leave a good deal to be desired. If a better career structure can be provided through amendments to the Bill and discussions about it, that will be a great improvement on the present situation. The erosion of pay scales in recent years has not been in the best interests of futher education.

Pay in the further education sector has also fallen sadly behind. It would be impossible to bring back Houghton overnight, as lecturers' pay has fallen 33 per cent. behind in the 10 years since the Houghton agreements. In my previous occupation, I noted with interest that my salary as a senior lecturer before coming to the House about 16 months ago was the equivalent of the top scale for a police constable. After a degree, various amounts of training and 14 years lecturing, that is disgraceful. Police constables are valuable members of society, but they do not spend their days instructing 50, 60 or even 100 students, imparting knowledge and sharing it with those students. If the present arrangements are left in place, as the amendment suggests, I trust that the FE sector will get a fairer crack of the whip. Having been a member of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education for many years, I know that we have not had a fair crack of the whip for some time and that there has been tremendous erosion of our position. It is also important to achieve proper pension arrangements for the FE sector.

I think that I speak for my party in saying that it is an extremely divisive arrangement to split off the FE sector from other sectors.

Mr. Allen McKay: I am not very clear or very happy about the provision or about the Minister's reply. Many education authorities are now going in for tertiary colleges. I am not convinced that that is the best path to take. I have always been a strong supporter of sixth form colleges attached to schools. I appreciate some of the arguments in favour of tertiary colleges, but I am still not convinced. I do not see why they should provide better education opportunities because there are more students and a greater variety of teachers. Why should it be better for working-class children to have larger numbers when the public schools always go for smaller numbers?

I wonder why we are hiving off the further education sector. Why do we have a Bill which takes away the negotiating rights of teachers organisations? Is the Secretary of State looking further ahead? I understand that he is taking powers to introduce different rates of pay in different areas. Will local authorities negotiate separately with their staff? Is the Secretary of State prepared for that?

Mr. Fatchett: I do not know whether I should start by declaring an indirect interest, in that my wife is a teacher in further education. Perhaps I can act as a negotiator on her behalf.

My hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) warmed my heart when he talked about short-term contracts. I listened with interest on my wife's behalf to see whether the Minister came up with an answer to that problem. My hon. Friend was right to say that there has been a substantial growth in Manpower Service Commission funding for short-term contracts and in short-term contracts generally. It would have been interesting if the Minister had commented on that.

[Mr. Fatchett]

It would be churlish of me not to say that I agreed with some of what the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) said. He spoke of lectureship scales in further education. He will have noticed that Ministers seem to have no difficulty with regard to scales when we are talking about further education, but that they have a limited and particular set of objectives when we come to teachers. If it is right to have scales in one sector, I should have thought that it would be right to have them in another.

My hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish asked the Minister why there is disparity of treatment. The Minister said that there is a national joint council for further education teachers with which the Government are not prepared to interfere at this stage. I suspect that the Minister might join us on the next group of amendments, which suggest that we should have a national joint council for teachers.

I realise that the Minister is a fair person. She says that she likes a national joint council for further education, so I should have thought that she would be consistent and join us on the next group of amendments. I welcome her support and hope that it will be transferred into votes. Perhaps she will take the Secretary of State into the Lobby with her. We heard her say that the national joint council is the factor that makes all the difference.

As for scales and the collective bargaining machinery, teachers in primary and secondary education are treated differently from teachers in further education. We object to that fundamental difference, and the Minister has given no explanation for it.

5.30 am

We asked about one or two other detailed points—for example, money that may be available in the negotiations that will affect further education lecturers in the early part of 1987. What we really object to is the difference of treatment. We cannot understand how the Government can treat some teachers in one way and further education teachers in another. We are not asking that further education teachers be treated as badly as teachers in primary and secondary education—we are asking that teachers in primary and secondary education have their rights preserved. Because of the Minister's inadequate answer, and because of our fundamental objections to the Bill, we shall divide the Committee on amendment No. 6.

Question put:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 27, Noes 124.

Division No. 28] **[5.30 am**

AYES

Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Clay, Robert
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Dalyell, Tam
Dixon, Donald
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Godman, Dr Norman
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Livsey, Richard
Marek, Dr John
Michie, William
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Nellist, David
Parry, Robert
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rowlands, Ted
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Derek Fatchett and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bigge-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Bruinvels, Peter
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hickmet, Richard
Hind, Kenneth
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knowles, Michael
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Spencer, Derek
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thurnham, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Portillo and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Fisher: I beg to move amendment No. 30, in page 1, line 15, at end add—

'(3) The remuneration and other conditions of service of school teachers shall be negotiated by a National Joint Council established by the parties after the making of an Order by the Secretary of State.

(4) Schedule ( ) has effect with respect to the composition of the National Joint Council and other matters'.

The Chairman: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 32, in clause 2, page 1, line 16, leave out from 'appoint' to 'on' in line 18 and insert—

'a National Joint Council nominated in accordance with Schedule (National Joint Council) to negotiate'.

No. 45, in page 1, line 20, at end insert—

'and shall establish a National Joint Council for the purpose of negotiating pay and other conditions of service for all teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales.'.

No. 49, in page 1, line 23, leave out subsection (3) and insert—

'(3) The National Joint Council will be composed of representatives of the local education authorities in England and Wales and of the six unions presently represented on the Burnham Primary and Secondary Committee. The balance of representatives on each side will be determined with the assistance of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.'.

No. 91, in page 2, line 4, after 'Committee' insert—

'or the National Joint Council'.

No. 104, in page 2, line 12, after 'Committee', insert—

'and the National Joint Council.'.

No. 105, in page 2, line 12, leave out subsection (5) and add—

'(5) It shall thereafter be the duty of the Advisory Committee to report its conclusions on the matters referred to it to the Secretary of State and such body or bodies as may from time be constituted for the negotiation of national collective agreements between teachers and their employers and to advise such body or bodies further in their consideration of such matters.'.

No. 119, in page 2, line 14, at end add—

'(6) In drawing up the detailed constitution of the proposed National Joint Council the parties will make arrangements for dealing with local disputes over the interpretation and application of national agreements and for access to those arrangements.'.

No. 124, in clause 3, page 2, line 15, after 'Committee,' insert—

'and the National Joint Council.'

No. 211, in clause 6, page 4, line 2, leave out from beginning to end of line 3, and insert—

'"National Joint Council" means the National Joint Council on School Teachers Pay and Conditions established under section 1'.

No. 230, new schedule — *Membership of National Joint Council*—

'(1) The National Joint Council ("the Council") shall be comprised of representatives of the local education authorities in England and Wales and the six unions represented before the passage of the Act on the Burnham Primary and Secondary Committee, and the balance of representation on each side shall be determined by the parties until the assistance of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

(2) The Secretary of State may, with the agreement of the organisations to be represented on the Council, make an Order to provide for the appointment by him of representatives to the Council in such numbers and according to such conditions as he may agree with all the parties.'.

Mr. Fisher: The amendments continue the debate that we have had on ACAS but in a rather different form. Amendment No. 30 seeks to set up a national joint council and the other amendments take up the detailed arrangements for that and reflect some of our proposals for changing the numbers of those who would participate in the work of the council.

The debate on ACAS, to which my hon. Friends contributed so fully and interestingly, showed that there were certain differences of opinion about the value of ACAS. Some of my hon. Friends expressed uncertainty about its long-term value because it is a third party in industrial negotiations between unions and employers. These fears are understandable. As my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) said, however, there could often be a constructive and useful role for ACAS, and that sometimes where there is a need for arbitration an arbitral body such as ACAS, being a third party, can achieve results that no one else can.

On the whole, the Opposition believe that, where possible, direct collective bargaining between unions and employers is preferable. We have some reservations about ACAS, though we recognise that in the teachers' dispute, which has continued for some time and where there have been difficulties in coming to decisions on pay and conditions, ACAS has played an invaluable role in bringing parties together. If the Secretary of State had been as constructive in bringing the parties together, we would not be in the present position, leaving aside the issue of when the money might have been provided.

There are occasions when we feel that ACAS is neither necessary nor appropriate, and we believe that the establishment of a national joint council would provide negotiating machinery for negotiating pay and conditions for all teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales. That form of negotiating machinery would be direct collective bargaining between union and employers and it is one possible answer. The amendments are drawn from the Nottingham agreement, which was arranged under the auspices of ACAS, for the consideration of the Committee. We recognise that we are not proposing the only way in which negotiating machinery can be established, but we believe that a national joint council would be infinitely superior to anything that is provided in the Bill. We believe also that trade unions and employers—the employers include many Conservative-controlled authorities—jointly believe that a national joint council would be much more effective than the Burnham machinery. The Minister of State waxed eloquent on why Burnham has imperfections, but some of the blame must be placed on the Government for interfering in the arbitration role of Burnham.

5.45 am

My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) referred to the reasons why Burnham has failed to come up with the goods and said that as authorities have been rate-capped and cash-limited, Burnham has been unable to operate as an effective deliverer of collective bargaining agreements. If the Secretary of State looks at the history of Burnham before he went to the Department of Education and Science, he will know that the Government have been meddling in the arbitration. For example, they prevented arbitration referrals from either employers or trade unions and said that it had to be the wish of both parties—effectively giving employers a veto over any transfer to arbitration. That is not constructive or helpful. Leaving aside the money problems, it is hardly surprising that Burnham has foundered, given that the Government have been meddling in the arbitration arrangements.

The unions and the local authorities are agreed that Burnham needs to be replaced. We suggest the national joint council—and join the unions and employers in doing so—as one possible solution. We do not feel that it is the only way, but we seek to propose a machinery that is collective and voluntary, in which the parties can participate and which fairly and democratically represents all the parties involved.

Dr. Godman: Does my hon. Friend agree that national joint industrial councils play an important role in other industries in helping to establish and maintain good industrial relations between employers and employees?

Mr. Fisher: I absolutely concur. Being well briefed, I am sure that the Secretary of State has seen the documents put out this afternoon by the NUT, one page of which specifies the multiplicity of industries and sectors that have national joint councils, all of which work pretty well.

In one of his interesting contributions, my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) quoted from that list, so I shall not weary the Committee by repeating it. If hon. Members are fair-minded they will realise that national joint council exist in a number of sectors and industries—particularly in the public sector—and that they play a valuable role. We seek to extend that machinery to the education service.

We do not regard that as mischievous. This is not a wrecking amendment. It is genuinely constructive and is put forward with the confidence that on this occasion both the unions and employers feel that it is a constructive way forward. It is also put forward on the understanding that it is not the only way. We would be very happy to consider further amendments from the Government if they found an alternative method that was both democratic and collective.

Education is undoubtedly a complex service. As the 1944 Act says, it is a national service locally administered. The six unions involved traditionally represent sectors of education that have very different roots and expectations, and often there are different economic circumstances and conditions of service. Indeed, the Nottingham agreement clearly lays down the different conditions for main professional grade, entry grade, deputy heads, heads, and principals. Education is more complicated than most other professions or services. Multiple employers, and the Government having a role, create complex elements in the equation and make education a difficult bargaining area.

Expertise among those involved is needed. We must come up with the right answers on pay and conditions on a rolling basis. That cannot be left to the Secretary of State and his Civil Service advisers. An advisory committee cannot have any credibility, however good the Secretary of State's intentions, if he appoints its members. The Secretary of State must devise machinery which allows those involved to appoint the members. The Secretary of State is window-dressing and being disingenuous. He is fair-minded and must know that such a committee will not have credibility. Such a complicated service requires those directly involved—the trade unions and the employers—to be directly involved in the negotiating machinery. That is what we seek in a national joint council.

I have no doubt that the Minister's instructions are to resist our amendment. He will take his troops into the Lobby against us, but what does he think teachers will do if he imposes a settlement and rejects our amendment? How will teachers vent their frustrations democratically? How will they press their views? He is forcing them to continue that which he says he wishes to avoid—further disruption in the classroom. Without joint negotiating machinery with the support and involvement of employers and trade unions there is little alternative to industrial action—classroom action—whether that means working to rule or working to the strict limits of contracts. If the Secretary of State has any sense and can look into the future, he will recognise that. But he intends to set up machinery which he knows is not and will not be accepted, which has no credibility and which does not democratically involve the employers and trade unions.

Many people are happy with the present arrangements, but the Secretary of State will leave them with no option. The right hon. Gentleman might try to gain political capital by saying, "It is disgraceful that teachers, in spite of it all, are taking industrial action." But how else are they to express their grievances? We do not have to agree with those grievances. I do not agree with members of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers on some issues, but they hold sincere beliefs which they believe to be important to their colleagues and people working in similar conditions. How does the Secretary of State expect them to express their views fairly and reasonably if he does not set up negotiating machinery which has their confidence, which involves them and which allows them their own representatives? Surely the Secretary of State understands that he is corralling those people into a situation that he would wish to avoid.

The other amendments deal with the composition of the national joint council. The Secretary of State will have read the document signed by the unions, under the auspices of ACAS, post-Nottingham on 21 November, so I need not weary him with the details of the national joint council, but the unions' agreement foresees representatives of the six unions and of the local authority associations involved.

The aspect that is not quite so straightforward is the role of the Secretary of State. The Government provide 46·4 per cent. of the money, so it is proper for the Secretary of State to have a role and the document provides for discussions about that role. It does not lay down a template; it is only fair that the Secretary of State should discuss his role with the other partners.

The Secretary of State is not the only person responsible for education. He says, rather pompously, "I have a responsibility for education and I must fulfil it." But local education authorities have a responsibility that they also contracted at the ballot box, and teachers have a practical responsibility. Those three parties, along with parents and children, have a responsibility for making education work.

The Bill, and the rejection of the national joint council, will leave everything with the Secretary of State and his appointeees. The Secretary of State cannot say that he is the only person in the country responsible for education. Education is a partnership. Even when the Government force the Bill through and take all the powers, the delivery of education will still have to be a partnership. The best way to make the partnership work and to deliver effective education is to have negotiating machinery that involves all the parties on terms that they accept. The Secretary of State knows that his proposals do not provide for that. If he is a fair man, he will recognise that a national joint council, which is a practical and reasonable suggestion, is an idea that he would be well advised to adopt.

There is no great political principle involved in the establishment of a national joint council. It is not a terrible political trick to sidetrack the Secretary of State or to strip him of his responsibilities and involvement. The right hon. Gentleman must recognise that the local authorities, which provide 54·6 of the cost of teachers' salaries, also have a responsibility and he must join them in a partnership if he is to deliver something effective.

If we were a Standing Committee and had time for representations to be made to the Secretary of State our uncontentious amendments might be accepted. The Secretary of State would lose nothing by accepting the amendment and he would gain credibility and send a message to employers and teachers that they had a role alongside him in negotiations and that that role should be incorporated in negotiating machinery that everybody accepted. If the right hon. Gentleman genuinely wants peace he will seek a partnership and compromise along those lines. If he rejects that, parents and teachers will have to conclude that he does not seriously want peace.

6 am

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) who moved the amendment, said that these matters relate to the second set of amendments that we debated earlier with regard to ACAS. They cover much the same ground as the first set of amendments on the negotiating position after the Bill is passed. The hon. Gentleman put a strong case for a joint negotiating council. One must query the criteria and conditions for the establishment of such a negotiating council. One must work from a pragmatic base.

In the previous debate on FE, the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) put forward the argument that the Government would go along with a joint negotiating council for FE, but not for teachers. Why not? To find the answer to that question, one has to examine what a joint negotiating council for teachers and FE has resulted in. The record of success of the joint negotiating council, which is broadly what Burnham is, has not——

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: No.

Mr. Baker: I shall pursue my argument in my own way. All hon. Members agree that conditions should be negotiated together with pay. Looking back upon the Bill of 1965, it now seems quite barmy that they were separated. If hon. Members consider what has happened when there has been, in effect, a joint working party over the course of the past year, outside the umbrella of the concordat, they will see what sort of record of success there has been. One cannot say that it has been a successful record. In Coventry, an agreement was initialled by five unions. They were asked to develop it, work it out and work it up. Straight away, I was asked to sign up for it. As the process of working it up and talking together proceeded, the unions started to break away from it. A meeting was called in Nottingham, which then went to London and resulted in the document of 21 November, which four unions signed. Although the hon. Gentleman calls it an agreement, he knows that it is supported by only two unions.

Mr. Radice: Which represented the majority of the teachers.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman made that point, but in the middle of November, he said, "It is supported by the majority of the unions." In fact, the NUT advertisement that appeared in the press two days ago erroneously referred to it in similar terms. I am sure that the editors got the copy and got it in place before they knew what happened last Friday and Saturday. I do not accuse the publishers of being deliberately misleading. They were overtaken by events. The history of this sorry saga is that one is overtaken by events. Now, two unions remain fully signed up. They are holding ballots. One does not know what the result of those ballots will be. The unions are deeply divided.

This Monday an advertisement appeared in *The Guardian*. It had been put in by that part of the NUT that is against the NUT's policy. Basically, it is the Inner London Teachers Association, but I think that it has wider support than that. That group is campaigning for a "Vote No" in the NUT ballot.

Mr. Radice: That is democracy.

Mr. Baker: Of course it is. I do not deny that. It shows that the NUT, which has campaigned strongly for this agreement and has probably dominated the discussions leading to it, has a group within it which goes to press to say:

"If the deal were accepted it would worsen the working conditions of every teacher and cause 1,000s to leave altogether."

The group says that the deal involves "illusory gains", "jam tomorrow", "Baker's dozen", and all the rest of it.

Mr. Flannery: I think I told the right hon. Gentleman that I was at the NUT conference. It should be made clear that at that conference the NUT voted on the employers' offer. That had nothing to do with the Government. The Government should not take comfort from what the Secretary of State is saying, because there is not the slightest difference between the two sides in their opposition to the Government. They differ on the employers' offer, but they are totally united in their opposition to the Government.

Mr. Baker: That position has yet to be made clear. We know that the hon. Gentleman is an assiduous supporter of the NUT. At that conference the motion only just squeaked through, with 55 per cent., and a ballot is now being held.

The profession is divided on this matter. Individual unions are divided. If Labour Members say that the joint negotiating council, or joint working party—call it what one will—is what they want, they must be able to show that it works effectively. For the past year, there has been something very close to the joint negotiating council——

Mr. Fisher: Come on.

Mr. Baker: With respect, the machinery has been working closely since 1985 on the basis of the joint negotiating council. It has not led to resolution because not only the unions but the employers are divided. The Labour employers have been fairly united and consistent, led by Councillor Pearman. The alliance expressed misgivings at certain stages, but I think that in the end it voted for the 21 November agreement, so it is party to an agreement that is falling about its ears. The Conservatives walked out, walked back again and then walked out again. The Conservative employers announced that they would not support that agreement.

Mr. Spearing: There may have been difficulties in the past few months. The right hon. Gentleman said that the unions are divided, but we are talking about the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) for a national joint council. Can the right hon. Gentleman say that the professional associations and the employers are on record as being against the proposal that is at the heart of amendment No.

[Mr. Spearing]

30? The right hon. Gentleman has to prove that they are, not that they are divided about his proposals or the present structure. That is not what the amendment proposes.

Mr. Baker: I was coming to that. Obviously, I shall refer to the words in the so-called agreement of 21 November. It states:

"The NJC will be composed of representatives of the local education authorities in England and Wales and of the six unions presently represented on the Burnham Primary and Secondary Committee."

I accept that they want some form of joint negotiating council. Four unions have signed up for it. The 21 November document goes on to say—this is the difficult part for the unions—

"The parties will seek discussions with the Secretary of State on his role in the new machinery."

So far, the unions have not sought to do that. Those that have come to see me have not raised the issue of future negotiation. I dare say that they will. One group is coming to see me on Friday and another next week, and I am sure that the matter will come up. The nub of representation on the joint negotiating council is how it should be determined. There has been a High Court action. Those who defend Burnham, and who would defend this type of operation, would be able to say that it did work in a period when one union ruled the roost. The NUT did rule the roost and thereby imposed a degree of unity on the unions by sheer numbers.

Mr. Flannery: Sheer numbers is democracy.

Mr. Baker: I put it to the hon. Gentleman that all those other unions that felt that they were being dragged along in the negotiating process may not have felt the great advantages of that form of democracy. That is one reason why, during the past 15 or 20 years — the hon. Gentleman wants to call them professional associations and they certainly started as that — the dominance of one union on Burnham exacerbated the intense union rivalries which have embittered the entire teaching profession, to the extent that a great membership battle is going on. The unions jealously guard their numbers and watch carefully whether the membership of the AMMA or the NAS/UWT is increasing, or the membership of the NUT is decreasing. The reduction in NUT membership reduced its representation on the Burnham committees. Therefore, the way in which it would be represented on a joint negotiating council is an important matter that is left rather vague.

Paragraph 7.4 deals with the role of the Secretary of State. Again, that is vaguely expressed. There is a recognition that the Secretary of State should have a role. Should there be weighted voting, as in Burnham, or should he have an explicit veto, as there was with the concordat? Of course, the concordat was torn up.

There are substantial practical problems that have not been resolved——

Mr. Radice: The Secretary of State is saying that the difficulties in the teaching profession and in education are so immense that what might be a solution anywhere else —presumably he would support that solution—just will not work. The Secretary of State said that he was responsible for education. That is the great message. Of course, he is. What is he doing to ensure that those problems are overcome? He cannot pretend that taking all the powers to himself will produce a more united teaching profession——

Mr. Fisher: United against him.

Mr. Radice: —except against him, and a more united local authority grouping. Or does he suggest that this interim solution will be in place for ever?

Mr. Baker: In answer to the hon. Gentleman's question about what I am doing, may I say that the first thing I am doing is introducing the Bill in an attempt to resolve a difficult problem. It is recognised as a difficult problem, with no easy answer. Had there been a easy answer, it would have been resolved much earlier; not in the past two or three years, but some time in the 1970s.

We had a statutory Burnham negotiating committee with the concordat. That gave the Government control over the total cost of pay settlements and a strong influence over the pay structure—not a determinant, but a strong influence. The committee dealt with pay alone, and it was not a successful arrangement. More recently, we have had the Burnham committee without the concordat, as a result of the unilateral decision by the local authority associations. The Government were patient and waited to see how that might work. My predecessor was patient——

Mr. Radice: Answer the question.

Mr. Baker: I am just coming to the answer. My predecessor was patient, and that was unsuccessful. A joint working party, was set up by the unions and the associations represented on Burnham to consider both pay and conditions of service. The Government were present, but with limited voting power. The working party was not successful.

Then we had the reference to ACAS earlier this year, and negotiations were carried out with its help and guidance. There has been some useful progress, but we still do not have sufficient agreement of total cost, including pay structure, teachers' duties and conditions of service.

Mr. Radice: When will the Minister answer the question?

Mr. Baker: I am about to turn over a page. When I reach the next page, the hon. Gentleman will hear all the answers there. Nor do we yet have the proposals for future negotiating arrangements. That is the background against which the Bill has been prepared. It provides for the establishment of an interim advisory committee. I emphasise that it is interim.

All the interests concerned will be able to offer that committee views — the unions, the local authority employers and other interested bodies. The Secretary of State will be required to consult the local authorities and the teachers' unions before giving effect to recommendations from the committee, whether or not he judges it necessary to give effect to the recommendations in modified form. That is clause 3(1), to which we shall come later.

6.15 am

In all this there is nothing to prevent the unions and the local authorities working together and offering agreed evidence to the advisory committee or to the Secretary of State. If they wish, they can do that. They can negotiate together and present a united front.

Finally, the Secretary of State will have to submit his conclusions to Parliament before giving effect to them. Nothing could be more democratic than that.

Mr. Radice: The Secretary of State has cleverly ducked my question, as he pretty well does all the time. How does he think that that will bring the union side together with the employers side, except, perhaps, in hostility to himself? What does he think will happen then? If it is an interim arrangement, he is obliged to tell us what will happen after 1990.

Mr. Baker: I have been asked by the hon. Gentleman several times now whether I agree with collective bargaining. If collective bargaining is effective and all the parties are involved, one should obviously try to find a way to achieve that.

Mr. Fisher: What is meant by "effective"?

Mr. Baker: For management to resolve a dispute in less than five years would be effective.

The review of the structure of the salary and profession started in 1981 and it went on until 1984-85.

Mr. Fisher *rose*——

Mr. Baker: I am still trying to reply to the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice), but I shall do the hon. Gentleman first.

Mr. Fisher: I shall be most grateful if the Secretary of State will do me first. Perhaps he will answer my question, which he has not yet heard, first. He said that there was nothing to prevent the unions and teachers negotiating together and then presenting joint evidence to the advisory committee, but he has just told the Committee how extremely difficult it has been for them to negotiate with formal machinery. How does he expect them to negotiate satisfactorily in order to form joint evidence with no machinery whatever?

Mr. Baker: They can do that themselves. After all, that is what we have just approved for further education. If they want to discuss together, they can, and not only regarding the presentation of evidence, but in the subsequent phase where I have to consult both the unions and the local education authorities. One knows perfectly well that that will be a form of intense discussion and consultation, because there will be proposals from the interim advisory committee and there will no doubt also be proposals from the unions and possibly from local authority employers. The resolution of that will have to be determined by the House. How much more democratic can we get? Hon. Members cannot dismiss the House of Commons and say that the present procedure, as Labour Members well know, involves no parliamentary process for the implementation of the findings of the Burnham committee. I issue orders and that is that. We are providing for a parliamentary process similar to that.

The hon. Member for Durham, North asked about the interim position. It may well be that one will be able to move towards a form of joint negotiations after a period of an interim committee, but that will have to await the outturn of events. The other view, as some people have already advocated to me, is that there should be a fully fledged and independent review body. That view has been put to me by some members of the profession.

It is sensible for the Government to proceed with the measure and to establish the interim advisory committee as a means of trying to resolve what has been an exceptionally difficult process of negotiating a settlement between six unions which have different views and profoundly different interests. Successive Governments, Labour as well as Conservative, have never seen fit, or have never been able, to relax their control over the cost of the overall settlement. That is quite understandable. It is not just a question of the 46·4 per cent. There is also a commitment of resources through public expenditure allocations to the local authorities. I do not believe that a joint council would work at this stage. That is why we have suggested an interim advisory committee, and I commend it to the Committee.

Mr. Spearing: The Committee's deliberations have reached a very interesting stage. One of the advantages of our parliamentary procedure is that the strength of Parliament can be displayed, even though it is 6.20 am. I appreciated the Secretary of State's apparently reasonable and philosophical tone. Gone are the great polemics of substitute Second Reading speeches in the glare of "Today in Parliament." We are now much closer to reality. For the first time in months I have a twinge of sympathy for the Secretary of State——

Dr. Godman: No, do not have any sympathy for him.

Mr. Spearing: I am dissuaded by my hon. Friend. However, the Secretary of State was pitched into this position and found himself floundering among the extraordinary machinery that he has inherited. Therefore, he decided to bring down his sword of Damocles by introducing this Bill.

We have just had a fairly wide-ranging review of how to find a way out of this mess. My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) suggested a joint council. He has skilfully inserted into a not very good Bill the means of converting the present machinery into something that is entirely new that does not require the Secretary of State to decide and then to obtain parliamentary approval.

I draw the attention of the Secretary of State and the Committee to the fact that this problem is not new. Far from there being fundamentally new problems, the old ones are still with us. However, instead of dealing with them constructively, as the amendment does, the Secretary of State has skilfully exacerbated the difficulties and let the milk boil over before deciding to turn off the gas.

I should like the Secretary of State to answer the charge of the Association of County Councils. I do not think that the Government believe that the Association of County Councils is irresponsible. The Government may hold certain views about some teachers' associations and some local authorities. We do not share the Government's views, but their attitude has been made plain. However, I should not have thought that it extended to the Association of County Councils.

In its communication the Association of County Councils says that it has argued for many years for the repeal of the 1965 Act which it believes has

"inhibited proper negotiations of teachers' salaries".

The Secretary of State has opposed changes that would have allowed effective negotiations to take place.

What is the Secretary of State's answer to the very serious charges that have been made by an important employers' association? Apart from the different employees' associations that came into existence for understandable, functional and historic reasons, as I

[Mr. Spearing]

showed in my contribution of about 12 hours ago, there are different associations of employers, each of which has its own particular and rightful place in the machinery.

The ACC goes on to say:

"The Government has hitherto consistently refused to agree to the employers' request for legislation to improve the negotiating arrangements."

The employers know a little more about education than the Secretary of State and the inhabitants of Elizabeth house. I do not blame them for that; it is in the nature of the national education machine. Here employers are using their proper role and responsibly saying that the Government have refused to agree to improvements in the legislative machinery. The Government have a responsibility to tell us—I do not think they have told us—why they have not responded at least to the employers' request in the past few months and years. There is an answer to that question, which I shall not pursue now. It does not show the Government in a good light. Perhaps it will be more appropriate to pursue it later.

I refer to the efficacy of the joint council that we are now discussing. The real parameters of the problem have not been changed. The forces in the education world that are moving in that area have not changed over the years. They have been present in some form since 1944, and were certainly present in 1965 when the present legislation was introduced. It is to the 1965 Act that I want to turn the attention of the Government. I ask for their reply to the points that I shall make.

It was on 20 November 1964 that Mr. Michael Stewart introduced the present legislation, which the Secretary of State has claimed is outdated and will not work. It was introduced on a Friday. The debate started at about 11 am and finished at 3.15 pm. There was no vote. The 1965 legislation was agreed because, as was amply demonstrated during debate, the Bill was drafted by the then Conservative Government and Sir Edward Boyle, and introduced by Michael Stewart. The elements that are now facing us faced them. For the first time, the Minister introduced his own representatives en masse into the Burnham committee. He said, "I shall have 15 of the 26 representatives of the employers on the employers' panel." That was a big change, but it was reckoned to be fair by everybody concerned because, as we have heard today, the Minister, as an employer, claims rights of representation on the employers' panel. But the conditions of their presence and what they were there for were carefully laid down.

I should like to quote in full something that Mr. Michael Stewart said on that occasion because I believe that the Secretary of State—I am glad that he is still with us—has misused what Mr. Stewart was saying at that time. It relates to the importance and presence of the Secretary of State's representatives on that panel. Mr. Stewart said:

"The Bill provides for the contingency that exceptional circumstances might justify the rejection of the arbitrators' recommendation. But to limit the use of this power and to safeguard against its abuse the Bill provides two separate safeguards. First, the decision to use it is vested not in the Secretary of State, but in Parliament"—

the Secretary of State referred to that—

"and it requires the affirmative action and not merely the acquiescence of each House separately. Secondly, the criterion by which Parliament must judge a proposal to reject the arbitrators' recommendations is whether national economic circumstances require it.

The effect of that is that the circumstances must be economic. They must not be purely educational in character."

6.30 am

In other words, when the present machinery was installed, both sides of the House said, "Parliament must have the last say. The Secretary of State can reject a long series of negotiations and arbitrators' proposals but, if he does, the last ditch refusal must be based not in educational matters, arguments about distribution in particular, but related to national economic circumstances." We now understand that the rejection, not of the arbitration result but the so-called ACAS agreement, is not connected with national economic circumstances. The Secretary of State has not claimed that. He has claimed that it is to do with his view of the needs of education at the time. He may feel justified in doing that. He has pressed it very hard.

Mr. Kenneth Baker *indicated assent.*

Mr. Spearing: I am glad to have the Secretary of State's confirmation. In doing that, he breaks with the accord of 1965, which said that the long-stop device should be related only to national economic matters.

It was not only Mr. Stewart who said that. A leading member of the Government at that time was Mr. Christopher Chataway. Mr. Chataway, alas no longer with us, had long experience in education as a member and leader of the Inner London education authority.

During the course of the debate, Mr. Chataway said:

"On the question of the overall total cost, the ultimate say rests with the Secretary of State. I was glad that he made the point today that there would not be any question of the Secretary of State's representatives coming along and issuing an ultimatum at the start of the talks. Clearly, that would be wrong. It would not be acceptable if the Secretary of State's representatives were to come to the Committee and say, 'it is to be £50 million. We have decided on the figure, and now what we are going to negotiate about is the way in which it is going to be distributed.' When my right hon. and learned Friend met the teachers' associations and the local authorities in September he made it clear that he, too, was not suggesting any such system."—*[Official Report, 20 November 1964; Vol. 702, c. 794-803.]*

When he referred to his right hon. and learned Friend, he was, of course, talking about Mr. Quintin Hogg.

In 1964 when the Bill, which was to become the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965, began its passage, neither side of the House saw the power that the Secretary of State is now, in effect, using as one that related to negotiation and internal distribution.

When I say that we are still on the same psychological parameters today as then, the Secretary of State will now know what I mean. He will say that conditions have changed, that things have been fouled up and that the associations, as I prefer to call them, have fallen out among themselves, and so on. I have to remind him that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, because in 1964 the representation of the Secretary of State on Burnham was justified morally and in common sense by the fact that it was claimed, without any dispute, that 60 per cent. of the salary was paid by the Exchequer.

What has happened since then? Because of the change in the rate support grant arrangements and the attitude of the Government to local government as a whole, that 60 per cent. has been much reduced. A figure of about 44 per

cent. or, at most, 50 per cent., no doubt varying from county to county and LEA to LEA, comes to mind. Certainly conditions have changed but the arithmetic about the representation on Burnham has not. I wonder whether there would have been a difference under Burnham if the 15 representatives had been reduced pro rata with the input from central Government. That might be an argument, but I am not making it. I am saying that the real psychological parameters in the whole bag of tricks are much as they were in 1965 and that the structure then created would have worked if those involved had wished it to do so.

That brings me back to the fundamental point that education in national negotiations, like education in the classroom, depends upon the will of those in the ring to reach an agreement. Any one of the three elements can at any time play a mischievous part and prevent such agreement from being reached. As my earlier quotation showed, even the Association of County Councils believes that the Secretary of State has played a part in preventing agreement. At any rate, the association wants a change in the machinery and we have yet to hear why that has not been accepted.

I shall prove my point by a quotation from Mr. Quintin Hogg when he was Minister of State. He is now Lord Chancellor, and thus a member of the Cabinet which no doubt approved this Bill, reluctantly or otherwise, with or without discussion. I can certainly imagine some of the dramatis personae in that argument. We do not even know which side the Secretary of State was on. I wonder what the Lord Chancellor said in Cabinet on this occasion. In November 1964, he said:

"The first point that I would seek to make is that this debate illustrates something which I have said on many occasions, and that is both the folly and, in the end, the corrupting nature of any attempt to bring the education service too strongly in the path of politics. I have always tried to pursue, in relation to education, as detached a view as I could and I think that this is a proper approach to the matter."—[*Official Report*, 20 November 1964; Vol. 702, c. 833.]

So say many of us here.

It is the path of politcs, to quote a useful phrase which may even come to the aid of the Secretary of State when he is protecting education, which has brought us to this sorry state. If the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor, the right hon. Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph), had not pressed what we saw as the path of politics far too strongly in negotiations in the past few years, the existing machinery could and would have worked. Pressing the path of politics too strongly has caused the present foul-up. All would have been well had not the path of politcs intruded into machinery that was never intended to cope with it. We have Lord Hailsham's authority for that.

Amendment No. 30, so ably proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher), offers the Secretary of State another path. The Bill, curiously enough, follows much the same structure as its two predecessors. Its centrepiece is Parliament's final approval, by order, as it has been since 1963, but the content of the order should result from the national joint council and not the old style Burnham committee. There is a very big difference. The Secretary of State did less than justice to the proposal when he referred to the joint council being composed in a rather vague way. I made a dissenting noise at that point because he was not giving sufficient weight to the proposals in amendment 49, which is also in this group.

Amendment No. 49 says:

"The National Joint Council will be composed of representatives of the local education authorities in England and Wales and of the six unions presently represented on the Burnham Primary and Secondary Committee. The balance of representatives on each side will be determined with the assistance of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service."

The Bill proposes no automatic arithmetical proportionate membership such as we have now. Whether that is right or wrong is another matter. The amendment proposes that the balance of representatives on the national joint council should be established by some form of mutual conciliation. It is up to the Secretary of State to table further amendments if he wants to decide how the balance will be struck, but with the help of ACAS. What I imagine will be a relatively small body should reflect a balance of interests, including the panel of employers' representatives.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The hon. Gentleman is highlighting the difficulty of the problem. He speaks of the assistance of ACAS, but suppose the unions do not agree with its advice and there is no agreement about how many representatives there should be of each union. ACAS has tried to find an agreement since the beginning of the year, but there has been none among the unions. What leads the hon. Gentleman to suppose that, when trying to establish the balance of power—a critical issue—the unions are likely to agree with what ACAS recommends? The same is true for the employers. The hon. Gentleman's optimism is overcoming experience.

Mr. Spearing: I suggest that it is the Secretary of State's pessimism — and especially that of his predecessor — which prevented the existing machinery from working. I do not pretend that the answer is easy. That is why I welcome the philosophical and thorough approach of the amendments. Perhaps both sides are a little closer on an analysis of the problem, although they have not reached accord on the optimum solution.

Dr. Godman: I readily accept that there have been formidable problems with the Burnham committee. The problem of the balance of power has been experienced by many national joint industrial councils and in many cases it has been resolved to the qualified satisfaction of those involved.

Mr. Spearing: That is a helpful intervention. We have here a problem which often arises in the House. It is the least worst solution. People often complain about our procedures and say that they are arcane, difficult and illogical, and ask why we go through the night debating a vital matter. We all know that we often come up with the least worst solution.

The Secretary of State has fairly and rightly drawn attention to some of the difficulties. He may be right, but if his chosen path is not right, we should stick with the machinery that we have got and not act like the sorcerer's apprentice.

The existing machinery is by no means perfect, and most hon. Members want to change it. It may be that there is only one alternative to the draconian power that the

[Mr. Spearing]

Secretary of State is trying to take or the pro rata of Burnham. The proposal of the joint council might work better than the present machinery.

6.45 am

In two years' time, the Secretary of State will have to produce another Bill. I suspect that many of his hon. Friends support him because they can say that while the Bill is outrageous in what it proposes, it cuts the Gordian knot and gets the schools back to work and gives them time to think up some better form. Perhaps there is not one. Perhaps the best way to go about it is along lines similar to those laid down in the 1965 Act, perhaps amended slightly, but with an understanding from each of the three partners inside their own groupings, which means inside the Cabinet and inside the Government, that they do not mess up and go down the path of politics referred to by the Lord Chancellor. That would be self-restraint from the Government, as there would have to be from the employees, that they would not play too much among themselves. There may be a feeling of constraint among the employers, the county councils and other authorities that they must not play too great a part in this difficult tripod of our education structure. In the end, that may be the only way in which it can be done. If that is shown to be true, it will prove that in this sector one cannot use the usual rules of industrial arbitration, or the usual rules of statute.

Everything starts on atmosphere. Everything begins and ends on the invisible threads of personal relationships, which occur inside a classroom, a school, the local education authority, the Cabinet and the minds and hearts of those involved in education. The Secretary of State should consider this proposal and say why it cannot work. Instead of looking at alternatives to the present structure, he has chosen the sword. In the end, the sword will not flourish and cannot succeed in this educational quagmire.

Dr. Godman: I speak in support of amendment Nos. 30 and 49. My support for the amendments stems from my belief that it is almost always the case that employers possess much more power than employee associations, or trade unions. That holds true as much for those employed in the education system as for those in manufacturing industry. I also believe that a formal structure of collective bargaining is an essential element in the development of good industrial relations. I would have thought that all of us here are concerned with the development of good, co-operative relations between employers and trade unionists.

By power, I mean where an individual or group has the ability or means to coerce others into complying with instructions, even though such compliance may conflict with the interest of those in the subordinate position in the relationship. One has to acknowledge that within the teaching unions as with others, there is a distribution of power among those trade unionists. A national joint industrial council can play a powerful role in the establishment and maintenance of good industrial relations, and there is a great deal of evidence from other industries to support this assertion. One thinks of the work carried out for many years by the national joint industrial council for the fishing industry. There are national councils responsible for collective bargaining about terms and conditions of employment in a range of industries extending from defence to private industries such as shipbuilding and engineering. I have mentioned the council that existed for a time for the fishing industry and one thinks also of the council for those employed in the maritime auxiliary services.

Many personnel managers and senior managers involved in collective bargaining prefer to deal with organised labour within a framework of national joint industrial councils. I think that the Donovan committee in its report published, if I remember rightly, in 1968 pointed to the formal and informal systems of collective bargaining.

Mr. Fatchett: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Dr. Godman: I shall in a moment. In cases where there is a clash between the formal and informal systems, one often sees a worsening of industrial relations. For example, if the informal system predominates, it is almost inevitable that industrial relations will be much less co-operative and much more unprincipled.

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend says personnel managers have a current preference for the bargaining structure about which he speaks. He will note, if he adds a historical perspective to his analysis of the development of collective bargaining, that it was Government through the initial Whitley reports who advocated structures such as the national joint councils. It was the espousal by private industry of the Whitley report that led to the creation of NJICs in many industries. Therefore, there is a long history of public policy advocating the sort of machinery spelt out in this set of amendments.

Dr. Godman: I am conscious of the history of national joint industrial councils, but I had better not go down that road. The national joint industrial council for the fishing industry was introduced to an industry characterised by casual employment and with the worst group of employers in the history of modern British industrial relations. Nevertheless, that council imposed a system of order on the fragmented processes of collective bargaining in the deep-sea fishing industry. In talking about teachers and their employers we are talking about an entirely different system of collective bargaining. Nevertheless, the principle is the same.

Mr. Spearing: Mr. Whitley was the Speaker of the House of Commons and the analogy that I attempted to draw between atmosphere, decision, and the procedures in the House of Commons and the self-disciplines of national joint bargaining are not coincidental: they are fundamental. I think that my hon. Friend has helped the Committee a great deal in suggesting that the stage at which teachers' bargaining has arrived may be, paradoxically, at an earlier stage in the cycle of evolution of national joint bargaining than that which has been reached in some other industries. It may be also that the Secretary of State should learn from that.

Dr. Godman: It seems that teachers——

Mr. Fatchett: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Dr. Godman: I ask my hon. Friend to let me get into my stride first.

It seems that teachers and their representatives have to make difficult choices and will have to accept that, but that is the essence of collective bargaining. Both sides must accept that which they would rather dismiss. The hawkish lot on the Government Benches seem to think that a

national joint council would go beyond democratic compromise, but it is in the nature of national joint councils that agreements are hammered out. It is my experience that by and large they are honoured.

Mr. Fatchett: I realise that my hon. Friend has moved on in the development of his argument. As my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) has said that a Mr. Whitley was Speaker of the House of Commons, it may be useful, as a Yorkshireman, to remind my hon. Friend that Mr. Whitley was a Yorkshireman and represented a Yorkshire constituency. The links with the argument that he is advancing are traditional and personal.

Dr. Godman: I think that the links may be somewhat tenuous. I am a Yorkshireman who for a long time has been domiciled in Scotland with, happily again, a Scottish wife and family.

I would wish to leave Mr. Speaker Whitley behind, though he has an honourable place in history. I believe that it is essential to have a structure for collective bargaining in education, and that with a formal structure it is possible to encourage some local autonomy. A national joint council composed of employers' representatives and teachers, representatives as outlined in amendment No. 49 is the way ahead if our objective is good industrial relations.

The Secretary of State observed in an intervention that some teachers' unions are unwilling to accept what he might call the democratic share of the representation on such a council. It seems that this is an area where ACAS has an important role to play. I spoke about ACAS earlier, and I believe that it could resolve, for example, initial conflicts of view and objectives at once. I believe genuinely that such conflicts would be resolved with the assistance of industrial relations specialists.

These are useful amendments on the composition of a national joint council. It could be that for one or two years the chairman of the NJC, as envisaged in the amendments, would be a local authority councillor, with a teacher, or teacher's representative, taking on the role of deputy chairman. Once their periods of office expired, these roles would be reversed so that for one or two years the teacher would become the chairman. That is an established practice with many national joint industrial councils, and I can think of no reason why the procedure of alternating chairmen should not be established for a national council dealing with teachers.

7 am

As with other national joint industrial councils, tough negotiations would be conducted by both sides at the monthly or quarterly meetings of the council, but agreements would have to be reached and, as elsewhere, both sides would have to make concessions. That is at the heart of industrial relations, and that is what we mean by collective bargaining—that, as is customary in collective bargaining elsewhere, concessions are made to achieve agreements that are binding on both sides.

It would be possible to arrive at a sensible composition of teacher and employer representatives on such a council. I support the amendments because of the need for a formal collective bargaining structure, such as that determined to a large extent by such a council. The Secretary of State will reject them, but national joint councils have an important part to play in many of our industries, and such a council could play a valuable role in collective bargaining between teachers and their employers.

Mr. Flannery: In his reply to the amendments, which I support, the Minister lingered lovingly over splits among the teachers. Of course there are splits. No one is more aware of that than we are. There have always been splits, although these have recently been accentuated simply because they always occur in struggles.

Unlike the Minister, we do not rejoice about this, because it creates terrible problems. It was significant that in an intervention in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) the Minister again entered that arena. He just cannot stay clear of it. There is something about this subject that gives the Minister pleasure, and he cannot help exulting about it. It is all grist to his mill of anti-democracy.

When the Minister talked about the difference in the composition of the JNC, he laboured mightily to try to prove that it was not possible for the local education authorities and the six unions, under guidance from ACAS, to arrive at a reasonably acceptable democratic conclusion. There is always difficulty with such matters, but the Minister is determined to highlight the difficulties in order to justify the destruction of any democratic negotiation.

Local education authorities are elected bodies which have had a long struggle to achieve democracy. They are the best that we can manage. All hon. Members know about the long struggle to establish trade unions. The Combination Acts stopped the trade unions in the early years. We still rejoice in the Tolpuddle martyrs and celebrate them every year. Democracy is a long and continuing process.

On Monday I mentioned Winston Churchill, who said words to the effect that democracy is awkward and unwieldy but the best thing we have. Indeed it is. Anything that violates democracy will ultimately be found out. There is no doubt about that. In the long term the anti-democratic people will be defeated. In the meantime they will cause misery, and unnecessary problems will be heaped upon us. They will cause trouble for the Minister, for us, the children and for everyone concerned.

I am sure that all hon. Members have a copy of the ILEA brief, section 3 of which states:

"The Bill replaces, therefore, the Burnham Primary and Secondary Committee set up by the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. Although the Bill does not explicitly remove the rights of collective bargaining . . . there will, for practical purposes, be no forum for this to occur. Any agreement could be overridden by the Secretary of State. It is quite clear that he will immediately use the powers in the Bill to impose a settlement to the current dispute without reference to the Advisory Committee and rely on the Advisory Committee operating under directions issued by him in future years."

That is the nub and essence of the Bill.

Mr. Corbyn: The Minister seems to be lacking faith in his own judgment, because although he has not yet appointed the advisory committee he has already ridden over a decision which it might have had the opportunity to take. Is that not an unpalatable prospect for anyone looking for a job on his advisory committee?

Mr. Flannery: I agree, but even deeper than that is that, after long struggles, we now live in a democracy. Dictatorship comes about because the old rulers can no

[Mr. Flannery]

longer rule in the old way and because the people are no longer willing to be ruled in the old way. Leaders take over and dictatorship is established.

We live in a democracy. For a Minister or Government to take short cuts with democracy, in a democracy, after a long struggle is disgraceful. That is being done to save what amounts to petty cash. In this case we are talking about saving £80 million. That is even more serious when there is no obvious regret by those who are engaging in anti-democratic methods. Instead, for some curious reason, the Minister seems to take joy in what he is doing.

Our task is to foil the Secretary of State in every possible way. We could give hostages to fortune because if the right hon. Gentleman treats these amendments with the contempt with which he has treated everything else, he will be conniving in allowing an area of democracy to slide away. That would strengthen the hand of those who would take further short cuts and go on to invade other areas. It would become a wide-ranging attack on the unions and democracy in education.

The Secretary of State was asked earlier what the advisory committee will do when he has used the elected dictatorship which conciously violates democracy. Even though there is a counting of heads. The right hon. Gentleman said that it would be difficult to get a range of democratic bodies to agree on setting up a democratic committee to continue democracy and negotiation. We all know that there would be difficulties, but we should try to overcome them.

When the Secretary of State hand-picks a group of people, including the chairman and deputy chairman of the advisory committee, that might be easy, but they will merely carry out his orders. The most that they can do is to reflect some ideas that they might glean from talking to elected groups. That will have little or no impact on getting the money that is necessary to educate our children, or in securing peace in our schools and all the things that Labour Members want, but which Tory Members, most of whom went to public school and do not understand the state education system, only say that they want. In fact, they want peace through a dictatorial attack on the education system and a deprivation of money.

The attitude of the Minister, as he lies there with his sleeping pack behind him, is one of utter contempt. The right hon. Gentleman is not sleeping. He is showing us that he is not even interested in what we are saying. Although we shall not win the vote, we shall win the argument and our case will become reality, because the difficulties will be so tremendous that something will happen and make what happened to Chirac look like a tea party. *[Interruption.]* I must object to the interruptions of hon. Members beyond the Bar. They are not officially in the Chamber and if they want to come in they should do so.

Mr. Allen McKay: I am pleased that we have woken up some Conservative Members. It is nice to know that we are speaking to people who are listening—even though only three Conservative Members are left after our long and laborious night.

Mr. Fatchett: It has been extremely enjoyable.

Mr. McKay: And informative, too. We have reached the nitty gritty of our amendments, and the Secretary of State's attitude reminds me of something that happened when I went on a parliamentary visit to the United States to study democracy in local government. We visited one place where we saw a cross between a quiz and a galactic war. It was in Dallas. Only Texans would build things like that, anyway. The people in the auditorium could have five minutes to speak on the subject under discussion. The chairman said to me, "This is democracy at work. All the people here can have a say. They will please themselves what they do." That is what the Secretary of State will do. He will become judge and jury. He will pay them and guide them.

7.15 am

Subsection (2) states:

> The Secretary of State shall appoint an Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions to examine and report to him on such matters relating to the remuneration and other conditions of employment of school teachers in England and Wales . . .
>
> The Secretary of State may give directions to the Committee with respect to matters referred to them".

Following a direction from the person who set it up, the committee will consider wages and conditions of service "and financial or other constraints to which their recommendations are subject".

The Secretary of State will not only set up the committee and give it directions, but will tell it how much it can spend. He will take away any semblance of free collective bargaining, of which the Government are supposed to be the champions.

I am bothered about the education of children. That is what the argument is about. My constituents are fed up to their teeth with children constantly being sent home from school when their parents are at work. More serious is the interruption to children's education. The Secretary of State's proposals will worsen the position. I hope that I will be proved wrong and the Secretary of State will be proved right. However, in correcting the problem, he will also create another wrong.

In the years that I worked as an industrial relations officer, I found that if impositions do work, they worked for only a short time. The problem was caused by the Government, who have cut local government and education finances. The Secretary of State knows that had extra money been provided when he became Secretary of State we would not be debating this matter until this hour, because there would have been no problem. The denial of the money caused the problem in the first place. By using his powers, the Secretary of State will cause problems for many years to come. With the return of a Labour Government, we shall get rid of them anyway. If the Prime Minister is right about the timing of the election, we shall debate this matter again and again.

If the Secretary of State is heavy handed and acts in a dictatorial manner, he will destroy an element of democracy which we cannot afford to destroy. He will destroy democracy at the gress roots of the education system. His proposals will not get the best out of teachers. He proposes to pay them according to their expertise and ability. I do not know how he will find that expertise and ability. It smacks of looking for blue-eyed boys and favourites. That will lower teachers' morale even more.

We want the Secretary of State to consider our suggestions seriously. We are not saying that the present system is right and should not be altered, but the right hon. Gentleman's proposals will make it even worse. We are trying to put in his mind ideas from which he could build a more regulated system. Our proposals will satisfy the

teachers and the trade unions, because they have already had a hand in them, and they should satisfy the Government because they will be part of that new system. There is no reason why our proposals should not work.

The Secretary of State said that he was in an impossible position and had to do something about it. He put across that idea very well. The problem with industrial relations is that one is always in an impossible position. The art of getting out of it is to do one's best and not to take the easiest and cheapest means. Indeed, sometimes one has to buy one's way out of it. It is ironic that we have a Government who created the Union of Democratic Mineworkers. They are going against their convictions in opposing the national joint council. I ask the Secretary of State to look seriously and favourably on our amendments and to give credence to the idea that they are better than his proposals and will work better than his will. He should therefore accept our amendments.

Mr. Corbyn: A great deal has been said on this subject, and I do not want to detain the Committee too long. The Secretary of State believes that he can somehow resolve a long-running and fundamental dispute simply by rejecting our proposal to establish a national joint council that could determine wages and conditions through a spirit of collective bargaining. He favours a body appointed by him, comprising his favourities who will do what he wants when he wants. How does that solve the problem? There will be no one with any respect for that body because people will know that, in reality, it is the Secretary of State. What will be its decisions? Will anyone agree with them? When the right hon. Gentleman's bidding has not been successful, what will happen? We shall go straight back to where we have been for the past year — into another teachers' dispute and another problem in the schools — because the right hon. Gentleman will not face up to the fact that the reasons for the dispute are that teachers have been consistently underpaid and that the Government have cut education spending.

Anyone who looks at the history of industrial relations will realise that there has been a constant struggle for the right of trade unions to undertake proper collective bargaining in a free spirit. The Government are keen on free collective bargaining for trade union rights, provided that it is in Poland. They are not awfully keen on the same for this country. In the past seven years, they have systematically attacked the rights of trade unions to organise and have systematically destroyed whatever national minimum standards applied through the wages council system. In this legislation, the Government are trying to set up something that is much worse than the rather inadequate bodies about which many of us have complained.

The body will be created from the Secretary of State's prejudices, and one dreads to think of the sort of people who will serve on it. Where will they come from? Will they be aspiring Tory Members of Parliament or former Tory Members of Parliament? Will they be people from the public schools, who will try to worsen the conditions of the maintained sector? Where will these creeps come from? Are there enough creeps in the country to fill the Secretary of State's advisory committee? Or will it be the ultimate trip-up by the Secretary of State, who is noted for his smooth appearance and approach? Will he finally trip over his own Brylcreem? I believe that he will be in a real mess over this.

The Secretary of State knows perfectly well that it cannot work. He knows perfectly well that he cannot solve the teachers' dispute other than by starving them to end the dispute or by ordering them back to work. This is a very dangerous step, because he is setting up an advisory body, which is dictated to by the Minister, and which comes to the decisions that the Minister wants. Will he then seek legal backing to impose its decisions on disputes? The advisory body will be no more independent than was the Spanish parliament under General Franco, or any other dictator around the world. That is the way we are moving in clause 1 of this nasty Bill.

If the Secretary of State bothered to talk to teachers and parents, he would discover that, although many parents are angry at the number of times their children have been sent home and very angry about the loss of education for their children, and there is a great deal of chaos in the schools, the parents are not queueing up to attack the teachers. He will discover that some teachers, parents and children are getting together to attack him, because they know that the root cause of the problem is him and his Government, not the teachers. If he was a teacher, he would either have left the profession a long time ago and sought more lucrative employment, such as being a Tory Member of Parliament——

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Lucrative?

Mr. Corbyn: It is extremely lucrative when one has several jobs. But what can the people who love teaching and who want good education and standards do? Are they supposed to continue existing on starvation wages, or will they leave the profession? Those who wish to continue have stayed, suffered and fought for education and for the campaigns mounted by their unions.

At the end of this debate, the Secretary of State will be very tired. He will probably be extremely bored, listening to Labour Members saying almost the same things to him, but it will not solve any problem. By Monday or Tuesday, or January or February, or whenever he succeeds in forcing through this nasty Bill, the same problem will land straight back on his doorstep and he will have to do something about it. He has solved nothing tonight and he will solve nothing tomorrow unless he faces the real issue, which is the conditions under which teachers operate, rather than attacking them for attempting to organise and obtain proper free collective bargaining.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To conclude the debate, I ask the Secretary of State especially whether he has given any attention to amendment No. 119. That deals with a problem in his new procedure which he may have overlooked. Under the existing Burnham arrangements, if there is a local dispute about the interpretation of the agreement, the matter could be referred to the joint secretaries for interpretation. I gather that, at present, there is a dispute about people who have obtained degrees in the United States. Until 1982, anyone who had a good degree from the United States received the extra payments on the scale rates. In 1983, the Government decided that they would no longer automatically recognise for good scale rates degrees from the United States. Some believed that the intention was that individual degrees from the United States would be considered; others thought that no degrees from the United States should qualify for extra

[Mr. Andrew F. Bennett]

payments. As I understand it, the Burnham committee is at the moment being asked to interpret that particular problem. I can give many more examples.

Who will now be responsible for interpreting either the Burnham proposals which are carried forward by the legislation or the proposals which would come from an advisory committee?

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The hon. Gentleman mentioned amendment No. 119. That should not be necessary. An order placed before the House under clause 3 can cover both remuneration and conditions of employment. Once the order has been approved by both Houses of Parliament it will carry the force of law. It will then be for local authorities to implement the provisions in the order. It will be a matter for each local education authority to decide what local consultative arrangement it has for the implementation of the contents of the order.

7.30 am

Mr. Bennett: I hope that the Minister will give more thought to that. I, for my sins, sometimes have to sit on the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments which looks at the orders which come up. They are extremely complex and sometimes one considers that a particular clause had to be written in, and sometimes several clauses, for that one example which may come up perhaps once every five years. There is danger about that approach of having to write everything into regulation in case one example arises. The attraction of the Burnham system, as I understand it, is that although it has laid down pretty detailed guidelines the exceptional cases can be referred to a body for interpretation. That has some attractions.

No doubt we can return to that matter later. However, I suggest to the Minister that he may be encumbering himself and the local authorities with some exceptionally detailed regulations. There is some evidence, particularly in areas such as social security, where amending regulations have to come out extremely rapidly. I suggest that the Minister gives the matter a little more thought.

If the Minister's objection on the general question of national joint councils is that one which is not really a national joint council has been acting like one, the present complicated procedure and the ACAS discussions do not augur well for one in education.

However, I suggest that the main problem in education is that at ground level the Secretary of State has used his influence to try to set one teacher union against another. It has been particularly noticeable that since the discussions arrived at at Coventry are not included, he seems to have put all those efforts into trying to set one union off against another. I suggest that instead of doing that he would be better occupied trying to demonstrate that a national joint council could work.

If the hon. Gentleman were to look at the possibilities of voting procedures within a national joint council, not just a simple majority but perhaps a two-thirds majority to obtain agreement, I am sure that he could design a procedure that would encourage the teaching unions to work together, along with the local authorities, recognising the legitimate special interests that some of the union groups represent.

The more that the Secretary of State encourages divisions in negotiations the more he encourages divisions and bitterness in the schools. If we want to allow our schools to return to giving a first-class service to our children, we want to get all teachers to work together in schools, and for there not to be the bitterness that does exist in some schools where people feel that perhaps over school meal regulations or some other regulation, one group of the profession has been causing particular problems for another area.

I am sure that a national joint council would be the way forward and I regret that the Minister has set his face against the legislation and is insisting on introducing a temporary measure when either a national joint council or something along those lines will have to be introduced if we are to have a return to genuine collective bargaining. If the Government will not do that, I hope that we shall be able to repeal this legislation and ensure that we can return to joint collective bargaining in the near future.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 26, Noes 137.

Division No. 29] **[7.35 am**

AYES

Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Clay, Robert
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Fatchett, Derek
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foster, Derek
Godman, Dr Norman
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Marek, Dr John
Maxton, John
Michie, William
Park, George
Pendry, Tom
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rowlands, Ted
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Don Dixon and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Bruinvels, Peter
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hickmet, Richard
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*

Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Spencer, Derek
Stanbrook, Ivor
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Wakeham, Rt Hon John

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

Motion made, and Question put, That the clause stand part of the Bill:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 144, Noes 33.

Division No. 30] **[7.45 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Bruinvels, Peter
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Neale, Gerrard
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Spencer, Derek
Stanbrook, Ivor
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Michael Neubert and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

NOES

Barron, Kevin
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Clay, Robert
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Dobson, Frank
Fatchett, Derek
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foster, Derek
Godman, Dr Norman
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Marek, Dr John
Maxton, John
Michie, William
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pendry, Tom
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rogers, Allan
Rowlands, Ted
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Don Dixon and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2

Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions

Mr. Fatchett: I beg to move amendment No. 33, in page 1, line 16, after 'appoint', insert

'after consultation with teachers' unions and associations, and the local education authorities'.

The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments. No. 34, in page 1, line 16, after 'appoint', insert

[Mr. Ernest Armstrong]

'on the nomination (in respect in each case of a third of the membership of the Committee) of the trades unions represented before the passage of the Act on the Burnham Primary and Secondary Committee; and of the local education authorities'.

No. 213, in schedule 1, page 5, line 5 leave out 'five' and insert 'seven'.

No. 214, in page 5, line 5, leave out subsection (1) and insert

'(1) The Advisory Committee shall consist of not fewer than fifteen members, of whom seven shall be appointed on the nomination of associations representing local education authorities and seven on the nomination of registered trade unions representing school teachers.'.

No. 215, in page 5, line 6, leave out 'nine' and insert 'twenty'.

No. 216, in page 5, line 6, at end insert

'and who shall include members appointed on the nomination of the relevant local education authority associations and members appointed on the nomination of the teachers' unions and associations.'.

Mr. Fatchett: We have discussed with you, Mr. Armstrong, the possibility of taking with this group amendment No. 35, in clause 2, page 1, line 16, after 'an', insert 'independent'. We are doing that so that the Committee can bring together two points about the advisory committee. We have taken on board the fact that progress has not been as quick as we had expected, and we are trying to facilitate matters. The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) was earlier bemoaning the fact that we were making so little progress. We are now making more rapid progress, and he is not here to see it happen, although the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mrs. Shields) is here. If the Government do not yield to the strength of our arguments, we shall seek to divide the Committee on amendment No. 33. Given the way in which the Labour vote has increased so dramatically in the last two Divisions, the Government may feel that, with the troops coming back in, it might be time to yield to our persuasive argument. We would also like to have a division on amendment No. 35.

8 am

The amendments deal with the advisory committee. My hon. Friends have already referred to the advisory committee, because it will replace the free collective bargaining for teachers. Our amendments deal with the balance of the advisory committee, consultation, nomination and other aspects of appointment. It may be useful for the Committee if I made it clear that while we seek to amend and improve the committee, it would not be the intention of any forthcoming Labour Government to have any truck with it, and when we come to repeal the legislation, the committee will go.

One of our major criticisms of the committee is that made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) on Second Reading—that it is toothless—and this is shown in a whole series of aspects.

Schedule 1 deals with the basis of appointment to the committee. Appointment will be at the pleasure of the Secretary of State. The Bill sets out various reasons for removing people from the committee—for example, if a person has become bankrupt or made an arrangement with his creditors. That seems a reasonable course. A second reason is if he is incapacitated by physical or mental illness, and, thirdly, if a person is absent for two or more consecutive meetings of the committee, except for reasons approved by the committee. That may also seem reasonable, although one or two hon. Members might find it a dangerous rule if it were applied to the House. Finally, the Secretary of State takes to himself the power to dismiss from the committee a person

"who is, in the opinion of the Secretary of State otherwise unable or unfit to perform his duties as member."

In other words, the Secretary of State determines whether a person is unable or unfit to serve on the committee. We know from the record of the Government only one way that the powers will be used. The Government and the Secretary of State will act as they have acted over the past few years, when the Secretary of State was in another office. They will appoint to the advisory committee only those people who are prepared to go along with the Secretary of State.

Mr. Frank Cook: Noddies.

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend says, "Noddies." That may well be an attack on an important children's toy and book, and is probably an unreasonable comment by my hon. Friend at this time of the morning. Children enjoy Noddy books and would be unhappy to see Noddy acquainted with the people we might find on the advisory committee. I hope that my hon. Friend will take an opportunity to withdraw his comment.

We will see what we have seen from the Government in other contexts. I ask my hon. Friends to think about all the appointments that the Government have made to chair district health authorities and the membership of those authorities. They appoint people who will support their policies and do not seek a balance or representation to reflect different views. They will simply search for people who will nod through the Government's policy. The Secretary of State, who is not here at the moment, has a record for doing that.

Some of us had the dubious pleasure of serving with the Secretary of State during the passage of the bill to abolish the GLC and the Metropolitan councils. We said then that the people he would appoint to chair the residuary bodies would be totally dependent on the government and would follow the Government's wishes. Anybody who lives and works in a metropolitan council area or in the GLC area will know how true those comments proved to be. The Government appointed to chair and run the residuary bodies exactly the sort of people that we expect them to appoint to the advisory committee—placemen for the Secretary of State.

In advancing interesting arguments during the earlier part of the debate, some of my hon. Friends spoke about the power of ACAS and the role of ballots in industrial disputes. I think it was my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) who asked the Minister of State to have a ballot on the Secretary of State's proposals. That brings to mind again the parallel with the metropolitan counties and GLC, because during the passage of the Bill to abolish them we tabled an amendment that the Secretary of State should have a ballot about abolition. We said that if he believed abolition would be popular he should subject it to the test of popular opinion. The Secretary of State refused to accept any such amendment. When it comes to a test of popular opinion, whether of the electors in the metropolitan areas or in the GLC area or of teachers, the Secretary of State runs away.

Mr. Corbyn: Does my hon. Friend recall that during the struggle against the abolition proposals, four GLC by-elections were held because Labour members resigned so that the electors could have a voice? The Conservative party refused to contest those elections.

Mr. Fatchett: I welcome that point from my hon. Friend because it shows that the Conservative party has a certain disregard for ballots. My hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) suggests that the Conservatives may even refuse to stand at the next general election. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) said that this debate had been running for less than a day and we had already gained five points in the opinion polls. If that process continues, the Conservatives might take the action that my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras suggests. If that happens, there might be a series of place men sitting on the Government Benches.

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): The Conservatives may already have decided to withdraw from the election without making it public. I do not think the conservatives have a candidate to stand against me at the next general election. Perhaps they are quite happy with the present representation.

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. We had better return to the amendment.

Mr. Fatchett: That is an interesting psychological observation by my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron), but I refuse to comment on it.

Mr. Allan Rogers: Does my hon. Friend find the Government's attitude to ballots strange? During the miners' strike there were Nuremberg-type chants from the Government Benches for a ballot. The cry was "Ballot, ballot, ballot" throughout the strike. Conservative Members were so concerned about democracy then. Is it not strange that now they are in conflict with the teachers they do not want a ballot? What is my hon. Friend's opinion of this selective democracy that is operated by the Conservative party and the Government?

Mr. Fatchett: We have expressed strong opinions about that throughout the night. My hon. Friend is right in saying that the Government have less than an even-handed approach to democracy. My hon. Friend may have entered the Chamber a little late, but I have no doubt that he will come to the same conclusion as my hon. Friends and me. The Government move quickly in whichever way they find convenient, and the question of principle rarely arises in that process.

I am delighted that the Under-Secretary of State is to reply to the debate. He has been present for about 15 hours and he has not been able to utter a word. That must be a great disappointment to him and to his many admirers on the Government and Opposition Benches. The hon. Gentleman will have the opportunity to address the Committee, and I suspect that my colleagues will want to make comments on the advisory committee. I have no doubt that the Minister will have the opportunity to reply to the debate.

The Minister will note that the amendments are an attempt to meet the point that my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) has made. We are trying to introduce an element of indirect democracy. Some of the amendments allow direct nomination by the individual trade union bodies, or in some instances the local authorities. This is not the same as a ballot of all teachers. We are trying to find common ground with the Government. We know that they are frightened of total ballots, but we thought that a system of indirect democracy meant that they would be prepared to accept the sort of amendments that we are tabling. The amendments would reflect the balance that exists within the current machinery and among the teachers' unions in membership, and it would involve an element of democracy and accountability.

If our amendments were accepted, the committee would have a degree of accountability. Those who served on the committee would report back to individual local authority associations or to individual trade union associations. We do not accept the principle of the Bill. Surely the hon. Gentleman must welcome the constructive way in which we are trying to improve the status and standing of the advisory committee. The amendments would work to that extent.

I shall comment briefly on amendment No. 35 and the group of amendments which are to be taken with it for debate. The amendments aim to extend both the powers and the independence of the advisory committee. It has been said time and again throughout the debate that the advisory committee is basically a tool or device of the Secretary of State. It has no independence and no real ability to gain legitimacy in the eyes of teachers or in the eyes of local authorities and their associations. We are saying that the committee should become independent of the Secretary of State and have the right to report to Parliament directly. On a number of occasions during the course of the debate the Secretary of State has suggested that he welcomes the greater involvement of Parliament. Our search for that middle ground has led to us wishing to give Parliament a greater role in the proceedings.

We are saying that if the amendments are accepted, there will be a process of direct reporting to Parliament from an independent body. In those circumstances we may be able to find other analogies in collective bargaining and industrial relations that will be similar to the machinery that we are suggesting. There will be no other example of workers who have moved from free collective bargaining to the independent advisory committee that is implied by the amendments. We put them forward very much as second best to collective bargaining. If the Minister is prepared to support these amendments, we shall at least get an advisory committee which, although independent of the Secretary of State, will have some powers and the ability to report to Parliament.

8.15 am

These amendments seek to remove from the advisory committee the total control and domination of the Secretary of State. If they are accepted, we shall have a better representation of membership and greater independence and powers. The Minister should recognise that if this committee is to do its job it needs these powers and this independence. That is why I ask the Committee to support the amendments.

Mr. George Howarth: My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) has made some telling points, several of which probably need emphasising.

The Bill refers to the advisory committee which will report on the remuneration and conditions of service of those in the teaching profession. On the surface that seems

[Mr. George Howarth]

to be sensible—even acceptable—but while accepting the need to seek advice, we must ask what the committee will do in practice.

Clause 2(2) enables the Secretary of State to give directions to the committee in respect of financial and other constraints. How will he do so, how large will the financial and other constraints be, and what discretion, if any, will the committee have? If it has no independence, it will be a sorry business if, on the one hand, we set up an advisory body—with all the notions of consultation that that invokes—while on the other its powers and potential usefulness are so circumscribed as to render it powerless. That appears to be the direction in which it could go.

The word "direct" has sinister connotations; and given the recent history of industrial relations in education, one becomes worried. On looking further into the matter—as I have done—those worries become stronger.

Schedule 1 sets out in skeletal form the constitution and procedures of the proposed new body. First, the Secretary of State has, and will no doubt use, the power to appoint the committee. How will it be composed? That is a good question, but so far we have had very little illumination.

I suspect that it will be composed not of people committed to the education service or its salary structure and so on, but of people who will do the bidding of the Secretary of State. I predict that we shall not even get people with expertise and experience in industrial relations, local government or other equally appropriate disciplines. They will probably be people who owe some kind of debt of gratitude to the Secretary of State—yes men who will do the right hon. Gentleman's bidding. People might be appointed because they are politically acceptable. That is a bit worrying because someone who is politically acceptable to this Government is often unacceptable to the education movement and outside.

The Government might produce a list of people who are acceptable, but I fear that they will not. The danger in putting the appointments in the gift of the Secretary of State, past, present or future—in the short term at least—is that the power may be used to make political appointments.

If politically acceptable people are appointed and they do not do their job quite as the Government want, the Secretary of State has the right to remove anyone who in his opinion is

"unfit to perform his duties".

What does "unfit" mean and who will decide who is "unfit"? Potentially, those words could encompass anyone who is simply unprepared to toe the Government line. What would happen if a politically acceptable appointee felt a rush of blood to the head and decided to be honourable? He would be removed as unfit. Is such a reserve power consistent with the apparent aim of conducting these matters in a balanced and sober way?

The proposal will widen the Government's ability to further abuse the education system. The Bill does not ensure the proper resolution of the central problems about which we are concerned. It does nothing to bring order and it inflames rather than settles issues at this time.

Mr. Dunn: It might help if I say a few words now and then listen to other contributions. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett), as usual, was kind and courteous in his comments about me. I have waited a long time for this opportunity to speak. I shall savour the opportunity since I have no idea what lies ahead.

Today was the first time that I have heard the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth) and I was worried about what he said about the appointments by the Secretary of State to the advisory committee. Because of his knowledge, the hon. Gentleman will know that successive Secretaries of State in Governments of both parties have made appointments to outside bodies. The University Grants Committee is, perhaps, the best example, but more recently appointments to the Committee for the Accreditation of Teacher Education were made by the then Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph). Neither those appointments nor others by previous Secretaries of State, were seen to be politically motivated. The appointees had strong views connected with industry, the trade unions or the theatre—which is not unknown to us. I should like examples of the type of abuse described by Opposition Members.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: What about district health authorities?

Mr. Fatchett: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Dunn: In a moment. I want to answer the point made by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett). Because I am not qualified to judge outside the area for which I am responsible, I deliberately spoke about appointments to bodies in education. There may be some comments that could be made from time to time in a snide way about people who serve on local or area health authorities. In education there are no examples that I am aware of—there may be some known to other hon. Members—where there has been a political appointment to bring about the results predicted by the hon. Member for Knowsley, North.

Mr. Fatchett: Given the fact that the advisory committee will be so political and that its work will create much controversy, is it not reasonable to expect that people will look to bodies outside education for experience of appointments to Government bodies? In that context, the intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) is appropriate. We noted the Minister's reservation about some of those appointments. If the Minister has reservations, he will understand that many people recognise the political nature of those appointments and will ask, "If it happens in health, why shouldn't it happen over teachers' pay?".

Mr. Dunn: Because my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will choose honourable men and women to serve on the advisory committee.

As we are talking about appointments to bodies that have to take difficult decisions, I should say that the UGC has made controversial decisions in recent years and CATE also has a difficult task in evaluating teacher training and education.

The Bill provides that responsibility for appointing members to the advisory committee shall rest with the Secretary of State. That is a matter of consent. The difficulty about accepting the amendments is that they are mischievous and perverse, because they would recreate something that we are trying to get rid of—a mark II Burnham committee.

Amendment No. 34 talks about membership being one third one third one third to particular interests. Amendments Nos. 213 and 215 seek to increase the minimum and maximum size of the committee. If we had a committee of 12 people it would be divided 4:4:4, but how would the Labour party decide which of the six unions and the other teacher interests, such as the Inner London Teachers Association, should take up the four seats? Would there be weighting according to membership, regional spread, responsibility spread and so on? The Opposition have not thought it out. With 4:4:4, so that not all six unions can be represented, we shall be back to the major Burnham committee problems when the NUT dominated the committee through sheer weight of numbers. There would be a tussle for seats.

People who were appointed to the committee to represent particular unions or teacher associations would constantly have to go back to their masters to decide what their policy was to be. The independence that the Opposition would like for the committee would not exist from the first minute of the first day.

Accountability is an important aspect of the debate. To whom would the ILTA be responsible if it were appointed to the committee.

Mr. Fatchett: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Dunn: I promise that I shall give way in a moment. The matter of accountability is such that there may be nominations from employers, who might be Labour-dominated, and who then go back to their source, and there may be teacher unions, who would then go back to their source. The independence of the advisory committee, which genuinely is sought in the amendments, would not be brought about.

8.30 am

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that, quite frequently in arbitration cases, a neutral chairman is appointed and the employers nominate one person and the employees nominate another person? It would be easy for those three people to put forward someone who is independent and who they consider to be a fair-minded person. The Minister claimed that the Secretary of State was capable of doing that, so why can these groups not do it?

Mr. Dunn: This is not an arbitration concept. It is an advisory committee. The hon. Gentleman has been in politics for a fair while, as I have. He knows that a great deal is often done in an informal sense—in smoke-filled rooms, in bars or behind the Speaker's Chair — to achieve the same results. The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish is a man of the world. *[Interruption.]* I believe him to be a man of the world. I am sure that he must be. I should imagine that he knows precisely the nature and importance of informal exchanges as well as of formal exchanges. Constant toing and froing, from the advisory committee to the source of the nomination, will make the committee much more inflexible, much more dangerous and much less independent than the hon. Gentleman would like.

That is not the kind of advisory body that Conservative Members want. It is not, in our view, to be representative of particular vested interests. For the benefit of those who must already know, I repeat that we do not want any return to squabbling points of view and narrow sectarian approaches. The committee must be composed of people who can look objectively at the problems of the teaching profession, without fear of recall, censure or penalty. That means attracting and appointing independent people of standing to the advisory committee.

Mr. Fatchett *rose*—

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Do not give way.

Mr. Fatchett: The Minister is talking about independence, and he is taking orders. Does the Minister not accept that, under these procedures the Secretary of State has a right immediately to dismiss? He said that there shall be no recall, as there would be under a system of local government or local authority accountability, but there is a system of recall. It is in the Secretary of State's office, and it is called dismissal.

Mr. Dunn: The dismissal by any Secretary of State would be subject to judicial review. Would recall to the National Union of Teachers headquarters be subject to the same review? I doubt it.

Mr. Batiste: My hon. Friend should be aware that the city of Leeds, which is temporarily under Labour control, has an abysmal record of recalling councillors who speak in opposition to the party line. The measures that my hon. Friend announced will be important. That fact should be well known to the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds).

Mr. Dunn: Labour control of any place is a temporary phenomenon. The point that my hon. Friend made is well known, and I am sure that he will expose it in the city of Leeds with which he has connections.

Opposition Members will have to wait to see who is on the committee. We have not even begun to put together a list of names. It must be understood that the Secretary of State will look for people of standing, integrity and independence of mind. The committee will not be the Secretary of State's poodle. It will not even be a Welsh corgi. It will exercise independent judgment, conduct independent analysis and arrive at independent conclusions.

It is suggested that my right hon. Friend should not refer matters to the committee or give it directions, but that it should decide of its own motion what matters to examine, or should have matters referred to it by local education authorities and teachers unions, or should consider matters only after their referral has been the subject of consultation.

The committee will, in any event, have quite a task to undertake. It will need some indication of what matters to examine and what priority to give them. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the holder of his office will be able to pick out issues of importance for the committee's attention. When he does so, I should be very surprised if others did not think that they were important. He will not make an unreasonable selection of issues. If all and sundry could refer matters to the committee, the committee would be swamped and would not be able to function. Of course, the Opposition would like that. It is right, of course, that references should come from one direction and that the committee should then take evidence on them from all interested parties.

Not so much in this debate but in earlier ones, there was an insistence that the results of the committee's work should be published. That insistence is unnecessary. I can

[Mr. Dunn]

give, on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, an unqualified assurance that the committee's reports will be published. My right hon. Friend will place them in the Library and there will be no undue delays in publication.

I return to the point made by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central on dismissal. The Opposition have tried, and failed, to make something of the provision in the schedule that the Secretary of State may remove a member from office if that member is, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions of a member. They imply that there is something political or sinister in that. As the Committee knows, that is entirely common form. It appears in the Employment and Training Act 1973 in relation to the Manpower Services Commission and in the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 in relation to the Health and Safety Commission. Of course, the Committee will know that the Secretary of State would need to have evidence on which he could properly base an opinion that the member was unable or unfit to perform his duties. If he made an unreasonable decision, it could be challenged by way of judicial review.

Mr. Rogers: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Do not give way. The hon. Gentleman has not been here all night.

Mr. Dunn: I am an independent Member and I have given way a number of times.

Mr. Fatchett: The Secretary of State told the hon. Gentleman not to give way.

Mr. Dunn: I am conscious of that. But I want to help the Committee to make progress. As light breaks over Westminster, we must make progress.

I think that I have demonstrated that, although I understand the thrust of the amendments, it is my intention to suggest to the Committee that they be rejected.

Mr. Rogers: On a point of order, Mr. Armstrong. In view of the rather silly remark by the Secretary of State when I tried to intervene, is it now to be a condition of participating in the debate that an hon. Member should have been here all night? I do not think that the Secretary of State has been here all night.

The First Deputy Chairman: The hon. Member knows that that is not a point of order for me.

Dr. Marek: I shall certainly give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) if he chooses to intervene.

We have had a scandalous explanation of why we shall have an advisory body that will be dominated by the Secretary of State, will be accountable only to the Secretary of State, will be composed of placemen of the Secretary of State and will publish reports but not the reasons behind them. The Under-Secretary of State referred to other bodies, but he distanced himself somewhat from appointments in the Health Service. I shall be interested to read in the *Official Report* exactly what he said. He placed much emphasis on being able to appoint people from the Department of Education and Science who have integrity and who are capable of examining the issues objectively and reporting on them. But can he do that? Even if he can do it, he must convince the House, the public and the teachers that he has done it. Unless it is done openly, his case will not be very convincing.

I refer the Minister to the parallels with the University Grants Committee. Recently, the UGC carried out an exercise and published a report, but we do not know how it rated the various university departments and cost centres. There are rumours that it conducted the research by examining research papers produced during the past five years. This is relevant to the advisory body which the Minister proposes to set up. No one knows how the UGC carried out its work, because its operations are not published.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: If the hon. Gentleman were to speak a little louder, he would wake up his colleagues who are asleep on the Labour Benches. He is casting a slur on the work of the University Grants Committee, which consulted widely before making its determinations.

Dr. Marek: The hon. Lady is wrong. I may cast such a slur in what I am about to say, but so far all that I have said is that although the UGC produced a report—it consulted, but only with selected people—it did not explain how it went about its work and why it made the decision that it did. I hope that the hon. Lady will accept that. No one in the university system who is not a member of the UGC or one of the sub-committees knows exactly what went on in the UGC. Several academics in universities have been drawing comparisons between what should be cut a litle more and what should be cut a little less and the institutions from which the members of the UGC come. I do not suggest that there is more than a casual connection. However, it is for the UGC to prove that there is no causal connection between the institution from which a UGC member comes and the results for that institution. The matter is debated in university circles.

I suspect that the same thing will happen with this advisory body. Of course, it could be appointed from people who have integrity and can consider matters objectively, and no doubt its reports will be pulbished, but unless the reasoning and the papers behind the report are published, the public will be unable to judge the objectivity of any such reports. The Secretary of State has no intention of publishing all the papers. The Under-Secretary of State is shaking is head. Suspicion will, therefore, remain, and I am sorry to have heard such shallow reasoning by the Minister, who jumped up early before some of my hon. Friends could make their important contributions to the debate. I hope that the Minister will speak again in the debate.

ILO convention 151, article 8, states:

"The settlement of disputes arising in connection with the determination of terms and conditions of employment shall be sought, as may be appropriate to national conditions, through negotiation between the parties or through independent and impartial machinery, such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration, established in such a manner as to ensure the confidence of the parties involved."

I quoted that convention earlier.

We have not heard a satisfactory reply from the Secretary of State. He dismissed it, although Britain is a signatory to the article. I wish to dwell on some of the words used in the article—"confidence" and "independent and impartial". Why should we accept from the Minister that the advisory committee will be independent and impartial? He says that it will be from his point of

view. However, it will be made of people whom he has appointed and to whom he will refer matters and then receive their report. Why should we see them as independent and impartial?

Secondly, the paragraph at the end of article 8 says: "to ensure the confidence of the parties involved." It does not say "party"—the Minister—but "parties"—the other side of the argument, the LEAs and the professional teacher organisations representing the teachers.

8.45 am

I should like an explanation from the Minister of how the form of advisory committee that he is setting up fits in with article 8 and why he thinks that this advisory committee will establish or ensure the confidence of the parties involved. I cannot see that. It will ensure the confidence of one of the parties, the Minister—there is no doubt about that—but I do not think that the Minister will argue with me that the teacher organisations will have no confidence in the advisory committee.

Other hon. Members want to speak and I shall not delay the Committee further. I have made two serious points. We want to see more confidence and impartiality. I understand the arguments on the advisory committee. The hon. Gentleman does not want it to be another Burnham committee. I do not necessarily agree with him, but I take his point and I understand his arguments. However, that does not mean that he cannot move some way towards meeting the requirements of article 8 of convention 151, which the United Kingdom as ratified. He could also take some lessons from what has happened within the UGC and the way in which that information has been disseminated, because I am sure that there are lessons there. He should try to avoid the same sort of thing happening with the advisory committee.

Mrs. Elizabeth Shields (Ryedale): The most worrying implication of the Bill, not just for the education sector, which is naturally of the utmost importance to the country's future, but for other areas where a similar power may be built in, is the totalitarian control afforded to the Secretary of State.

There was much talk by the Minister earlier in the week of "consultation", but that consultation may count for nothing if the Secretary of State can overrule every suggestion, proposal or amendment, even after discussion and recommendation by the proposed advisory committee.

The Secretary of State is effectively saying to the teachers, the unions and the LEAs, "Heads I win, tails you lose." The whole principle of collective bargaining is being abandoned. Not only are the local authorities, which, as employers pay the greater part of teachers' salaries, being deprived of their negotiating rights, but so are the teachers' representatives.

The unprecedented attack on negotiating rights may be the most iniquitous part of the Bill. Those rights have been in existence since 1919 and, if superseded by the proposals, could mean the disfranchisement of about 400,000 teachers.

The standing joint committee was founded in order to bring stability into industrial relations in education through a national partnership composed of LEAs, teachers and the state. I recognise that, 60-odd years later, the reform of Burnham is needed, but the proposals before us are for complete centralisation.

Amendment No. 34 says that the major bodies concerned should be represented—both the unions most closely involved with the members of the profession and the teaching scene in the classroom, and of the LEAs, which have local responsibility for and knowledge of the schools in their areas.

If one compares the procedures relating to pay and conditions in the nursing profession, for example, there is obviously a difference of approach. The nurses, rightly, have an independent review body to discuss their pay which is separate from negotiations carried out by the health authorities and the nursing unions with regard to their conditions of work. According to these proposals, teachers will have a non-independent review body which will be able to discuss only what the Secretary of State says it may discuss.

Many hon. Members have been connected in the past with the education service. My connections are more recent than theirs. I am well aware of the frustrations of former colleagues and of the low level to which morale in the profession has sunk. Abolishing national representation, thereby preventing teachers from communicating through well-established union channels, will not make for good industrial relations—rather the reverse. I do not believe, however, that teachers will allow themselves to be steamrollered in this fashion.

The Secretary of State is heading for disaster if he takes hold of the educational reins in the way that is outlined in the Bill and makes himself virtually a dictator in education. Given the rapidity with which the Bill is being pushed through Parliament, he may achieve his objective. The numerical superiority of those who sit on the Government Benches may, unfortunately, ensure this, but amendments may receive a different reception in another place.

The Secretary of State should also reflect upon the fact that a dictatorship can lead to unwelcome and sometimes unpleasant reactions. The practical consequences of his actions will echo adversely through the educational establishments of this land. I join other Opposition Members in condemning such a move in the educational sector as unprecedented, unwise and completely undemocratic.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): I had intended to address my remarks to the Secretary of State for Education and Science, but he has disappeared. He may come back, and if he does I hope that his junior Ministers will remind him of the remarks that I shall address particularly to him.

My intervention is relevant to the amendment. It is also relevant to the point made by the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mrs. Shields). She referred to the lack of morale in the teaching profession. I was a schoolmaster for a very long time. I was president of my association when we went on strike for one day to secure recognition for Burnham purposes. In those days the Conservative Government were swifter in detecting the feelings of those in the teaching profession than they are today. It is a pity that the Government do not recognise that their first priority should be to restore morale rather than to introduce the arrangements that are embodied in the Bill.

In January next the Secretary of State is to address the north of England education conference at Wentworth Woodhouse in my constituency. I wish to convey the apology that I have sent to those who invited me to attend

[Mr. Peter Hardy]

to the Secretary of State also. I have to attend a meeting elsewhere on the same day. It is important to refer to Wentworth, because something happened there about 100 years ago that is relevant to the Bill. It is right to tell the Committee about what happened then. In Wentworth there is a very good village school. It existed 120 years ago, and a maiden lady was the schoolmistress at that time. This was in the days when a reactionary 19th century Government applied the rule of payment by result.

When Her Majesty's inspector of schools arrived in Wentworth he decided that this lady was a very poor schoolmistress. His assessment of her teaching was "very wretched". The great house, Wentworth Woodhouse, which the Secretary of State is to visit shortly, is owned by the Earls Fitzwilliam. The Earl Fitzwilliam of the time took very seriously the patronage of his estate village. He was deeply concerned that Her Majesty's inspector of school's assessment of the lady was very poor. He came to the House of Lords, where he encountered the president of the board of education. He complained to him that Her Majesty's inspector of schools having had the audacity to give this lady a very bad assessment. Because of the way things were done in those days, shortly after Earl Fitzwilliam contacted the president of the board of education, Her Majesty's inspector of schools was asked to carry out a further inspection of this lady's achievements.

When the inspector arrived at Wentworth village school to review the case, he saw not merely the children of Wentworth, but the Earl Fitzwilliam, Countess Fitzwilliam, Lord Milton, their eldest son, who was usually a Member of Parliament—a Whig—and three or four assorted nobility. That was only a short time after the first assessment, but the strange thing was that the assessment that the inspector of schools made on the second visit showed a remarkable and astonishing improvement in the prowess and professional achievement of the teacher.

That story, which is relevant to the amendment——

Mr. Dunn *indicated assent.*

Mr. Hardy: I am glad that the Minister is nodding his head in approval of that proposition.

That story illustrates several things. First, it illustrates that the Conservatives 120 years ago were much more responsive to the realities for people in the north of England in areas such as mine than they are now. Secondly, it illustrates that the Conservative party has changed dramatically from the principle of noblesse oblige, which led an important nobleman to become concerned about a humble schoolmistress. Thirdly, it illustrates that those who were in Parliament and knew their areas could affect decision making in a way that this Government do not like. It may illustrate that there was something wrong with the methods of assessing teachers in those days. It may even illustrate that something was wrong about preferment in the Church. I understand that shortly afterwards that inspector of schools was made a bishop. It may illustrate that the methods of assessment, the principles involved and the mechanics that applied in those days are essentially the principles and mechanics that will relate to the development of the supervision of teachers' pay and conditions by the various bodies that will be associated with that process under the Government's proposals.

History turns circles. We are circling away from a system which, by its historic chemistry, had begun to develop fairly in the post-war period until this Government began to set the profession on its head. The Government should understand that the unsatisfactory aspects of 19th century educational management will be developed in the late 20th century. Before it is too late, I suggest to the Minister that the matter should be reappraised. The amendment should command attention.

Mr. Rogers: One of the problems that we face on Labour Benches is the fact that yet again we have come up against a Secretary of State and Ministers who refuse to accept reasoned argument on amendments that are designed to help. The Under-Secretary said that the amendments were mischievous and perverse and that they were Burnham mark II. Often, one of the reasons for developing a mark II of any product is that an improvement is required. That is why we have tabled the amendments.

The amendments are mischievous and perverse in one sense, in that when we tabled them we anticipated the Government's response. It is the response that they have given to every sensible suggestion that has been made. As Labour Members know, they are dug into blind dogmatic hatred, in many ways, of anybody who earns a wage or salary. Anybody who is on fees or commissions or who charges whatever he likes for whatever he performs is the good guy in the Conservative party book, but anyone who does an eight-hour day and is paid a wage or salary is the one to be screwed in the Conservative economy. So we expected that response to these reasonable amendments. We in the Opposition do not see what is wrong in any way with employees being involved in or consulted about their pay conditions of work and so on. We consider that to be normal, rational and proper.

At the end of all this, the teachers will end up being treated differently from every other profession in the country. The status of the teacher will be downgraded as a result of being subjected to the conditions of the Bill. No longer will the post of a teacher in the community be looked upon as an honourable profession, to be ranked alongside doctors, lawyers, accountants and architects. They will be seen as someone who is simply employed at the rates of pay and the conditions of work laid down by the Secretary of State.

9 am

The Secretary of State is absent, as I suppose he has been on many occasions during the night, because he looked very sleek this morning, but perhaps I can ask the junior Ministers some questions that I hope will be answered in the reply to this debate. My first, question, which I ask as a Welshman is, how many Welsh people will be on the body as of right? It is part of the arrogance of the Department of Education and Science on this matter that it has not even considered that issue and the Under-Secretary of State did not mention Wales in anything that he said. Of course, this measure applies not only to England but to Wales. What representation will Wales have on the body? Is the Minister going to allow the peculiar problems that relate to Wales and Welsh education to be taken cognisance of in the advice that is received? I know that it is daft for me to ask for

representation from Wales because we know that when the advice and reports are provided the Minister will ignore them anyway. However, we should put a clear marker down at this stage and I hope that the Minister replies he will say what input the Principality will have on the advisory committee.

When the Minister replies I hope that he will also be able to answer a point that was partly raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek). Will the papers and documents of the advisory committee be available for perusal by Parliament or is it to be another secret body to be kept under wraps with the only thing coming out at the end of the day being the Minister's decision? I hope that the Minister will be able to satisfy us on that. Will the report of the advisory body on any issue that has been referred to it by the Secretary of State be published?

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Yes.

Mr. Rogers: I am glad that the Secretary of State has said that, because it has relieved us of one of our great fears.

Mention has been made — I shall not labour this because contributions should be brief at this stage — of the fact that the Secretary of State will be quite unilateral in his powers of appointment.

I greatly fear the way in which appointments have taken place in area health authorities in Wales since the Government took office. With the appointment of the Secretary of State for Wales we saw a clearing out of everybody who sat on those bodies who did not conform to the Secretary of State's potential views. We had ridiculous circumstances where people of great integrity, seniority and with great knowledge of the Health Service were dismissed and people were brought in who had no real knowledge of the Health Service and no real contact with it but happened to be friends or, in one instance, the solicitor, of the Secretary of State for Wales. I am not saying that that man was not a person of integrity, honour, fairness and intelligence but he did not have any background in that area and it was obviously a personal appointment of the Secretary of State for Wales. I hope that the Secretary of State for Education and Science will not go down that road in making his appointments.

One problem with this — I am sure that the Secretary of State will accept our fears on this issue — is that if he is to have such wide and arbitrary powers he must accept that we will be suspicious of them. The present Secretary of State may appoint a fair and honest committee of people with integrity and he may heed its advice, but that does not mean that all future Secretaries of State will do so. The profession and everyone else must be concerned at such a small body being given such arbitrary powers and reporting only to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Barron: The debate is going so well that I hesitate to intervene, but I wish to point out the great weakness of clause 2. I refer to the absence of any indication, either in the clause or in the Minister's speech, as to whether the local authorities and the teachers' unions and associations will in any way be represented on the advisory committee. I hope that the Minister will tell us, preferably before we divide the Committee on this, whether there is any intention to consult the various bodies and, if so, how it will be done.

Amendment No. 33 is one of the most helpful amendments that I have ever seen. It does not lay down powers sought by the Secretary of State but asks him to consult the education authorities and the teachers' unions and associations before the appointments to the committee are made public. I cannot see anything wrong with that. The Secretary of State should also regard it as his duty to consult the major parties in relation to any agreement or advice suggested by the advisory committee.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) mentioned convention No. 151 of the International Labour Organisation. Article 8 refers to

"independent and impartial machinery, such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration, established in such a manner as to ensure the confidence of the parties involved."

How can any of the parties have any confidence in the advisory committee when the Secretary of State and the Minister will not say whether they are prepared even to consult, let alone take note or do as they are bid by the interests involved. Amendment No. 33 is perfectly reasonable. It would go some way, at least, towards ensuring that there is some confidence in the decisions coming from the advisory committee. The Minister described it as mischievous and perverse. That is a disgraceful reaction to a helpful amendment. I am sure that it would be supported by all the organisations that seem to be excluded from consultation by the Secretary of State.

I see that the Secretary of State and the Minister of State have their heads together. I hope that they will reconsider amendment No. 33 and accept that consultation has always been embedded in the machinery of public bodies and trade unions. We want the Government to help the negotiations rather than try to get rid of free collective bargaining negotiations, and thus fail to ensure that people get their rights and have confidence in what is being done by Whitehall.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): I apologise for not being here to hear the dawn chorus, but I do not intend to delay the Committee long.

The Government seem to be proceeding with this Bill, as with many others, on the basis of the old schoolmasterish principle that if it answers back shut it up, if it still answers back suspend it, and if it still answers back expel it. That is not a democratic approach. We want a society in which people are encouraged to answer back and have their say and a legitimate influence on all of the bodies that affect them.

The Burnham committee, flawed as everybody realises that it is, provides for teachers and their employers to have a major say in what happens to their pay. The Bill is just a product of the Government's "rent-a-creep" approach to public bodies. Whenever they have the opportunity, they get rid of representative bodies and replace them with appointed ones. The appointees are scarcely worthwhile. They are not people of stature because people of stature will not come forward to be appointed as creatures of the Government.

General Jaruzelski would be happy with schedule 1 and the terms of appointment. It is a long time since we heard the cant of Conservative Members about free trade unions in Poland, but all their cant did not lead them to do anything about helping free trade unions in Britain.

Mr. John Evans (St. Helens, North): Is my hon. Friend aware that, since the Tories took office in 1979, they have

[Mr. John Evans]

put three Bills through the House — the Employment Acts of 1980 and 1982 and the Trade Union Act 1984 — on the grounds that they are giving trade unions back to their members, whereas here they are taking trade unions away from their members? Would my hon. Friend care to comment on that?

Mr. Dobson: That is the nub of the argument about the Bill. The Government are saying that we can have free trade unions, it is just that they will not have a say in anything to do with pay and conditions.

It is common knowledge that the Government, led by the Prime Minister, ask of every potential public appointment, "Is this person one of our sort?" The Ministers who make the assessments, however, have proved themselves utterly unfit for public office. They will ask whether Mr., Mrs. or Ms. X is one of their sort and will properly reflect their views if appointed to the advisory committee.

I challenge the Secretary of State to get up now and guarantee that he will make available in the Library all of the information that he, his Department and Tory Central Office has about any of the people that they consider for appointment to the advisory committee.

Mr. Rogers: My hon. Friend might not be aware that the Minister said that he would appoint only honourable men. He did not mention honourable ladies.

Mr. Dunn: I did.

Mr. Rogers: In that case I withdraw my comment.

Mr. Dobson: My recollection tallied with that of my hon. Friend, but no doubt *Hansard* will show who is correct.

9.15 am

Mr. Cabom: We have seen this political vetting in many sectors since the Government have been in power, for example in the health authorities. A colleague of mine in Sheffield was the chair of one of the area health authorities for many years, but has now been removed because he would not comply with the privatisation diktats from Government. He has a wealth of knowledge about the industry and the services provided, but because he will not carry out Government dogma, he has been removed from his post. Could not such actions be repeated under the provisions of the Bill?

Mr. Dobson: I agree with my hon. Friend. In the health sector, there has been a tradition of making balanced appointments on the basis that people would reflect the public interest, and have a record of public service and so on. In this case, the Government are setting out to establish a body with the sole objective of ensuring that nobody with a track record of public service would dream of serving on the body.

It is an inherent tendency in anyone with power to appoint those who will agree with one, but some people manage to resist that. The Government have not, but they would also claim that they are getting a good quality of appointee, even among those who always agree with them. Therefore, it is worth while drawing attention to that part of schedule 1 that refers to those who have become bankrupt or made an arrangement with their creditors being dismissed from those bodies.

It is not long ago that one of the Government's appointees as chair of the south-west Surrey health authority, a Mr. Salmon, left that office because he became bankrupt. The Government had such faith in the financial and managerial skills of Mr. Salmon, that one of his previous appointments was to a group that was advising the Government on value for money in the National Health Service. He was one of the Prime Minister's sort, but he was so stupid as to go bankrupt because he bought a boatload of bananas that went rotten before he could get them to shore. Those are the sort of people that the Government are appointing, and we want to keep them out of our Health Service, and wish that they had never got into our education system.

There is a serious point to be made to those Tory Members who call themselves, and genuinely believe themselves to be, Conservatives. Many of them are not, by any definition. Those who regard themselves as Conservative take almost as a first principle, "He who rules best rules less." No one could accuse this Government on that fundamental Conservative belief. They are centralist and interfering, and they make change without any forethought. They get rid of institutions that have served for a long time, and substitute things that are almost bound to be cock-ups from the start. They do not give any value to our exisiting institutions or to the plural aspects of our country, to which most hon. Members and certainly Labour Members, would subscribe.

We subscribe to the view that there are and should be countervailing centres of power in our society, but Government Members utterly reject that proposition. That is why we reject the schedule and support the amendments. We accept that the amendments fall far short of producing a decent advisory committee because it is impossible by amendment to turn into something useful a measure which starts out profoundly flawed and incapable of performing the task it is supposed to perform. Tory Members and people wo regard themsleves as Conservatives should know that the Government are not Tories: they do not subscribe to any of the decent traditions of British Conservatism. That is why the Conservatives will be rejected at the next election.

Mr. Freud: This series of amendments looks at the opportunities for consultation. As I drove back here after my bath break between 5.30 and 8 o'clock, I listened——

Mr. Forth: Lucky you.

Mr. Freud: Lucky me, indeed. As I drove back I listened to BBC Radio 4 to hear about what was happening in the Committee. The announcer said that the Government were introducing a Bill for "imposed settlement." It is extraordinary that the Secretary of State, who prides himself not only on his use of English but on his correct use of taut English, should believe that such a thing as an imposed settlement exists. It is a contradiction in terms, and the only way it would have any relevance would be if the Secretary of State were to level with those people on whom he will try to impose a concordat. Neither the Bill nor the clause seeks a concordat.

I remind the Minister and the Secretary of State, who is absent, that the whole point of negotiation is that it provides a safety valve for people before they take more serious and damaging action. By removing that safety valve, the Secretary of State is jeopardising the well-being and continued education of our children.

Schedule 1 deals with the advisory committee. There is no intention of giving the teachers a fair deal. No attempt has been made to appoint to the committee anyone who will represent and speak up for the teachers, or the employers.

Mr. Dunn: How does the hon. Gentleman know that?

Mr. Freud: I know because the committee will have no power. It cannot vote for its own chairman because he will be imposed on the committee.

Mr. Dunn: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Freud: Not at the moment. Allow me to finish my sentence.

This schedule shows contempt for the teachers and for the negotiating procedure and will impose on the teachers what they do not want.

Mr. Dunn: The hon. Gentleman said there would be no one to speak up for the teachers or for the local education authorities. How does he know? We have not even begun to formulate precisely the interests that will be represented on the advisory committee.

Mr. Tony Banks: That is disgraceful.

Mr. Freud: The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) is right. It is disgraceful. It is the job of the legislation to provide facilities for teachers and persuade them that the Bill will look after their interests. The schedule says that anyone who:

"has become bankrupt or made an arrangement with his creditors, is incapacitated by physical or mental illness,"

will be removed from the committee. Can the Minister tell us who will be the judge of mental illness? Many people accused his predecessor of being less than totally sane. Would that be a criterion for removing someone from the committee? The schedule also mentions anyone

"who has been absent from two or more consecutive meetings of the Committee, otherwise than for a reason approved by the Committee".

Even if that is thought to instill a certain demand on attendance, there is then a catch-all phrase:

"or who is in the opinion of the Secretary of State otherwise unable or unfit to perform his duties"

I presume that

"unfit to perform his duties"

would mean unfit in the eyes of the Secretary of State to do what he would like him to do, which is to behave in the way in which the patsies who will be put on to the advisory committee will be expected——

Mr. Dunn: I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman was in the Chamber when I spoke a few moments ago. Will he confirm that he was not? If he was not, I direct him to read the report of my remarks in *Hansard*. I covered the precise point that he is making in my remarks a few moments ago.

Mr. Freud: If the Minister has said anything to disprove what I am accusing him of, those words should by rights be in the Bill, and more particularly in the schedule. A teacher will read the legislation and ask himself what it contains to protect him. He will want to know what machinery exists to enable teachers, through their unions and democratic negotiating procedure, to be able to bring their justifiable views to the Government's attention. He will not read a report in *Hansard* to ascertain what the Minister might or might not have said during an early-morning sitting.

Mr. Tony Banks: Is it not a fact that when a Bill is being considered in Committee it is incumbent upon Members, and certainly Ministers, to ensure that all the good intentions that the Minister of the day might have are set out in clauses? If there is to be a subsequent challenge of an Act in the courts, the judges will not be allowed to read *Hansard* to ascertain what the Minister was saying at the time and what his good intentions were. Ministers move from one Department to another as ministerial changes are made. Legislation must be precise, and in this instance it is not.

Mr. Dunn: The Bill is precise.

Mr. Freud: I agree entirely with the hon. Gentleman. It is all very well for the Minister to say from a sedentary position that the Bill is precise, but that can be said only when everything is set out in the Bill, and that is not the position at present.

On Second Reading, I asked the Minister of State to tell me of any other group of employees who is as disfranchised by negotiating legislation as the teachers will be when the Bill becomes an Act. What other special cases are there? The police are better represented than the teachers will be, and the same can be said of nurses, firemen and water authority employees. As an education spokesman, I deeply resent 400,000 teachers being disadvantaged and disfranchised by being put into a special category of non-representation by this Bill.

I accept that the Secretary of State deserves power and I do not object to the renunciation of the 1965 Act, but I mind very much what is being put in its place. History will show that it is the wrong measure at the wrong time and that it has been introduced after insufficient consultation. Over the next hours, or days, we shall attempt to persuade the Government to accept that the Bill is capable of amendment to satisfy those who look to us to provide decent legislation for their negotiating system.

Mr. Evans: I wish briefly to express my contempt for the authors of the Bill. This is ne of the vilest measures ever to be put before the House of Commons. Those who have produced it are not democrats and should be ashamed of themselves. The Bill exposes the complete and utter hypocrisy of the Tory party and all its works.

I intervened in the debate a short while ago to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Government have produced three major Bills since 1979 directed to the affairs of the trade union movement. They were the Employment Act 1980, the Employment Act 1982 and the Trade Union Act 1984. We were repeatedly told by Secretaries of State and Ministers for Employment that the Bills had one express purpose — to give trade unions back to trade unionists. The thrust and purpose of the Government's exercise was to democratise the trade union movement. I refer to part I of the Trade Union Act 1984. At the time, the Government insisted that it was aimed at ensuring that trade unionists had the right to elect their executive councils. This clause——

9.30 am

The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is coming towards the end of his preamble and will now address himself to the amendment, which relates to the membership of the advisory committee.

Mr. Evans: The preamble is necessary, Sir Paul. Clause 2 informs us

"The Secretary of State shall appoint an Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions to examine and report to him on such matters relating to the remuneration and other conditions of employment of school teachers"—

in other words, to do the job that those employed in the teaching profession collectively join together to perform, and that is to form a trade union.

The Government have taken away the trade union from those employed in the teaching profession. They have taken away their executive council. They have removed from the executive council the functions that any trade union should perform — negotiating wages and conditions. The Government, who repeatedly force Bills through the House on the basis of giving trade unions back to their members, have produced a Bill that effectively removes trade unionism from the teaching profession.

Mr. Dunn: Rubbish.

Mr. Evans: The Minister says, "Rubbish." Will he tell the House precisely what the National Union of Teachers and other trade unions will do in future in relation to negotiating the pay and conditions of their members? I shall give way to the Minister if he can tell me how I am talking rubbish. The Minister blusters. He cannot answer the question. The clause is aimed at smashing the National Union of Teachers and other teachers' trade unions. Over 400,000 teachers will not forget that fact in the next general election. They will make sure that they, their families and the parents of their pupils will remember that the Tory party forced this evil Bill through the House. They will take their revenge on the Tory party at the next general election.

Mr. Fatchett: This has been a unique debate. We had to wait for nearly 16 hours to hear the first words from the Under-Secretary of State, and we had to wait virtually the same length of time to hear the initial contribution to the debate by the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), who speaks on behalf of the Liberal party. The debate has confirmed many of our fears.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) referred briefly to ILO convention 151, article 8. He said that the Government's action would transgress that article. The Government's defence is a weak one, but I shall not comment on it legalistically. Their defence is that by simply allowing trade unions the right to make a case and to forward it to the Secretary of State they will satisfy ILO convention 151, article 8. If that is what the Government mean by participation and democracy, it shows what little respect they have for the views of other people and trade unions.

The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East made an important point that has come through in the debate generally. He talked about collective bargaining acting as a safety valve. We had a long discussion earlier this morning about the powers and role of ACAS. A number of my hon. Friends pointed out that collective bargaining operates as a safety valve and provides a mechanism whereby industrial conflict can be institutionalised and peace preserved, not just in our schools, but in many other industrial relations aspects. The Bill will take away that layer of institutionalised conflict and bring the teachers' unions much closer towards raw politics. When we return to this debate, as we will from time to time, Ministers will be said to be responsible for politicising the teaching profession. I agree with the analysis of the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East on that point.

The Under-Secretary of State said with great relish that the amendments were "mischievous" and "perverse". I felt that he had waited some time to use those adjectives. It is churlish to call our measurs "mischievous" and "perverse" when we are trying to maintain a certain level of debate.

My hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) made some good points which suggest that many of our fears about the Secretary of State filling the advisory committee with his friends, who do his political work for him, are well founded. That is why we have taken such a strong line against the Bill and the advisory committee. The only point on which I disagreed with my hon. Friend was when he apologised for the fact that he had missed the dawn chorus this morning. He need not worry about that. There is a chance tomorrow and on other days to consider many other amendments, so why should he hide the talents that are clearly there to be used on other occasions?

If the Under-Secretary of State considers our amendments to be "mischievous" and "perverse", he should note that what is really mischievous and perverse about the Bill is that it will replace collective bargaining with an advisory committee comprised of place men appointed by the Secretary of State. That is why we shall seek a Division on amendment No. 35.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 93, Noes 216.

Division No. 31] [9.33 am

AYES

Alton, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Coleman, Donald
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Dobson, Frank
Eadie, Alex
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freud, Clement
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lamond, James
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McTaggart, Robert
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth

Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Don Dixon and
Mr. Ron Davies.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Mather, Carol
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Portillo and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Freud: I beg to move amendment No. 50, in page 1, line 23, leave out subsection (3) and insert—

'(3) The Secretary of State shall inform the Committee of any financial or other constraints which he considers to be relevant to their consideration of the remuneration and other conditions of employment of teachers, and as to the time within which they are to submit their report.'.

The Second Deputy Chairman: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 55, in page 1, line 23, leave out 'direction' and insert—

'such advice as he considers to be appropriate.'.

No. 59, in page 1, line 24, leave our from third 'to' to end of line 3 on page 2 and insert—

'the financial or other constraints and as to the conditions to which they shall have regard in discharging their functions under this Act.'.

No. 60, in page 2, line 1, leave out 'are' and insert 'may'.

No. 61, in page 2, line 1, leave out:

'and financial or other constraints to which their recommendations are to be subject,'.

No. 62, in page 2, line 1, leave out 'or other'.

No. 63, in page 2, line 1, leave out 'constraints' and insert 'consideration'.

No. 64, in page 2, line 1, leave out:

'to which their recommendations are to be subject'

and insert—

'which they may take into accont in their recommendations.'.

No. 81, in page 2, line 2, after 'subject', insert—

'which shall include the need to maintain and improve the morale of school teachers'.

No. 82, in page 2, line 2, after 'subject', insert—

[The Second Deputy Chairman]

'which shall include the need to expand provision for teachers' remuneration and other improvements to conditions of service'.

No. 83, in page 2, line 2, after 'subject', insert—

'which shall include the achievement and maintenance of a salary structure for teachers which pays proper regard to the value of good classroom teaching.'.

No. 84, in page 2, line 2, after 'subject', insert—

'which shall include the value of a properly-financed education service.'.

No. 87, in page 2, line 3, at end insert—

'( ) In any report to the Secretary of State the Committee shall state the considerations to which they have had regard in making their recommendations, together with any comments they may wish to make on the appropriateness of the relevant considerations, and as to any other considerations which would in their view be appropriate for them to have taken into account.'.

No. 88, in page 2, line 3, at end insert—

'( ) The Committee may after the making of a direction under sub-section (2) above publish any considerations which they may consider to be relevant in addition to those specified in the direction, and they may take these into account in making any recommendations to the Secretary of State as though they were specified in the direction.'.

No. 93, in page 2, line 6, leave out 'direction' and insert 'advice'.

It will also be convenient I understand to discuss the next group of amendments: No. 94, in page 2, line 6, leave out 'such' and insert 'all'.

No. 95, in page 2, line 6, after 'authorities', insert—

', organisations representing parents.'.

No. 96, in page 2, line 7, leave out 'such' and insert 'all'.

No. 97, in page 2, line 7, leave out 'as appear to them to be concerned'.

No. 98, in page 2, line 8, leave out 'any' and insert 'all'.

No. 99, in page 2, line 8, leave out from 'education' to 'and' in line 9 and insert 'authorities'.

No. 100, in page 2, line 10, leave out 'reasonable opportunity of submitting' and insert—

'period of at least four weeks to submit'.

No. 102, in page 2, line 11, at end insert—

'(4A) Such arrangements for submitting evidence and making representations shall include reasonable opportunity for the parties in subsection (4)*(a)* to discuss and negotiate between them such issues as they require so to consider jointly, whether in the presence of the Committee or otherwise.'.

Mr. Freud: It is very good to have a morning audience that was significantly missing during the night—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I think that it would be fair to tell hon. Members who have arrived now that they have missed some virtuoso performances. [HON. MEMBERS: "So have you."] I have been here. Above all was the virtuoso performance by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who is a graduate of the Quasimodo school of deportment and who kept the House up for some two hours.

This series of amendments covers the relationship between the Secretary of State and the advisory committee. That relationship is not dissimilar from that of Idi Amin and his army in their heyday, in that the Secretary of State may say what he will and the advisory committee will do what it is told to do. The Bill allows the Secretary of State to give directions to the committee. Our amendment maintains the link between the Secretary of State and the committee. We concede, for example, that he will have input regarding finance, but we would give him the power only to inform the committee and not to direct it. In that way, the committee would pursue its investigations in possession of all the relevant information but independent from the Secretary of State. Above all, our amendment is searching for a modicum of independence in the clause. I hope that when the Minister of State replies, she will give her attention to the independence that there will be on the part of members of the committee.

Reading the clause, we think that there will be no interest in what the committee might have to say—perhaps a passing interest, but in all the verbiage that we have had, it has become abundantly clear from the Government's responses that they are not interested in anything but the imposition of the Bill on teachers and employers. I have yet to meet a teacher or employer who feels that this emergency measure will be of benefit to them. Certainly it will in no way enhance their status.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett), who accused me of not speaking for some 14 hours, should concede that in a marathon, it is rather pointless to accuse someone who is running second, third and fourth leg of not contributing greatly to the first. I shall now listen to what the Minister has to say——

Mr. Fatchett: I should be interested to hear whether the hon. Gentleman wants to hear from the Minister about the principles of running a marathon. The hon. Gentleman said that it was sensible to keep the sprinters until the end of the marathon. We see that he is well fitted for that role. There is a danger that one needs runners in the earliest parts of the marathon. The Minister may well feel that the alliance has not provided us with runners for the earlier part of the marathon.

Mr. Freud: That intervention was not only stupid but pathetic. We had a five and a seven-hour debate on minor amendments, which many people with a selectivity of wisdom would have felt were less important than the major amendments that are now coming up.

It seems crucial that we should get the advisory committee right. These amendments deal with the relationship between the Secretary of State and the advisory committee. The Minister was not, of course, being asked to comment on the aesthetics of athletics or marathon running but on the relationship that she feels she will have with the committee and on the power the committee will have to be independent to the extent of choosing its own chairman, to select its own vice-chairman, to make decisions and to have genuine contact with the teachers and the employers so that they will have input that will not be brushed aside by the Secretary of State, but will have statutory powers.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): I wish to speak to amendment No. 81, which states:

"which shall include the need to maintain and improve the morale of school teachers."

I recognise that with the length of time that some debates have gone on, many issues have already been covered. Obviously with one's eye on the time, one cannot, at this stage cover all the points that are being made in this group of amendments.

I believe that the morale of the teachers educating our children is vital. It is true to say that over the past few years the morale of teachers has reached a low ebb. Indeed, until there are real and positive changes in direction by the

Government as a whole and a willingness to provide the resources necessary for education, that situation will continue. We believe that to set up this body is moving in the wrong direction, but we recognise that the Government will be able to force the Bill through because of their majority. However, if it has to go through we believe that morale has to be one of the issues considered by the advisory committee so that it is given proper consideration and importance.

If the morale of teachers is not good it affects the education of all our children. We want to ensure that the teachers have sufficient interest to be able to give our children a good education. I know that many people have said on numerous occasions that education is one of the biggest single investments that we make for the future of the country. Therefore, it is important that that investment is used to its full advantage.

We recognise the Government's argument, but we obviously disagree with their approach. However, I am sure that both sides of the Committee recognise that if we are to have a good education system we need teachers whose morale is at a high level. Therefore, it is important to overcome the difficulties of the past couple of years.

The mail on this issue from my constituency is only just beginning to come through because there was a postal strike in my constituency last week. However, even in the past 24 hours I have opened letters from teachers who are expressing their concern about the way in which the Government are moving and who believe that the Government and the Secretary of State will have so many powers that the power of negotiation and free collective bargaining will rest solely with the Secretary of State. I know that the Secretary of State will argue that that is not the objective and the Government will obviously argue that it is a step forward. However, one has to accept that those working in the education profession, the teachers themselves, do not see it as a step forward. We must accept the view of the teachers on this. The Government have already turned down an amendment which merely provided for consultation on appointments to the advisory committee. Far from improving, morale among teachers is likely to deteriorate. That would be most regrettable.

10 am

If the Government have any serious intention to improve the situation in education I hope that they will accept that morale is of great importance. They always say that they do, of course, but, as my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) pointed out, what Ministers say in debate is not the law. The law will be the wording of the Bill when it becomes an Act. If the Government believe that improving morale is important, perhaps they will show it by accepting at least amendment No. 81. I am sure that that would be welcomed, not just by the teachers' unions but by all in the teaching profession as well as by the parents of our schoolchildren. This should not be a political issue. It should attract the support of Members on both sides of the House.

At this stage of the proceedings I shall limit my comments to just one aspect of the amendments, but I am sure that my hon. Friends will wish to speak on the other important points raised by this group of amendments. I believe that the Government recognise the crucial importance of morale among teachers. If that is true, let them show it by accepting amendment No. 81 and securing a modest improvement in the retrograde step that they have taken in introducing the Bill.

Mr. Michael Hancock (Portsmouth, South): It is nice to participate at long last, having sat through six hours of yesterday's proceedings before concluding that what was happening was of no use whatever.

Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Vice Chamberlain of Her Majesty's Household): It is nice to see the hon. Gentleman in the Chamber at long last.

Mr. Hancock: I am glad to be here.

The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) talked about the morale of teachers. I do not believe that prolonging the agony, with one Opposition Member after another trying to gain brownie points from the teacher by speaking for as long as possible, will do anything whatever to boost the morale of teachers, parents, pupils at school or students in sixth form colleges who have seen the dramatic change that has taken place in education in the last five years. It is a travesty to suggest that our proceedings here yesterday, today and perhaps even tomorrow will do anything to alter the teachers' distruct of the Secretary of State's philosophy of trying to hammer things through or that they will induce any kind of confidence among teachers or their union representatives. Nevertheless, the exercise has to be gone through.

With the Secretary of State, I sat through the long agonies on the Local Government Bill — [HON. MEMBERS: "What is he talking about?"] I am talking about the need to boost morale. I went through that earlier exercise in the mistaken belief that prolonging the Committee stage and speaking for hour upon hour was boosting the morale of councillors trying to save the GLC and the metropolitan councils. I learnt that that was completely untrue. The metropolitan councillors who spoke to me afterwards said that they thought the whole thing was a sham and a farce.

I went through a similar exercise last year and, for my sins, prolonged the agony of the Dockyard Services Bill by speaking for close on one hour simply to drag out the debate. I was asked whether I was good for an hour. *[Interruption.]* I have several letters which confirm that I am better than good for more than one hour. It was suggested that it was time that the alliance did its bit to delay the Bill.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is good for an hour at the moment, but his speech must be on this group of amendments.

Mr. Hancock: I have good news for the House—an hour is not forthcoming today.

Amendment No. 50 is a step in the right direction. My hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) made the alliance's stance on the Bill clear on Second Reading, so criticisms about lack of speeches are ill founded. If the Secretary of State can see through the mud that he has tried to pour over the issue, he will see that amendment No. 50 is a real opportunity to go some small way towards redressing the difficulties that many people envisage.

Amendment No. 50 would allow a wider understanding of the problems which the Secretary of State, county councils and the advisory committee will face. It might

[Mr. Hancock]

also give the people who wrote to me a better understanding of what is going on. Opposition Members have quoted from letters. The Association of Polytechnic Teachers wrote to me expressing its anxieties. If amendment No. 50 is accepted, its representations might be considered. It is represented on Burnham, but the Bill would shut off that representation.

Mr. Fatchett: I do not want to interrupt the hon. Gentleman's flow, but if he had been here earlier he would know that the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) asked questions about the Association of Polytechnic Teachers and that the Minister gave various commitments. The hon. Gentleman would delay the Committee if he went through those arguments again when the Minister has already given such clear commitments.

Mr. Hancock: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, but the amendments to which he is referring fell. Commitments from Ministers mean nothing, because Ministers and Governments change. Consideration of polytechnic teachers' interests would be embodied in law, however, if amendment No. 50 were accepted. We can all talk about what went on in the past, but so far no amendment has succeeded. Whatever comes after the failure of these amendments should be seen as trying to embrace all the points that have been made.

I had hoped that the Government would realise, not from the expressions of concern and doubt in the House and the Committee, but by the concern of those at the coal face — the teachers, the parents and the students — the real problems that they are facing. I represent Hampshire, which employs 26,000 teachers. It has been beset with problems over the past two or three years, and those problems have not been helped by the Government's attitude or by that of the trade unions. However, that concern has been real and well founded. It is a sad reflection that something as important as the future of our children and the fabric of our education have been pushed even further over the abyss by this legislation.

The Bill would be a disaster in educational terms, and should be rejected. The alliance has made its views clear time and again. We would like to see a tripartite approach to negotiations, with the Government, the local authorities as the employers, and the teachers all playing a role, and with the opportunity for parents to have an input. I hope that the people of this country will realise that the only way that success will come to education, and morale in the profession improved, is not through manipulation but through a change of Government to a new Government with a strong realisation that education is as important as our existence on this planet. The only party hat has come near giving anything like that support to education is the alliance.

I hope that that message goes out. Amendment No. 50 is well worth supporting, and I am sure that all Opposition Members will see that. I hope that those Conservative Members who care about education will see that something that widens involvement in education is critical. We should all be grateful for that opportunity.

I am only sad that today has denied us two events. One is seeing the Leader of the Opposition, on his return from the United States, combating the Prime Minister. One wonders whether there is not a link between today's events and the fact that we shall be denied that opportunity.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not wander too far away from the amendment.

Mr. Hancock: I was about to wander back to a sedentary position. The other event that the House will be denied is my asking question No. 1 at Prime Minister's Question Time. I am bitterly disappointed about that. The question would have been directed to the events in the House over the past few days and the future of education. I should have liked the right hon. Lady as a former Secretary of State for Education and Science, to explain——

The Second Deputy Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not wander into tomorrow, if tomorrow never takes place.

Mr. Hancock: I was hoping to draw into my disappointment the fact that my question would have urged the Prime Minister to look carefully at amendment No. 50 and realise the merits of it, and how her colleagues had retreated from their duty in failing to support it. I urge the House to support it, because it gives us a real opportunity to redress some of the damage to education that has been done by the Government over the last three or four years.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am sorry that I cannot follow the simile about marathon races, because I have never participated in such events although I know that many people do participate. I am sure that the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) would have been excellent at that sport. If he would like to join me in a swim I would be more than happy to challenge him at any time.

I am glad that, in moving his amendment, the hon. Gentleman recognised that the advisory committee will need to work against the background of the relevant financial constraints. For the interim body we have concluded that the Secretary of State ought to have a more precise power to give directions to the committee about its considerations and its financial or other constraints, because the committee's recommendations will be subject to those constraints as well as to the time within which it has to report.

The power to give directions should be of considerable benefit to the committee during its interim life. For example, it would be quite stupid for the advisory committee remit not to take into account the financial position of local authorities and I am sure that no Opposition Member would suggest otherwise. The committee will also need to operate within the realistic framework of what local authorities can afford. Most local authorities operate within such a framework.

Other amendments have a common purpose — to weaken the control of the Secretary of State in determining matters upon which the committee is to advise and deciding within what constraints it should operate. I shall give two examples of this type of weakening. If the amendments were accepted the Secretary of State would not even be able to direct the committee that it ought to have in mind various considerations. Instead, he would be able only to give it advice and clearly, that would not be a sensible way for the advisory committee to set about its

task. Obviously, and not surprisingly, the Opposition would rather not permit the Secretary of State to advise the committee that its recommendations should be subject to certain financial considerations or, indeed, to any constraints. No doubt they would prefer the committee to assume that resources are totally limitless. It would be folly if the advisory committee's remit did not take into account the financial position of local authorities.

10.15 am

Mr. Tony Banks: An advisory committee made up of reasonably intelligent men and women will not do what the Minister suggests — take no notice whatever of financial conditions and be limitless in its approach? It is unrealistic to suggest that. The Minister cannot say that about people.

Mrs. Rumbold: Of course we expect the advisory committee to work within financial constraints, and it would be helpful if the Secretary of State could advise it about the kind of financial constraints under which it will work. I accept the hon. Gentleman's point. Because they will be reasonable people, we expect that that is the way in which they will operate.

Mr. George Park (Coventry, North East): Does the Minister realise that by using the word control she reveals the huge gap between us in the approach to this problem that we all want to see solved? In normal negotiations both sides would set out the position as they see it. The Minister would set down what he saw as the restraints and the teachers' organisations would put forward their case. That is why the Opposition are trying through amendments to persuade the Minister to come back to a negotiating posture, so that all the pros and cons, the restraints and the advantages, can be set on the table and freely negotiated. If that were possible, we would arrive at a mutual agreement. We would have peace in the schools and teachers would know that they had taken part in negotiations for a settlement and had not had a settlement imposed upon them.

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Gentleman is plausible, but the intention behind the amendment is to restrict the role of the Secretary of State in regard to the work of the interim advisory committee. The open-endedness of the terms of reference that Opposition Members would wish to see go very much along the lines that have been set out during the debate. It is important to remember that the advisory committee is being brought into place to replace arrangements that have failed. In turn, the committee will be succeeded, we hope, in due course, by other arrangements, which will have been duly discussed by the parties concerned, which will have been consulted.

In the brief time that the advisory committee will be in existence it will have a job to do. It will need some direction on the matters relating to pay and conditions of service on which it is to concentrate. I suggest that that is a proper function for the holder of my right hon. Friend's office. That function is to give assistance and any direction that it is appropriate to give on other constraints to which the recommendations are to be subject. It is on the basis of that clear approach that the committee should be able to give of its best.

Labour Members and the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) spent some time discussing the raising of morale in the teaching profession. The hon. Gentleman's opposition to the Government's reasonable proposition is the factor that will damage the teachers most in the long term. Our proposals include a substantial pay increase for teachers next year and the putting into place of an effective system of pay determination in the medium term.

Mr. Hancock: I understand what the Minister is saying, and no one appreciates the need for teachers to have a decent pay rise more than I do. I support that proposition wholeheartedly. I shall be interested to know whether the hon. Lady considers that amendment No. 50 will cause teachers to think that they will not have better vehicle for negotiations in future. I shall be interested also to know whether she can state to what she objects in amendment No. 50. If she reads it carefully, she will appreciate that its wording is far better than the relevant passage in the Bill. I think that the hon. Lady owes those who are associated with the amendment a proper explanation of what is it she sees that will constrain the Secretary of State, other than telling the truth to his appointees.

Mrs. Rumbold: I have already paid tribute to those who tabled amendment No. 50 in so far as it recognises that there is a need to have a financial constraint placed upon the interim committee. My right hon. Friend and I understand what those who are associated with the amendment have tried to do. We do not accept that it is quite as good or accurate as the relevant passage in the Bill, but we recognise the attempt that has been made to put forward their point of view.

The hon. Member for Portsmouth, South contended that the low morale of teachers would continue if the Bill were to be enacted. I am trying to explain to him as best as I can—poorly, I know—that it is our belief that the proposals that are set out in the Bill will give the teachers stability and the certain knowledge that there will be a system for determination of their pay in the medium term. This will enable them to raise their morale and to return to work feeling that there is at least a Government who care about the way in which their pay structure should be dealt with and the way in which they operate within the schools. We feel that that is most important.

A number of other amendments have been brought to the attention of the Committee. There are issues such as the advisory committee having the discretion to decide which association of local education authorities appears to it to be concerned. It is possible that some authorities could form themselves into a group or association that had no common interest in teachers' pay and conditions. It would be somewhat irrelevant for the Government to accept amendments of that character, and most of the amendments before us fall into that category. I suggest that the Committee rejects them.

Mr. Fatchett: At this stage of the debate, it may be useful to state the official Opposition's position in relation to amendment No. 50. The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), the spokesman for the Liberal party, said that the Liberals had prioritised amendment No. 50. It was an amendment of supreme and significant importance. If hon. Members have a policy of priorities and pick on particular issues, it is important that we develop a strategy at the early part of the debate.

It is clear that the alliance strategy has worked. Alliance Members waited until amendment No. 50 was under discussion, to "major" on it, to use an American

[Mr. Fatchett]

expression. Liberal Members had not spoken until 9.45 am, when the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East spoke for 17 minutes. He preserved himself for his contribution to the debate on this important amendment. Alliance Members did not intervene. They saved all their fire power for amendment No. 50. So far, the total contributions to the debate, in this process of prioritising, by the alliance parties—even with the hon. Gentleman's contribution—comprised 36 minutes contribution to the total debate over 118 hours. Without trying to be too much of a mathematician, that totals 3·33 per cent. between the two parties. Clearly—[AN HON. MEMBER: "It is like an opinion poll".] And it is like an opinion poll rating. Clearly, the policy of prioritising amendment No. 50 worked perfectly. Alliance Members waited until that point.

Nobody would disagree with the purpose of the amendment. To a great extent, it is self-fulfilling and self-satisfying. We will support the amendment because any attempt to get some information out of the Secretary of State as to the contraints under which the advisory body will operate will be of benefit. If alliance parties Members examine their own amendment, they will see that it is badly drafted. I shall ask my hon. Friends to support it, but they may be worried about supporting it for certain reasons. I do not know whether the Minister commented upon this matter. The alliance amendment states:

"The Secretary of State shall inform the Committee of any financial constraints".

If political parties claim to believe in the disclosure of information into the public domain, it would be important that not only does the Secretary of State inform the advisory committee but that he makes that information available to the relevant parties.

If we are to "major" on an amendment, it is crucially important that that amendment is right. It may take us back to some of the arguments that we used in which we suggested that there had been a rush from Second Reading to Committee. If there had been more time, the inconsistencies of the amendment would have been noted.

I ask my hon. Friends to support the amendment simply on the ground that we wish more constraints to be placed upon the advisory committee. We say to the alliance parties, "When you do it again, please do better. Please make sure that you think through all the implications. If you are to have a flow of information, we would like it in the public domain because that is where it should be". We previously thought that that was the policy of the alliance parties. It clearly is not the case. Maybe this belief in secrecy has characterised the alliance parties' contribution to the debate.

Mr. Rogers: The clause emphasises the central role that the Secretary of State intends to take in the future settlement of teachers' demands about pay and conditions of work. The Minister said that the committee should have regard to the financial position of local authorities. In saying that, the Minister put the importance of local authorities in the payment and employment of teachers at the centre of the debate. It is strange that she should emphasise that the local authorities' financial position should be one of the main considerations of the committee, because it is not intended that they should be represented on it. Thus local authorities will have to pick up the bill for 54 per cent. of the teachers' remuneration without having any say.

10.30 am

The Minister and her Friends continually say, "Why should the Burnham committee reach a settlement but the Government have to pick up the tab?" They imply that the Government are dispensing their own money, and not money that belongs to the people.

Clause 2 proposes setting up a body that will recommend the amount of expenditure made by the local authorities—they will pay the bulk of it—without giving them any representation. Therefore, the Government are confounded and defeated by their own argument. They will not accept the amendment because of their dogmatic attitude towards wage earners. That just shows the nonsense of their blind hatred towards people who earn salaries and wages, as opposed to those who can fix commissions or charge fees to earn their living.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) has left the Chamber, because I should have liked to address my comments to him directly. I have to admit that I am one of those hon. Members who had a reasonable night's sleep, and who came back early this morning to participate in the debate. It was a pleasure for me to see the newly risen hon. Member for Portsmouth, South come into the Chamber, looking very spruce, to address us this morning—*[Interruption.]* It is no surprise that he is known as the part-time hon. Member for Portsmouth, South. However, I did not like the fact that he made me feel so sad. He said that he was sad, but I have never heard a more depressing speech. He spoke first about the length of the debate—not that he had been here. He then said that we were not giving support and morale to the teachers, although he did not even suggest an alternative. He spoke about travesties and disasters, and said that the debate was a sham and a farce. I imagine that he spent the night consulting some thesaurus. It was suggested that he might be good for a speech lasting an hour, but if it was going to be an hour of that, I am sure that we would all have found our way to a clinic.

Mr. Fatchett: Last night I intervened when my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) commented on the absence of members of the alliance parties and, among other things, on the way in which ACAS works. I reminded my hon. Friend that at a rally yesterday in Central hall, Westminster, which was organised by the National Union of Teachers, the SDP spokesman, Anne Sofer, committed the SDP to fighting the Bill line by line. Does my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) feel that Anne Sofer's remarks were consistent with the policies set out by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South?

Mr. Rogers: I shall not comment on the position of either Anne Sofer or the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South, but I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman has not returned to the Chamber. I shall not stray into discussing ACAS, because, as the hon. Member for Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones) knows, our flat Welsh vowels create problems for us in pronouncing the second part of ACAS.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) is absolutely right in saying that the SDP gives promises but does not fulfil them. Alliance Members come

to the Chamber and try to depress us. Hon. Members were enjoying the night, and found a great thrill in the arguments of the debate, the constructive attitudes of the Opposition, and the negative arguments adopted by the Government. Then the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South came here in such a defeatist mood, and that has made me very sad.

The amendment is vital and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central said earlier, Opposition Members will have to support it. Indeed, the alliance amendments are important because they seek to put the position of the local authorities and of the advisory committee at the centre of the argument.

Mr. Tony Banks: The Minister said that those on the advisory committee could, if they were not given directions about financial constraints, act in such a way as to assume that there were no constraints. I do not know who the Minister or the Secretary of State are considering appointing to the advisory committee. Indeed, that is one of the problems. I have not sat through all the debate. I was here until about 2 am, but then I left for four or five hours. Therefore, I do not know whether the Minister has told the Committee the names of the people who will be on the advisory committee.

Mrs. Rumbold: No, I have not.

Mr. Banks: If the Minister has not advised hon. Members of that, one can assume only that the list exists somewhere. I imagine that it will be difficult to get anybody with any self-respect to serve on the advisory committee. However, as there is little self-respect in the Tory party these days, the Minister's job will not be that difficult, because those appointed will probably all be hand-picked Tories. Even if they are hand-picked Tories, it is difficult to accept that they will not be aware of the general financial problems. They would be peculiarly detached if they were not aware of the financial positions of the Government and the local authorities.

I also found it strange that the Minister said that, if one has an advisory committee, one gives it directions on financial matters. I should have thought that an advisory committee would be able to look at a situation impartially and to offer advice to the Secretary of State. Under the Bill, the Secretary of State is under no compulsion to accept any advice that he is given. Why bother to give the advisory committee directions if the Secretary of State can ultimately ignore its advice, even if that advice is within the constraints of the directions that he has given them?

Quite frankly, the committee will be a stooge or a poodle committee. Whatever adjective one uses, nobody with any self-respect or standing in education is likely to want to serve on that sort of committee. Therefore, we shall look with great interest at the names of those people. Perhaps some people hope to serve and to be rewarded eventually by elevation to the other place, or by the baubles that the Prime Minister can hand out from time to time.

I did not propose to speak to the amendment until my hon. Friends started discussing the fact that education authorities pay about 54 per cent. of the costs of teachers' salaries. Overall, that is no doubt true. However, in the absence of block grant, the Inner London education authority pays 100 per cent. of the pay bill of inner London teachers. Under the Bill, it will lose any effective influence that it has, other than through consultation. It is unacceptable that the Government, who pay nothing at all, should have the temerity to say that they will tell ILEA, which pays everything, what it must do. That is thoroughly unacceptable, and that is why I support the amendment.

Mr. Freud: After 10 hours of debate, I suggested that we might make progress. There were enraged cries from Labour Members who explained that, far from taking their time on a specific batch of amendments, they were using the Committee of the whole House procedure as we would normally use such procedure upstairs in Committee. With the promise that that would be continued throughout the passage of the Bill, I did not beg to move, That the Question be now put. I have been here for all but three hours of the debate—*[Interruption.]* The Chair refused the closure, and I did not seek to move it again, although that debate continued for another five and a half hours. However, 15½ hours of debate on clause 1 and less than three hours of debate on clause 2 would seem to fall short of that promise.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) said that we majored on amendment No. 50. We certainly believe that the committee's constitution is of considerable importance. Indeed, we consider clause 2 to be of great importance. The amendment asks that

"The Secretary of State shall inform the Committee of any financial or other constraints which he considers to be relevant to their consideration of the remuneration and other conditions of employment of teachers, and as to the time within which they are to submit their report."

However flawed the amendment may be in the eyes of hon. Members in that it does not make a great song and dance about freedom of information, it remains eminently acceptable. I cannot see why the Minister should look into the middle distance or why she should do anything but accept it. If the hon. Member for Leeds, Central wants to add the rider that all information should be freely given to those who want to be in receipt of it, we will certainly not object.

The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) has left the Chamber, but he made a relevant point when he said that the teachers' morale was crucial. If we can get any good out of this defective legislation, it must be to persuade the teachers that it will, to some extent, be to their benefit. To date, a vast amount of time has been taken up in acccusations and counter accusations about the absence of hon. Members at specific times. It is only fair to put on record that we have been here for 18½ hours so far, and no hon. Member can remain conscious in the Chamber for that long. It is twice as long as an HGV driver is allowed to drive under EEC regulations. I hope, therefore, that hon. Members will stop scoring cheap points about the temporary absences of certain hon. Members.

Throughout this debate, the Benches of all three participating parties have been manned. If the alliance bench has not been as heavily manned as other Benches, the iniquities of our electoral system are to blame. However, on a percentage basis we are even now more heavily represented in the Chamber than any other party.

Mr. Rogers: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that we were not criticising him or his Liberal colleagues who have participated in the debate. We were stung into retaliating because no SDP Member was present. The hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) had the gall to come into the Chamber and to castigate hon. Members who had been in the Chamber for 18½ hours. We

[Mr. Rogers]

were not scoring cheap political points but responding to the hon. Gentleman's cheek in saying that. I hope that the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) will accept that intervention in the spirit in which it is made.

The Second Deputy Chairman: Now that we have got that off our chests, I hope that we can return to the amendments.

10.45 am

Mr. Freud: I would, of course, accept absolutely anything in the spirit in which it was offered. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock), who has been here for much longer than the average hon. Member, made an important point when he voiced the concern of his constituency teachers.

Mr. Hanley: Look at the voting records.

Mr. Freud: That sort of attitude is totally unconstructive.

The Minister spoke of a more precise power that was to be given to the Secretary of State. I wonder what she means. At present, the Secretary of State has the power to ignore any contribution. Clause 3 states:

"Where the Advisory Committee has reported to the Secretary of State on any matter, he may, after consulting—

(a) such associations of local education authorities as appear to him to be . . . desirable."

That will not make teachers feel wanted or respected. The clause also refers to

"such organisations representing school teachers as appear to them to be concerned".

We want teachers and employers to have the right to have some input into the advisory committee.

I realise that the Minister has things to say to the Under-Secretary of State, and that she would rather do that than listen to the debate. However, it is absurd to make us sit through proceedings on this Bill if she does not intend to listen to our reasonable amendments. This series of amendments would make the teachers and employers respect the committee a little more than they will do, given that the Bill is so negative. They should, therefore, be accepted by Opposition Members. Indeed, although there may be internal sniping, the Opposition are united in disagreeing with the Bill and all that it represents. I therefore ask all hon. Members—heaven knows, there are few enough in the House, and we had more at 3 am than we have now — to vote in favour of the amendments, and against this nasty little Bill.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 137, Noes 224.

Division No. 32] **[10.48 am**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wainwright, R.
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. A. J. Beith and
Mr. James Wallace.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Aspinwall, Jack
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael

Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'lch N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question put, That the clause stand part of the Bill:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 229, Noes 145.

Division No. 33] **[10.59 am**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Aspinwall, Jack
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel

Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant
Mr. Peter Lloyd.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R. *(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. James Hamilton and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Clause 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3

POWER OF SECRETARY OF STATE TO MAKE PROVISION BY ORDER

Mr. Radice: I beg to move amendment No. 126, in page 2, line 16, leave out 'may' and insert 'shall'.

The Second Deputy Chairman: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 139, in page 2, line 22, leave out from beginning, to end of line 20 on page 3 and insert—

'from time to time (and as soon as may be) lay before Parliament the report of the Advisory Committee. If such a Report is disapproved by a resolution of either House of Parliament passed within forty days beginning with the date of laying (and exclusive of any period during which Parliament is dissolved or prorogued or during which both

Houses are adjourned for more than four days) then the Secretary of State shall as soon as may be make such changes or further changes in the Report as appear to him to be required in the circumstances so that the statement of those changes be laid before Parliament at latest by the end of the period of forty days beginning with the date of the resolution (but exclusive as aforesaid).'

No. 143, in page 2, line 23, leave out from 'Committee' to end of line 25.

No. 144, in page 2, line 23, leave out 'with or'.

No. 145, in page 2, line 23, leave out from 'modification' to end of line 25, and insert—

'providing any modifications have first been referred back to the Advisory Committee for further consultation prior to the placing of any order.'.

No. 146, in page 2, line 24, leave out lines 24 and 25.

No. 153, in page 2, line 26, leave out subsection (2) and insert—

'(2) Any order made following the recommendations of the Committee under section 3(1), shall not be made unless a draft of the order has been laid before and approved by resolution of each House of Parliament.'.

No. 156, in page 2, line 26, leave out 'which contains" and insert 'must contain'.

New clause 10—*Provisions as to Orders*—

'(1) An order may, instead of containing the provision to be made, refer to provisions set out in a document published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office and direct that those provisions shall have effect or, as the case may be, be amended in accordance with the order.

(2) The effect of an order is—

(a) so far as it relates to remuneration, that the remuneration of teachers to whom the order applies shall be determined, and they are to have regard and financial or other constraints to which their recommendations are to be subject, and as to the time within which they are to report to him.

(3) An order made under this Act may make retrospective provision but not so as to require the reduction of a teachers pay in respect of a past period.

(4) No order made under sections 4 and 5 of this Act may make different provision for different areas or for different cases otherwise then in accordance with an agreement made between teachers and their employers.

(5) The Secretary of State may not approve any recommendation of the Advisory Committee as regards conditions of employment so as to remove or diminish any contractual entitlement of a teacher.'.

Mr. Radice: As we should all know after 18 or 19 hours of discussion, the objective of the Bill is to abolish collective bargaining and substitute in its place a system of ministerial diktat. The purpose of this group of amendments is to highlight the exceptional and unacceptable powers that clause 3 grants to the Secretary of State.

I should like to remind the Committee of the powers that will be granted. Clause 3(6) allows the Secretary of State to impose a settlement by order before 1 October 1987. It will also be possible for the Secretary of State to backdate any order to April 1986. That is the first exceptional power. I need not remind the Minister that it is a new power. Contrary to what the Secretary of State told us, he does not have that power under the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 or under the Education Act 1944. Once the advisory committee is set up — and we should remember that the Secretary of State will appoint the members of the committee, he will pay for it, set its agenda and also choose the chairman and deputy chairman — the Secretary of State can modify recommendations and impose his own settlement.

When the Secretary of State makes an order, he or she can make provision for different areas. That point has been highlighted earlier. He can also impose conditions of service on teachers through their contracts of employment, though the Government do not employ teachers. The local authorities are, of course, their employers. The Secretary of State can impose on the local authorities the obligation to impose conditions of service through teachers' contracts of employment. That is a most unusual and exceptional power that has been commented upon by the Opposition during the debate and by commentators outside Parliament.

I am terribly sorry, but I seem to have forgotten the name of the Deputy Chairman. Of course, it is Sir Paul; Forgive me, Sir Paul; after 18 hours of debate it is a dreadful insult to forget your name and I apologise for that.

The Opposition amendments are designed to minimise the damage caused by clause 3 and I do not pretend that they will do more than minimise that damage. No doubt my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) will discuss the amendments in more detail when he replies. In principle we oppose the authoritarian assumption of ministerial powers. Therefore we will not only be voting for our amendments but, if we have the opportunity, will vote against clause 3 stand part.

Mrs. Rumbold: It would be for the convenience of the House if I tried to explain the Government's position with regard to the amendment so that I can clarify the position before the debate continues.

Mr. Radice: It would also be useful, as this is in a sense a clause 3 stand part debate—I doubt whether we shall have an opportunity to have a clause 3 stand part debate —if the Secretary of State will tell the Committee why he is taking the powers that I have outlined.

11.15 am

Mrs. Rumbold: I believe that the hon. Gentleman is referring to the power to backdate.

Mr. Radice: No, I did not mean that.

Mrs. Rumbold: Very well, I will consider the amendments as they appear on the Amendment Paper and proceed to consider amendment No. 126 which seeks to delete "may" and insert "shall".

The amendment would, in effect, compel the Secretary of State to make some provision by order after receiving a report from the advisory committee. It is certainly expected that on most occasions when the advisory committee has reported to the Secretary of State, he will proceed to make such an order after consultation with the local authorities and trade unions. However, that may not always be so. The committee may have been asked to report on a simple, single issue, for example, problems of shortage subjects. The committee might recommend a course of action that entailed changing present remuneration. The Secretary of State might then consult the local authorities and/or unions. As a result of the consultations, he might be persuaded that the advisory committee's advice should not be taken and that it would be better to leave matters as they were.

If the clause was amended, that discretion would not rest with the Secretary of State and he would be compelled to make an order on the subject even if he had no changes to propose. It is better to have discretion which Opposition Members may be absolutely assured that the Secretary of State will use sensibly and reasonably.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Does the Minister accept that under the provisions in the Bill, the Secretary of State will hand pick his committee and if it makes a recommendation that he does not like, he can veto it again at that stage?

Mrs. Rumbold: The Secretary of State is bound to consult local authorities and the unions. Having done that, he may have to explain his views and they may explain theirs. He must act reasonably. Whatever his advice, the Secretary of State must bring it to the House. If he chooses not to alter that advice, as we have explained before, it will be subject to a negative resolution. In other words, Opposition Members may call for a debate on a negative resolution.

If, on the other hand, the Secretary of State receives advice that he wants to alter, he must bring that to the House on an affirmative resolution and that will be debated on the Floor of both Houses. There is a safeguard for this House and the other place to have adequate debate on the subject.

Amendment No. 139 seeks to delete most of clause 3 including all of the order-making powers of the Secretary of State and put in its place a provision that the reports of the advisory committee are to be laid before Parliament and subject to disapproval by resolution of either House and subsequent amendment. There is no power left to the Secretary of State or anyone else to make the recommendations in the report effective. That is a little difficult to understand, and I am not sure that I follow the arrangements as envisaged in the amendment.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The aim of the amendment is to get over the problem that always faces the House of Commons that when it receives an order it can either approve it or throw it out. A package may contain five or six good points and one to which the majority in the House might object, yet that package may still be passed.

The amendment is a device to enable the House to amend the order, and transfers considerable power back to the House rather than to the Minister. I expect to hear reasons why the Government oppose the amendment. However, if they are claiming to be granting Parliament safeguards and control over the Secretary of State, then they should accept the amendment.

Mrs. Rumbold: By the time such a matter came to the House in the form of a negative or an affirmative resolution, I would hope that there would have been adequate consultation and agreement between the parties seeking to implement the advisory committee's proposals.

Mr. Freud: The Minister has said that there shall be adequate consultation. She will notice that the amendment asks for no more than that. It simply asks that "may" be deleted and "shall" be substituted. She said that there shall be more consultation. I cannot understand why the Government cannot accept this minor amendment.

Mrs. Rumbold: I have been trying to explain, somewhat tediously, the difference between the words, "may" and "shall". If we have "shall", that is an imperative, and the Secretary of State has to make an order even if there is nothing on which he can make an order. Amendment No. 139 is strange because, in effect, it suggests that Parliament would censure a report by an independent body such as the advisory committee. As there is no machinery for implementing the advisory committee's recommendations, such arrangements are clearly absurd. I ask the Committee to reject the amendment.

Amendments Nos. 143, 144 and 146 would render the consultation with local authorities and unions about the committee's recommendations pointless. Whatever that consultation produced, the Secretary of State would have to implement the committee's recommendations as delivered. That gives the committee a greater power and a much more powerful role than is intended. The committee's recommendations should be subject to full consultation between local authorities and the unions. We do not want that to be ruled out.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The hon. Lady is not looking at the picture built up by the group of amendments. If she accepts the power of the House to amend the orders, it can make considerable sense to follow that through. I accept the hon. Lady's argument that it would be illogical for us to press this little group of amendments on its own, but, taken in conjunction with amendment No. 139, powers to vary the orders, would be given to the House instead of to the Secretary of State.

Mrs. Rumbold: That would be an extremely untidy arrangement and certainly would not comply with my right hon. Friend's vision of the clear advice that the advisory committee will give after it has had an opportunity to undertake the relevant consultations and reach its conclusions. It is then the job of the Secretary of State to go back to the unions and the local authorities for their views and, having had their views firmly fixed in his mind, to decide what recommendations to make to the House. It would be unsatisfactory in the extreme to change that arrangemnt.

Amendment No. 145, which was tabled by the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud), concerns procedures when it has been decided not to accept the advisory committee's recommendations in full. The Government believe that, during consultation with local authorities and unions, the best course of action may be to make some provisions differing somewhat from the committee's recommendations. If so, it would be for the Secretary of State to put those recommendations to the House. Consultation would be limited in scope if it were not possible to move far forward from the committee's recommendations. I hope that the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East realises that it is important to have the two sets of consultations.

It is not necessary to have three lots of consultation with the committee. The committee will have given its independent advice. It will then be for the Secretary of State to consider that in consultation with the local authorities. In that case, the committee will have had adequate time to consult with the parties and the Secretary of State will then go back to them to consult them on the committee's recommendations. To go back to the committee does seem to be appropiate at this stage.

Mr. Freud: We take issue with the subjunctive. We are concerned with the steady insistence that the Secretary of State "may" and the steady feeling that teachers will have that he will not.

Mrs. Rumbold: I think that I can honourably say that my right hon. Friend or any hon. Gentleman——

Mr. Tony Banks: Or hon. Lady.

Mrs. Rumbold: —or hon. Lady who holds the post of Secretary of State would act in a way that was totally appropriate to and compliant with the spirit of the interim

committee's work. I remind the committee that we are talking about a body that has a rather short life according to the Bill.

The intention of amendment No. 153 is to make all orders subject to affirmative resolutions. The Government believe that their procedures, which are laid down in the Bill, are preferable. When an order implements recommendations of the independent advisory committee, it is to be subjected to less parliamentary control than when it departs from those recommendations. The advisory committee will be of such standing that I hope that this proposed variation in procedure will be appropriate.

Amendment No. 156 would render pointless the consultation with local authorities and unions about the advisory committee's recommendations. Whatever that consultation produced, the Secretary of State would have to implement the committee's recommendations as delivered. This gives the committee a much more powerful role than we intend. Its recommendations should be subject to full consultation. What is finally implemented by order after consultation with the Secretary of State may be substantially different from the advisory committee's recommendation.

We are also considering new clause 10. I remind the Committee that the Bill's purpose is to set up interim arrangements for determining teachers' pay. It is not intended that any party should have a veto over the advisory committee's recommendations. There has always been regional variation in pay. Since 1945, a London weighting has been paid. I am sure that Labour Members would be the first to admit that that has been a benefit in present circumstances. Indeed, teachers' unions press every year, as I know to my cost, for this weighting to be increased. Different rates are paid for teachers in special schools and classes. The principle is already there, and this matter may well be referred to the advisory committee. I therefore suggest that that principle should remain.

I have endeavoured as best I can to give the flavour of what the amendments mean in the context of the clause. I hope that the Committee will accept my explanation and reject the amendments.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The Opposition are disappointed, but not surprised. The whole thrust of the legislation is to give the Secretary of State considerable extra powers. The Under-Secretary of State said that its provisions are intended to be temporary until March 1990. The Government do not seem to be confident of that, because they have included powers to continue those provisions for one year, and to go on continuing them after that. This may well be one of those pieces of legislation that are rushed through the House and are renewed year after year. It is not a good enough excuse to say that this is a short-term measure.

It is not satisfactory to say that the recommendations may be the subject of negative procedures. We can give many examples of the way in which the Government are able to take advantage of the House by using the negative resolution procedure, with the associated problems of considering prayers, and so on. With the affirmative procedure, if there is no matter of contention, the Government can have the measure passed at 10 o'clock on the nod with no problems. That means leaving power with Members of Parliament rather than with the Government. Labour Members and, I think, Liberal Members, feel that the Government should consider in the other place making this provision subject to affirmative order.

We must tackle the fact that orders cannot be amended. We had an example of this yesterday upstairs in Committee with regard to student grant regulations, the majority of which increase the grants for students. It was impossible for Opposition parties to vote against a set of orders that increased the grant for students even though we felt that the grant increase was insufficient, and the minor clauses that dealt with the provisions for mature students were particularly unfair.

If we can find a way which will allow the House to amend those sort of orders it would be much more reasonable for Ministers to take increased powers to make such orders. However, as long as Ministers have the power to lay an order and the House has to take it or reject it, that stokes up the power far too much in favour of the Minister and takes far too much power away from the House of Commons.

I hope that my hon. Friends will join me in the lobby to vote for our amendment, which shows our dissatisfaction with this part of the Bill.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 146, Noes 235.

Division No. 34] **[11.30 am**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Cleiland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor

McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Don Dixon and
Mr. Tony Banks.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Heyward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Hill, James
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I beg to move amendment No. 168, in page 2, leave out lines 37 and 38 and insert

'not provide for other than a system of remuneration to be consistently applied throughout England and Wales.'.

The Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 169, in page 2, line 37, leave out paragraph *(a)*.

No. 173, in page 2, line 41, leave out from 'that' to end of line 43 and insert—

'matters may be settled by agreement between, or in a manner agreed between, teachers and their employer.'.

and No. 174, in page 2, line 41, leave out from 'provide' to end of line 43 and insert—

'that to the extent that matters specified in the order have not been settled by agreement between, or in a manner agreed between, teachers and their employers at the date on which the order is made, the order shall have effect with regard to those matters.'.

and new clause 11 — *Starting salaries for teachers in shortage subjects*—

'No arrangement or determination made pursuant to section 3 of this Act shall preclude the headteacher of a school from appointing a member of staff in a shortage subject at a higher starting salary than that for which the appointee would otherwise qualify.'.

Mr. Bennett: This group of amendments deals with the question of whether different rates of pay can be paid in different parts of the country or for people doing different jobs. Let me make it clear at the outset that different rates of pay already apply in different parts of the country. The most obvious example is the London allowance and there are also different scales north of the border. In addition to those two geographical differences, different rates are paid in special schools. There were in the past special rates of pay in social priority areas and in one or two other circumstances.

Labour Members do not want to ask too many questions about the present payment of different rates, either for different areas or for teaching different groups of pupils. However, we would be alarmed if that system were to be extended. There have been a series of comments from Ministers which suggest that they are giving some consideration to that. If the Government want the legislation to proceed without many wild rumours and much concern, it would be helpful if they could make a clear statement on how far they see the extension of such variations to other parts of the country on a regional basis.

I have one or two doubts about the wisdom of the original introduction of London allowances. The introduction of that, not only in education but in quite a few other areas, may well have contributed to an increase in house prices within the London area. Each time the allowances are put up they may allow house prices to rise, and a vicious circle is created. However, that cannot be changed in education because the London allowances are tied to allowances in all sort of other areas and because of the extremely high housing costs within London.

However, to begin to extend that principle to different regions would create many problems. First, I am sure that the Minister is aware that there are some people on the boundaries of areas where London allowances are presently paid who feel that house prices are just as high in the area where no London allowance is being paid as some house prices within the area in which the London allowance is being paid. I am sure that the Minister is aware of that problem. Such problems always arise when one tries to designate particular areas in such a way.

If the Government were to consider London allowances along with others for other parts in the south of England, there might be lower rates of pay in parts of Wales or Lincolnshire, or other areas where there are allegedly low housing costs or where perhaps unemployment rates are high. That would be unfair as a matter of principle and the Government would be storing up major problems among people living close to areas in which such allowances were payable.

11.45 am

On Second Reading I made the point that a particular unfairness arises when a benefit is carried through into a pension. Someone who is living in an area where the higher allowance is paid—in this case that would be London—who moves to a low cost area will continue, as I understand it, to receive a pension which takes into account the average of the best years' earnings in the previous three years. Therefore, that takes into account the London allowance. Such a person would continue to receive an enhanced pension compared with someone who has always lived in such a low cost area and who cannot enjoy a capital improvement on moving from one area to another. There are already problems about allowances which are paid according to regions and I hope that the Government will not attempt to go further along that line.

We must recognise that there are shortages of young teachers within the London area. The problem for young teachers is their basic rate of pay and that is one reason why the NUT in particular was keen to press for the long basic teacher allowance which would help people applying for a mortgage to show that their income would steadily increase to enable them to meet the repayments. In the short term, local authorities in London must look at assistance with housing and in the long term the Government must tackle the housing shortage within London so that not just teachers but many other people who are now finding it almost impossible to earn sufficient to pay a mortgage on a dwelling can obtain a house. Much more effort should be put into solving housing problems rather than in continually extending variations in pay.

Let me deal now with subject differentials. Various supporters of the Government have suggested that one of the solutions to shortages of maths and physics teachers is to pay higher rates for such teachers. Again, I had only a brief opportunity on Second Reading to point out some of the problems in this area. The real questions are first, how to define a shortage subject, and, secondly, a teacher of that shortage subject. One can often have teachers with an academic qualification in, say, maths or physics, who are, for one reason or another, not spending a great deal of their time teaching those subjects. The most obvious example is a head or a deputy head in a school. It would be illogical to pay such people extra because of some qualification if they are not using it or are using it for only part of the day.

Then there is the problem of those people who are filling in for a specialist who are doing their best to teach, say, physics, chemistry, design and technology, mathematics or one of the other shortage subjects. They will not have an academic or professional qualification in that area, but they are doing their best and will probably be putting in extra time to keep up with the subject. Yet, would such people be eligible for any extra payment? Once the Government start to look at such problems they will see that there are major practical difficulties.

If the Government want to solve the shortage of teachers of maths, physics, design and technology and micro-electronics they will have to consider the education

[Mr. Bennett]

service as a whole. In particular, they must try to attract more children to study these subjects in our schools and then go into further education. They must also consider how to retain the teachers of shortage subjects. That could be done by raising the basic rate of pay for teachers and by ensuring that teachers have a long basic teaching scale, which will provide promotional opportunities. That would encourage them to remain as subject teachers instead of being lured away by the higher pay that is offered for administrative posts in schools — for example, deputy heads and head teachers.

Many of the problems over the teaching of science begin at primary level. We need more teachers in primary schools who are science literate, thus enabling them to include a small amount of science teaching in their normal class subjects. However, it would not be practical to pay one class teacher more for his science qualification and another teacher less. If specialist teachers are paid more money, it leads to problems. On many occasions they will be doing exactly the same work as their colleagues, yet they will be paid considerably more.

Schools frequently organise combined geography and biology field courses. Geography might not be recognised as a shortage subject, whereas biology is recognised as a shortage subject. There are many other examples. Many schools sensibly provide a combined science course for fourth and fifth year pupils——

Mr. Patrick Thompson: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that heads already exercise flexibility over payment for specialist subjects, in particular for shortage subjects? Surely we want to encourage head teachers to exercise more discretion and flexibility.

Mr. Bennett: Perhaps I may be allowed to finish my point. There are many other examples. Teachers with different qualifications may be teaching children the same subjects. That has been the position in schools for many years. Various means have been found to pay teachers of shortage subjects more money.

When I was a teacher on probation, another probationer—a maths teacher—who began at the same time as me made it clear to the head of the school that he would not remain there beyond his probationary year unless he was moved from a scale 1 to a scale 2 post. Those who teach shortage subjects are promoted more quickly. On some occasions they are promoted beyond their capability because the school wants either to attract or to retain a specialist teacher.

My teaching experience suggested that when that was done blatantly it caused a great deal of resentment and did not produce the co-operation that is needed to encourage a good atmosphere in schools is to be encouraged so that pupils can be taught well. At one school in which I worked a teacher was recruited to teach mathematics. He was put on a fairly high scale. He insisted upon teaching only the most able pupils in the first to the fifth years, leaving his colleagues to cope with the pupils who were less willing to study. The fact that he was receiving a considerably higher rate of pay than his colleagues, who had to work so much harder in the classroom, caused considerable resentment.

Mr. Flannery: If a physics teacher is already being paid extra for an important post, is my hon. Friend able to say whether he would also be paid more for teaching physics?

Mr. Bennett: I cannot answer my hon. Friend's question. It depends upon the Minister's intentions. It is tempting to float the idea, and the Minister may suggest that the advisory committee could look at it, However, I suspect that it would generate a great deal of resentment and that it would cause far more problems than it solved.

At this stage it would be better if the Secretary of State could give the idea a brief, preliminary airing and then conclude that when one introduces different rates of pay for teachers who are working side by side it is bound to create difficulties. Teachers have always been paid extra for additional responsibilities, on the basis that the extra responsibilities relate to duties outside the classroom or to duties that are in addition to their normal classroom teaching.

Classroom teachers ought to be paid the same basic rates. I accept that there has always been a small differential, depending upon whether teachers have undergone a two, three or four-year training period and also upon whether they have obtained ordinary or good degrees. Sufficiently significant differentials, introduced to attract teachers of specialist subjects, cause a great deal of resentment. I hope that the Minister of State will say that the Government do not intend to increase the differentials.

Mr. Madel: Bracketed with amendment No. 168 is new clause 11, to which I should like to address my remarks. It provides:

"No arrangement or determination made pursuant to section 3 of this Act shall preclude the head teacher of a school from appointing a member of staff in a shortage subject at a higher starting salary then that for which the appointee would otherwise qualify".

According to the Bill, a head teacher can offer various promotional opportunities, but he cannot offer what is contained in new clause 11. The object of the new clause is to maintain the best possible curriculum for schoolchildren.

The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) made a very interesting speech about the shortage subject problems which have been with us for many years. Both sides of the Committee have grappled with the problem created by the shortage of maths and physics teachers. Evidence was given to the Cockroft committee, after which it produced its report and conclusions. The House debated the report, but the problems remain. My object in putting down new clause 11 is to try to alleviate the problem, bearing in mind that we are moving towards a new advisory committee which, on a temporary basis, will advise the Secretary of State and take evidence from interested parties as to the pay and conditions, for the time being, of teachers.

The first problem for head teachers, which will be alleviated by new clause 11, is the tremendous variation in housing costs between the north-west and the south-east. There is a great deal of movement between those areas. If an industrial firm in the north-west wants its employees to move to the south-east, it has to dangle various salary carrots in front of them to encourage them to move to the south-east.

The problem does not relate just to housing costs. Rates are also a problem. There are sharp differences between the rates that are paid on houses in the south-east and those that are paid on houses in other parts of the country. There can be even sharper differences between the rates that are paid on houses in one county in the south-east and the rates that are paid in another county in the south-east.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): I hope that my hon. Friend is not suggesting that the rates in the north are not excessive. Cleveland has the highest rates in the country.

Mr. Madel: I am not saying that at all. I am not making any comments on the rates in the north. I am talking about rates and the general cost of living in the south-east. I take my hon. Friend's point. I believe that Cleveland is involved in an interesting discussion about the rate support grant. I shall pull away from that rapidly because it would not be in order, although I would dearly like to make a great speech on the problems——

12 noon

Mr. Flannery: I am confused about what the new clause means. Can the hon. Gentleman give us an example of how a head would bring a teacher into a school at a rate higher than that due to him on the pay scale? How would the head do that?

Mr. Madel: I shall deal with that, but I was distracted. The hon. Gentleman knows that it sometimes takes me a little while to get to my main point. I think that we have all suffered from that in the past 18 hours.

I felt it appropriate to talk about regional variations because that is the sort of problem facing head teachers in Bedfordshire, to name but one county. If LEAs wish to fill a post, they have often difficulty attracting a person at the starting salary. The starting salary goes right through the age range. I feel that we must try to build positive inducements into the teachers' salary system so that people can move out of industry to teach shortage subjects. If people have worked in industry until they are 45 or 50, they would go into the teaching profession on the starting salary. I think that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) is "indicating assent", which is how such things are described in the *Official Report*.

As I have said, that problem thwarts head teachers in their desire to appoint a member of staff to teach a specialist subject.

The next question is, who will decide what?

Mr. Stephen Dorrell (Loughborough): Does my hon. Friend agree that regional differences in salary structures need not only represent regional differences on cost, that is to say, rates, living costs and so on? They may also reflect the difficulty of recruiting people in areas that are not immediately thought of as attractive places to live in by many teachers. Regional variations could be used not only to compensate for differences in the cost of living but to encourage teachers to go to areas where local education authorities find it difficult to recruit the number and quality of teachers they need.

Mr. Madel: I agree with my hon. Friend. We all have our own roots. We were all born somewhere, as were our wives, and often family connections and a history of having lived or gone to school in a particular area create an obstacle to people moving and they want something really attractive to persuade them to move and teach in a particular area. How will we deal with that matter in practical terms? My hon. Friend the Member for Loughborough (Mr. Dorrell) has hinted at that.

The Education Act 1986 gives greater powers to the governors and head teachers, and, above all, it gives greater powers on the question of budgets in schools. We now have a system where there will be an annual meeting of parents, governors and the head teacher and accounts will be presented to the parents, the ratepayers and all those interested. Therefore, for the first time, people will have a statutory right to see the running cost of schools in a particular education authority. That will mean that as it gets under way in about two or three years—it is early days yet—and because there is a rising parental interest in education, people will say to the head, "You are spending so much on books and equipment, and yet in your report you refer to the difficulties involved in attracting someone to teach a specialist subject. Why do you not use new clause 11 of the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill because it would help to attract someone at a different starting salary from what he or she would expect?"

I believe that this new clause meets that point. It gives head teachers the opportunity to respond positively to parents at that meeting, who might say, "For the next two years shift your costs slightly in favour of the salary rather than the books and equipment." There will not be a uniform rule. It will depend entirely on what type of school it is and the history of the school and it will particularly depend on whether there is a static or rising population in the area in which the school is situated. I think that the Government will welcome the new clause because it fits neatly in to the——

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: If there is a shortage, there will be a tendency for teachers to go round suggesting to heads that they are paid extra either to stay in a school or to be attracted to a school. As long as there is a shortage, all that will happen is that those groups of teachers will be paid extra and one will merely move the shortage round from one school to another.

Mr. Madel: I do not think that it will be like that. Not every school is in that position.

Mr. Dorrell: Surely the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) totally misunderstands the nature of the causes of shortages in specific subjects. There are shortages in subjects such as mathmatics and physics because people who have those skills are able to command higher salaries, such as the new clause will allow the local education authorities to pay, in professions outside the education service. It is precisely in order to redistribute the shortage in favour of education or to be able to allow the education service to compete with employers outside that my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) tabled his new clause.

Mr. Madel: That is right. On many occasions my hon. Friend the Member for Loughborough (Mr. Dorrell) has drawn attention to that. Conservative Members are trying to bring forward practical suggestions as to how the shortage could be overcome. We all visit the schools in our constitutency and we so often hear the head teacher say that he has lost a physics teacher to a certain firm or a mathematics teacher who has been tempted by another firm. I am trying to reduce the possibility of temptation with the new clause.

Mr. Park: I am trying to follow the logic of what the hon. Gentleman is saying. I understand the difficulty about shortages of particular teachers in particular areas. However, on considering the suggestion in the new clause, I begin to wonder how it would work in practice. The hon. Gentleman says that it may be necessary to offer financial incentives to bring in a teacher in a shortage subject for

[Mr. Park]

whatever reason, and to pay that teacher an enhanced salary. However, is it not a fact that the adverse conditions, whatever they may be, also apply to the existing staff? If one brings in a new person on an enhanced salary other members of staff will feel that they are already adversely affected and they will wonder why that new person is receiving preferential treatment.

The Chairman: Order. Please be brief.

Mr. Park: I am sorry, Mr. Walker. I have not intervened before and I hope that you will use your discretion.

Looking at the practical application, I think that the hon. Gentleman's new clause would bring one more element of discontent into schools.

Mr. Madel: I think not. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will agree that this is not an easy problem. I am treating it seriously. It is as difficult as some of the industrial relations problems that the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Park) has referred to many times when he has addressed the House.

Mr. Patrick Thompson: Does my hon. Friend agree that the shortage of physics and maths teachers has now reached the proportions of a national crisis which is being debated by such organisations as the Royal Society and the Institute of Physics? There is a desperate need for some action. That is why I welcome new clause 11 and why I am glad that my hon. Friend is addressing himself to the problem.

Mr. Madel: My hon. Friend is right. If a shortage subject post is not filled, that runs contrary to the Education Act 1944, as it constitutes a failure to maintain a good education system. Although we can draw attention to difficulties that will occur if new clause 11 were added to the Bill, failure to do anything merely exacerbates the problem and puts the Government and the Secretary of State for Education and Science at risk of being taken to court. A few years ago, there was, I believe, a tremendous argument in Hereford and Worcester about why music had been dropped from the curriculum in a certain school. As far as I remember, the matter ended in the courts. We do not want that; we want a sensible Bill which goes some way to meet the problem.

The Education Act 1986 gives greater influence and power to governors. We hope that some governors will have experience of management training in industry. I look to some governors to attract people from industry to help bridge the gap. There are many people in industry who have done 20 or 25 years' hard work. The hon. Member for Coventry, North-East knows how demanding a job in industry is and how demands increase each year. I am not for one fleeting second suggesting that teaching is an easy job, but it is for many people a welcome, refreshing and challenging change. New clause 11 could attract people from industry to work just as hard but in a different environment with a different set of challenges in what is often a more rewarding job.

The Government have indirectly added to the problems. I am not criticising, but drawing attention to the facts. Conservative Members know how popular the technical and vocational education initiative is, but it does not apply to every school. The Government never intended that it could immediately, although an increasing number of schools are taking advantage of it. TVEI is starting to bring people in from industry. It is proving an attractive curriculum, and in schools where TVEI does not exist parents are asking whether some of the elements of TVEI can be included in the curriculum. That will continue as interest in the science curriculum increases.

New clause 11 would help the Government over a difficulty which might not have been seen at first. I support TVEI to the hilt and it is proving extremely popular, but it has some spin-offs which were not foreseen. Giving a head teacher the powers that I suggest would help overcome some of the problems. The Government are also introducing city technology colleges, which will have a science-based curriculum. They will also want to attract people from industry. Teachers in schools might be tempted to CTCs. Only time will tell how popular and successful they will be — education is a continuing experiment — but by creating another opportunity and another system of education which emphasises science and technology we could add to the shortage of certain teachers.

Mr. Holt: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Bill will affect what happens many years in the future? There have for some time been moves to introduce industry-based courses such as City and Guilds and the Royal Society of Arts so that there is greater integration between education and training. Teachers will want to bear that fact in mind.

Mr. Madel: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. During the past seven years the Government have put in place a whole host of welcome new initiatives to improve the curriculum. As I have written in my notes, there may be more new initiatives and changes to the curriculum which have a bearing on the shortage of specialist teachers.

University requirements and curriculums often change, and that has a bearing on what is taught at school. The new advisory committee will take evidence from throughout the country. We should remember that we have a widely varying pattern of comprehensive education —different education authorities have different systems. The curriculum depends on the age range in a county. A middle school that runs from nine to 13 can widen the curriculum and bring in teachers on a higher salary because different subjects are taught, but middle schools that run from eight to 12 do not have an automatic right to the additional funding that a middle school which runs from nine to 13 enjoys. That variation would be covered by new clause 11, because it speaks only of "a school".

The advisory committee will also take evidence from the polytechnics and colleges of further education, which are tied in with the teaching profession. The number of students who attend polytechnics has rocketed since 1979. That is welcome.

12.15 pm

New clause 11 is yet another attempt to solve a difficult problem. We have spent many hours in many debates on it. The new clause is strengthened by the existence of the Education Act 1986 which gives greater powers to head teachers, governors and parents. I believe that, in a short time, there will be an enormous increase in parental interest in how schools are run, how money is spent, how the curriculum is taught and in the efforts that are made to ensure that the curriculum is thoroughly covered. That has always been Conservative policy — the broadest

curriculum properly carried out. New clause 11 is part of Conservative policy, and I therefore commend it to the Government.

Mr. Pike: I shall speak briefly to amendment No. 168.

In clause 3(4)(a), the Government might have made a genuine attempt to deal with the problem that we are debating but, because of the haste with which they are trying to force the Bill through, they have not considered the matter properly or consulted adequately on it and if clause 3(4)(a) is allowed to stand we will create a bigger problem. Amendment No. 168 is important and should be carried.

One of the problems is attracting teachers to different areas. I know that people who live in the south, for example, believe that Lancashire is a county of long rows of blackened houses dominated by the dark satanic mills from the last century. It is not like that. Lancashire is a beautiful county and in my constituency one can see green hills from wherever one stands. However, when people look at jobs advertised in different schools in Burnley, if they have not seen that part of the country, they will have an image of it created by "Coronation Street", and which rest on images that they learned at school many years ago, when the position has changed considerably and the areas are different. I may have ideas about certain parts of the country that I have not visited that are very different from the reality.

It could be argued that, if this part of the clause were allowed to stand as it is, it could be used to attract people to apply for jobs in those areas. However, it would be difficult to define those areas. For instance, even in the county of Lancashire, there are wide differences between the Fylde coast and the section of north-east Lancashire and other parts of the country. I can see arguments about who will designate areas that are less attractive and proving a problem in attracting teachers to fill vacancies. That is an important problem, and it could cause bigger problems, if we were to move in the direction proposed by the Bill.

There is then the difference in the cost of living. We all recognise the problem of living in London and its immediate surroundings. The biggest difference is in housing. The cost of housing makes it difficult for people who are selling a house in the cheap area of London to be able to move into the London area to take up a job if they should so wish. Anyone moving to other parts of the country could be in an advantageous situation. The part of the country that I represent must be one of the cheapest areas for buying property. In Burnley, one can buy a semi-detached house for £20,000, and would be paying a high price at that.

Mr. Tony Banks: There are other problems associated with living in London, such as transport costs. On average, Londoners have to travel much further from home to work than do people in other cities, where people are much closer to work, assuming that they are lucky enough to have some work.

Mr. Pike: Transport is the second problem in the London area, but that problem is created by the first problem, since so many people are forced into outlying areas because in the inner London area property is either not available or its price is too high for ordinary people.

Mr. Corbyn: In my constituency, somebody who has come to the area to start a teaching job and wishes to buy a one-bedroom flat would have to spend between £50,000 and £60,000, which is impossible. As a result, teachers cannot come, and working class families are forced out by the market economy, which encourages the speculators to move in, destroying communities. Is this not an important point, which is coming home to roost in the teaching profession?

Mr. Pike: My hon. Friend is emphasising the point that I was making. The cost of housing is compounded by the cost of transport because people are forced to live outside of London. In rural areas, some people may have difficult journeys to travel to work. The deregulation of buses has aggravated the problem.

The clause attempts to deal with the problem of the cost of living but even within regions there are wide variations. We have already heard about the rates difference in the south-east, but there are other costs that vary considerably from one region to another, even in my region of the north-west. It would be difficult to know how to determine a high cost area, except in London, where the situation is more clearly defined.

My hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) drew on his experience as a teacher before coming to the House, and that was valuable in showing difficulties in other aspects of what this part of clause 3 would do. It would allow different rates of pay for people who specialise in subjects in which there are difficulties in recruiting teachers. He rightly spoke about the friction among teachers that would result from such a move. I have never been a teacher, but I know, as a school governor for a number of schools, the friction caused even when one genuinely used additional responsibility to give certain people a move up the scale. There tended to be some suspicions that it was not being used correctly, and one had to be careful to ensure that it was being correctly used and could be fully justified.

This move would cause considerable difficulties. When teachers work side by side with each other, they find it difficult to accept certain of their colleagues who, in their eyes, are working no harder, with no greater responsibility and are doing the same job but, because of a shortage of teachers in that category, are getting more pay.

Mr. Marlow: Why do teachers in public sector schools find it so difficult when teachers in private sector schools do not find it difficult, and people who work in industry and other businesses do not find it difficult?

Mr. Pike: That point is not relevant. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to speak in the debate, he will have the opportunity to make his own case. I have no wish to deal with schools in the private sector. That would open a different avenue.

While the intention of this part of the clause could be genuine, it would create more problems than we already have. We need to think much more about what we do because we have enough problems in education already. I am sure that even the Government do not wish to add to those problems. If this section of the Bill is allowed to stand, it will worsen the situation and affect the morale of teachers.

12.30 pm

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Mr. Walker. I regret that I must raise it, but it is a genuine point of order. Could you instigate inquiries to find out whether the access of

[Mr. Madden]

hon. Members to the House is being impeded by large numbers of people trying to gain access to the House through St. Stephen's entrance? The Norman porch entrance to the other place has been shut and large numbers of tourists wish to visit the House. I had a group of constituents, nursery nurse students from Bradford college, and they had to wait a long time to get into the House. Such things will occur more and more often as the Government try to force through more centralist measures of this sort——

The Chairman: Order. I shall deal with the hon. Gentleman's point of order and we shall see whether there is any need to take it further. I remind hon. Members that we are in Committee and that the matters raised by the hon. Gentleman are matters for the authorities of the House. I shall make sure that they are immediately drawn to the attention of the authorities so that we can see what action may be taken about this matter.

Mr. Madden: Further to that point of order, Mr. Walker. Could it be suggested that for debates like this, which I am sure will happen more and more, the Norman porch entrance to the other place be left open so that people who wish to tour the House can do so without causing undue congestion? Such congestion occurred this morning, and large numbers of people who wished to listen to the proceedings in Committee were not facilitated because only one entrance to the Palace was open.

The Chairman: I again remind hon. Members that they are in Committee. I am the Chairman of the Committee and, as such, I do not have authority to deal with these matters. As I have said, I shall make sure that the matters are drawn to the attention of the appropriate authorities and that any remedial steps which can be taken are taken.

Mr. Robert Atkins (South Ribble): I listened to the point of order by the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden). I have just come in through the entrance that he spoke about and found it entirely clear. The hon. Gentleman has raised an entirely bogus point of order.

The Chairman: Order. We must recognise that we are hon. Members and that that sort of remark does not help our proceedings.

Mr. Flannery: A long time ago, many of us said that this Bill would cause chaos, and it is already doing so in Committee. The Bill is a minefield and clause 3 is confusion worse confounded. I should like to speak to amendments Nos. 168 and 169. Clause 3(4) says:

> "An order may as regards remuneration—
>
> *(a)* make different provisions for different cases, including different provision for different areas".

What does that mean? How in heaven's name will it work? We tried to do things like this in the past and ended up in a mess, even though we had the noblest of intentions. For a long time, we have had to face the London allowance as best we could, but we still do not know what to do about it. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) said that the rates in Cleveland were higher than anywhere else. According to him, anybody working in Cleveland would be in considerable difficulty.

Hon. Members will recall the Plowden report on primary education. That report considered the east ends and other difficult areas of the great cities and recommended an allowance to everybody who taught in schools in such areas. We all thought that was a splendid idea. I told that to a conference of teachers and arranged such a scheme with a group of teachers in Sheffield. No sooner had we tried the scheme and found out how good it was than people from all over the city complained bitterly that their areas were far worse than some of the areas to which we had given the allowance. Some of the areas complained about were next to areas that received the allowance and we had a constant demarcation line. That scheme proved to be a nuisance, although at the time we had the noblest of intentions.

The part of the clause which says "make different provision for different cases" prompted the tabling of amendment No. 168, to leave out lines 37 and 38 and insert

> "not provide for other than a system of remuneration to be consistently applied throughout England and Wales."

We are to have a system under which people in Yorkshire will be able to negotiate — which this Bill hardly allows—in that area. What sort of pressures for negotiation will one area have that another area does not have? Is it possible that the councils or the unions in one area might be stronger than councils or the unions in other areas? Will negotiation be allowed if the pressure is strong enough, and will teachers in those areas get more money than they would get in another area? Matters like that persuaded us to table this sensible amendment.

Amendment No. 169 seeks to remove subsection 3(1) *(a)*. If accepted, it would avoid all this confusion. Can the Minister explain why there will be negotiations about different amounts of money for people in different areas?

New clause 11 was referred to by the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel). I know that he spoke to it with complete integrity, because I have worked with him for a long time and know him well, but it is dangerous to try to introduce such a clause, no matter how noble the motive.

My hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Park) spoke about a science or mathematics department that needed three maths teachers. Let us suppose that two are available and the third must be taken from industry. One is then faced with the problem, specified by my hon. Friend, that having spent years in industry and being almost at the top of his profession with a good salary, that candidate for the teaching post can hardly be expected to begin at the bottom. If he is started high up on the salary scale, what happens to the other two teachers? Have they not a right to the same salary as the third teacher? By trying to remedy the problem, real trouble will be caused in the school.

This new clause has so many anomalies and suggestions for setting things right that it is a positive minefield. The hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) came into the Committee, intervened two or three times, and then went out. He told us about private schools and said that they could solve these problems. What nonsense! This Bill has all the hallmarks of having been drafted by people educated in private schools and in grammar and public schools. The only thing they know about the state system is how to destroy it. That is what will happen.

I should like the Minister to explain some of the convoluted points made in the debate. I should like him to explain subsection (4) and reply to my query about teachers from industry. I know that many people enter teaching and that not all of them will come from industry,

but those are the people that I have mentioned because their employment as teachers will give rise to great dangers.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): Will the Minister assure the Committee that clause 3(1)*(a)* is not intended to pave the way for differential regional wage scales? I am not talking about allowances. Clearly, there must be a cost-of-living allowance in areas such as London. I am no great supporter of national wage bargaining. It is one of the worst things with which we have been landed. But if we do away with national wage bargaining, we should do it by the front door, not the back door. We should not use the Bill as a way of eroding wage bargaining. I shall be unhappy if the Bill ensures that Wales gets second-class teachers with second-class salaries. Can my right hon. Friend assure me that the Bill will not discriminate between regions, but will make provision for inner cities areas where there is a special need to attract teachers to shortage subjects?

Mrs. Rumbold: The discussion on the first amendment suggested that Opposition Members—the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) admitted this—are not addicted to the principle of London weighting. The hon. Gentleman said that there had to be a London weighting, but he was not fond of the idea of it. Had the matter been left to him, he would not have subscribed to it. I understand what he said. I have heard the argument many times. London teachers would not be happy if it were suggested that they should not have London weighting.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I did not suggest anything of the sort. I suggested that if we could go back to the point at which the matter started, which perhaps led to the escalation of house prices in the area, we might not have wished to go along that path. Once there is London weighting in schools and in other occupations, I accept that it will be impossible to get rid of it.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am glad to hear that the hon. Gentleman accepts that it will be difficult to get rid of it. Until about 1945 there were different salary scales for different areas within London attracting a higher rate. Territorial differences have been applied. There was a scale 1 for purely rural areas—I am talking about a different London from the London that we know today. There was a scale 2 for partly rural areas. Perhaps my constituency would have been a partly rural area then. There was a scale for partly urban areas, and scale 3 for industrial areas, or partly urban and partly industrial areas. There was scale 4 for London. In 1945, those scales differentiating between various parts of the country were abolished, but teachers in the London county council and certain areas adjoining London received the London area allowance. The allowance was comprised of two rates. The higher rate applied either when the person attained the age of 37 years or on the completion of 16 years' service in the London area, whichever was the earlier. These arrangements continued until 1965.

Before then, the only recorded significant change was the extension of the London area to include parts of Kent, Essex, Surrey and Hertfordshire which fell within the metropolitan police district. In 1965, the two rates were abolished and replaced by one rate. In 1974, there was a special pay board on London allowances. As a result, three rates of London allowance were established, and they are still in existence. From 1 March 1974, teachers in ILEA and certain outer London boroughs — Brent, Barking, Haringey, Ealing, Merton and Newham — received the highest rate. Outer London areas, including those adjacent to London, received a lower allowance. A new fringe allowance was established for selected parts of the home counties that never before had attracted London weighting.

Mr. Corbyn: I am sure that the hon. Lady listened carefully to the speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike). Does she accept that house prices in London are high, particularly for young teachers? It is impossible for young teachers to buy a house in virtually any borough in London. Because of the pressure on public sector housing, it is almost impossible to get public sector housing, either. They must travel a long way or we must face a serious shortage of teachers in many inner urban areas, such as the one that I represent. I should imagine that the same problem applies in the Minister's own constituency.

12.45 pm

Mrs. Rumbold: That is a powerful argument for the maintenance of the London weighting. It is one of the obvious reasons why we need the provision as drafted in the Bill. There is a provision for different cases. This will allow us to continue the higher rate of pay in special schools and social priority allowances for the inner cities. It is an important method of ensuring that there are teachers in schools that are in serious need of an extended number of teachers to help with their special deprivations. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will agree with that.

It is unfortunate that Opposition Members are obsessed with paying everyone the same rate. It would create difficulties if we were to apply their argument to this differentiation. We seem to agree that there are special needs because of the price of houses and the price of housing generally within the south-eastern area. I do not include only London, although I accept that London housing is highly priced. People in all sorts of professions in my constituency have great difficulty in buying houses. In the south-east generally, the price of houses is different. Therefore, the London weighting is an important — though not perhaps great — incentive to teachers to remain within London.

The hon. Members for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) and for Burnley (Mr. Pike) talked about regional differences. They were concerned about any proposition that there could be different regional pay. Their argument was that the proposed pay structure that should be accepted included sufficient rewards for classroom teachers and there was no need for any incentives for shortage teachers or shortage skills, and no need to get teachers to go into difficult posts by having different scales because it would create difficulties.

The Government's argument is the reverse. It is important that individual head teachers can offer special rewards and that individual authorities can examine the possibility of attracting people to areas in which they can pay for shortage teachers or shortage skills that they believe are important, and also that they can get good teachers to take up difficult posts either in inner city areas or in rural areas. In rural areas, it can be just as easy, for different reasons, to have deprivation and just as easy to

[Mrs. Rumbold]

find it difficult to attract people to work in rural areas. It is important that one should not rule out the possibility of there being some differentials, incentives and some special posts within the structure of the salary scales.

The House has not yet decided the issue of regional pay. I urge Opposition Members not to make too many assumptions about regional pay but to have an open mind. Recruitment problems differ from one part of the country to another. The hon. Member for Burnley reminded us about how beautiful his home county of Lancashire is. That is quite true. I have associations with Yorkshire people who claim that Yorkshire is marginally more beautiful. The hon. Member for Hillsborough will agree that Yorkshire has marginal attractions over the county of Lancashire. These are matters about which all hon. Members have different opinions. I do not wish to extend that argument. It might divide the Committee in a different way from the customary one. There is clearly a case for asking the advisory committee to consider the possibility of some regional pay differences. I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) that in no circumstances would we seek to make regional differences in such a way as to deprive one area to benefit another, but there may be good reasons for providing enhanced remuneration to attract people with shortage skills to a particular area.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) referred specifically to recruiting problems and the need to give head teachers discretion to pay salaries higher than the prescribed starting salary to staff teaching shortage subjects. He made some cogent and powerful points. We recognise the need to recruit staff to teach shortage subjects such as mathematics, physics and craft and technical design. As I have said, our proposals allow for an increase in salary and an expansion in a number of incentive posts.

This is the matter of principle that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has tried to explain to local authority employers and to individual unions. He feels very strongly about this because he believes that it is essential to have a number of incentive posts available to teachers. He believes that this will allow good quality teachers, including those with specialist skills that are in short supply, to be properly rewarded and motivated. We certainly do not rule out the idea of appointing teachers at a higher starting salary to attract people to the profession, but I think that it would be inadvisable for the House to lay that down prescriptively in the Bill. Again, I think that it would be preferable to ask the advisory committee to consider the matter. I accept, too, that the technical and vocational education initiative and the city technology colleges might also use the advisory committee.

I hope that I have managed to cover many of the points raised in the debate and to put the Government's view. Much of what has been said today should be noted and some will certainly be taken on board by the advisory committee, but I hope that the Committee will reject the amendment.

Mr. Freud: I shall be very brief. I have just a few points to make. I have never felt it important to occupy time simply because I wanted to make a point. I have listened to most of the debate, and I apologise to the few hon. Members whose speeches I did not hear. It is totally unacceptable for central Government to impose different pay scales for different areas on the local education authorities. I take a fairly relaxed view of a local authority coming to an agreement with a teacher within a pay scale, but I would not wish the advisory committee to be involved in that. There is a danger that Conservative councils, which undervalue teachers, might pay them too little while certain irresponsible Left-wing councils might pay them too much. Provided that the pay scale was agreed within the top and bottom guidelines, I think that alliance Members would be content to allow local education authorities to negotiate with teachers.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The Minister has given substance to our fears that there will be major demarcation problems between one area and another and between one subject and another. It is therefore important that we register our opposition to the proposals in the Division Lobby.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 139, Noes 220.

Division No. 35] **[12.54 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKelvey, William
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie

Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Torney, Tom
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. James Hamilton and
Mr. Don Dixon.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Glyn, Dr Alan
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Portillo, Michael
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Ward, John
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Amendment proposed, No. 183, in page 3, line 9, leave out subsection (6).—*[Mr. Radice.]*

Question, That the amendment be made, *put and negatived.*

Clause 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Corbyn : I did not realise that we would reach clause 4 so quickly. We in the Labour party are very keen on clause IV, but not in respect of the Bill.

The curious wording of clause 4 does not make it clear what its impact will be on rate-capped local authorities. I represent the inner-London constituency of Islington, North, which comes within the Inner London education

[Mr. Corbyn]

authority. Today, ILEA is the largest education authority in Britain, and probably in western Europe. It employs the largest number of teachers and has one of the best records on spending per pupil in the country. However, that authority has been singled out for especially vindictive treatment by the Government. Apart from money for further education, the authority has received no Government grant since 1980.

Therefore, it is fallacious for the Secretary of State to claim that any agreement reached between the local authority employers and the teachers' unions, as has happened on this occasion, is partly his responsibility. On numerous occasions it has been abundantly clear that the Secretary of State is not prepared to fund ILEA, despite all the educational problems and the multiple deprivation of inner-city areas.

The Government should tell us how the clause will affect any settlement that is reached between the local authority employers and the teachers' trade union representatives, or any settlement imposed on them by the Government. If the Government are to be consistent in claiming an even-handed approach towards education problems throughout Britain, they should recognise that ILEA has special educational needs. They should recognise also that is has tried hard to provide a decent standard of education, and that it has achieved a great deal, despite the smear tactics that have been used against it by the Murdoch empire, and despite the regular attacks mounted on it by Ministers.

We need to know exactly what the Government's response will be if a settlement is now imposed in the teachers' dispute as looks likely, because the Tory hordes have returned after their night out. In fact, ILEA has been knee-capped and has been hit harder than any of the borough councils that have been rate-capped.

I could speak at enormous length about ILEA's problems, but I do not want to detain the House. Nevertheless, the Government should understand what they are doing to education in Inner London. I believe that ILEA has played a good and positive role in furthering innovative education in Britain, and that that has been recognised by education authorities throughout the country. Indeed, ILEA is recognised as a pioneer in the school meals service, in nursery schools and classes, in play centres and junior clubs, in youth centres, adult education, further and higher education, polytechnics, media resources, language training and many other areas. It is thus recognised as an advanced authority.

Moreover, because of the multi-ethnic nature of London's society, it has willingly spread linguistic training throughout London. I do not call that a problem, as it is not one. It is part of the rich pattern of London life that there are so many people who speak different languages. Obviously, ILEA had to spend a lot of money on all those things. Consequently, it has been singled out for special treatment. Over the years, the Government have attempted to break up ILEA. I have been party to many campaigns to defend it in my capacity as a NUPE organiser in the past, and as someone who is concerned about education in inner London. For all those pluses the Government have singled out ILEA for special and vindictive treatment.

Mr. Tony Banks: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Government have actively pursued a hostile political campaign against ILEA? Does he recall that during the discussions on the Local Government Bill 1985, it was originally proposed that ILEA should be broken up?

Mr. Corbyn: Yes, indeed I do. Since its inception, ILEA has been under constant threat from this Government and previous Conservative Governments. As my hon. Friend has said, they did not like the fact that London county council was a progressive education authority. Since the establishment of the GLC and ILEA, and since the local government re-organisation of 1963, Conservative Governments have been consistently opposed to ILEA. People in County hall, who have been trying to plan education for Inner London, have always had to look over their shoulders at the threat implied in breaking up ILEA into a series of too-small, unmanageable and educationally unsound organisations.

Mr. Banks: My hon. Friend has highlighted the financial problems that are unique to ILEA. Perhaps he might care to reflect for a moment on the additional problems that ILEA will face if the London residuary body insists on kicking it out of county hall. I remind my hon. Friend that it was the ILEA boroughs which then made up London county council that paid for county hall out of London rates. Consequently, ILEA is being told that if it wants to stay in county hall, it must buy back its own property. What does my hon. Friend think of that outrageous situation?

1.15 pm

Mr. Corbyn: My hon. Friend's intervention has a great deal to do with the Bill. It is outrageous to suggest that ILEA should be forced to leave county hall. County hall was built and paid for by the people of London. The GLC was destroyed against the wishes of the people of London, but it will come back and it will be stronger than ever. Obviously, that building is part of London life and the London scene——

The Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman must relate his remarks to the provisions of the Bill, and should not go over old history.

Mr. Corby: I understand that, so I shall relate my remarks to the financial problems of ILEA in respect of its occupation of county hall. The Government have——

The Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman must relate his remarks to the provisions of the Bill, and should not deal with the occupation of county hall.

Mr. Corbyn: Perhaps I can say that ILEA has severe financial problems that are associated with the Bill and with the way in which the Government have treated it. Those problems have been exacerbated by the Government's obsession with throwing ILEA out of county hall, thus putting increased expenditure on that education authority, when it would rather spend that money on taking care of its children.

The agreement reached in Nottingham was welcomed by ILEA as a major step forward in defining the professional requirements of teachers and in setting a long-term pay structure that is just and attractive. The authority employs 17,200 full-time equivalent teachers in inner London. Its current practice conforms with the agreement on class sizes, which provides for an overall maximum

planned class size of 33 by 1 September 1987, subject to the availability of qualified teachers and space. In ILEA, the average effective class sizes are 20·4 for primary schools and 18·2 for secondary schools. Therefore, ILEA already falls very much within the terms of that Nottingham agreement. The same is true in relation to cover, and ILEA fully accepts what has been put forward with regard to appraisal in that agreement.

Moreover, ILEA welcomes the equal opportunities content of the agreement, and has been singled out for a particularly vindictive attack by the Government because of its progress in equal opportunities training, educational methods and employment practices. As has been said, unless the financial relationship between local and central Government is clarified and the Government accept the idea of local democracy, the Bill will create only further problems for ILEA in particular, and for other education authorities too. The clause, however, appears to make that financial relationship even more complicated and local democracy an even more remote prospect.

I hope that the Secretary of State will reply to the debate. On 5 November the leader of ILEA, Frances Morrell, sent a letter. I should like to know what answer she is being given on this important matter. The people of London want to improve their education system. They supported the teachers in large numbers during the pay dispute. There were many petitions, demonstrations, marches and rallies. In my constituency, the local people were not blaming the teachers for that dispute, but were putting the blame where it belongs, on the Government. Ministers may find it a little hard to understand that.

However, I hope that the Minister will at least give us some hope that the financial vindictiveness that has been shown towards ILEA will be ended, along with the rate-capping of that authority. Moreover, I hope that he will agree to introduce amending legislation that will put ILEA on the same footing as other education authorities, and that will release it from the especially vindictive position that was sorted out for it at the time of the GLC's abolition and the consequent legislation affecting ILEA.

Mr. Tony Banks: I shall be brief. Both I and my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) wanted to use this debate to draw the attention of the Committee to the unique financial problems facing ILEA. I do not believe that the Minister is likely to give the assurances that my hon. Friend sought. Indeed, for us to believe that he would do so, we would also have to believe passionately in Father Christmas. Nevertheless, I hope that Ministers will at last show that they are aware of the problems facing ILEA.

Unlike any other authority, in the absence of block grant, ILEA funds 100 per cent. of the pay bill for inner London teachers. Consequently, it feels doubly deprived as a result of the Bill.

I shall not go into all the reasons for that position, but we know that the Secretary of State realises that ILEA will face enormous problems. In answer to questions on his statement he said:

> "The one local authority that could be in trouble this year is ILEA because it is not in receipt of block grants." — [*Official Report*, 30 October 1986; Vol. 103. c. 470-1.]

An additional bill will be faced by all education authorities, whatever settlement is finally reached, but ILEA ratepayers will face the largest bill of all ratepayers in Britain because ILEA is the largest education authority and will receive none of the Government's additional block grant. At present it appears that this additional grant to be paid by the Government will go to other local authorities, most of which are not education authorities, so face none of the extra costs.

That seems on the face of it patently absurd because the additional money that Ministers will make available for an educational settlements, imposed, agreed or whatever could end up going to authorities with no educational responsibilities. Even in his wildest moments the Minister could not possibly wish to see that happen. We hope that when he replies he will tell us what special arrangements will be made for ILEA because of its unique and special problems.

Mr. Fisher: When the Minister replies will he mention two further problems in addition to the problems on ILEA that were well laid out by my hon. Friends the Members for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) and for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks)?

Will the Minister confirm that if the money is paid through the block grant some of the increase will inevitably go to non-education authorities? That strikes me as inevitable by the very nature of block grant. Will the Minister confirm that that is an inevitable consequence? I am sure that he will agree that that is far from satisfactory, especially when he puts such emphasis on the tightness of the financial arrangements and the desire not to waste money. I am sure that he will agree that it would be entirely unsatisfactory, if money paid under these provisions through the block grant went to non-education authorities.

My next point is even more serious. Will the Minister make it clear how the Government will pay? Local authorities inevitably fear that the Government will reflect in the grant a particular proportion of the cost of a pay settlement which the Secretary of State may impose. That would mean that the Government could limit their contribution to a specified number of staff employed. The Minister will acknowledge that the DES figures for the correct number of staff employed are considerably lower for a variety of complicated reasons than the number of staff that are employed. A position could easily arise in which the increased money was paid through the block grant for a specified number of employed staff which was lower than the number of staff that an authority had. That is possible and likely. Then the authority — if the Minister is still with me on this crucial point — which discovered that it was being given money for a specified number of staff which was less than the number of staff that it had in place in schools would be faced with the choice of varying its contracts, redeploying or sacking staff, or diverting funds from other activities on to staff costs. I am sure that the Minister would agree that all of those things are undesirable. I hope that they are unintentional.

I would be interested to know if I have misinterpreted those points about the block grant. An increase will inevitably go to some education authorities, and the difference between the specified number of staff and the actual number of staff employed, if the Secretary of State chooses to make that specification in his increase, is a serious problem. Local authorities should be aware of exactly what the Government intend to do.

Mr. Freud: I am anxious about the advice that we are given in the notes on clauses where it states:

[Mr. Freud]

"The main expense would be payments to members of the Advisory Committee and this will be largely offset by the disbandment of the previous Burnham committees."

The phrase "largely offset" clearly means that the pay for the Advisory committee will be more than the money which is currently spent on the Burnham committees. That has grave implications. The Minister owes it to the House to explain what remuneration he has in mind for the members and for the secretariat of the committee. The expenditure on Burnham is very considerable. I would think that the travelling costs alone, apart from the secretariat and the papers that are published, would be infinitely greater than the costs that one could envisage for a committee of five to nine men doing good work.

Mr. Corbyn: And women.

Mr. Freud: Women and, possibly, young people. As people do good work they are steadily underpaid. Hon. Members know how insistent we on the Opposition Benches are to give authority to people who may not necessarily have reached the age at which the Secretary of State thinks them fit to sit on Committees.

I shall listen with interest to the Minister's reply because he owes it to the House to go into this at least in some detail.

Mr. Dunn: The clause is about the expenses of running an advisory committee, as the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) confirmed. It has nothing to do with the level of rate support grant paid under the Local Government, Planning and Land (No. 2) Act 1980. Hon. Members know that the level of rate support grant is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine.

On the Burnham committee and the costs of servicing the advisory committee, no decision has yet been taken on the payment of committee members. Members of pay review bodies have their expenses paid, but do not receive remuneration. However, we shall consider whether the advisory committee members should receive remuneration.

With regard to the costs of the Burnham committee —there are direct costs and indirect costs in the sense that some costs are not easy to quantify and put on the table—the direct cost of the Burnham meetings is about £20,000 a year. That covers a small allowance paid to the chairman together with the costs of the hire of the meeting rooms refreshments and the production of verbatim reports. But clearly the overall cost of the Burnham machinery is much greater than that figure when the costs of salaries, allowances and expenses of those attending Burnham meetings are also included.

Schedule 1 provides that the Secretary of State——

Mr. Freud: Is the Minister saying that these provisions will save money or cost more? It sounds as if there will be a considerable saving, which is the first good thing we have heard from the Conservative party.

Mr. Dunn: As I have just outlined, we have yet to take a number of decisions on whether the Department of Education and Science or other Government agencies will finance the secretariat. There are costs involved, but my view in trying to equate the gain made by the elimination of Burnham with the costs of the secretariat is that the cost will probably be a little less or the same. I shall write to the hon. Gentleman when a figure is more clearly available to us.

The hon. Members for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) and for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks)—with great ingenuity—raised the questions of ILEA, county hall, pupil-teacher ratios, staffing, equipment, books and a whole range of ILEA activities which do not necessarily fall within the particular ambit of this debate. However, because it is the season of good will, as the hon. Member for Newham, North-West said—although I do not think that I yet resemble Father Christmas—I would like to engage the House in a debate on ILEA.

Mr. Tony Banks: The Minister would have a job climbing up and down the chimneys, would he not?

1.30 pm

Mr. Dunn: Certainly, most modern houses do not have chimneys. To return to the subject, a debate on ILEA includes what it does, how it does it, what expenditure levels it follows and how it could do better.

The hon. Member for Islington, North, said that the Government were being harsh and vindictive in their financial treatment of ILEA. Perhaps the political debate is a further dimension. I am happy to engage in debate on ILEA, what it does and how it does it at any time, while occasionally paying appropriate credit and tribute to some of the good work that it has done. I will not deny that it has done good work in recent years and that it has extremely good officers who have probably kept the authority under better control than might have been the case.

The fact that ILEA receives no block grant under the present rate support grant system in no sense implies that it is being singled out for harsh treatment. It is treated in the same way as all other authorities. As the House will know, one significant reason why ILEA receives no block grant is that it benefits from the high rateable value of the inner London area. In addition, its expenditure policies are such that it takes them above the line for Government support.

Opposition Members and I will always differ sharply on how and what we see the work, function and role of ILEA. I believe that expenditure and savings can be made without detriment to the education provision for young people of inner London. I know that both hon. Gentlemen who have spoken with great ingenuity will disagree with me. There can be savings on plant, privatisation of services, supernumerary teachers who are unallocated to jobs and exist on the books, and in many other areas.

Mr. Corbyn: I am unclear whether the Minister is prepared to say now that the Government will fund the teachers' pay increase for ILEA. It is the only education authority in England and Wales that under the present arrangements would stand to receive no central Government funding whatever for the increases in teachers' pay, be they the Nottingham increases or increases which the Minister may try to impose this legislation.

Mr. Dunn: The answer is plain. So long as ILEA continues to behave as it does, it will not receive grant. The hon. Gentleman referred to a letter which we have received from the leader of the authority, but it would be injudicious of me to reveal the reply at this stage—I

mean no disrespect to the hon. Gentleman. It will be replied to and Mrs. Morrell will be the first to receive the reply. That is only fair and courteous.

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) will realise that money is given for a specified number of staff because grant is related to the overall assessed need to spend on an authority. Our intention would be to direct the extra grant to local education authorities by increasing the education GRE.

This debate is about the money to be made available to cover expenses attributable to the provisions of the Bill, if it becomes an Act. It is a standard provision and does not obviate the need for the money to be voted at the appropriate time. The main expense envisaged is payment to members of the advisory committee which will be largely off-set by the disbandment of the previous Burnham committees. Therefore, I welcome the inclusion of clause 4 in the Bill.

Question put, That the clause stand part of the Bill:—

The Committee Divided: Ayes 208, Noes 133.

Division No. 36] **[1.34 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Mariand, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Portillo, Michael
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'lch N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Ward, John
Watts, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Francis Maude and
Mr. David Lightbown.

NOES

Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Cartwright, John
Clay, Robert
Cleiland, David Gordon
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George

Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr Don Dixon and
Mr. James Hamilton.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Clause 4 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 5

Duration of Act

Mr. Radice: I beg to move amendment No. 202, in page 3, line 30, leave out '1990' and insert '1989'.

The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments:

No. 203, in page 3, line 30, leave out '1990' and insert '1987'.

No. 204, in page 3, line 30, leave out from '1990' to end of line 38.

No. 205, in page 3, line 31, at end insert
'or unless terminated by an order made by the Secretary of State before that date'.

No. 207, in page 3, line 38, at end insert
'or shall cease to have effect after such period of notice as he sees fit'.

1.45 pm

Mr. Radice: We have discussed the points covered by these amendments on many occasions throughout yesterday and today, or is it tomorrow and the day before yesterday—I cannot quite remember.

I should like to ask the Minister two questions on the definition of interim. When is interim, interim? Most fair minded people would not consider a three-year period—four years if we take account of the retrospective element — to be interim. Most people would regard that as almost permanent. The Government must face that issue. My second question is very simple. What do the Government envisage will happen after 1990? I hope that the Minister will answer those questions.

Mr. Dunn: I was very grateful for the advance notice given by the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice), in his usual courteous way, of the two questions that he intended to raise. There are temporary civil servants who are temporary civil servants for all their working lives. In the context of the notion of interim, we are concerned to have the notion of interim status applying until 1990. What happens thereafter is a matter for consultation and debate. We will consider proposals as they are made.

Mr. Radice: What about speculation?

Mr. Dunn: There is bound to be much speculation. The Opposition indulge in that all the time, especially on the date of parliamentary elections, defence and such matters. However, we intend to consult very carefully about the engine that will replace the clapped-out Burnham vehicle.

Mr. Radice: The Minister has said that the Government will consult very carefully about the engine to replace Burnham. However, the fact is we are discussing a Bill about which there has been no consultation whatsoever.

Mr. Fisher: Why the sudden conversion?

Mr. Dunn: I do not feel part of the debate that is taking place on the Opposition Front Bench. However, I am determined to say that of course we shall have careful consultations. Representations will be made by individuals, institutions and political parties. No doubt by 1990, the hon. Member for Durham, North will, like me, be four years older but he will still be sitting on the Opposition Front Bench and giving me advice and I shall listen carefully. Not all the hon. Gentleman's ideas are completely bad. We shall consult and replace Burnham with a new engine.

Mr. Tony Banks: What about a new engine driver?

Mr. Dunn: If the new engine driver is anything like the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), he will have to take several tests before he is qualified.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Fisher: I beg to move amendment No. 206, in page 3, line 33, after 'order', insert
'a draft of which has been laid before and approved by resolution of each House of Parliament,'.

The First Deputy Chairman: With this we shall take amendment No. 209 in page 3, line 44, leave out subsection (4).

Mr. Fisher: As my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) said in speaking to the last group of amendments, we have discussed at length in Committee the powers of the Secretary of State, but we have not discussed at great length the proceedings to be followed when the Secretary of State makes decisions on the advice of the new advisory committee and brings them before the House. The Secretary of State tried to say that the procedures laid down in the Bill were democratic and constitutional enhancements. He tried to make the case

that the House of Commons would have greater powers of scrutiny and control. For all his ingenious arguments, smiles and charm, he did not make that case successfully. His tongue was planted firmly in both cheeks, if that is possible. That might be possible for this Secretary of State. Anything is possible in view of the way in which he has conducted the debate.

Amendments Nos. 206 and 209 concern the form in which the measures to be introduced by the Secretary of State should be presented. In amendment No. 206, we suggest that, instead of an order being laid before the House, there should be

"a draft . . . which has been laid before and approved by a resolution by each House of Parliament".

That is a normal procedure which you, Mr. Armstrong, the Under-Secretary of State and even the Secretary of State understand, although the Bill suggests that the right hon. Gentleman's sensitivity to parliamentary procedure, or at least to the niceties of democratic political management, is sadly lacking. Even he should understand that an affirmative resolution approved by each House of Parliament is a normal and correct procedure. It would be interesting to hear the Under-Secretary of State explain to the Committee why the House of Commons should not be allowed to affirm a draft order rather than have a statutory instrument laid before it. As the Under-Secretary of State understands full well, the latter is a very different form of scrutiny and effectively puts all control in the hands of the Secretary of State.

The burden of our case in Committee has been that the Secretary of State has been taking unto himself extraordinary, unnecessary and undesirable powers in relation to trade unions and local authorities. The right hon. Gentleman said in a different context last weekend in a widely reported speech on the curriculum that he wanted to take the curriculum to Elizabeth house or its successor in the Department. In this legislation, power will be centralised in the hands of the Secretary of State, and I hope that teachers, local authorities and parents understand that.

By presenting orders to the House of Commons in this way the Secretary of State will further centralise power in his hands. I hope that Conservative Members who are parliamentarians, who have respect for the House of Commons and who believe that we all have a duty to our constituents to ensure that there is parliamentary scrutiny will agree that the system of affirmative resolution by each House of Parliament is an appropriate one in this case.

Mr. Marlow: I do not know what the hon. Gentleman has done with the Bill. I do not know whether he has lost it, has turned it upside down, cannot read it or cannot understand it. The Bill refers to an order. If there is an order, there will be parliamentary scrutiny. The hon. Gentleman seems to have mislaid the Bill.

Mr. Fisher: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman has the amendments in front of him. We commend amendment No. 206 to him. It says that a draft should be

"laid before and approved by resolution of each House of Parliament".

If the hon. Gentleman feels that that is an inferior and less secure way for Parliament to scrutinise the activities of the Secretary of State than that provided in the Bill, by all means let him make his own contribution. I think that he would be hard put to say that our proposal in amendment No. 206 is not a better way for Parliament to proceed. This is not a party political point. Irrespective of which party is in power, it is better for the Government's actions to be approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament. Will the Under-Secretary of State respond to my point and explain how the procedures in the Bill are superior to those proposed in our amendment?

Mr. Dunn: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Cental (Mr. Fisher) for the chance to comment on the amendments to clause 5. The clause provides for the advisory committee to have a limited life. The interim arrangements are due to expire on 31 March 1990, unless renewed by an order subject to negative resolution procedure. Renewal may be for a period of one year at a time.

Amendment No. 206 converts the procedure for the extension of the legislation into an affirmative resolution. That was made quite clear. There may well be an occasion when an extension of the legislation for one year is deemed to be uncontroversial, in which case it would perhaps take up Parliament's time to debate it. If it were deemed to be controversial, as might be the case with Labour Members, no doubt it would be prayed against, so Parliament would debate it anyway. I think that I am satisfied with that provision.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: It is sad that the Government do not appreciate the difference between affirmative and negative resolution orders and their considerable implications for debate in the House of Commons. Affirmative resolution orders must be debated, although this does not have to take up more than a few seconds. There are examples of affirmative orders which involve no controversy. They are considered at 10 o'clock and are passed on the nod. This means that an hon. Member has the opportunity to debate the matter, whether as an individual member of a political party who supports the order, as a member of that party who, on that occasion, disagrees with the party's view, or as an individual. Hon. Members may want to discuss the order although not necessarily to vote against it. Affirmative orders can be debated for an hour and a half in Committee.

The difficulty is that negative resolution orders must be prayed against, which involves lobbying through the usual channels. A Front-Bench spokesman has a good chance of getting an early debate on the order as a result of such lobbying. But a Back Bencher may not necessarily win an easy passage for the order, if the usual channels are not especially sympathetic to the idea of a debate. There are occasions when one has to make oneself particularly awkward to get such a debate.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Has the hon. Gentleman ever introduced a negative order?

Mr. Bennett: I have pursued the issue of exemptions for gipsy caravan sites. On one occasion, there was quite a cosy arrangement between the two Front Benches that one of the orders should be passed without debate. Getting a debate entailed making quite a nuisance of oneself.

There is a further problem with a prayer. If the prayer is tabled for consideration at 10 o'clock, the debate is entitled to continue until 11.30 pm. But if there is a vote on the busines that is due to conclude at 10'clock, time for the debate on the prayer is reduced, and there may be less than an hour's debate on it. If, as often happens, the two Front Bench spokesmen speak for longer than 20 minutes

[Mr. Bennett]

each, hon. Members do not have much time to debate the prayer. At least, with an affirmative order, we are guaranteed an hour and a half debate. There seems to be a considerable advantage in having affirmative resolution orders rather than negative orders.

I am not overly excited by either procedure. I do not think that the guarantee of an hour and a half's debate to approve extending legislation such as this is particularly satisfactory. I argue that there should be procedural changes so that, at least, on the first occasion that such a procedure is implemented there is a guarantee of rather more than an hour and half's debate. It is not satisfactory for a Government to go for extensions to an Act of Parliament on the basis of a possible hour and a half's debate, as a result of a prayer, when there is also the possibility of less than an hour's debate on the topic.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 133, Noes 206.

Division No. 37] **[2 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Cartwright, John
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R. *(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Don Dixon and
Mr. James Hamilton.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Bruinvels, Peter
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey

Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Portillo, Michael
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Ward, John
Watts, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Francis Maude and
Mr. Michael Neubert.

Question accordingly negatived.
Clause 5 ordered to stand part of the Bill.
Clauses 6 and 7 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

New Clause 1

Pension Arrangements

'The Secretary of State shall ensure that, for the determination of pension arrangements, the agreement on pay reached under the auspices of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service on 21st November 1986 shall be deemed to have effect from 1st January 1987.'. — *[Mr. Andrew F. Bennett.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Motion made and Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 133, Noes 193.

Division No. 38] **[2.11 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Cartwright, John
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. James Hamilton and
Mr. Don Dixon.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert

Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Ward, John
Watts, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 18

SCHOOL MEALS (NO. 2)

"The Secretary of State may empower local education authorities to negotiate an agreement on pay and conditions for all those involved in the supervision of school meals.". —*[Mr. Fatchett.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Fatchett: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

It is significant that at the end of this lengthy Committee stage, new clause 18 deals with the supervision of the school meals service. School meals provide the best illustration of the different approaches adopted by the Opposition and the Government to this service. School meals were last discussed during the Report stage proceedings earlier this year on the Education (No. 2) Bill. The Secretary of State for Education and Science will remember that on that night we succeeded in abolishing corporal punishment. He will be remembered as the Secretary of State who abolished corporal punishment. When we debated the school meals service on that occasion I moved a new clause that would have set national standards for the school meals service. The new clause was defeated, but that came as no surprise. However, it is significant that the next day Buckinghamshire county council discussed its provision of a school meals service and decided to abolish it.

The difference between the policies adopted by the Opposition and the Government are best reflected at local level—by decisions similar to that which was taken by Buckinghamshire county council. It has resulted in the loss of jobs and in the loss of a service that was important to so many children in Buckinghamshire.

What happened in Buckinghamshire is typical of what has happened to the school meals service since this Government were elected. Cuts have been made each year in the rate support grant and that has led to cuts in the school meals service. Rate support grant cuts lead to a reduction in the quality and the quantity of the service. They lead also to an increase in the price of school meals.

My hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) has compared the price of school meals in various local authorities. His survey shows that Labour-controlled authorities provide the best and the cheapest school meals service. In Labour-controlled authorities the price of a school meal is 57p, whereas in Conservative-controlled authorities it is 67p. In the middle but, as usual, leaning towards Conservative-controlled authorities, alliance-controlled authorities charge 65p. If one lives in either an alliance-controlled or a Conservative-controlled authority, it is impossible to detect the difference.

The alliance tell us that the best value for the electorate is a balanced Parliament and balanced local authorities. Those who live in Somerset suffer the ill-effects of a balanced local government in terms of school meals. The price of a school meal in Somerset is 75p, which is above the average price that is charged by Conservative-controlled authorities.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fatchett: I am surprised that at this stage the hon. Gentleman wants to intervene, but I shall not give way to him at this point.

The Black report came to the conclusion that the nutritional value of school meals is very important for all children. Its conclusion was reinforced earlier this year by a House of Lords Select Committee report on the school meals service. This Government and Conservative-controlled local authorities are trying to ensure that school children are provided with cheap, quick meals and junk food. They refuse to provide an adequate school meals service.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: What about the food?

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman asks, "What about the food?" Under his Government the nutritional value of school meals has declined. New clause 18 would provide local authorities with the power to negotiate an agreement on pay and conditions that would lead to the provision of a nationwide school meals service.

The Opposition believe in negotiation and in collective bargaining. New clause 18 provides for collective bargaining and for a negotiated agreement for those involved in the supervision of school meals.

At the moment there is substantial variation between authorities. There are variations in schemes, conditions of service and pay for individuals employed in the service. We have those differences and the head teachers' organisations have said to us, and I am sure they have said to Conservative Members, that the only way in which we can make progress is to have a nationally negotiated scheme that will give the head teachers and their organisations what they wish.

2.30 pm

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cecil Franks (Barrow and Furness): On a point of order, Mr. Armstrong. Can you give some guidance? As I understand it, our deliberations having reached 2.30 pm on Thursday afternoon — [HON. MEMBERS: "Wednesday."] the business for Thursday will not take place. Not only will the business not take place, but, equally, Prime Minister's Question Time will not take place. There are hon. Members on both sides of the House who have an interest in Prime Minister's Question Time. Is it not a disgrace that the Labour party should——

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. I remind hon. Members that we are in Committee. It is not for me to give procedural decisions about the meetings of the House. We must continue with the Bill.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): Further to that point of order, Mr. Armstrong. There is a danger of the Committee being misled by the point of order of the hon. Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Franks). You will know, Mr. Armstrong, that there are many opportunities for the Prime Minister to make a statement to the House and that would provide a great opportunity not only for the Prime Minister to be questioned, but, a novel opportunity for this Prime Minister, for her to give some answers.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. We are in Committee and we should proceed on that basis.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. I will not take any more points of order on procedure.

Mr. Marlow *rose*——

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. I remind the House again that we are in Committee; unless the points of order are directed to the Committee proceedings, I will not take any more.

Mr. Fatchett: Over the past 24 hours my hon. Friends and I have fought for democratic rights in Britain. That is why we have opposed the Bill that takes negotiating rights from trade unionists and teachers. *[Interruption.]* If Conservative Members do not want to listen to the educational argument and want to raise bogus points of order. If at any time they had wanted to stop the deliberations of this Committee they had the opportunity to do so. They have not done so.

This has been an important education debate. People who are involved in education have listened to this debate. They have seen the reaction of the Government to democratic rights and they will have listened to the reaction of Conservative Members who are not prepared and not interested in the issues we have been debating. Over the past 24 hours we have been involved in fundamental issues. New clause 18 is a practical and more prosaic issue but it is important for the children of our country. I ask my hon. Friends to join me in supporting new clause 18.

Mr. Dunn *rose*——

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): On a point of order, Mr. Armstrong. Since the business that was provisionally set down for Thursday, has lapsed, may we expect the Leader of the House to make a statement on business and whether——

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman can raise that point of order when we are no longer in Committee.

Mr. Dunn: I approach this part of our proceedings with some anxiety because I believe that our debates over the past 24 hours——

Mr. Bruinvels: 23.

Mr. Dunn: —have been cheerful relevant and robust, and we have won the vote on every occasion. Needless to say, we have won the arguments *[Interruption.]*

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. We have had long debates during the night and we would continue our Committee proceedings much better if sedentary interventions were more restrained from both sides of the House.

Mr. Dunn: I always enjoy the comments of the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett). However, when he talks about trampling on people's rights and about upholding a concept of Socialist democracy, I can remember, over a period of some 20 years, a catalogue of abuse from the Labour party in the context of people's rights. It started over 20 years ago with the Burmah Oil legislation—*[Interruption.]* leading on, in the context of new clause 18, to the introduction of circular 10/65 which abolished our grammar schools, and the iniquitous Education Act 1976 which was supported by the other Socialist parties in the House. That took away the rights of local authorities to organise secondary provision as they

[Mr. Dunn]

felt fit. The latest catalogue, in the context of new clause 18, is that the Labour party is committed to the abolition of the assisted places scheme and existing grammar schools. It will abolish the city technology colleges——

The First Deputy Chairman: Order. The hon. Gentleman must come back to the supervision of school meals.

Mr. Dunn: In all the free-standing establishments where school meals are served the Labour party would seek to abolish them and deny people's choice.

I thought that the purpose of the debate was to discuss new clause 18. [HON. MEMBERS: "Get on with it then."] We shall do it. *[Interruption.]* Labour Members should listen. We have set all local authorities free from Socialism of the direct and indirect collectivist sense. I look forward to the day, in five years' time when we see Socialism reduced to the numbers currently occupied by the Social Democratic party.

I suggest that the House rejects new clause 18.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 138, Noes 211.

Division No. 39] **[2.38 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mark Fisher and
Mr. Ron Davies.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baldry, Tony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bigg-Davison, Sir John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*

Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

Question accordingly negatived.

Schedule 1

Constitution and Proceedings of Advisory Committee

Mr. Freud: I beg to move amendment No. 217, in page 5, leave out lines 17 and 18.

The First Deputy Chairman: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 218, in page 5, line 20, leave out sub-paragraph (1) and insert—

'(1) The Committee shall elect one of its number to serve as chairman and one of its number to serve as deputy chairman.'.

No. 219, in page 5, line 20, leave out 'The Secretary of State' and insert—

'The members from amongst themselves'.

No. 220, in page 5, line 22, at end insert—

'and either the Chairman or Deputy Chairman (if applicable) shall be appointed from amongst the members representing local education authorities.'.

No. 221, in page 5, line 28, at end, insert—

'Ineligibility for appointment

2A. No one who is a governor of, or recommended by, any private educational institution shall be eligible for appointment.'.

No. 222, in page 5, line 33, at end insert—

'(1) The Committee shall maintain a register of members' interests, listing the relevant financial interests of each member of the committee, which shall be open to public inspection.'.

No. 223, in page 5, line 33, at end insert—

'but the allowance in each case shall be no more than £2,000 per annum.'.

No. 224, in page 5, line 37, leave out 'pension'.

No. 225, in page 6, line 7, at end insert—

'giving the reasons for his decisions.'.

No. 226, in page 6, line 7, at end insert—

'and shall lay an order before the House for affirmative resolution before any such payment under this paragraph shall be paid.'.

No. 227, in page 6, line 18, leave out

'such as the Committee may determine'

and insert—

'at least half of the total membership excluding the Chairman.'.

No. 228, in line 20, after 'members', insert—

'up to a total of two vacancies.'.

No. 229, in page 6, line 20, at end insert—

'(3) All meetings of the Committee shall be conducted in public.'.

Mr. Freud: We are reaching the end of the debate and this is a unique opportunity to win a Division. We have come second 15 times and it is absolutely fair now to expect victory.

We feel that, in a bludgeoning, bullying, uncaring and dictatorial Bill, the least that can be done is to give better reasons for someone's elimination from membership of an advisory committee than that the Secretary of State feels that they are unfit.

Perhaps the more important of our two amendments is the one that seeks to take out the statement:

"The Secretary of State shall appoint one of the members of the Advisory Committee to be Chairman and may appoint one of them Deputy Chairman."

Instead, we would insert a democratic electoral system. I suppose that the Secretary of State, bearing in mind that members of the advisory committee shall be appointed and shall not be paid, is frightened that they may not be of the right quality to elect a chairman or deputy chairman. We would resent that. Here is an ideal opportunity of practising democracy and introducing a small amount of democracy into what is basically a dictatorial Bill.

We suggest that the five to nine members be allowed to elect their own chairman by a single transferable vote, an admirable system. The members of the advisory committee will have their names put down on a piece of paper and will write from one to five or from one to nine on them. This will go on until someone reaches an overall majority. It may be possible that the people whom the Secretary of State will nominate for membership of the advisory committee will all vote for themselves as their first preference. In that event, there is a draw, one of them is eliminated and that person's vote goes to the second name on the list. This goes on being done until an overall majority is reached.

Mr. Rowe: Is it part of the scheme that when the result is finally known, the ballot papers should be burnt and a

[Mr. Rowe]

puff of smoke of the appropriate colour be emitted? If so, could this be regarded as a proper sequel to the Burnham committee?

Mr. Freud: The confidentiality of our electoral system does not need revision. What needs revision is our electoral system. If we could get smoke of an alliance colour, the idea would not be unattractive. At the moment, the available colours do not reflect either orange or black, so we have a problem.

This is a small thing to ask of the Secretary of State. It is the insertion of a small amount of democracy, simply so that the five to nine members of the advisory committee can at least be seen to have some authority and elect, among themselves, the chairman and the deputy chairman. We would not advise that the person who comes second should become deputy chairman, as it would be hard to find out who comes second unless one goes on using the alternative vote. There should be a separate election for the vice-chairman.

Mr. Dunn: The amendments proposed by the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) concern the make-up and proceeding of the advisory committee. The provisions in the schedule are all common form, and I can see no reason to disturb them. Throughout today, the Opposition have tried to make something of the provision that the Secretary of State may remove a member from office if that member is, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions of a member. They claim that there is something sinister in that. In fact, it is entirely common form. It appears in the Employment and Training Act 1973 in relation to the Manpower Services Commission. It appears in the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act passed by a Labour Government in 1974 in relation to the Health and Safety Commission. The Secretary of State would have to have evidence on which he could properly place an opinion that the member was unable or unfit to perform his duties. If he made an unreasonable decision, it could be challenged by way of judicial review.

The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East outlined a selection system for the election of chairman. To my dying day, I shall be opposed to a system of proportional representation.

Mr. Fisher: That is not on the amendment paper.

Mr. Dunn: I am grateful for that point.

The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East wants the committee to select its own chairman. The Committee understands that the members of the committee will be capable people, but the chairman must be prepared to devote more of his or her time and effort to the work of the committee. It must be right that the Secretary of State, bearing that in mind, should select the chairman of the committee. Therefore, I ask the Committee to reject the amendment.

Question put:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 142, Noes 222.

Division No. 40] **[2.57 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Alton and
Mr. John Carthwright.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Ancram, Michael
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baldry, Tony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin

Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'lch N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Neubert and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.
Schedule agreed to.
Schedule 2 agreed to.
Bill reported, without amendment.

3.10 pm

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

This has been a long, thorough and exhaustive debate, but it has not been exhausting for me, for my Minister of State or for my Under-Secretary. We are ready for many hours of debate. I thank my hon. Friends for the help that they have given me during the course of the debate. The only closure during the past 24 hours was moved by the Liberal party. Until the point when members of the Liberal party moved that closure, no member of the Liberal or alliance parties had had anything to contribute. I was keen to ensure that, on such an important matter as the Bill, we should use neither the closure not the guillotine, although I was sorely tempted to do so as the speech made by the Hon. Member for Bolsover, (Mr. Skinner) reached the end of its second hour.

So great was the interest of Her Majesty's official Opposition that, for some Divisions, only 26 or 27 Members had managed to stay up. During Divisions, Conservative Members overwhelmed Labour Members by five to one. At two o-clock this morning, Conservative Members were joined on the Government Front Bench by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. We saw neither sight nor sound of the Leader of the Opposition. I thank all my hon. Friends for sharing my determination to see that the Bill goes on to the statute book.

The Bill is important because it marks the end of the discredited Burnham negotiating machinery. It marks the beginning of the period in which pay and conditions will be settled together. It re-establishes a proper role for the Secretary of State in determining schoolteachers' pay. Above all, it provides a way of bringing to an end the negotiating brawl that has disfigured the education system for the past two years and in which children have been the victim.

Under the 1944 Act, the Secretary of State is the guardian of educational standards. He is the upholder of the quality of education service. Right at the heart of the quality of that service stands the teacher. That is why, in

[Mr. Kenneth Baker]

discharging my responsibility, I have provided for an extra £600 million expenditure this year and next year for more pay for teachers. This will provide an average increase of 16·4 per cent. and will mean, when added to what has already been paid this year, an average increase of 25 per cent. over 18 months. This is a massive and generous increase, unique in the public sector.

Under my proposals, a good honours graduate—we need to attract such graduates to teaching—will start at £8,500 a year. If he or she becomes head of a big school, the salary will be over £30,000. Attracting good graduates into the profession is not enough. We need to keep them there. To motivate them, we need a structure with incentives, differentials and good promotion prospects—a structure that recognises and reward the good classroom teacher and those taking on additional responsibilities, and also provides flexibility for filling difficult posts, including those in shortage subjects.

I am pleased that there has been a measure of agreement on certain aspects of the Bill. I wish to stress the measure of agreement between all hon. Members. The agreement is that Burnham should go, that pay and conditions should be settled together, that a clear definition of teachers' jobs should be adopted, and that the Secretary of State should have a proper role in pay determination. However, we disagree fundamentally with Oppostion Members on the cost structure and pay machinery. They want to keep the same type of negotiating machinery that has failed to produce a settlement for two years—that machinery got the agreement of five unions in Coventry last July, the agreement of four in Nottingham and, now, the agreement of two. We propose an interim measure, an advisory committee that will receive evidence, including that from unions and local authorities, separately or jointly. I shall then consult the unions and the local authorities about the recommendations of the committee.

The Bill also will enable me to move to resolve the current impasse. I shall meet two of the unions and the local authorities over the next few days. My door will remain open. One union has already made some proposals about how it might move on structure. I shall need to explore those proposals and discuss them.

In the past 24 hours, I have heard a great deal about trade union negotiating rights and trade union rights. These rights will be respected under the new arrangements. The unions will not be shut out from involvement in the determination of pay. They will have an important part to play. The unreality of the present position is that I have been virtually excluded, even though I am expected to provide a great deal of the money.

Although we have heard so much about trade union rights, we have not heard much about children's rights or about parents' rights to access to an uninterrupted and high quality education. To achieve a balance between all these rights and to resolve the current debacle, we should ensure the passage of the Bill.

3.15 pm

Mr. Radice: I thank the staff and officers of the House who, despite the haste with which the Bill has been railroaded through the House, have provided hon. Members with the usual efficient service. I also pay tribute to my team and all of my parliamentary colleagues for their sustained efforts that have ensured that this highly controversial Bill received adequate parliamentary scrutiny. However, as it leaves the House, the Bill still remains dangerously authoritarian. It removes collective bargaining rights, substitutes a system of ministerial diktat and will make the teachers' dispute harder not easier, to solve.

The Bill, in its seven short clauses, seeks to overturn all existing negotiating procedures to abolish teachers' direct participation in the determination of their pay and conditions of service and to abolish the rights of local authorities to have a say in determining the pay and conditions of those whom they employ. In place of collective bargaining, the Secretary of State proposes to establish a committee to advise him on teachers' pay and their conditions of service. That committee can only be described as the Secretary of State's poodle. He will decide its membership. He will have the power to sack its members at will. He can decide the terms of reference for the committee's work. The Secretary of State is leaving nothing to chance. In the event of his rigged committee reaching conclusions that are not to his liking, he has given himself the power to ignore its recommendations and to impose his own settlement.

The Secretary of State cannot claim that the proposals are an exceptional one-off measure covering only the immediate pay deal. The Secretary of State is to take these sweeping powers for at least the next three years. Indeed, if we count the retrospective powers, he will hold those powers for four years. If the Bill comes into force, 400,000 teachers will have fewer bargaining rights than any other group of public servants. I remind the House that civil servants have the Whitley council machinery. Nurses, doctors and the armed forces have independent review bodies that publish their own reports. Teachers will not even have that.

The Secretary of State has failed to shake our view that the Bill rides roughshod over International Labour Organisation conventions as well as the European social contract. Despite all our efforts, it remains a tyrannical piece of legislation. However, the Opposition have reminded the Government, who are growing arrogant with power, of the need to maintain parliamentary rights and scrutiny. We have drawn public attention to a Bill that gives exceptional and unacceptable powers to the Secretary of State. The Minister has deliberately tried to mislead the House and the media about the nature of the Bill. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not talk of an hon. Member "deliberately misleading" the House.

Mr. Radice: The Minister has misled the House about the nature of the Bill. If the Opposition had not discussed the Bill thoroughly, its true character would have remained hidden.

We have sent a signal to another place that the Bill needs careful scrutiny. It infringes basic rights. It gives unacceptable power to the Secretary of State. It makes a long-term settlement harder to achieve. It is a bad Bill and it does not deserve a place on the statute book.

3.19 pm

Mr. Freud: The Secretary of State began his speech with a cheap jibe at the performance of the Liberals. I begin by complimenting all Front-Bench Members on their stamina

and courtesy throughout the night. The Secretary of State and his Ministers were here as long as most of us, as were the Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen, and all deserve recognition. As for the Secretary of State's jibe about the Liberals, I should point out that there were 20 groups of amendments on the Order Paper. We signalled on Second Reading that we would not seek to amend clause 1, so we did not enter the debate until the third set of amendments. The fact that 15 hours were spent on the first two is no good reason to blame us for not contributing.

Nevertheless, this is still a rotten little Bill. It abolishes negotiating rights. I remind the Secretary of State again that the more one can negotiate the greater is the safety valve and the less is the danger of industrial dispute. Genuinely, and for the sake of our children, I must say that I do not believe that the Bill will bring peace to our classrooms.

We have always favoured the repeal of the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. We have agreed that the Burnham machinery has clearly become inadequate and we have never denied that the Secretary of State has an undisputed right to legislate. We are saying that he should not do it in this way in a temporary measure for this long. We believe that this is a dangerously authoritarian Bill. In this dispute the Secretary of State surely has a duty to find common ground to aid a true settlement rather than alienating and demoralising the entire teaching profession as I believe he has done. Pushing a Bill of this kind through Parliament with such haste is not the best way to cultivate a good working relationship with the teachers.

In the context of employment legislation, I believe that the Bill is unprecedented. It means that 400,000 teachers will lose the rights that they have had in law since 1919. I am still waiting for a reply from the Minister of State as to which other group of workers — police, firemen, nurses, look where she will—is similarly disadvantaged in negotiations. The Bill directly contravenes two International Labour Organisation conventions, both signed and accepted by the Government. We need a new initiative from the Secretary of State to help solve the dispute, not the strong-arm tactics that we have seen. One wonders about the implications for other public sector employees. Is the Bill the thin end of the wedge? Who will be next? Will it be the Civil Service? Will the First Division Association be denied its negotiating rights?

Finally, the award for the worst point made in twenty-three and a half hours of debate must go to the Minister of State when she said that although a majority of the teachers had voted for the ACAS agreement she would not admit it because the majority of the unions had voted against it. If she genuinely believes that that view has any credibility, she may care to consider that the Government represent just one party while the Opposition represent the Labour party, the Liberal party, the Social Democratic party, the Scottish Nationalists, the Welsh Nationalists and the Ulster Unionists. On the hon. Lady's argument, we outnumber the Government party by six to one. What a rotten argument. If for no other reason than that, I hope that the House will deny the Bill a Third Reading.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 235, Noes 152.

Division No. 41] **[3.24 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baldry, Tony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Mariand, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey

Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr Michael Portillo.

NOES

Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Garrett, W. E.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Dr M. S. *(E Kilbride)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Rt Hon J. E.
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R. *(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Fisher and
Mr. Derek Fatchett.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Business of the House

3.36 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the business for next week.

MONDAY 15 DECEMBER—Until seven o'clock, private Members' motions.

Motion for the Christmas Adjournment. It will be proposed that the House should rise for the Christmas Adjournment on Friday 19 December until Monday 12 January.

Proceedings on the Consolidated Fund Bill.

TUESDAY 16 DECEMBER — Second Reading of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill.

Motion on the draft Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Continuance) (No. 3) Order.

Motions on supplementary benefit regulations relating to mortgage interest. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

There will be a debate on EC documents relating to fisheries arrangements for 1987. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER—There will be a debate on a motion to approve the Chancellor of the Exchequer's autumn statement.

Motion relating to the Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order.

THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER—Motions on supplementary and social security benefit orders and regulations. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER—Adjournment debates.

Tuesday 16 December

Relevant European documents:

(a) 10549/86	*Fish guide prices*
(b) Unnumbered	*Fisheries: total allowable catches and quotas 1987*
(c) Unnumbered	*Reciprocal fisheries agreement with Norway 1987*

Relevant reports of European Legislation Committee

(a) HC 22-i (1986-87) para 2

(b) HC 22-iv (1986-87) para 5

(c) HC 22-iv (1986-87) para 6

[Motions on supplementary and social security benefit orders and regulations to be debated on Thursday 18 December

The draft Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (S.I. 1986 No. 1961)

The draft Social Security Benefits Up-rating (No. 2) Order 1986

The draft Supplementary Benefit Up-rating (No. 2) Order 1986

The draft Family Income Supplements (Computation) (No. 2) Regulations 1986

The draft Statutory Sick Pay (Rates of Payment) Regulations 1986

The draft Social Security Benefits (Contributions, Re-rating (No. 2) Order 1986

The draft Social Security Benefits (Treasury Supplement to and Allocation of Contributions (Re-rating) Order 1986

The Housing Benefits (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulations 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 2183)

Motions on Supplementary Benefit Payments (Mortgage) Interest Regulations to be debated on Tuesday 16 December

The draft Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1986

The Supplementary Benefit (Claims and Payments) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 2154)]

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islewyn): I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his statement.

The motion on Tuesday night relating to benefit regulations on mortgage interest is a shameful proposition, especially from a Government who have given away so much to those who are best off among home-buyers, and who now wish to deny those who, by definition, are among the worst off and most insecure in our society. It is the worst gesture possible, especially in the period immediately before Christmas. Talk about no room at the inn!

I welcome the announcement of a debate next week on the autumn statement. I should like to draw the attention of the Leader of the House to the recommendation in paragraph 10 of the report of the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service that was published yesterday. I should be grateful if the right hon. Gentleman would obtain an assurance from the Chancellor that, as the report states, he will make

"all statements on macro-economic policy to the House of Commons, where he can be questioned by Honourable Members"

and not outside the House.

In view of the fears of hon. Members on both sides of the House, if the Government make the wrong decision and opt for Boeing instead of Nimrod for the airborne early warning system, will the right hon. Gentleman arrange for a statement to be made next week, and also arrange for a debate on that matter before the final decision is made? The right hon. Gentleman will be well aware that hon. Members on both sides of the House are concerned about the impact that the wrong decision would have on jobs and on core technology in this country.

Does the right hon. Gentleman appreciate the widespread concern among local authorities about the continued postponement of an announcement on the rate support grant settlement for 1987-88? A third and unprecedented consultation document asking for responses by 19 December has been published. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that that is widely understood to be evidence of a Government effort to delay, rather than a genuine effort to broaden consultation? Is it not the case that the Secretary of State for the Environment is twisting and turning in a desperate effort to buy off Tory Back Benchers by switching grants from the deprived inner city areas of Britain to the better-off home counties? When will the House be in a position to debate the RSG order for 1987-88?

Does the right hon. Gentleman recall that two weeks ago I asked him for an early debate on the privatisation of Rolls-Royce? Will he tell us when that debate will take place so that we can expose the Government's decision to use £100 million of public resources to promote the sale of public assets?

Mr. Biffen: I shall deal with those five points in the sequence in which they were presented.

[Mr. Biffen]

I heard what the right hon. Gentleman said about the debate on mortgage interest payments and social security. However, I thought that the situation that he described was admirably rebutted by my hon. Friend the Minister of State when he made the statement yesterday. However, there will be a debate and the arguments can doubtless be expanded.

The right hon. Gentleman mentioned the autumn statement, and I confirm that the report of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee will be set down for consideration with that debate. I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the anxieties the right hon. Gentleman has expressed.

The right hon. Gentleman also asked me about the important decision that has to be made about Nimrod. I shall of course, pass on his comments to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. I fully understand and underline their validity. Perhaps the question of the timing of any statement for debate can be pursued through the usual channels.

In this pre-Christmas period, I thought that the right hon. Gentleman was being less than charitable about the actions of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment in respect of the rate support grant. My right hon. Friend has shown that he is a shrewd and listening Secretary of State. I assure the right hon. Gentleman that we are fully aware of the imperative need for a statement on the rate support grant. I shall take account of his points but I have already implied that we shall be operating broadly in line with previous practice.

Although the privatisation proposals for Rolls-Royce cannot appear in the business for next week, that matter could be considered further through the usual channels. However, those really devoted to the topic may like to turn up during the debate after the Consolidate Fund Bill when privatisation may be discussed. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman and I can exchange pleasantries then.

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, apart from Members of Parliament, the only person who works double or treble shifts at this time of the year is Father Christmas? Will he promise that in the new year the Government will be as good about giving hon. Members treats as Father Chistmas is?

Mr. Biffen: The one agonising fear that I have about this place is that there may be too many hon. Members who think that they are Father Christmas.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Following the reported announcement in the press today that a £240 million radar contract has been signed with Iran, will the Leader of the House arrange for a statement to be made tomorrow morning on that important deal? How does it square with the Prime Minister's statement last week that the Government were consistently and scrupulously pursuing a "no arms" policy with Iran?

Mr. Biffen: I cannot in any way confirm the hon. Gentleman's interpretation of newspaper comment, but I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence to it. That subject might conceivably be raised in relation to two or three of the topics that have been chosen for discussion on Monday, just as the question of Nimrod could also be raised then.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): In view of the appalling threat posed to the nation's integrity by the remote possibility of a Labour Government implementing their defence policy, will my right hon. Friend arrange for a day's debate on the whole subject of defence and of our place in NATO as soon as the House returns after the Christmas recess?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend can rest assured that we are approaching the time of year when the individual Defence Estimates are debated by the House. That will happen after the Christmas recess. In the meantime, my hon. Friend may have an opportunity to raise that issue in the debate under the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): The Leader of the House has regularly displayed an almost genetic predisposition to fairmindedness and sound logic, and so it is with confidence that I ask him to take note of correspondence received from a constituent of mine today. The constituent is secretary to the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association and she refers to correspondence that has passed between the chairman of that organisation and the Home Secretary on three occasions since mid-September in relation to interference in telephone communications. As yet, that correspondence has not even been acknowledged. Will the right hon. Gentleman prevail on the Home Secretary to make a statement or, better still, to acknowledge that that correspondence has been received and is being given proper and careful attention?

Mr. Biffen: I shall refer that matter to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, but meanwhile the hon. Gentleman may like to know that my right hon. Friend will be top for questions on Thursday 18 December.

Mr. Richard Ottaway (Nottingham, North): When will we debate the recommendation of the Procedure Committee on short speeches?

Mr. Biffen: Shortly.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): Will the right hon. Gentleman admit that any announcement of a decision not to go ahead with the Nimrod early warning system after the Cabinet meeting on Thursday, the last full day that the House will sit, would be an outrageous way of treating the House, especially as we would not have any knowledge of the RAF's objections? We are not totally happy with the discussions promised through the usual channels, as it is they that have landed us in this extraordinary situation. Perhaps the Leader of the House can tell us why the Leader of the Opposition seems to want to avoid asking the Prime Minister questions.

Mr. Biffen: That subject has already been well worked over and the right hon. Gentleman has come in on the tail end of it. On his more substantial point, I should say that there is a prospect of a debate on the Nimrod issue tomorrow and again, possibly, during our Consolidated Fund debates. However, I cannot go beyond what I have said to the Leader of the Opposition. On reflection, I hope that the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) will feel that I have been quite forthcoming.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): Has my right hon. Friend had time to consider early-day motion 310 on the subject of small dairy farms?

[That this House believes that should a reduction in milk quotas be necessary, the first 200,000 litres of a United

Kingdom holding should not be included in any calculations, thus helping to ensure the future of the small family farms which have done so much for the British countryside.]

Is my right hon. Friend aware of the growing concern felt by the dairy industry? Will he ensure that, as soon as practically possible after the meeting of the Council of Ministers in Europe, the House will have an opportunity to debate the subject fully?

Mr. Biffen: I well understand the anxiety that there should be a statement on the outcome of that meeting of the Council of Ministers, and I shall bear that in mind. The trouble is trying to determine when that meeting will conclude.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I recently left the Kensington Hilton where miners' homes are being auctioned to the highest bidder? Many of those miners are old people who have suffered severely during the past two or three years as a result of Government policy. They consider such action to be yet another kick in the teeth. I have seen what may be racketeers today bidding for those homes. They will become absentee landlords, and those aged miners will not even know who they are. The miners' houses will be allowed to fall into decay and disrepair. Does not the right hon. Gentleman think that that is disgraceful of the board of British Coal? Will he arrange for an early debate on this matter?

Mr. Biffen: I do not necessarily accept in any sense the interpretation or motives that the hon. Gentleman attributed to the National Coal Board, but he will have an opportunity to raise the matter in the Adjournment debates on Friday 19 December.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): Will my right hon. Friend consider an early debate on law and order and especially on lenient sentences? Will he give us the opportunity to debate the recent Reith lecture by Lord McCluskey, who called for an amnesty for some prisoners awaiting trial because they had committed only minor offences? Surely the punishment must fit the crime.

Mr. Biffen: I shall certainly draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to my hon. Friend's points. Meanwhile, he may try to discover what options there are at Question Time on Thursday.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): The Leader of the House will recall that earlier this year the Secretary of State for Defence announced the privatisation of the royal ordnance tank factory in Leeds. It has been sold to Vickers. Now the Christmas pay-off has come and there are 400 redundancies. Will the Secretary of State tell us next week whether he knew of the 400 or 500 redundancies when he approved the privatisation? Many of us believe that if we had a proper policy on conventional defence in Germany Britain would be making those tanks for the British Army of the Rhine.

Mr. Biffen: Since both privatisation and defence will be debated on the Consolidated Fund Bill, I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will consider what opportunities that presents to him to make those points.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Is my right hon. Friend aware that this morning in the Standing Committee on the Coal Industry Bill we were treated to the most extraordinary spectacle of the Labour party, apparently on the instructions of Mr. Arthur Scargill, refusing to offer any comment whatever on clauses 5 to 9 of the Bill? That is half the entire Bill——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is not in order for the hon. Gentleman to refer to what goes on in a Standing Committee. He must ask for a debate about something.

Mr. Smith: I apologise Mr. Speaker. In the light of that may we have the Report stage on the Bill early so that we can have a further debate on the subject and so that the Labour party can get its act together?

Mr. Biffen: I shall most certainly consider the timing of the Report stage, especially as it appears that that would enable the House to have a most entertaining debate.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Will the Leader of the House arrange for the Secretary of State for Energy to make a statement to answer the important allegations that were made by my hon. Friend the Member for Pontyfract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) and many others who signed the early-day motions about absentee landlords and Rachmanism that is taking place on a grand scale in the colliery areas? Is he aware, for instance that in my constituency a firm picked up houses at £3,000 each, which, according to the valuers, was less than the worth of the land upon which they stood? Within weeks they were sold for £6,000.

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton (Fife, Central): That sounds like a Tory.

Mr. Skinner: There is no question but that they were Tories. That is why we are having some difficulty getting a debate. I wonder whether, rather than just telling my hon. Friend, as the Leader of the House told me last week, to raise this on the Christmas Adjournment — undoubtedly efforts will be made in that direction—he will also ensure that the Secretary of State for Energy is made aware of this because if the National Coal Board can shut pits because of market forces the same should apply to houses. Market forces were not the criteria used when selling those houses because none of them were out to open tender.

Mr. Biffen: I am sorry that that rather extended question did not live up to the reputation which the hon. Gentleman created for himself last night with his speech.

Mr. Skinner: The right hon. Gentleman's head was on his pillow.

Mr. Biffen: I have my means of knowing. I was told that the speech was so formidable in its content that the day will arrive when every parliamentarian will have "Erskine May" on procedure and Skinner on amplification. The hon. Gentleman said that this week he wanted a different answer to the question he puts fairly regularly, so I will give him a different answer. On Monday he can ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy, who will be answering questions.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that for the second week running two lamentable early-day motions remain on the Order Paper which appear to impugn the honour of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security. Should not those motions either be disposed of in the House or immediately withdrawn?

Mr. Biffen: I join with my hon. Friend in regretting the language in which the motions were couched, particularly

[Mr. Biffen]

as they do not admit themselves to instant challenge when they are tabled. Their remaining on the Order Paper is entirely a matter for the hon. Members who have tabled them.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Will the Leader of the House arrange for the Foreign Secretary to make a statement on why a Foreign Office official attended last weekend's conference of the Committee for a Free Nicaragua where Contra leader Arturo Cruz was preaching terrorism, despite an assurance that I received from the Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office that no official would be present? Why did an official from our embassy in Costa Rica attend a conference in San Jose on 24 November to set up a rebel Government for Nicaragua? Is this a U-turn in our policy on central America under pressure from the United States? We must know whether the Government now support terrorism in central America.

Mr. Biffen: The Government's position has been made amply clear and remains completely consistent, but if the hon. Gentleman would like to take his arguments on this matter further may I tell him that the tenth topic chosen for the Consolidated Fund Bill is Government policy towards central America.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): Will my right hon. Friend make time available for a debate on the Floor of the House on the dispatch from Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador in Washington relating to the disastrous visit to Washington by the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Biffen: That is a matter of such lively and general interest that my hon. Friend will find his own opportunities to raise it without requiring my services.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Has the Leader of the House heard of an American-owned company called Electronic Data Systems, the chairman of which, Ross Perot, was forced to resign last week because he had paid a £2 million ransom at the request of Lieutenant-Colonel North to try to get released some hostages in the middle-east? That firm employs the most Victorian working conditions, sacking employees on the least excuse, and it has been accused — probably correctly — of employing illegal American immigrants. The Home Secretary is about to tell us that that company has been awarded the contract for the computers in the passport department of the Home Office and the police computer. Should not the Home Secretary come to the Dispatch Box next week to try to explain this further muddle?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentlemen would agree that I might describe his accusations against a company as being more general than precise. Obviously, on Thursday my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will be at the Dispatch Box to take questions.

Mr. Derek Spencer (Leicester, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the work of the Highfields task force in my constituency is being sabotaged by the city council from a sense of political spite? Can he say when the House may have a debate in which the admirable possibilities of inner-city task forces can be displayed?

Mr. Biffen: I am fascinated because it seems that at this time of the week the House learns more and more of the difficulties of the conduct of good government in Leicester. I take account of what my hon. and learned Friend says, but as a first thought I suggest that he might try to get an Adjournment debate on 19 December.

Mr. Ted Garrett (Wallsend): Is the Leader of the House aware that an important engineering company in the north-east, Cummins Engineering in Darlington, has announced a closure with 500 job losses and that that is causing dismay in Darlington and other areas of the north-east? Does he accept that that is another sign of the harsh decline in our manufacturing base? Will he find time so that we can discuss this one issue in a serious manner, if not next week, at least when the House returns?

Mr. Biffen: I understand the anguish caused in the north-east by that closure. I shall refer the question to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Mr. Gerrard Neale (Cornwall, North): On the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman), may I make a last-ditch appeal on behalf of the Opposition parties for a sign of good cheer from the Leader of the House? In the light of the speedy evolution of their defence policies, could my right hon. Friend find a way of offering them a fortnightly debate when we return after the Christmas recess until some unknown date in May or June to give them the opportunity to explain to the House and the country the latest mutation in their policies?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend makes an appeal which has wide and popular support in the House, but, without being too Scrooge-like, may I say that there is a tactic in one's timing of these great topics. I hope that we shall not use up the defence issue too soon.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): Referring to the request of the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Spencer), may I ask that there should, indeed, be a debate about poverty and disadvantage in the city of Leicester, not least in the Highfields area, where the Government are doing little to help, and in outer areas, which do not receive inner-city help? In Braunstone in my constituency, for example, unemployment is about 60 per cent. Such areas tend to be omitted from the programmes in the belief that disadvantage, poverty and unemployment are the prerogative of central areas of cities.

Mr. Biffen: I would be happy to do a trade with the hon. and learned Gentleman. Perhaps we could give up one sitting which ran through the night, who knows, and in return thereafter have a Leicester-free zone in the affairs of this place.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Has my right hon. Friend noticed that the Opposition parties are keen to debate subjects, such as South America, Africa and Asia, but banded together to avoid having a discussion about agriculture and fisheries in Scotland on Monday? Can he give an early date when we may be able to discuss that?

Mr. Biffen: I understand my hon. Friend's point and the genuine irritation that it must cause him and all those who have the fishing industry's fortunes at heart. I shall certainly look at it.

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South): I know that the Leader of the House, in his Father Christmas spirit, was

disappointed that he could not join his hon. Friends the Members for Reading, East (Sir G. Vaughan) and for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) and other hon. Members from both sides of the House last Tuesday when we gave considerable support to the nursing profession during this difficult period. Will he now study my early-day motion 300 about the nurses pay award 1987?

[That this House welcomes the appointment of Sir James Cleminson as the new Chairman of the Review Body for Nurses and Midwives Remuneration; notes with concern, however, that the recommendations of his predecessor, in spite of declarations of acceptance by the Prime Minister, were scaled down in 1985 by being implemented for only two months instead of 12, and that in 1986 the 8 per cent. recommended was reduced to 75 per cent. of that award by the commencement of payments only from 1st July instead of 1st April; and now urges Her Majesty's Government not to evade a full and genuine acceptance of the coming 1987 recommendations and to give nurses and midwives their full entitlement, as decided by an independent and objective Review Body.]

I am not asking for a debate in the immediate future, but, in view of the right hon. Gentleman's well known economic expertise, will he use his influence with the Cabinet to ensure that for the third time nurses are not conned out of the award given by an independent and objective review body?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman asked a wide-ranging and dangerous question which he sought to cloak with flattery. Obviously, I shall read his early-day motion and draw its contents to the attention of my right hon. Friends.

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): Does my right hon. Friend recall that last week I drew his attention to outside pressures on hon. Members resulting from the position in mining areas? May I draw his attention to early-day motion 337, which was laid today and is gathering signatures at a fair rate?

May I also draw his attention to the fact that the alliance group leader on an east Sussex county council has referred to one of our hon. Friends as a "Tory scab" because he is an ex-miner and a Conservative Member? Should we perhaps provide a short debate to allow the parliamentary leaders of the Liberal and Social Democratic parties either to confirm that attitude or to dissociate themselves from it?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend raises an interesting point. The language that seems to be used by the Sussex elite of the Liberal and Social Democratic parties is not language that we would wish to hear in this Chamber. As for the debate, I am under some difficulty because, as I look at the Benches, I do not see a single, wholesome, working-class prejudice among them.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): Has the Leader of the House heard that the Department of the Environment has made it clear that it will soon be informing local authorities of housing investment programme allocations for next year? As we are seeing a deterioration in housing, in both the public and private sectors, will he arrange a debate in Government time on housing as soon as possible after the figures are announced?

Mr. Biffen: I shall bear in mind the hon. Gentleman's request, but he, too, will be able to share my anxiety about the shortness of time which is available to the Government. However, I can hold out to him the modest crumb of comfort that housing is the third topic nominated for debate under the Consolidated Fund Bill.

Mr. John Watts (Slough): Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is a matter of great regret that the protracted proceedings on the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill had the effect of saving the Leader of the Opposition the embarrassment of having to face my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister at Question Time? Will my right hon. Friend provide injury time during the business of next week so that the sport is not lost for good but merely deferred? Will he consider introducing a Leader of the Opposition's Question Time because many hon. Members take the view that the right hon. Gentleman receives a substantial salary from public funds and many of our constituents, as taxpayers, feel that he provides poor value for money?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend is showing a slightly unhealthy degree of thirst for parliamentary blood sports in making those requests. I must tell him — I say this from genuine affection for the Leader of the Opposition — that we must preserve the right hon. Gentleman because, if he did not exist, he would certainly have to be created.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Does the Leader of the House realise that he is being unfair and discourteous to the minority parties, especially in Scotland and the northern quarter of the electorate whom they represent, in rejecting our legitimate, fair request to meet him to discuss the handling of the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc, Bill after the Committee was set up? Is he further aware that that unfairness and discourtesy was parallelled by his bouncing a debate on local agriculture in Scotland on Scottish Members without porper notice or discussion with their representatives? Can he say why he has such double standards of courtesy?

Mr. Biffen: First, no discourtesy was intended, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that. Secondly, most objective observers will assume that I have been as broadly discourteous to him as to everybody else trying to make a claim on the time of the House which I cannot concede.

On the Special Standing Committee procedure for the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. Bill, it is available to the hon. Gentleman to seek that from the House. He does not have to have that from me.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): In welcoming the Government's consultation paper on the Warnock issues and the rejection of knee-jerk legislation, when does my right hon. Friend feel that we can have time for the fullest possible debate which the Government called for in the paper?

Mr. Biffen: Not this side of Christmas. But I shall certainly bear in mind my hon. Friend's point because this is a topic which commands genuine interest in the House and the public generally will expect some movement.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Earlier the Leader of the House suggested that hon. Members who were interested in the Government's privatisation programme should join in the debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill. Surely he knows that that is listed as item 16 for debate and has little chance of being reached. Indeed, we may just reach item 12, which is my debate on the arts

[Mr. Tony Banks]

budget for 1987-88 which, as the right hon. Gentleman will be aware, is one of the most interesting casualties from losing Thursday's proceedings. As there is a long list of items, will the Leader of the House explain why we are starting the Consolidated Fund Bill so late this year? Time has been lost and that is a great disadvantage to us.

As the right hon. Gentleman was very interested in the opinions of my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), perhaps he can tell the House whether he heard my hon. Friend's excellent two-hour speech in the early hours of this morning. Is it not time that we had a special award for hon. Members—the Skinner award—for the longest and most interesting speech in a debate?

Mr. Biffen: I note the hon. Gentleman's point with much interest and with some soul-searching because I have been asked to facilitate the rule on 10 minute speeches. The two cannot be easily reconciled, though through Parliament most things are possible.

I will consider the hon. Gentleman's point about the lateness of the Consolidated Fund Bill. I was not aware that it was that late or that it had given rise to any inconvenience to hon. Members.

On the hon. Gentleman's point about the Government's privatisation programme, of course there is an element of hope rather than expectation when I plead this opportunity, but what else can I do?

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): May I put it to my right hon. Friend that the sole outcome of the Opposition keeping the House up throughout the whole of today, last night, or whatever, is to prove to those millions of ratepayers and taxpayers who earn less than teachers, who pay the teachers, and who are offered increases in pay less than that offered to the teachers that the Opposition think that the 16·4 per cent. offer is not enough? Is not this, after the Australian telephone calls and the visit of the Leader of the Opposition to the United States, the third Opposition banana skin in a fortnight?

Mr. Biffen: The fact that we have run through the night is a matter that we must observe. I hope that we will not be too free and easy in being disparaging about our procedures. I am sure that the Opposition believe that they have conducted their arguments by a reasonable standard. I imagine that they, like me, regard the BBC's description of the debate as a marathon filibuster as an unfair description. I hope that everyone outside will note that there was no attempt to guillotine or force a closure during the debates.

We have our own ways of proceeding. They may seem bewildering to the world outside from time to time, but it is just as well that this place has the confidence of its procedures rather than looking for the approval of editorial comments.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the ratepayers of Ealing, including the Leader of the Opposition, have been promised a rates increase of between 60 per cent. and 100 per cent. next April after one year of control by the new Labour majority on the council? In view of the serious effect that that is likely to have upon jobs and industry in the area, the devastating effect that it is having upon pensioners' ability to pay rates and the suffering and hardship that it is causing disabled people and many others, may we have an early debate on that issue,

Mr. Biffen: I hope that the serious position outlined by my hon. Friend, including the employment consequences that he suggested, will not in any way affect the employment of the Leader of the Opposition, who we all want to be Leader of the Opposition for many years to come.

I will consider my hon. Friend's wider point, but he will understand thatre is real pressure on Government time now.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my right hon. Friend agree that item No. 17 on the Consolidated Fund Bill list—the protection of the security of the United Kingdom—which is a euphemism for the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition, should be brought forward and that we should have an urgent debate on that matter especially as it has just been announced on the news tapes that 16 NATO Foreign Ministers have agreed that they will bring forward proposals for cutting conventional arms in Europe?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend has raised an important point. However, on the specific issue that he raised, he will realise that I have no power whatsoever, and indeed seek no power, to alter the arrangement of debates for the Consolidation Fund Bill. However, the topic that he has in mind could probably be debated on other maters more likely to be chosen for debate.

Mr. Kinnock: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. There is some danger of the House being misled as a result of questions on today's business statement. In order that this House and wider opinion is not misled, attention should be drawn to the fact that it was certainly well within the Government's power to use their majority at any stage in the proceedings on the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill to ensure that progress was made.

If it was a pressing matter of attention by the Prime Minister, wanting to bring herself before the House to account for her actions, she had any amount of opportunity to do so, today or even conceivably tomorrow. The number of amendments tabled on the Bill —almost 250—as the Leader of the House has said, was a matter of legitimate debate, well within the power of the House, certainly well within the entitlement of the Opposition, and necessary because of the extremely contentious nature of the Bill.

Bills and Christmas Adjournment

Mr. Speaker: I have two statements to make. First, it may be for the convenience of the House if I confirm that the Public Bill Office has treated notices of ten minute rule motions received at 10 o'clock this morning as valid notwithstanding the fact that Thursday's sitting has been broken. The same treatment is being accorded to any notices of presentations of Bills handed in before the rising of the House today for tomorrow, Friday 12 December.

Secondly, I remind hon. Members that on the motion for the Adjournment of the House on Friday 19 December, up to eight hon. Members may raise with Ministers subjects of their own choice. Applications should reach my Office by 10 pm on Monday next. A ballot will be held on Tuesday morning and the result made known as soon as possible thereafter.

Mr. Eric Stanhope

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn—[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]

4.16 pm

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary is in his place looking very spruce and energetic despite the fact that the House has been sitting for almost 24 hours. I also apologise from this place to a number of my constituents whom I should have seen this morning, as I was due to present awards and trophies at a winter fatstock sale in Chelford market in my constitutency. I apologise to the partners of Frank Marshall and Company and to the many people who were expecting me to be there.

I would like to raise the case of Mr. Eric Stanhope of Park House farm, Gawsworth in Cheshire, in my constituency. Mr. Stanhope's position is both a personal tragedy and one in which the spirit of moral justice has been denied by Cheshire county council through its practical insensitivity and its insistence on the application of the letter of regulations and the law. I cannot fault the county council in its strict legal interpretation of its position. However let me give a little of the background of this sad case.

Park House farm, which for 40 years has been the home of the Stanhope family, is a smallholding of just under 40 acres, which is owned by Cheshire county council and was first let to Mr. Stanhope's father as long ago as 1942. When Mr. Stanhope senior died, his wife — Eric Stanhope's mother — succeeded exceptionally to the tenancy in 1966. Since then, Eric Stanhope has worked the dairy farm, first for his mother as tenant and latterly for himself, albeit no tenancy has been granted to him by the county council. Following the death of Mrs. Stanhope in March 1982, a notice to quit was served by Cheshire county council on Eric Stanhope and his sister, Miss Rosemary Stanhope, allowing them 12 months to quit the smallholding.

Since the death of his mother, Mr. Stanhope has struggled to maintain the farm, despite the crippling effect of milk quotas inflicted on the industry in 1984 — a burden which Mr. Stanhope, despite his desperate and serious situation, was not spared. In my view, Mr. Stanhope's ability and motivation to farm his holding properly has been severely and adversely affected by Cheshire county council's reluctance to grant him a tenancy in 1982. I must tell the House in all sincerity that it is my understanding that Mr. Stanhope's position, financially and in other ways, has deteriorated since then. In short, Eric Stanhope, who is now in his late 40s, has spent his entire working life on Park House farm working beside his father in the early years and then managing and working the holding for his mother until her death.

Mr. Stanhope has spent years — in fact, all his working life—at Park House farm, only now to see all his hopes dashed by the county's decision to refuse to allow him to achieve a tenancy. As justification for this decision, the county council cites the fact that it had reviewed the boundaries of all its farms under the provisions of the Agricultural Act 1970, a measure that encouraged the creation of more commercial units on smallholdings through amalgamation. At Gawsworth, it was decided to amalgamate the land, then tenanted by Mrs. Stanhope, with adjoining holdings when that became

[Mr. Nicholas Winterton]

possible. That decision was notified to and confirmed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. However, the council accepts that the tenants concerned were not notified at that stage of this decision—the impact of which on Eric Stanhope's whole way of life was not to become apparent until many years later.

Court proceedings for possession were commenced in the autumn of 1983 and the case was finally heard in May this year. The council, in agreement with Eric Stanhope, undertook not to enforce the order for possession until 14 August. Mr. Stanhope continues to reside at the farmhouse but is now awaiting the fulfilment by the council of its promise to enforce the order for possession which it has already obtained.

Such is the letter of the law. A court has sat and decided that the council is acting within the law in pursuing the course which it has chosen and that it is within its rights to deprive Eric Stanhope of his home, his livelihood and his way of life, should it so wish. That is the law, but, in my opinion, for the county to enforce its rights in such a manner is far from just or moral.

Many questions need to be answered. First, why were the tenants not notified of the decision taken in 1972 to amalgamate smallholdings in Gawsworth to increase the size of adjacent tenancies by adding to them sections of Park House farm?

Secondly, the Agriculture Act 1970, under which this decision was made, was enacted to cover circumstances in a very different economic climate in the dairy industry and agriculture as a whole. At that time, there was a need to encourage county council landlords to amalgamate small farms so that they could establish larger, more profitable, viable holdings and so to improve the efficiency of the dairy industry and agriculture. The situation now is so very different. The agricultural sector is over-producing in the EEC and our own dairy farmers are suffering the results of severe milk quotas, with further quota reductions still to come. We are having to strive to reduce dairy output and not increase it. Why should this decision be enforced on economic grounds to which it runs counter?

Thirdly, the county has given assurances to Mr. Stanhope that it would seek to assist him in his desire to remain within the farming industry. Why, then, is it depriving him of any of the value of the milk quota which is attached to his holding? Without a share of the quota, he cannot even dream of remaining in the dairy industry. Why has Cheshire county council overlooked its promise to consider further aspects of the milk quota attached to the holding? In normal circumstances, should not the council consider allocating to Mr. Stanhope 25 per cent. of the value of his current quota in accordance with the Government's own formula—worth, if my arithmetic is right, some £3,000 to Mr. Stanhope?

Fourthly, back in 1982, the county gave Mr. Stanhope a promise that it would consider an application for another tenancy from him and that, in recognising the difficulties which he faced, it would consider what might be done to assist. Why has that promise amounted in the end to nothing? Why, despite such an undertaking to assist Mr. Stanhope to find an alternative tenancy, has the council seen fit to remove his name from its own register of approved tenants? What sort of assistance is that? Mr. Stanhope is not the most efficient of farmers. He is not even typical of most small dairy farmers, and he has in some respects been his own worst enemy, but he has worked in farming all his life and he is very much part of the local farming community.

True, the council will argue that, subsequent to serving its notice to quit, it did notify Mr. Stanhope of other vacancies which became available. It claims to have fulfilled its commitment to Mr. Stanhope by considering his one application and rejecting it. It argues that it is justified in removing his name from its approved register because he made no other attempt to apply for an alternative tenancy at that stage. Was the council really justified in expecting Mr. Stanhope to apply for alternative tenancies at a time when his situation was still in dispute? Would that not have jeopardised his own case to be allowed to remain in his home—the home that he had known from his birth — at Park House farm in Gawsworth?

The council has claimed throughout this sorry saga that it is doing all that it can to assist Mr. Stanhope. So far, that assistance has amounted to very little. In the several years in which I have been helping Mr. Stanhope, I have yet to see a real and positive initiative by the council to consider the true impact of its decision. A man in his late forties, evicted from his lifelong home, deprived of his livelihood and, through the loss of his quota, of any possibility of remaining in the farming industry which has been his life —the future for Eric Stanhope is very bleak.

I cannot believe that the possibility does not exist of allowing Mr. Stanhope to retain the holding which he farmed for his mother until his retirement—which may be in just 10 years' time. I cannot believe that no solution can be found to allow him to remain in the only work that he has ever known, however badly the council believes he has performed. I cannot believe that the county cannot find some way of assisting him to remain in farming. I cannot believe that a more just handling could not be found for dealing with the milk quota, a percentage of which is Mr. Stanhope's by moral right even if not in the letter of the law.

What I can believe is that, in pursuing this cold and sad course of action, Cheshire county council has lost sight of the personal tragedy which it is inflicting. Obsessed—I use the word intentionally—by its own past decisions, it is turning a blind eye to the human effects of its policies. It has forgotten that farms are not just economic units; they are communities of people with their own hopes and aspirations—hopes and aspirations which the council has no moral right to ignore, to dash and to shatter.

It is time that the county lived up to its promises to Mr. Stanhope and genuinely sought a solution to his problems —which it is not only its moral right to do but, more importantly, just. I urge my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to give sympathetic consideration to this sad case and the principle involved. If current legislation needs amendment, it is up to the Government to act.

4.27 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Donald Thompson): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) on his success in coming first in the ballot. He said that he had cancelled various engagements to be here today to discuss this important matter. It is right that I should have waited here with him so that this issue could be discussed.

I appreciate my hon. Friend's anxiety about the issue, and especially about the circumstances faced by his constituent, Mr. Eric Stanhope. I am already aware of these concerns because of my hon. Friend's many representations to Ministers about this case. I know that his efforts have been directed to the county council as well as to Ministers.

County councils are in the best position to judge how to manage and run their smallholdings, and are free to manage them as they think best, bearing in mind all the circumstances.

We have heard the circumstances of this case from my hon. Friend and this is the right place to air the various views. Perhaps it would help the House if I explained the background to the smallholdings and agricultural holdings legislation. The provision of smallholdings is a traditional county council function. Even though I sympathise with the circumstances faced by Mr. Eric Stanhope, it has to be remembered that one of the main aims of statutory smallholdings was to provide a gateway into farming for suitably qualified young people with limited capital behind them. When the legislation was introduced it was recognised that although some tenants would stay on a small-holding for the remainder of their farming lives, others—and I stress that this latter group were expected to be the majority—would move on to a larger farm in the tenanted sector or would even be in a position to buy their own farms. The vacated smallholding would then be available to provide another young person with an opportunity of a first rung on the farming ladder. Unfortunately, the smallholdings estates have not proved as successful in providing this gateway into farming as might have been hoped.

One of the reasons for that has been the shortage of farms in the private tenanted sector — a problem exacerbated by the introduction in 1976 of statutory succession in the private sector by the Labour Government of the day. In addition, some tenants of statutory smallholdings have difficulty in building up sufficient capital from a relatively small farm to enable them to move on up the ladder. Nevertheless, the provision of statutory smallholdings at public expense can still be justified if they continue to work towards their original aim of providing a way into the industry for well qualified young people.

Many successive Governments have recognised the importance of the tenanted sector as a whole as it gives the well qualified outsider a chance to get a farm of his own. The Agriculture Act 1947 introduced lifetime security of tenure to encourage tenants to plan ahead and to look after their land as well as the interests of agriculture generally. This applied equally to tenants in the private sector and statutory smallholders. However, when the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 extended this security to two generations of eligible and suitable successors it was recognised that it was not appropriate to extend these provisions to smallholdings because it was clearly incompatible with the overall objective of providing an entry into farming for young people.

My hon. Friend well knows that after 1976 there was a general reluctance by landlords to let new land because they feared they might not be able to regain possession for 100 years or so.

We decided that some change in the law was required to make it more attractive for landlords to let their land, but we realised that any change must have the support of the industry. In 1981 the National Farmers Union and the Country Landowners Association proposed, among other things, that succession rights for all new non-succession tenancies should be repealed. This was done in the Agricultural Holdings Act 1984. Tenants on county council smallholdings are therefore in much the same position as new tenants on farms in the private sector.

However, tenants on statutory smallholdings enjoy certain advantages over their private sector counterparts. The Smallholdings (Selection of Tenants) Regulations 1970, which was amended in 1976, requires the smallholdings authority, in relation to the first letting of the smallholding after the death of the tenant, to consider the suitability of the wife or husband, brother, or sister or child of the deceased tenant if they make an application to take on the smallholding, and only to consider other candidates if the close relatives have been refused the tenancy. They can be refused tenancy. In practice this means that a relative of the deceased tenant whose standard of farming is not above the average or outstanding could have an advantage over the highly promising outsider who may be better trained and more qualified than the close relative. This does not mean that the close relative has an automatic right to succeed to the tenancy.

I appreciate my hon. Friend's concern over the case of Mr. Stanhope, but it is most important that tenants and their families should be aware of their legal position and that they should make adequate provision for the future on the assumption that they will not necessarily be able to take over the holding. A tenant's executors are entited to claim compensation for the tenant's improvements to the holding. Those include long-term improvements made with the landlord's consent and also short-term improvements. If the parties cannot agree on the level of compensation, the Act provides for the matter to be determined by arbitration. The executors would also have an interest in the proceeds from the sale of stock and farm machinery.

As I mentioned earlier, regrettably statutory smallholdings have not been notably successful in providing as many young people as might have been hoped with a first step on the farming ladder because few smallholders have been able to move onto larger farms in the private sector. Furthermore, over the past 10 years or so there has been a steady decline in both the number of smallholdings and the total areas of land held for this purpose. However this is in part brought about by smallholdings authorties re-organising their estates as they were required to do under the Agriculture Act 1970. Some authorities have taken the opportunity to increase the size of some of their holdings so that tenants may be able to progress from smaller to larger more viable holdings on the estate. It is possible that tenants from the larger holdings may be in a better position financially to move onto farms in the private sector if the opportunities are available.

My hon. Friend clearly considers that this is an area where the Government ought to intervene especially because of the difficulties encountered by Mr. Stanhope. I recall that my hon. Friend asked for the law to be changed, but, as the law stands, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has certain limited responsibilities under the Agriculture Act 1970 to oversee the manner in which county councils manage their statutory smallholdings estates. That does not extend to the selection of tenants. This is a matter for the council. I understand that since Mr. Stanhope's mother's death

[Mr. Donald Thompson]

they have made certain offers to Mr. Stanhope. The council has tried to help him out of his predicament. My hon. Friend referred to those offers.

There is also the question of end-of-tenancy compensation in respect of milk quota. As my hon. Friend is aware, milk quota is attached to the land and cannot be removed when the producer leaves. There is, however, an obligation on the landlord under the Agriculture Act 1986 to pay end-of-tenanccy compensaion for milk quota to a lawful tenant of a holding who was in occupation on 2 April 1984. I understand that Mr. Stanhope was not, on that date, a tenant within the meaning of the Agriculture Act 1986 and is not, therefore, legally entitled to that compensation.

County councils are in much the best position to decide how to manage their estates in the light of prevailing local circumstances and to take into account the interests of their present tenants, well qualified outsiders who are looking for a holding to rent, ratepayers and the general rural community.

We have heard my hon. Friend's submission on behalf of his constituent. My hon. Friend has asked a number of questions, but he and I know that only the county counil can give satisfactory answers. I shall urge the council to reconsider this case with compassion and in the spirit of moral justice for which my hon. Friend has asked.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-two minutes to Five o'clock on Thursday afternoon.

House of Commons

Friday 12 December 1986

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

BILLS PRESENTED

PARLIAMENTARY AND HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Richard Luce, supported by Mr. Secretary Edwards, Mr. John Biffen, Mr. Secretary Fowler, Mr. John MacGregor and Mr. Secretary Rifkind, presented a Bill to make further provision in relation to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration and the Health Service Commissioners for England, Wales and Scotland, to provide for the appointment of persons for a limited period to act as the Parliamentary Commissioner or as a Health Service Commissioner, to extend the period within which complaints may be referred to the Health Service Commissioner for England or Wales by a body subject to investigation and to make fresh provision in relation to references of complaints to the Health Service Commissioner for Scotland: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Monday 15 December and to be printed. [Bill 36.]

HEARING AID COUNCIL ACT 1968 (AMENDMENT)

Mr. Laurie Pavitt, supported by Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones, Mr. Dafydd Wigley, Mr. Reg Freeson, Mr. Jim Craigen, Mr. Clive Soley, Dr. M. S. Miller, Mr. Donald Stewart, Mr. Barry Jones, Mr. Robert N. Wareing and Mr. Frank Dobson, presented a Bill to amend the Hearing Aid Council Act 1968: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 13 February and to be printed. [Bill 35.]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) Regulations 1986 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Defence Projects and Exports

9.35 am

Mr. Robert Hayward (Kingswood): I beg to move

That this House notes the importance for jobs and exports of the British defence industry; and welcomes the Government's continuing support for the industry in its drive for a greater share of the defence export market and the industrial technologies appropriate to the 1990s.

I intend to cover some general matters and some specific projects that relate to the British defence industry, especially those that affect Filton, within Bristol. Before doing so, I make the observation that in ordinary circumstances our debates on Fridays possibly see the House at its best. That is not the position in terms of attendance, but they give us the opportunity to cover a range of topics in a more considered manner than may generally be the position Monday to Thursday. In the light of the statements made by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) in Bristol yesterday, in which he attempted to produce a scare story about the long-term future of the European fighter aircraft and the job implications for many of my constituents and those of my hon. Friends in the area, I shall in a later part of my speech deal with somewhat more contentious issues than those that I anticipated raising. The terms of the motion were framed specifically to enable the House to move away from the more emotive issues of unilateral and multilateral defence and to consider instead some of the great benefits to the nation's economy that many of the major companies within the defence industry provide for the United Kingdom.

I think that the hon. Member for Eccles (Mr. Carter-Jones) will confirm that previous debates on aerospace have been considerably all-party in character. I recall a motion that I moved three years ago—it was the first motion that I had the pleasure of moving in the House—concerning the A320. It was notable for every Back Bencher from both sides of the House speaking with a common line of thought. I think that my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), whom I am pleased to see in his place, took part in that debate.

The defence industry employs about 200,000 in the United Kingdom directly and there are many others who benefit indirectly through sub-contracting and off-shoot employment. The annual turnover of the industry has risen dramatically in recent years. In 1983 it was about £5·75 billion. In 1986 it increased to £6·6 billion, and the projection for 1987 is about £7 billion.

In an answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) a few days ago, my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State stressed that exports of British defence equipment have risen strongly in recent years at a rate of about 12 per cent. per annum in real terms. That is a substantial achievement. Export orders reached £2·9 billion in 1985 and represented over 5 per cent. of British manufactured exports, accounting for about 120,000 jobs. A large proportion of the defence industry contributes to exports. The prospects are extremely good for the long term for both employment in this country and exports.

We should ask ourselves why the prospects are so good and how they can be maintained. They can be maintained primarily by the joint operation of a strong industry and active support from the Government, in their ordering policy in the United Kingdom and in assistance for exports overseas. The strength of the industry starts with the big

[Mr. Robert Hayward]

high-profile companies such as British Aerospace and Rolls-Royce, and moves down to many small companies through companies such as Ferranti, GEC, Plessey, Racal and Lucas Industries.

We tend to presume that British Aerospace is a long-established company with great strength. It is worth remembering that it came into existence only nine years ago as a result of legislation passed by the Labour Government, who rightly brought together the airframe manufacturing industries. Over the past few years British Aerospace has rationalised its bases and products and is now beginning to show its strength. It is important to remember that for most companies in the industry—British Aerospace is no exception; indeed, it is probably the prime example — collaboration is an absolutely crucial factor. It is not just collaboration in the United Kingdom but collaboration in Europe as well as with the United States and other countries.

Without the strength of that collaboration, the British industry would be absolutely nothing. As a country, we cannot afford to produce major defence projects and expect them to succeed on our own. The cost of producing them is excessive. The length of the orders available is minimal. Therefore, we have to look for international collaboration outside our shores to achieve the maximum benefit. The routes that we are following in several projects show that. This must be recognised by anyone who is involved in the industry.

With regard to progress in selling abroad, there also has to be a direct inter-relationship between the Government and the industry. There is no point in any of the defence companies going abroad trying to sell projects when they have not received orders or substantial support from their home base. We must also ensure that they receive active support from British Government representatives in the countries involved.

I am pleased to say that, in general, the support that apparently is given to all industries—not just defence—has improved around the world from our embassies and trade missions. However, we have not as yet reached the level of support given so visibly by the French and Americans, for example, to their industries in other parts of the world. There has been an improvement, but we must not sit back and say, "We have made the changes. That is enough." It is not.

We are now receiving support from the Government and leading personalities. The royal family has been seen to give support on several occasions when dealing with other royal families who are in charge of major deals. That is to our long-term benefit, and it is the way that we have to go if we are to compete with those countries.

One of the major projects that is currently under consideration by the Ministry of Defence is Nimrod. I do not want to deal with it at great length; I know that a decision is close. I am also aware that one or two hon. Members wish to refer it. However, I should like to make two observations. First, I am concerned that there is a supposition that if the order does not go to GEC it will be a mortal blow to British technology as a whole. That is not so. There will be an impact on GEC and other defence technologies, but in recent years, for example, the United States has had failures with defence projects, such as the T46, the failure of some satellites that have had to be brought back from outer space, and the Divads project Sergeant York. All those failures have resulted in expensive cancellations. There will be implications; I do not deny that. However, I hope that they will not be overstated too dramatically.

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): The difference between ourselves and the Americans is that the Americans say that they do not give official support, which we know they do. In some of the projects to which the hon. Gentleman referred the loss was borne by the Government of the United States, not by the companies concerned.

Mr. Hayward: I agree with the hon. Gentleman, who has substantial experience in defence matters. There is no doubt that the American Government give immense support to some of the companies, visibly and invisibly. They are supposed to be free-standing defence contractors, yet when one looks at the way in which projects have developed one sees that several major companies are asked to produce alternatives, and they are funded by the Department of Defence. Probably the best example is the benefit that went to Boeing as a result of the 747, which was a failure for the contract for which it was orginally designed, but the Department of Defence had funded the pre-production models of the 747, which ultimately has turned out to be a great benefit not only to the company but to world aerospace. One cannot but recognise the assistance that has been given indirectly through such systems of funding.

My second observation about Nimrod is that, since the original commitment was made in 1977, there have been nine years of delay. We are told that there has been substantial improvement in the technological capacity of Nimrod. It is not for me as a politician to judge whether the options are now comparable. I say to the Minister and the Ministry of Defence that if the projects are technologically close we would all wish the order to go through GEC and British Aerospace. However, if the technical assessment is that there is a massive difference, I am afraid that, on balance, we would have to consider the Boeing option to be preferable. I am concerned about the technical gap. If the two are on a par, there is no problem, but defence technology is moving so rapidly that in two or three years time the requirements imposed on all defence capacity will be far greater than today. There are developing expertises in silencing equipment, new paints and new defence systems, all of which make it necessary to keep up with the advance of technology as much as possible, because other nations are changing extremely rapidly.

The other defence project that has caused problems within and without the Chamber over the past few months is helicopters. Earlier in the year there was a substantial argument about Westland and where its long-term industrial commitment should go. There is also, however, the problem of orders at the moment. I am not convinced that as a country we have identified the role of helicopters in the defence and civil fields. Until we address ourselves to that problem, it will be difficult for a Government or a civil company to decide what orders are to be placed and where. There is no doubt that there is a substantial gap in orders in the factory at Yeovil at the back end of next year, 1988 into 1989. I believe that that is causing considerable concern at Yeovil and in the aerospace industry as a whole. I know that efforts are being made by the company with the support of the Government to find orders around the

world for aircraft currently being constructed at Yeovil, and to find work in association with the consortium which includes Sikorsky and to determine the other options available. It is important for us to retain helicopter technology because there are substantial prospects beyond 1989. The EH101 has been discussed on many occasions and work on the A129 and on Black Hawk may provide employment.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): The hon. Gentleman's comments about Westland are entirely accurate and I agree with them. It is not just this Government who have failed to produce a helicopter policy; successive Governments over 17 years have failed to do so. The gap is not just at Westland, because the British Army on the central front is regarded as flying the oldest helicopter fleet in the world and, according to an American study, it is 100 aircraft short of its need to fulfil the NATO task.

Mr. Hayward: The point made by the hon. Gentleman relates to the problem that I spoke about at the start of my speech. We are not sure where we are going in terms of the use of helicopters, not only for defence but in general. The problem identified by the hon. Gentleman is to some extent a reflection of the overall problem. The development of the RTM322 is a joint project between Rolls-Royce and Torbo Mecca. The engine has undergone test trials at Filton and has proved a success. I saw the tests when I visited Rolls-Royce at Filton, and everybody was pleased with the performance of that engine. It looks like a serious contender to the T700 for use in the Black Hawk and its variants. It is an example of the way in which Government and the defence industry can work together. In the long term, that engine could substantially benefit the helicopter industry.

We are not proud enough of the Pegasus engine. It is unique and we have been able to sell it to the United States, although we have not been able to sell it to as many other countries as we would like. The development of that engine did not stop once it was installed in the Harrier. It has been uprated and, in answer to a question that I asked in July, I was told that negotiations with the United States were going well. The Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement said:

> "There is a Rolls-Royce initiative to uprate the GR5 Pegasus engine. Although there is a formal requirement for this at the present time, we are attracted by its lower life-cycle costs and better performance. We are looking at it in conjunction with the United States marine corps."—[*Official Report*, 15 July 1986; Vol. 101, c. 836.]

As far as I am aware, that was the first public declaration that such developments were taking place. I hope that progress has been maintained in negotiations and that before long we shall see a commitment to the L1161 so that British and American forces and other people to whom we may be able to sell the aircraft will benefit from the further improvement in what has been up to now a uniquely British and successful project.

The other major aero engine being developed at Filton is the RB199. It has been in production for some years for use in the Tornado project. Work is being carried out in Germany, Italy and Spain and I hope that the XG40 will be one of the bases for the engines for the European fighter aircraft. A number of new technologies are being developed to improve substantially the performance of the RB199. It is a good engine, but the evidence suggests that the XG40 will be substantially better.

While dealing with those two engines and their development, I should say something about the Tornado and the European fighter aircraft. My hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins) is unable to be here this morning, but he, along with members of the aviation Committee and other interested parties, worked hard to encourage the Ministry of Defence to get the four countries together. That was a major achievement and the four countries agreed to develop the European fighter aircraft. We now have a commitment to that aircraft and I hope to see the XG40 development together with developments in the other countries being used in that aircraft.

I understand from information that I received yesterday from a number of people in Bristol that they are worried about comments by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North. I understand that he claimed that there was no money in the Ministry of Defence budget for the European fighter aircraft. When challenged that this was merely a scare story, the hon. Gentleman said that it was not, and that there was no money and no prospect for the long-term development of the European fighter aircraft. Quite rightly, that worried many people.

I am amazed that the hon. Gentleman could have made such a statement. Some of us have longer memories than he may think and we know that the last fighter aircraft Britain attempted to develop was the TSR2 on which my father had the pleasure of working. That aircraft was scrapped by a Labour Government. *[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) makes the very point that I was about to discuss. After the scrapping of that aircraft, there was an act of industrial vandalism unparalleled since the war — the instruction to destroy every jig and tool associated with the TSR2. At a stroke, all the associated technology was destroyed.

As far as I can ascertain from research in the Library, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North has not asked one question over the last six months about the funding of the European fighter aircraft. The only question about it from the Labour Benches was asked in June by the hon. Member for Eccles. Since then, the only questions about the European fighter aircraft have been from Conservative Members. If one looks at the way funding is provided and commitments are taken about production of all defence projects—with the exception of Trident — one sees that they are not specifically identified until they are due for production.

Funding provided for research and development is clearly shown in column 32, page 17 of the second volume of the Defence Estimates published earlier this year. They do no identify any specific project. It is appalling that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North can go to a major city, Bristol, which depends heavily on defence industries, and raise such a scare story which is so incredibly ill-founded. If the hon. Gentleman has put down questions and has not received answers, I am willing to give way to him so that he can tell us about it. I shall also give way to him if he can identify the funding not only for the XG40 but the L1161, the RTM322 and all the other Army and Navy projects. I note that he sits in his seat in silence. I presume therefore that he concedes that his scare story yesterday in Bristol has no solid foundation.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): I concede nothing. I will make my own speech in my own time.

Mr. Hayward: I hope that all hon. Members will note that I have provided the opportunity but that the hon. Gentleman will wait and presumably avoid the examples that I have quoted and will not counter my argument and identify his information that the project is under threat.

Apart from the European fighter aircraft, another major long-term technological effort is under way — Hotol. It is primarily for defence but it has substantial implications for civilian use. That project is being developed by a number of companies, including British Aerospace and Rolls-Royce. It is at the forefront of technology. We should be extremely proud of it. Recently I visited Japan and was amazed by the interest that the Japanese show in the project. If the Japanese are interested in it, that leads me to believe that the project is a potential world leader for the 1990s and into the next century. It has great potential for the transportation of people; it would also deal with defence threats; it could also launch satellites in a different way from Ariane and from the programmes that are pursued in the United States. After the recent tragic failures in the United States, involving the loss of life, it is important that a more reliable alternative should be found. The fact that the most attractive option is available from United Kingdom industry is a great compliment to us.

As for collaboration on projects, I said earlier that the United States has suffered from certain technological failures. I identified Sergeant York as an example. It provided British Aerospace and the Government with the opportunity to demonstrate to the United States that there is an alternative to track Rapier. The Rapier project has been successful. It has been sold to many countries. However, the long-term evolution of any defence project is important. We cannot regard it as a one-off project and then assume that that is it. Track Rapier is an example of the development of the Rapier project which is well worth identifying and supporting, because the United States Government need a system like that.We have successfully sold a variant of the harrier, the AV8B, to the United States. They are very pleased with it and variants are being developed. The Hawk is another primarily British project which is now being sold to the United States. It has a British airframe and British engines and it shows great potential. However, apart from the United States, other countries could be persuaded to purchase such projects.

On a more tendentious note, there is the strategic defence initiative. Many people are absolutely opposed to it, while others support it. It is important that the British defence industry should be allowed to sit at the table when projects at the forefront of long-term technology are discussed. We cannot sit back and allow other people to participate in a project and say that we shall not try to obtain any orders. It is absolutely crucial that companies and universities should be able to work on state of the art technology. I should welcome the participation of British companies and universities in that project. It would keep us abreast of the United States and also of the Europeans and the Japanese who intend actively to participate in the project.

The Labour party has recently published a consultation document headed "Labour party science and technology policy." It was written by the hon. Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray) and published on 19 November 1986. It will have aroused concern in the defence industry. The hon. Member for Motherwell, South calls for a direct swap from defence research and development expenditure to civil research and development expenditure. We need increased research and development in civil engineering and in civil industry in general, but the document does not give credit for the large amount of feedback from defence research and development to civil projects. For example, nobody would identify the V2500 as a civil engine, but much of the research work on that engine was carried out in defence establishments. On page 5 of his consultative document the hon. Gentleman calls for

"a cut of £100 million in defence research and £1,000 million in defence development."

I have looked through the document, but I cannot find the time scale upon which the hon. Gentleman is working. However, I am willing to presume that it would be over the period of one Parliament. If so, that involves a cut, on the basis of last year's expenditure on defence research and development — which I understand to have been £2·1 billion — of £200 million a year in defence research and development. If the Labour party confirms that that is its policy, it is important that it should identify which 10 per cent. of defence research and development is to be removed. Such a cut would affect projects not only in my constituency but in other parts of the country. One of those projects, the XG40, could be the basis of an engine for the European fighter aircraft.

Various countries have declared that they are committed to the European fighter aircraft and that the engine for it should not be the F404. The F404 is already in certain foreign air force aeroplanes. The attraction for foreign air forces is that the F404 could be used as the initial engine for the European fighter aircraft. The logic of that is somewhat dangerous, for there would then be an argument over cost. Because the F404 engine was in place, it would be argued that all associated development should be cancelled.

The Ministry of Defence actively supports a European engine for the European fighter aircraft, and I understand that Germany and Spain are still committed to a European engine for the EFA. I ask the Government to continue to support the commitment to a European engine and, with their European colleagues, to ensure that it is in place in the project from the start. My conversations with Defence Ministers in the last few months lead me to believe that they recognise that the European fighter aircraft is crucial to a number of air forces in Europe for the 1990s.

I have covered fairly broadly a number of specific projects and the general problems that face the British defence industry. With the support of the Government we must develop United Kingdom projects that can then be exported in order to provide a continuing and assured base of British defence manufacture not only for another decade but for many decades to come.

10.8 am

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): I am very grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for calling me to speak so early in the debate. For reasons that I have already explained to you, I shall have to leave the Chamber fairly soon, for which I beg the forgiveness of the House.

The motion is very interesting and I agree with much of it. I have been the chairman of the parliamentary

Labour party's aviation group for some time and I have had the pleasure of working closely with the Conservative aviation group. We work harmoniously together, never acrimoniously, and always in the national interest. The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) is a relatively new boy in this House. However long he may be a Member of Parliament, he will never experience so much co-operation from both sides of the House, particularly from Back Benchers, as he has received over Westland. The Ministry of Defence has behaved badly over helicopters, not the Back Benchers.

I may now be attacked — nicely I hope — because I shall defend Nimrod in the strongest possible terms. My opening remarks are aimed at preventing unemployment and preserving technology but that argument is not meant to disguise the fact that I think highly of Nimrod. Technically, I am the only hon. Member in the Chamber who has flown Nimrod and used the equipment. I used it in a professional capacity. Hon. Members will probably laugh, because the last time I used air interceptor equipment was in 1945 — possibly before some hon. Members were born.

At the end of the war we used the British mark 10 air interceptor. It was probably the best in the world and we lost it. That is the point that I wish to make to the hon. Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward). I do not take any comfort from his remarks about preserving technology. If the Nimrod equipment provided by GEC is not utilised, it is, in my book, another act of vandalism. I cannot do much about Nimrod in the sense of operating it, because I am old hat now, but it has been said that Nimrod produced too many returns, that the screens became cluttered, and that one could not pick up individual targets. That was basically the main complaint about Nimrod. I looked for that during the exercise. I must set the scene for this. Hon. Members may say "Ah, well, they have fed you a load of bull." But I am old enough in the tooth to recognise bull when I see it.

I operated the equipment with a squadron leader from the Ministry of Defence. We used the same circuit, so he knew exactly what I was doing and what he was showing me and there was no argument. I say clearly to hon. Members that the major objection to Nimrod was that there was a mass of clutter. That complaint was true, but is now no longer true. That problem has been resolved. In a crowded part of Britain, which shall remain nameless, we identified individual targets. That seemingly is Boeing's strongest argument against Nimrod.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his courtesy in giving way, and I apologise if I am raising a point which he may be about to come to, but can he be secure in his belief that the clutter has not been cleared up to such an extent that some of the targets that should have been within range are not now shown on the screens?

Mr. Carter-Jones: The hon. Gentleman makes an interesting point, but if danger comes at all, it will come from the south, east and north while the clutter occurs in the west. However, the clutter in the west satisfies my requirements.

The Secretary of State for Defence said:

"They both work. There's no question about that".

I did not say that; the Secretary of State did. He went on a different mission in Nimrod. He flew successful interceptions. As a former member of the Royal Air Force, I do not wish to foist upon the RAF any equipment which does not meet its staff requirements. This aircraft does. The only hazard is that the horizon that can be reached is not quite as great on Nimrod as on Boeing, but that difference is not of any great significance.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): The hon. Gentleman has already given way once, and I thank him for doing so again. He knows that we are both joint signatories to the early-day motion which now, with the Labour motion, has more than 100 signatures on behalf of Nimrod.

Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the detection range for Nimrod is slightly shorter by, say 8 to 10 per cent. because the AWACS system was originally developed on the west coast of the United States for very fast arriving Soviet aircraft coming from the east. The protection configuration for Nimrod is of a different physical requirement for the whole of the greater European theatre, and is therefore perfectly satisfactory.

Does the hon. Gentleman also agree that the disturbing thing about what the Secretary of State for Defence said about Nimrod working as well as Boeing is that Britain would have no chance of getting such a system adopted by the Pentagon and Department of Defence, because the Americans buy and support 100 per cent. American systems? They have done that overwhelmingly, as history shows. Above all, there is such a major difference in cost that the decision must be made in favour of Nimrod.

Mr. Carter-Jones: I congratulate the hon. Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) on getting his speech in quickly. I do not agree with everthing that he said, but I must confess that he reminds me very much of a wing forward coming round the blind side when I played scrum half. I should have learnt the trick of not giving way. Basically, yes the environments of, say, the North sea and the west coast are different and Nimrod has been built with that in mind.

I shall refer to unemployment later for good reasons, but I do not wish people to think that I am advancing this argument for the sake of saving money for other projects and I do not want to condemn Boeing. In all fairness, I must say that I have quarrelled with Boeing more than most people, basically, as the hon. Member for Kingswood knows, over the airbus industry. I deplore the fact that Boeing tends to say that it is subsidising the airbus industry. It can say that if it wishes, but it should not pretend that it is not very heavily subsidised by the Government. It is Boeing's pretence that annoys me, not its aircraft. AWACS is now rather old hat. It is getting rather long in the tooth. One can modify and upgrade equipment to a certain extent, but there comes a point when one has to start from scratch. The aircraft that I flew in the war were modified. The poor old Mosquito was modified until it was hardly recognisable. One can modify and upgrade too far. The advantage of the GEC system is that it is a new system which possesses tremendous potential for development and improvement. I have a funny feeling that the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) is about to rise.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): To put matters in perspective, does the hon. Gentleman not recognise that the Nimrod mark III AEW was launched in 1977, a year before the NATO AWACS programme was launched by our European friends in NATO, and yet the NATO AWACS came into service in 1982, which was the

[Mr. John Wilkinson]

year in which the Nimrod mark III should have become operational? That is the difference in what has been achieved.

Mr. Carter-Jones: That is the one point that I will concede to the hon. Gentleman. The time factor has been scandalous. Two groups of people must accept responsibility for that. GEC must accept its part of the responsibility and the Ministry of Defence must also accept responsibility for moving the goal posts. Responsibility is not one-sided. I share the hon. Gentleman's anxiety about the delay, but we are talking about the present. The Nimrod aircraft will perform efficiently, will do what is required, and will meet the requirements. I have praised the aircraft and its system. Above all the aircraft has been paid for.

Recently, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been belabouring us about the need to support exports. But there is no export potential for us in the Boeing AWACS. We could export our electronic capability for use in American aircraft, and in that respect the export potential is good. For that reason, Nimrod should be supported. However, I would not support an aircraft that did not provide the necessary protection for the boys flying it.

Contrary to what the hon. Member for Kingswood said, I believe that if we do not order Nimrod we shall lose that technology. Moreover, it costs an awful lot of money to keep people unemployed; a substantial amount of public expenditure is involved in it. But if we did not pay unemployment benefit, to those made unemployed they would probably be attracted overseas, and I believe that those skills must be retained in Britain.

Mr. Hayward: Perhaps I can clarify what I meant to say. I did not want to suggest that that specific technology would not be lost. But I believe that some people have exaggerated the situation, saying that if we did not get the order it would be a comment on British defence technology as a whole. I concede that there would be a problem for this specific technology.

Mr. Carter-Jones: That just goes to show what a reasonable bunch of people we are in the all-party aviation group. I accept the hon. Gentleman's point.

We have some massive gaps in our defences. We may now start arguing about the figure. How much more will the AWACS system cost compared with Nimrod? A reasonable figure would seem to be about £500 million. However, as soon as I say that, someone will probably disagree. No fluttering of light has come into the Minister's eyes, but perhaps we should settle for £450 million.

That amount of money would provide a lot of conventional weaponry in this country, and that is what we desperately need. I do not like the sort of headline that states, "Decision on assault ship awaits a £250,000 report". The Government commission reports when they should be commissioning ships. The problem is that there has been delay after delay, and our shipbuilding industry has suffered. Our ability to land assault ships has been substantially reduced.

Mr. Marlow: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Carter-Jones: An intervention will take up my time, but I certainly give way.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman will realise, I am sure, that Conservative Members and no doubt the Government as well are deeply committed to the Royal Marines and that particular capacity, but the assault ships that we have at the moment have a life until the mid-1990s. Surely it is far more sensible for the Government to commission a proper report and to come up with the best, most cost-effective, proper and effective solution than for them to go ahead and build ships at this stage, when they are not now wanted.

Mr. Carter-Jones: I suppose it shows that the Ministry of Defence is flexible in that it cancelled those ships at one time, and preserved them just in time for the Falklands war. It had a deathbed conversion. The Navy still needs more ships, but instead it gets feasibility studies. Feasibility studies are all right if time is on one's side. In 1939 or 1940, we had Spitfires, which were first-class aircraft, and Hurricanes. They were not feasibility studies but real aircraft. Our problem was that we did not have enough of them. That is the problem now with our conventional defences. Feasibility studies are still being carried out.

I think that I have made the case for Nimrod, and at least the House knows where I stand on that issue. I am not talking about a mock-up; I actually flew in the aircraft. During both exercises the equipment worked to the air staff, not target, requirement. When we come to air staff targets, we enter a whole new sphere. I was confused, because I thought that Westland made the W30 to meet air staff target 404. Then somebody said that the target was not what was really wanted, and that it was the requirement that was needed.

Let us leave out the political battles. After all, the Conservative aviation group went to see the Minister of State for Defence Procurement about two years ago, just as the Labour party aviation group did. He was warned about what would happen. Suddenly everything happened, and we had one hell of a row about helicopters. However, Back Benchers on both sides of the House had given warnings, so the Ministry could not say that it did not know.

The Ministry then put two problems before the country. First, Westland, a high technology helicopter industry, found itself in difficulty. Secondly, the armed forces were denied the helicopter support that they required. In response to the point made earlier by the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), I should point out that paper helicopters do not defend people in battle. If troops have to be moved up quickly, a working and up-to-date helicopter is needed, not one that is years out of date.

Westland has recovered quite well, but not thanks to politicians. Our track record on defence is not good, but Westland has pulled itself up by its bootstraps and now deserves support and orders. The hon. Member for Kingswood said that if we ordered in advance we could order helicopters now that would be of great value to the Army, in support, using substantial amounts of Westland technology and the RTM322 engine, which would seem to be a superb winner. Consequently, the Ministry may have an obligation to bring forward some orders for Westland. The company is owed that.

I strongly support what has been said about HOTOL. We have too often taken the lead and produced designs that we have then thrown away. If, at the end of the day,

money is required to push the concept ahead faster, it is well worth it. Some of that money could come from the savings that will follow fitting GEC avionics into existing Nimrod aircraft that have already been paid for.

Back Benchers on both sides of the House were right about the new fighter trainer and the Government were wrong. What we said about the PC9 and the delay in the provision of Tucano was absolutely right, and the latest figures prove that. British Aerospace is delivering. My hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) is going there on Monday when the first PC9 will be delivered and the Saudi airforce will get it.

The aircraft that we chose, I think because of a cunning aerial manoeuvre which won the hearts of many people, is a long way behind. The Minister should sometimes listen to his Back Benchers. If Back Benchers on both sides of the House are united, they are probably right and have probably received well informed advice.

The Minister should go for Nimrod. Some of the money that is saved by buying Nimrod should be put into HOTOL. The Government cannot rethink their decision with regard to the fighter trainer, but it was the wrong one. Having helped to cause some of the problems at Westland and as they have now been put right, the Government should ensure Westland's high technology, especially in view of its high technology blade and the possibility of a new Rolls-Royce engine going into the helicopter. If they buy British, the Government will find that the exports flow.

10.31 am

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on introducing this important debate. It is vital that our Armed Forces are supplied with the best and most technologically up-to-date equipment. It is equally important that we have an effective, efficient and successful, especially in terms of exports, defence industry.

Opposition Members might say that it is immoral to export weapons of war. Maybe they say that in their constituencies as well, where we enjoy such a successful defence industry. Sadly, the world is not a safe place and there will be armies and defence forces which require equipment. As long as that is the case, I for one believe that it is more than proper—it is right and beneficial—that they should enjoy the opportunity of buying British equipment, and the better that equipment is, the more satisfactory it will be.

We have addressed the important subject of airborne early warning. I do not know what the solution to the requirement is. I do not know whether it should be AWACS or Nimrod. With respect, I believe that the hon. Member for Eccles (Mr. Carter-Jones), despite his great eloquence, does not know what the solution should be either. I also put it to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) with the greatest respect, because I have the greatest respect for my hon. Friend, that he and the 100 hon. Members who have signed the various early-day motions, do not and cannot know, either. What I do know is that this is a very important requirement and that it is of the essence that we get it right. Airborne early warning is the system by which we would know whether a surprise attack on the United Kingdom was likely to take place. It is vital that we have in position in the sky a system in which we can have the utmost faith. If we get something which is not the very best—which is adequate—bearing in mind the circumstances in which it could be required, it could be the death of the United Kingdom. It is therefore vital that we get the right solution.

When looking for the right solution, we have to ask of both systems, "Does it work?" I do not know. I do not have the skills, knowledge or ability to assess whether they work. Do they work?

Mr. Dykes: I shall be brief this time. I am sure that my hon. Friend agrees that our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence confirmed on "News at Ten" last Friday that Nimrod works as well. With that confirmation, we know that we are making a rational decision between the expensive AWACS system, which had teething troubles for the first six years, and a much better system which has enormous export potential and is British.

Mr. Marlow: I am sure that, when the decision is made, the effectiveness of Nimrod will be taken into account. I am sure that Nimrod will do an effective job, or my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State would not have said so. I am sure, however, that my hon. Friend agrees that it is of the essence that we have the very best.

As the hon. Member for Eccles said, the Nimrod system used to have a great problem with clutter. One could see targets, and objects that were not targets as well. The hon. Gentleman talked about looking to the east and looking to the west, but if one clears up the screen to the extent to that one clears up the clutter, it is possible that the target, whether coming from the east or the west, will not appear on the screen. I do not know, and I put it to the hon. Gentleman that he does not know either—perhaps he has some miraculous way of knowing—whether that problem has been solved. If so, perhaps he will tell the House.

Mr. Carter-Jones: I most certainly will. The one thing that the hon. Gentleman must realise is that part of the clutter is caused by slow-moving equipment. If one is trying to intercept a cruise or stealth-type machine, it develops a tail. One looks for something which moves quickly and develops a tail. I am sorry to have to give the hon. Gentleman a lesson, but that is the difference between a fixed and a moving target—a moving target shows a tail and can be clearly identified.

Mr. Marlow: I thank the hon. Gentleman for the lecture. I spent three years at university being taught engineering. I am not saying that I learnt anything, but I was taught. What the hon. Gentleman says is probably correct, but there are other aspects of the technology and of definition. I am not saying that the baby has been thrown out with the bathwater, but the hon. Gentleman does not know whether it has or has not, either.

The hon. Gentleman said that Nimrod has a lesser horizon than AWACS. There is a difference in the geometry. The radar antenna is central with AWACS and there are antenna at both ends of the aircraft with Nimrod. I do not know, and the hon. Gentleman does not know, whether that difference in geometry has different characteristics with regard to the effectiveness of the two systems, but that factor must be taken into account.

The hon. Member for Eccles said that AWACS is out of date and that it is not the sort of system that can be modernised and brought up to date. Perhaps he is right.

[Mr. Marlow]

Maybe he is wrong. I am quite sure that the Government, the Cabinet and all of the people who are scrutinising these two options will consider that aspect carefully. I am not trying to run Nimrod down. The hon. Gentleman spoke of on the one hand, but we should consider the other. Nimrod is based on the Comet aircraft, which I think was built after I was born, but I was born before the hon. Gentleman was flying an aircraft. It was not that recent.

The hon. Member for Eccles also said, as others would put it, that a lot of money has been spent on Nimrod. If money has been spent, that water has flown under the bridge.

Mr. Carter-Jones: No.

Mr. Marlow: If the hon. Gentleman were in business or commerce and he bought a bit of machinery for his factory last year and it was doing a good job and a new piece of machinery came along with he could finance and afford to employ the labour for and, after employment and interest costs he would still save some money, the best thing that he could do is dispose of the old machine for the most money that he could get for it. The same applies here, if one has spent money that money has gone and it is not retrievable. What one is looking at——

Mr. Carter-Jones *rose——*

Mr. Marlow: If I may just finish my point. What one is looking at are the future costs. The future costs, taking into account the disposal costs of what one has got and the disposal potential of what one has got. It is the future costs that one has got to look at.

Mr. Carter-Jones: I must make it very simple for the hon. Gentleman. We have got 11 arcraft that have been paid for. We do not have to write them off, we have got them.

Mr. Marlow: of course the hon. Gentleman is right. If one is looking at building Nimrod from today it will obviously make it less expensive than it would be if we did not have those aeroplanes. The point I am making is that it is the money that one has got to spend from today—to get to the solution—that is the financial cost that one should look at. That money has gone — one cannot retrieve it. It is the on-cost from today—we start from today. I will not make a racialist remark about Irishmen.

We come to the question of the British or United States solution. I think we all know in the House that these multi-billion projects are not as simple as that. If we have what is essentially a British solution it also has a large foreign component and if we have what people think to be a United States solution that also would have a massive British content. If one speaks to Racal or Plessey about AWACS they start watering at the mouth. They see a very great opportunity for them to be involved in this project. It is not as simple or as straightforward as that. I think that the hon. Member for Eccles would know that. The hon. Gentleman talked about employment.

Mr. Ashdown: I feel absolutely certain that on the question of offset-arrangements there is a great deal to be gained for British companies out of AWACS. The difference is that if we take AWACS we shall be building technology invented elsewhere but if we take the Nimrod option we shall be using British technology. On the one hand, we would be basically bolters and pinners of other people's technology but on the other hand we would be developing our own. Can the hon. Gentleman not see which is to be preferred between those two options?

Mr. Marlow: I agree with the hon. Gentleman as far as Nimrod is concerned and that part of avionics that is particular to airborne early warning systems. Of course, that is British technology and of course, it is preferable if we can use British technology, particularly if there are great export opportunities. But one cannot yet say that. I am sure, all things being equal — I am sure the Government would believe, all things being equal—that if Nimrod does the job, it is Nimrod that we must have.

Mr. Ashdown: It does the job, the Secretary of State said so.

Mr. Marlow: Well, we will see, we will see. That may be the case and the hon. Gentleman may hope that it is the case, but I start from the simple position that I hope that we get the best possible solution. I would move on from there. For obvious reasons one would hope, possibly, that Nimrod is able to produce the best possible solution. We do not know yet and I put it to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) with great respect, that he does not know either.

In terms of technology, the early warning system is not the only technology on the aircraft. Racal and Plessey, in their own ways, are on the frontiers of technology with regard to other parts of avionics within the system. If the AWACS system were to be developed there would be great opportunities. I am not necessarily talking about the offset employment opportunities but the technological opportunities for British companies, together with Boeing, to develop further along the frontiers of technology and to gain technological expertise and further export markets. That would benefit Britain later on.

Let us consider the offset arrangements. Yes, of course, Boeing has offered very generous offset arrangements but I think that, to a certain extent, one is sceptical about that offer. These offers may be made, but given the position of Congress and given the difficulties of the United States system in putting orders overseas, whatever the company says, can we really be assured that it could deliver what it is promising? Again, this is something I am sure the Government will be scrutinising as effectively as it possibly can.

Right. If both work and if Nimrod is as effective as AWACS—as hopefully it will be, as I said to the hon. Member for Yeovil — and as that is the most British solution and if it is an effective solution, so be it. Hurrah! Let us have Nimrod. But I put it to the House that we do not yet know. A British Secretary of State for Defence would have all the evidence before him and would put that evidence to the Cabinet. It is impossible that he would go for a United States version, or basically the United States version, if he thought that the British version was better and would do the job. That will not happen. If the Government come up with AWACS there must be a very good reason for coming up with AWACS, for to do so will obviously be politically difficult. The Government will only do that if it is the best solution. They will not do it for any other reason.

I would like to address myself briefly to one other point and that concerns the British Army of the Rhine and the equipment for the British Army of the Rhine. This might be music to the ears of the hon. Member for Eccles, I am

not sure. I take the view, without a great deal of knowledge, perhaps instinctively, that we have reached the stage—a watershed—as we reached a watershed between the horse and the tank. We reached that watershed rather too late as we had horses for too long. We are now reaching a watershed between the tank and the helicopter.

I have been told by people who I believe are objective and who have the knowledge to put the point, that given modern methods of battlefield surveillance, one would be able to see where all the tanks are from a very long distance. One can get helicopters a long way quickly and concentrate them. Traditionally, the tank, in attack, has been used in a concentrated format, to puncture holes through our defences or the enemy defences. One has got to get the tanks together—concentrate them together, to use them to the most effect. The concentration of tanks, slowly lumbering into position, would be seen "for a long time from a long distance". The build-up would be known in advance.

Helicopters, with a much greater range than the tanks, with highly effective missiles, developing every day, could be in a position well out of range of the tanks. They would be safely—as far as anywhere on the battlefield is safe—and securely over their own troops, ready to take out each and every tank without any intervention from the tanks, though of course there might be other forms of aerial intervention. That technical problem could be dealt with, to a large extent, also by the helicopters through stealth and other means.

We have just bought a regiment of Challenger tanks and I believe that that probably should be the last regiment of tanks that we buy, particularly for an offensive role. I do not say that tanks do not have some defensive role. If we look to the future and the modern cavalry I believe that the modern cavalry will not be based in tanks but in helicopters. After all, a helicopter is much more like a horse than a tank. If one is after a bit of esprit de corps and élan in the cavalry, perhaps the helicopter is more appropriate than tank. Farewell the tank, welcome the helicopter.

Let me make a few comments, which one would expect from the Labour Benches, but may be of more interest coming from this side. I wonder whether we really ought to look at the way we form some of our regiments. There is the idea that some of our cavalry regiments should be outposts for some of the less intelligent sons of families that own large slices of counties and have double-barrelled names. I think that we ought to move on from there and we ought to be more professional in our approach as to how we officer some of those regiments.

I believe that our Army is now a very professional Army and I believe that some of the social aspects that have been carried forward from the past are things that we should, perhaps, look at a little more carefully in the future.

10.49 am

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): I wanted to take part in the debate because I suspected that there would be almost unanimous agreement on the motion and I wanted to put some arguments against it.

Because of what I have to say, I should make it clear that I am not a pacifist. I served for five years in the Royal Navy during the war and I have never looked back on that service with anything but satisfaction. I agree that every country has the right, indeed the duty, to arm and defend itself, but I oppose the expansion of the arms exports trade.

In saying that a country must defend itself, I do not say that it must necessarily use nuclear weapons. There is a glib cliché that nuclear weapons have preserved the peace for 40 years, but I do not believe that that is the case. One can believe that only if one postulates the theory that for the past 40 years the Russians have been poised to walk into this country. I have never had any illusions about the Soviet system of government, but I do not believe that that is true.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton): Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that peace has been maintained for 40 years?

Mr. Stewart: There is no argument about that, in the sense that no major war has broken out. However, some people who defend the Common Market argue that it has been responsible for ensuring that there has been no European war. Those who defend the nuclear deterrent make the same claim. I do not look at the Russians through rose-tinted spectacles, but I do not believe that for the past 40 years they have been poised to invade the United Kingdom.

At least Conservatives are frank about wanting to expand arms sales. Unlike the Labour Prime Minister who appointed a Minister for disarmament and within a month appointed a salesman to go round the world flogging arms, the Conservatives are open in their wish to increase arms sales.

I find the mention of developing British technology rather odd because we in Scotland have suffered from what the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) says would be the result of ordering the American aircraft. Although Scotland has had many military installations dumped on her soil, with effects on the environment, the economy and our way of life, we have had little share of defence contracts, even those for the defence of the United Kingdom. We do not have the percentage share that our population would justify.

I do not have the knowledge to make a judgment between the Nimrod and the AWACS, but Boeing says that it will produce far more jobs in Scotland if its aircraft is chosen. If it is a question of jobs, I look for an advantage for Scotland and I will do no public relations work today on behalf of the Nimrod.

The hon. Member for Eccles (Mr. Carter-Jones) said that the Government should be commissioning ships and not reports. The Government have shown little concern over the disappearance of the Merchant Navy, but the Royal Navy cannot be maintained without a sufficient merchant fleet. The trade aspect might be disregarded, the employment aspect might be disregarded, but surely this Government, of all Governments, with their dedication to defence—they make a great thing of it and there is substance in their claim—should not be indifferent to the disappearance of the Merchant Navy, because we are still a maritime nation and without a Merchant Navy the Royal Navy will not have the people to man its ships in a war. In the meantime, the maintenance of the Merchant Navy will provide work for our hard-hit shipbuilding industry.

The hon. Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) mentioned the Chinook helicopter. There has been a loss

[Mr. Stewart]

of confidence in that machine following the recent tragic accident in the Orkneys. I have written to the Department of Transport following representations made to me by my constituents who use that service to the oilfields. They say that the helicopter should be phased out and I understand that it is not used for civil purposes in the United States. I hope that the Minister will note their representations.

It is not true to say that arms exports result in more jobs. The opposite is happening. The value of arms exports has risen substantially recently, but the number of jobs has fallen. Britain is the fourth largest exporter of arms after the United States, the USSR and France and it is immoral that some arms are diverted to countries such as Chilek, Iran and Turkey that have appalling records. It is an immoral trade which raises tensions and increases danger. It puts an arms burden on Third world countries with meagre resources. I decline to support a motion which "welcomes the Government's continuing support for the industry".

10.55 am

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip, Northwood): I do not know what it is about this season of the year and its effect on colleagues, but a year ago an outbreak of mass hysteria seemed to affect the collected ranks of hon. Members and, particularly, right hon. Members and this year a similar thing has happened over Nimrod and AWACS.

In both cases, the debates have been characterised by a plethora of hyperbole and wild exaggeration. Arguments in favour of patriotic solutions have been advanced, with few or no technical facts to back them up. Such behaviour does us discredit.

In both cases the relevant experts have clearly come up with appropriate policies and we saw yesterday that the judgment of the board of Westland was vindicated in the return of £26 million profit by Westland plc over the past year. This is hardly surprising in view of the excellent quality of management there and the commitment and dedication of the work force.

We are now considering the future airborne early warning requirement of the Royal Air Force. The defence equipment committee of the Ministry of Defence has had all the facts, there has been an extremely thourough evaluation over the past six months and the technical conclusions are patently clear. Only the Boeing E3A AWACS meets in full the necessarily demanding specifications of the RAF for an airborne early warning system.

Furthermore, Boeing has secured three leading British electronic companies as partners. Plessey, Racal and Ferranti all stand to gain substantially from that arrangement and, according to the offset agreement, the Americans will purchase in the United Kingdom £1·30 of goods and services for every £1 that we spend on procurement of the AWACS in the United States. We shall also be able to share in the future enhancement of the AWACS system over its whole life in service not merely with the RAF, but with other air forces, such as those of the United States, Saudi Arabia and, potentially, France.

The French air force dimension has been gravely overlooked. When Mr. Chirac came to the Assembly of the Western European Union last week I advocated that the French air force and the RAF should jointly buy AWACS. The aeroplane has already been certificated for the Franco-American CFM56 engine and it will be much more economical than the AWACS currently in service in the USAF. The French chief of air staff has come out publicly and strongly in favour of the Boeing solution, saying:

"The crux of the matter is low and very-low-altitude detection. And at this stage only the E3A Sentry responds to the Armée de l'Air's operational needs within reasonable delivery dates."

The needs of the French air force and those of the Royal Air Force are not so dissimilar as to lead to a different judgment. That is why the Royal Air Force unanimously recommended that Ministers should procure AWACS. If they do not do so, they will be irresponsible. The needs of the country's air defence are absolutely paramount. They will be more crucial if there are INF arms control reductions which, if so, will leave the country just as exposed to manned, penetrating bomber attack. Therefore——

It being Eleven o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *interrupted proceedings, pursuant to Standing Order No. 5 (Friday sittings).*

MVs Kowloon Bridge and Derbyshire

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Michael Spicer): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement.

In the statement I made to the House on 25 November I undertook to make public the reports of the inspectors who investigated the damage to, and subsequent loss of, the vessel Kowloon Bridge on 23 November. I have now received the first report from the inspector who examined the vessel when anchored in Bantry bay on 20 November, and I have placed a copy of his report in the Library. A second report has been commissioned into the subsequent loss of the vessel, which will similarly be made available to hon. Members as soon as it is received.

In my statement I referred to the possibility of a link between the damage suffered by the Kowloon Bridge and the loss of the Derbyshire, one of her sister ships which disappeared in the Pacific ocean in 1980 with the loss of 44 lives. I undertook to consider whether, in the light of the loss of the Kowloon Bridge, there might be a case for holding a formal investigation into the loss of the Derbyshire.

The inspector's report contains details of cracks and distortions in the deck and hatch coamings of the Kowloon Bridge and of other damage sustained during her voyage across the Atlantic. The report concludes that there was no evidence of design defects or of structural failures of the kind that were suggested might have been the cause of the loss of the Derbyshire. However, I recognise that more than one interpretation of these findings may be possible. I also recognise that the subsequent loss of one of her sister ships has increased public concern about the unexplained loss of the Derbyshire, which was reflected by hon. Members on 25 November.

In these circumstances, I have decided that a formal investigation into the loss of the Derbyshire should now be held. Arrangements for the investigation will be made as soon as possible.

Mr. Roger Stott (Wigan): I thank the Minister for his statement. From the evidence that I have received, I agree that different interpretations could be placed upon the inspector's findings. The Derbyshire was lost without sending a Mayday call, and with all hands on board, six years ago. Since that time, the families of those on board and the seafaring unions have attempted to persuade, first, the Department of Trade, and then the Department of Transport to conduct a formal investigation into the loss of that vessel. It has been a long, trying and difficult six-year campaign.

Although nothing can compensate for the loss of the 44 people who died on board the Derbyshire, this news will be the best Christmas present that the families of the crew of the Derbyshire could receive. On behalf of the seafaring unions, the families of those who were lost aboard the Derbyshire and hon. Members, I thank the Minister for his statement and for conceding that a formal investigation is required.

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): I thank my hon. Friend for his courageous decision and for the speed with which he took it. My hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price), who is not able to be present, also thanks the Minister on behalf of his constituents whose relatives drowned on the Derbyshire.

There has never been an attempt to seek recriminations or financial gain in our request for a formal investigation, but, rather, that every possible stone should be turned over that could prevent a similar occurence with sister ships. I echo the words of the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott). The news of the investigation is the best possible Christmas present for the families concerned.

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): I join the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) in thanking the Minister for acceding to the pressure for an investigation. At the risk of sounding churlish, I hope that the Minister will put down a marker for the Department that, when a vessel of the size of the Derbyshire disappears without trace, it owes it to the families of seafarers to see that immediately an investigation is carried out.

Mr. Spicer: Over the years, detailed inquiries have been carried out. This year, in March, a detailed report on the matter was produced. The only issue was whether a formal inquiry would produce new evidence about a ship that disappeared without trace. Today I said why we have taken the view that we have. There has never been any question of the Government not wishing there to be the maximum information about this disaster.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Seventeen of the 44 families who lost men on board the Derbyshire come from the city of Liverpool. For the past six years, many have pressed for an inquiry. I join other hon. Members in thanking the Minister for announcing this investigation. Many hon. Members have asked how on earth this ship got a certificate of seaworthiness in the first place. Does the Minister agree that, in general, with more British companies flagging out, standards will drop even further?

Mr. Spicer: It is probable that the formal investigation will take place in Liverpool, which was the home port of the vessel. It is customary that such investigations are held in the home port. The classification societies or registries involved will not be affected in any way by flagging out. Obviously, from the point of view of insurance as well, which is largely based in this country, standards will be maintained in future.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): I declare my interest as medical adviser to the National Union of Seamen.

I thank the Minister for his frankness this morning. Does he not think that seafarers suffer enough hardship and danger without extra problems being put in their way by ships such as the Derbyshire, which seemed to have some structural problem? The Kowloon Bridge has some structural problem, but I do not know whether it is the result of its fabrication.

The Minister was complacent when he said that flagging out has no bearing on the matter. The object of flagging out is to make more profits for the owners. I do not reject that; I do not object to profits. Even the new general secretary of the National Union of Seamen, Mr. McCluskie, said the same thing in an interview. He said that he does not expect companies to run their ships at a loss.

Does the Minister think that the goods that we export and import should be carried in ships made in Britain, which fly the British flag and which are manned by British sailors? Seafarers want a fair deal. The comparisons

[Dr. M. S. Miller]

between our seafarers, and other seafarers are not fair. Will the Minister consider the reduction of our merchant fleet? It was once biggest and proudest in the world.

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Gentleman has asked a perfectly fair question. The immediate question which it raises is whether obstacles are put in the way of seamen and whether what has happened over the past six years reflects the fact that there have been obstacles. I would argue that there never has been any question of depriving anyone of information. The problem has been how to obtain information about a ship that went down without any trace and whether a formal investigation would add to the information. That has been the only issue at stake.

As I am sure the hon. Gentleman knows, a great deal of flagging out, especially recently, has been with countries whose ships fly the Red Ensign—Hong Kong, Bermuda, and, increasingly, the Isle of Man. In those countries, the standards of the classification societies apply. I think, therefore that there is not quite the concern, that the hon. Gentleman perhaps imagines.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): I join in the welcome given to the Minister's statement and I should like to echo many of the comments made by other hon. Members. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will recall that he wrote to me about the Derbyshire only the week before the problems of the Kowloon Bridge arose. He stated all the reasons why a formal inestigation should not be carried out and the difficulties that might arise in such an investigation. Does the hon. Gentleman believe that it is now possible to overcome those difficulties and that this investigation will be relatively genuine?

Mr. Spicer: The difficulties remain. There will now be a long process of formal investigation. I have to say that it is very difficult to see what new information will be forthcoming. Having heard what was said in the House, having noted the great feeling on both sides of the House and having looked at the inspector's report, I took the view — not that there was doubt perhaps in the Government's or inspector's mind — that there were different interpretations which led me to believe that there was not as strong a case for not holding a formal investigation. It was a balanced and very fine judgment. I have never felt dogmatic about this. I felt that the loss of the Kowloon Bridge just tipped the balance. I do not disguise the fact from the hon. Gentleman or from the House that there will be great difficulty in trying to investigate an event that took place six years ago when there is very little additional evidence.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is not the truth of the matter that the Government are not very good about holding inquiries when it is possible that some of their friends in business might come out of them badly? Six years ago, the Derbyshire went down. Since then, the hon. Gentleman has been resisting any form of inquiry.The fact is that he should not be getting compliments for deciding to hold an inquiry. It should be plainly stated that it has been dragged out of him. The only reasons for the announcement are that another ship has broken its back and that my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) and other hon. Members asked questions some weeks ago about the Kowloon Bridge and were able to inform the Minister that there might be some connection.

Will the hon. Gentleman give a guarantee that, when the inquiry is finalised, proper compensatory payments will be made retrospectively to all the families whose relatives were victims in the Derbyshire disaster?

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Gentleman is not being quite his normal generous self. He said that the Government were defending some vested interest. I should like to know what vested interest that was. Was it, for instance, the good name of the British shipbuilding industry? One might argue about that. If it was compensation, to which the hon. Gentleman finally referred, he is absolutely up the creek.

Mr. Skinner: Why?

Mr. Spicer: Because, in respect of who is likely to have to pay compensation if the courts so decide, appropriate arrangements have already been announced. When Swan Hunter was sold by British Shipbuilders, the indemnification was made. What more can the hon. Gentleman require than that proper indemnification was made at the time of the sale? The hon. Gentleman is making, as usual, a hard political point which is totally unjustified and unmerited.

Defence Projects and Exports

Question again proposed.

11.14 am

Mr. Wilkinson: They sometimes say that timing in politics is all. The great advantage of being called at this time is that, occasionally, one gets the opportunity to make two speeches for the price of one. I shall not do that, but I shall continue the plea that I initiated before the ministerial statement at 11 o'clock.

There are certain similarities between the Nimrod AEW controversy and the Westland helicopter controversy a year ago. One linking strand is that defence equipment collaboration is not sufficiently well understood in the House. The Royal Air Force's role in airborne early warning was an ideal candidate for a collaborative solution. It is deeply regrettable that a collaborative solution was not followed. If it had been, there would have been great benefits of inter-operability, standardisation, reduced costs and the entry into service of an effective weapons system. AWACS would have them much earlier.

Dr. M. S. Miller (East Kilbride): I pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman for his deep knowledge of this subject, for which I have great respect. Will he cast his mind back about 10 years? At that time I was a member of the Select Committee on Defence. The problem was that the Ministry of Defence could not make up its mind about the specifications it wanted for an early warning system. AWACS was developed mainly for use over large land masses. As a maritime nation, we wanted a system that could do the job over large sea areas. The avionics firms said to the Ministry of Defence, "Let us know what you want and we will supply it." What has happened?

Mr. Wilkinson: As so often, the threat has evolved and become more acute, especially the threat of very low-flying, manned penetrating bombers and cruise missiles and, ultimately, there is the possibility of the Soviets acquiring stealth technology. We therefore need an airframe that has a much larger payload and the power generation to offer radar of sufficient size and effectiveness to be a satisfactory system throughout the life of a potential airborne early warning aircraft. This is the case for AWACS—an aeroplane with a 140-tonne maximum all-up weight at takeoff. It is not the case with Nimrod, which is an 85-tonne aeroplane. The size of the radar and power make a tremendous difference. The positioning of the Boeing AWACs Attenna on top of the fuselage rather than split fore and aft in the configuration of the Nirmrod 3 are all very much in favour of AWACS and have enabled Westinghouse to improve the capability of its radar. It has a continuing potential for improvement and enhancement. I am sure that Cabinet will take those factors into account.

Last week I had the honour to present a report to the Assembly of Western European Union on helicopters for the 1990s which was passed unanimously. I want to draw certain lessons from the report. We are all deeply conscious of the need for the Government to make certain key decisions on helicopter strategy. There must be much greater understanding in the Alliance as a whole of the importance of the helicopter in land-air operations. This was referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). As an aviator, I shall not quarrel with his expert judgments as a former member of the Royal Engineers. Nevertheless, the British Army has been slow to exploit that potential. In part that may be because the operation of helicopters has been divided between the Royal Air Force and the Army, but the adverse effect of that somewhat artificial division has been over-emphasised.

When the study of this matter is reviewed it is important for the optimum choice to be made on overall grounds —command and control, logistics and training—and not merely on administrative convenience and loyalty to a particular service. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his team will make that judgment.

Operational requirements and time scales must be much better harmonised. The independent European programme group is working well and has essential work to fulfil for helicopters. Above all, an initial study into the new helicopter for the 1990s, the NH90 programme, has been completed. The helicopter has potentially two variants—a tactical transport or light support helicopter and a helicopter for the new NATO frigate for the 1990s, the NFH.

It is not immediately apparent what the United Kingdom's interest in that aircraft is. Westland, rightly, wants to pursue the studies into it, is interested in it and its technical potential and may well participate. However, it is too early both for Westland and the Ministry of Defence to make an ultimate judgment on the programme.

More important for our country's helicopter industry is the decision that the Ministry takes on whether to procure a new light support helicopter. All hon. Members know that part of the reason for the Westland crisis last year was the failure of the Ministry of Defence to order more helicopters soon enough. In particular, there is a genuine need for new light support helicopters or new medium to light support helicopters.

I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to put to his colleagues in the Department the benefits of buying a Black Hawk with the RTM322 Franco-British engine as a replacement for the Wessex, which is in service with the RAF and the Royal Navy, and a transport version of the EH101 as a replacement for the Puma. The transport version of the Anglo-Italian EH101 would come into service sooner than the anti-submarine variant, which is more complicated.

If the Government could take those two decisions and come up with sufficient funding to order sufficient aeroplanes to make the orders worthwhile, this could transform the prospects of the Westland company, which has done well but which, nevertheless, has an evident gap in its order book until full production work for the anti-submarine warfare EH101 becomes available.

Finally, I ask my hon. Friends in the Government not to forget the importance of the associated industries to helicopter manufacture. They include avionics, electronics and the light turbine aeroengine industry. A great deal of Government money has gone into the RTM322 engine. I hope that the RTM322 will be definitely specified for the Agusta 129 Mark II light attack helicopter, which we all hope will be produced for the British, Italian, Dutch and Spanish armies.

It is a great step forward that our Army now recognises the need for such a dedicated anti-tank helicopter. The agreement on operational requirements which has taken place between the Italian and British general staffs is an example of what can and should be achieved. A negative example of the dangers in collaboration is seen in the so far abortive attempt of the French and Germans jointly to

[Mr. Wilkinson]

produce a new third generation anti-tank helicopter and, in the case of the French, a new anti-helicopter helicopter. The helicopter Apui Protection is the anti-helicopter helicopter and the helicopter Troisième Generation is the French anti-tank helicopter. The Panzer Abwehr Hubschrauber is the German version. In the anti-tank role all those aircraft will require the new third generation fire-and-forget Trigat missile.

The problem has not been a lack of political will, because during the past 10 years the French and German Governments at the highest level have tried to make the programme succeed, but the operational requirements of the Bundeswehr and the French army are manifestly different and it is impossible to reconcile them.

A great deal of progress is still to be made in arms collaboration. The AEW episode has shown us the dangers of trying to go it alone in expensive, sophisticated programmes which are of the greatest importance to our defence. There is a higher degree of security if a team of industrial partners is available from different nations. I wish that had been available and that we had participated in the AWACs from the start as some of our NATO European friends did.

The Government now have the opportunity for working out an effective helicopter strategy of great benefit to Westland, Rolls-Royce and our armed forces. It is overdue, but that is not to say that it will not be all the sounder for that extra time. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) for the expert and well informed way in which he introduced this most timely debate.

11.26 am

Mr. John Cartwright (Woolwich): I add my congratulations to the hon. Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on his timely choice of subject for the debate today. We should be particularly grateful because it looks as if this may be our only opportunity to discuss the airborne early warning system, if, as we understand, the Government are to announce their decision immediately before the Christmas recess.

I agree with the hon. Gentleman's thesis that it is probably unwise for politicians to produce snap judgments on something of this complexity when we do not have access to all the technical assessments, especially the views of the RAF. In 1977 I pressurised the Defence Minister, now Lord Mulley, to choose the AEW Nimrod. I must confess that in the past year or two there were times when I did not feel it appropriate to boast about that part that I played.

In trying to add up the balance sheet on this extremely complex issue, it is fair to say that from a technical point of view the Boeing AWACS would probably be the safe choice simply because the technology is tried and tested, it is generally in NATO use, and it may well be bought by the French, so the issues of standardisation and interoperability do not raise any particular problems.

It is also true that in terms of the jobs calculation Boeing has offered what appears to be extremely generous offset possibilities. That may well compensate for the 2,500 job losses that GEC and its sub-contractors would suffer, if the AEW Nimrod solution is not chosen. Major British firms, such as Plessey, Ferranti and Racal, see considerable opportunities in the Boeing AWACS proposal.

Some of those jobs would be created in areas of high unemployment, which desperately need that sort of support. Other hon. Members, especially my hon. Friend the Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), have drawn attention to the fears that these replacement job opportunities would be in fairly low-grade trades and skills and that the high technology involved in the GEC avionics operations may well not be replaced as a result of the offset proposals.

As the Boeings would not be swiftly available, we should presumably have to borrow American planes for the early years of the programme. The purchase of nine Boeing planes would also cost about £1 billion. As the hon. Member for Eccles (Mr. Carter-Jones) eloquently pointed out, 11 airframes are already available for the AEW Nimrod project and £1 billion has been sunk into avionics research in the past nine years. There is also at least a possibility of export opportunities. I think that it is generally accepted that if we reject the Nimrod option we shall pay the penalty of breaking up the design and hi-tech teams and losing their expertise. The hon. Member for Kingswood suggested that that expertise could perhaps be replaced in other ways, but initially it would be broken up. That, more than anything else, brings me down on the side of Nimrod as the more attractive proposal, provided—this is a very important proviso—that it can meet the detailed performance requirements of the RAF.

I am not so reassured as others have been by the Secretary of State's protestations that both systems work. As this stage of consideration, I should damned well hope that they do. I should hope that we would not be considering a system that did not work. The question is not whether they work but how well they work and whether one offers a substantial advantage over the other in terms of performance. If there is little to choose between them on technical capabilities and performance, I believe for a variety of reasons that we should stick with the British solution.

A procurement issue that has not been mentioned in the debate so far — the DROPS system of battlefield ammunition transporters — has caused considerable concern on both sides of the House. I understand that my hon. Friend the Member for Yeovil intends to explore this in greater detail if he catches your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I therefore content myself with saying that there is a great deal of concern and suspicion that will not be allayed until there is a full and thorough inquiry into the whole issue.

The motion rightly draws attention to arms sales and exports. The hon. Member for Kingswood was right to stress the economic importance of our ability to export arms, but he will appreciate that the subject arouses controversy. There is always concern about the role of nations selling arms around the world and especially about developed nations selling arms to the Third world. I accept that those arms are sometimes needed for national defence, but all too often one feels that resources that should be used for other purposes are being used for the purchase of arms for not altogether worthwhile reasons. There is also concern about arms sales to nations with bad human rights records, especially if the equipment concerned could be used to suppress internal dissent. There is growing concern, too, about the activities of

private arms dealers throughout the world, and especially those based in this country. On all those issues, the Government's position is less clear than some of us would like.

With regard to the Government's position on the supply of arms in the Iran-Iraq conflict, we appreciate that there is a problem in terms of contractual obligations. We understand that the supply of spares for the Chieftain tank and the Scorpion armoured vehicle arises out of contractual obligations entered into in the days of the Shah. Nevertheless, that seems a very long time ago and we cannot ignore the impact of those supplies on the Iranian war effort and the role that they play in that sad conflict.

There is also concern about the role of the International Military Sales Organisation. We read in the press that between 20 and 31 October a team of Iranian officials visited this country and had extensive discussions with that organisation, which is a wholly-owned subsidary of the Ministry of Defence. The talks seem to have covered issues such as infrastructure contracts which had been in existence for some years but which had been in abeyance. It is suggested that those contracts relate to matters such as repair bays and garage facilities for the Chieftain tanks. If there is to be further support for the Iranian effort in terms of that kind of back-up it should be publicly acknowledged by the Government. It is not good enough to argue that although the IMSO is a wholly owned subsidary of the Ministry of Defence it is entirely independent. We cannot accept that type of approach. We need to know exactly what is going on. We have seen from across the Atlatic the dangers that flow from supplying arms to the Iranians and trying to keep it secret. I hope that the British Government will be absolutely clear and open about any arms deals with the Iranians.

As a footnote to that, it would be interesting to hear the Minister's comments on reports that this country has supplied Chieftain spares to the Iraqis to enable them to re-use captured Iranian tanks in the conflict. If that were true, it would be a sad instance of Britain supplying both sides in a conflict which to many of us seems pointless and which has unnecessarily claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

There is also concern about the role of the Iranian team based in London, which seems to have a vast shopping list of military hardware of all types. The supply may not come directly from the United Kingdom, but it is certainly masterminded in London. Again, there is a feeling that the Government are turning a blind eye because no British laws are actually being infringed. It would be interesting to hear the Government's view on the activities of that group.

A similar issue has arisen in relation to arms supplies to Libya. At the beginning of this week there were reports of the purchase by Libya of submarine lifting gear produced by a Clydeside company. This is apparently intended to equip a Libyan naval base near Tripoli. According to media reports, the company concerned consulted the Department of Trade and Industry and was advised that no export licence was required because the supplier to which the equipment was going was an Italian company. That may be so, but the entire work force at the yard knew that the end customer was Libya. In those circumstances, it seems strange that the need for an export licence was not even considered. In *The Guardian* on 8 December a spokesman for the Department of Trade and Industry was quoted as saying:

> "We have a normal trading relationship with Libya, though it is doubtful that equipment which could have a military use would get a licence."

He went on to say:

> "Sometimes the equipment is not easy to define."

I accept that there are problems in defining when and which equipment could be used in a military situation, but as the equipment in question was destined for a naval base near Tripoli and as the firm concerned was supplying similar gear for use in Polaris submarines and, potentially, Trident submarines, it is hard to accept that the potential military use was not obvious. Bearing in mind what the Government have rightly said about Colonel Gaddafi's role as the godfather of a great deal of international terrorism, it is strange that the Department of Trade and Industry does not fall over backwards to be absolutely firm and clear that we should not be supplying military equipment to the Libyan Government. The order was apparently placed in March 1985, well after the embargo on supplying arms to Libya was introduced. The equipment was due to be collected in December 1985 but was not shipped until November 1986. It would be useful to have the Minister's comments on that.

The hon. Member for Kingswood has painted the traditional rosy pictures of the opportunities that SDI offers British firms and academic institutions. In doing so he was echoing some of the early high hopes that SDI meant a lucrative gravy train for a range of companies in Britain. He was echoing the suggestions made by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) when he was Secretary of State for Defence, when he said that about $1·5 billion worth of orders were available to Britain through the SDI programme. General James Abrahamson, the head of the SDI office, talked in the summer of 1985 of hundreds of millions of dollars being available to Britain through the programme.

The Memorandum of understanding, which was signed in December 1985, did not involve any formal guarantees of how much money was to be involved. I understand that so far the contracts amount to the princely sum of £25 million for British firms, which is a long way short of the $1·5 billion prospectus that we were offered a year or so ago. Most of the orders that have come to Britain so far are for theoretical studies in areas such as computers, sensors, command control systems and potential counter measures. It may be that these theoretical studies will lead on to orders for hardware, but as the song says, "It ain't necessarily so". A good deal of concern is being expressed among some United Kingdom firms that their commercial research is being exploited by some of their American competitors with no guarantees of contracts coming at the end of the operation.

One independent body, the Strategic Research Initiative, is warning United Kingdom companies that are involved in SDI research that they risk losing copyright and patent rights. It would be useful if the Minister could tell us whether there is concern on the Government's part about the progress of SDI opportunities, whether the position is likely to improve in the foreseeable future and whether the original target figure given by the then Secretary of State, the right hon. Member for Henley, is ever likely to be achieved.

[Mr. John Cartwright]

I shall echo what has been said about the need for much tighter European co-operation in defence procurement. It would have been better if the issue had been included in the motion. We talk constantly about the need for co-operation and we agree constantly on the principle and how necessary it is to implement it. Unfortunately, we make only slow progress towards achieving this element of European co-operation.

The hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) talked about the Western European Union, and I have been a member of the North Atlantic Assembly for the past 10 years. Throughout that period the Assembly has produced reports on the need for greater European co-operation in defence procurement. It has constantly agreed about the principle and it was discussing the issue long before I came on the scene. I suspect that if I disappeared from it tomorrow, it would continue to discuss the issue for years. As I have said, it is unfortunate that we make extremely slow progress. There is pressure on defence budgets throughout NATO and it is essential that we co-operate more. If we want to see a genuine two-way street across the Atlantic and more equal defence procurement opportunities, we must co-operate in Europe. The two-way street currently is, in reality, one great highway from the United States to Europe with 14 individual winding lanes from Europe to the United States. If we want to sell in the American market, we must get together and work together in Europe.

We have had some successes in collaborative ventures, but even when we go down that road there is often an insistence on maintaining national production lines. We must accept that we cannot continue trying to maintain productive capacity and capability at a low level in virtually every type of weapon system. Rationalisation is inevitable. I know that there are problems when national security is involved. I know also that there are difficult issues to be faced involving economic considerations, especially when there is such high unemployment in western Europe and rationalisation means jobs going to one country rather than another. As I have said, however, we cannot continue avoiding the need for greater rationalisation and specialisation in defence given the enormous cost of research and development.

I hope that one of the Government's priorities will be to produce some real progress towards more co-operation within the European pillar of NATO instead of merely talking about it, adopting resolutions and reaching agreements. If we do not make progress we shall not obtain value for money from our defence investment, and that is needed desperately.

11.45 am

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I am pleased to be able to contribute to the debate immediately after my hon. Friend the Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright). I endorse wholeheartedly his comments about European co-operation and the sensible approach that he outlined on Nimrod and AWACS. I congratulate the hon. Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on introducing a timely debate which has already borne a considerable amount of fruit. I thank the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), who is not now in his place, and the hon. Member for Eccles (Mr. Carter-Jones) for their mentions of Westland. I hope that the Minister listened to their remarks with great care. The hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood made some powerful and telling points of which I hope the Minister and the Government will take account. They are points on which I hope to touch briefly.

The hon. Member for Eccles said that the campaign to get the Government to see sense about Westland has not been run, happily, on a party-political basis. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have made a considerable contribution to the campaign and it is appropriate for me, in representing the community which has the largest dependence on Westland, to pay my tribute and express my thanks to both Labour and Conservative Members for fighting a long and strenuous battle on behalf of the company. I hope that their efforts will bear fruit in the near future.

I am sure that the House will not be surprised when I make a few comments on my own about the present position at Westland. I shall take as read some of the more detailed points which were made by the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood, who covered the ground with his usual diligence and the background knowledge for which he is widely respected on both sides of the House. The arguments which he advanced were powerful and ones that I wished to adduce myself, but in the interests of brevity I shall not do so. It will be more useful to leave them on the record in the hon. Gentleman's name. As I have said, I hope that the Minister will take account of them.

It is with pride and pleasure that I am able to call the attention of the House to a success story for Westland. Last year the company had a loss of about £95 million, but announced its end-of-year results yesterday and they showed a profit of £25 million. In Britain's present industrial climate it is rare enough for any company of any size to have turned round profit to loss a sum of £120 million in one year. But for a company to have done that against the background of political turbulence and turmoil that Westland suffered in the early and middle portion of the year is testimony to the skill and ability of its management, especially to its leader Sir John Cuckney, to the wisdom of the management's policies, to the strength of the company and most especially to the loyalty and dedication of the work force. The House and the Government should recognise and pay tribute to those qualities in Westland, which have ensured that one of our key defence companies has survived the past year and prospered as well.

I ask the Government to recognise that in all senses and in full measure Westland has played its part in restructuring itself. Westland has been able to fight through a period during which it has been a political football for the most powerful in our land. It has maintained the integrity of the company and prospered. I say again to the Government — I shall do so softly because this is not the time to be too raucous—that it is time that they fulfilled their part of the bargain. It is time that they stopped shilly-shallying over what orders the Government require of Westland.

I say again, as I have said before, that Westland does not ask for charity. It is strong enough to survive in the real world, but it is interested in its primary customer, the Government. The least that the Government can do is to say what they require of the company so that it can begin to address those needs.

We were told that the information on the study on helicopter procurement that we need so desperately to plan

for the future would be available towards the end of the year. It is not. I understand that it will now be available early next year. It is now said that it may not even be in the first month of next year. I say sincerely to the Government that every day's delay undermines Westland's capacity to take advantage of its current position in the market place and to fulfil the needs of the British services for helicopters, which are great enough now, and undermines and threatens jobs. I hope that the Government will take account of that, and will move heaven and earth to ensure that the decisions over which they have pondered for so long will be delivered in the near future. For, if they do not do so, jobs will be at risk, and the design teams that Westland has accumulated over the years—its most priceless asset—will be in danger.

Let me be clear, for I do not want to be misunderstood. There is no question of Westland itself being threatened. The company is now strong enough, and, with our new partners, is capable of facing up to the world, whatever the competition may be. I am delighted to say that. I do not want this to be misunderstood. There is no question of Westland not being strong enough to survive. It can. What is at threat is Westland as Britain's majors "stand-alone" helicopter provider. The fact that the Government must now face is that further delay will mean that it cannot deliver the undertaking which we understand was previously concluded, that the Government wish Britain to have a helicopter manufacturing capacity from the design stage to final production. Further delay will threaten, not Westland in total, but that capacity.

We are capable of supplying the helicopters that the United Kingdom forces need so badly, which the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood articulated so clearly. We know that those helicopters are required. We are running the oldest helicopter fleet in the world, serving the British Army in the central plain of Germany. It is 100 short of what is needed to fulfil its tasks. The helicopter capacity is desperately needed. Helicopters are a force multiplier, which is doubly important when, by the Government's own concession, we stand at a disadvantage to the conventional forces of the Soviet Union. It makes no defence sense as well as no business sense not to recognise that and bring it to fruition by allowing Westland to know what the Government require of it.

We are discussing export orders abroad. That is important in terms not only of our defence needs in Britain but of the orders that Westland can win abroad. There are orders to be won. There is considerable interest in NATO and in Europe in the aircraft that Westland is producing and has the capacity to produce. There is particular interest in the Black Hawk. However, no nation will buy those aircraft from a British firm such as Westland unless the British Government make the commitment in the first place. That is the seal of approval that such firms look for. We must understand that.

I shall not say that those orders are at risk, but the potential for sales abroad, which could be great, will be enhanced immeasurably as soon as the Government make up their mind. I ask the Government to decide quickly and to recognise that the defence industry implications for Westland are great. About 70 per cent. of the final product, the modern helicopter, is produced not by the aircraft manufacturer in Yeovil or elsewhere, but by other portions of Britain's aerospace industry. That amount is bought in from Smiths Industries and instrument and avionics manufacturers throughout the country. A great swath of our high technology industry depends on the survival of Westland as a helicopter manufacturer and the winning of those orders overseas.

The hon. Member for Kingswood and other hon. Members rightly mentioned the Rolls-Royce RTM322 engine. It is a brilliant engine, with great potential. But it is now an engine waiting for an aircraft. The decisions that the Government now take will therefore have consequences for Rolls-Royce, for the winning of new orders and for large sections of the rest of the aerospace industry.

All that is at stake, and it now hangs on the Government's decisions, which have been delayed too long. Westland is a great firm, and is essential to our aerospace industrial base. It can win export orders, and the prosperity of my community depends upon it. I plead with the Government not to delay further and not to fudge. Let us have those decisions, which have been promised and have been delayed too long.

My second point on the export of British defence equipment is not relevant to Westland. It was mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) and I believe that it will be mentioned by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara), who will deal with it in detail. I wish to look at it in terms of export orders. I wonder whether the Minister realises what is happening with the DROPS contract, which is required by the British Army so that it can fulfil its tasks in the central plain of Europe and in NATO and so that it is supplied with the ammunition that it needs. The Minister may not know that in the present placing of that order we are involved in an unwitting export abroad — in fact, to the Soviet Union, by courtesy of the decision taken by the Procurement Executive of the Ministry of Defence.

Let me give the House the details. We know of the concern about the award of the DROPS contract. Boughton did much of the original work, but was excluded from the contract. Nevertheless, Boughton's bid for the contract was regarded by many independent experts as not only more viable and efficient for fulfilling the task but cheaper in real terms. Instead, the Government awarded the contract to Foden and Scammell. A portion of that contract, fulfilled by Multilift, is at the heart of the system. It is of concern that Multilift's solution to the hydraulics problem bears a startling resemblance to the system proposed by Boughton which was developed with Ampliroll for military application. That concern will, no doubt, be expressed by many other hon. Members in the debate. There may have been some leakage of technical information from Boughton to the people who succeeded in getting the contract, Foden and Scammell, using the Multilift hydraulics system.

What has not been known until now is that Multilift has a parent company in Finland called Pratek. It has been the supplier for a long time of hydraulic systems to Kamaz, the Soviet state truck manufacturers. According to the latest figures that I have, in 1982 Kamaz provided about 400,000 vehicles to the Soviet army, among other people. I am told that in 1982 that same manufacturer used a Pratek multilift hydraulic system to do a similar job to that which is now being done by DROPS.

There have been worries about the similarities between Multilift and Ampliroll. Leaving all other aspects aside, it is now evident that the contractor chosen by the Ministry of Defence supplies similar systems to the Soviet Union,

[Mr. Paddy Ashdown]

very probably the Soviet army. How can we be assured that the advantages that DROPS will give to the British Army will not quickly become available to the Soviet army as well? It now appears evident that the Ministry of Defence Procurement sees its task not just to supply weapons systems to the British army, but possibly to supply systems to the Soviet Union as well through a firm's parent plant in Finland. Is that not extraordinary?

In the light of all those facts, we must have severe doubts about the competence of the MOD Procurement Executive because of the way it has handled this matter. We must have an inquiry into the full facts, and we must have it soon. I hope that when the Minister replies to the debate he will bear in mind that systems now being supplied to the British Army are also being supplied to the Soviet Union and the Soviet army. I hope he will look into these matters to ensure that the advantages of this equipment to our Army will not in the near future be available to the Soviet Union as well.

11.59 am

Mr. Nicholas Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): I welcome this timely motion and agree with most ot its contents. That keeps me in tune with almost every hon. Member who has spoken in the debate. I hope that the hon. Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) will not mind if I concentrate my remarks on procurement for the Royal Navy—because that has not yet been dealt with in depth — rather than discuss avionics or even helicopters. Before doing that, I should like to speak about our conventional defence industries. Those industries provide jobs and exports. Their export potential is underpinned by the domestic procurement programme of the Ministry of Defence. It is difficult to see how the industries would survive in their present form without that domestic underpinning.

In the next few years, about one third of all available money for conventional defence is committed to the Trident programme. Instead of supplementing NATO's conventional forces to bring the Western Alliance to a closer balance with the Warsaw Pact countries, we are duplicating a nuclear capability that is already provided. That provision is eating into a reasonble conventional defence programme. The effect of this on our conventional forces is substantial and in none of our forces is that more heavily felt than in the Royal Navy.

One third of the Navy's destroyers and frigates are over 25 years old and will be obsolete by 1990. In order just to retain our present position, a further nine frigates would have to be ordered before 1990 and by then about 16 destroyers and frigates of the present fleet would be between 25 and 30 years old. Nothing of the sort will happen.

At Question Time on Tuesday, I asked the Secretary of State for Defence if it was true:

"that the order for type 23 02 has been placed with Swan Hunter, that 03 and 05 have been placed with Yarrow, that type 23 04, 06 and 07 have been dropped from the programme altogether and that there will be no frigate orders next year?" —[*Official Report*, 9 December 1986, Vol. 107, c. 169.]

The Secretary of State did not refute what I said and did not even bother to hint at further frigate orders next year. Until there is some ministerial statement, the position will remain as I have described it. The Trident programme may never sink any ships in the Russian navy, but it has already sunk a fair bit of our Navy.

The motion speaks about exports. Although we build excellent warships, we do not sell many abroad. The naval sales task force that the Government have dispatched around the world is a worthwhile initiative. However, the real failure of the nationalised warship building industry to secure export orders is only partially related to a lack of world demand. Although that is an important factor, it does not have much to do with the often alleged complexity of our own warships. It is said that foreign purchasers look for simplicity but, if our builders of warships can build complex vessels, they can certainly build less complex ones.

Foreign Governments do not always make procurement decisions on the same basis as our Government. Nationalised industries find it difficult to respond to some of the criteria of foreign Governments. The Government believe that our newly privatised warship builders will do better, but so far there is no evidence of that.

Hon. Members have spoken about Nimrod. All the speeches assumed that procurement decisions are made on the merits of each case. With what little is left of naval procurement, that is not so. The last of the type 22 frigates —I think it was No.14—was won by Swan Hunter on a competitive tender basis.

However, the then Secretary of State placed the contract with Cammell Laird. As compensation, he promised a type 23 frigate — the 02 — later that year. That frigate was eventually placed, some two years later, on terms and conditions that were more onerous than those that pertained to the original type of 22 frigate.

The effect of lead yard services on pricing makes first of class status imperative for warship builders. In previous debates of this kind I have referred to the way that this works in practice. It creates difficulties for follow-on yards and operates against true competition. Also it has the effect of creating monopolies. If the Government are not very careful, they will find that the virtual monopoly that already pertains in submarine supply may spread to the surface fleet, to the detriment of the shipbuilding industry and eventually to the detriment of the defence procurement budget.

Undoubtedly the greatest procurement scandal in recent years has been the procurement of the first of class auxiliary oiler replenishment vessel by Harland and Wolff. The design was undertaken by Swan Hunter which had supplied the Royal Navy with 84 per cent. of all its fleet auxiliaries in the previous 20 years. That should not automatically have meant that Swan Hunter obtained the work, even though the yard that had carried out the design study eventually obtained the order in every other recent decision.

This important defence contract was placed with Harland and Wolff for political reasons. The Government tell us that the Harland and Wolff bid was lower, yet the detailed designs have not yet been cleared by the Ministry of Defence, despite the fact that on 24 April 1986 the Prime Minister wrote to me and said:

"You are correct that an undertaking was given to the Swan Hunter buy-out team before privatisation that the Harland and Wolff bid would be unsubsidised and comprehensively costed."

Comprehensive costing has to be based on the designs themselves, yet the bare bones of those designs have only

just been released to Swan Hunter to enable it to prepare, in general terms, its bid for the AOR2. The crucial detailed designs, which are supposed to have been comprehensively costed last April, will not be released to Swan Hunter until January 1987. It is legitimate to ask why. Naturally, foul play is suspected on Tyneside.

The nationalised industry, Harland and Wolff, is given massive subsidies and it is using them to take work from yards that have been pushed into the private sector. Harland and Wolff is the most heavily subsidised shipyard in our country, yet the Government assure us that none of this subsidy is underwriting the AOR2 contract. Nobody believes them. The Ministry of Defence must think that it is getting value for money, but the Government are not playing fair with the private sector. The final outrage has been the failure to release the detailed designs to Swan Hunter to enable it to make its bid for the AOR2.

The last reason that the Ministry of Defence gave me was that the delay is due to the fact that the designs are being vetted for commercially confidential information. That is obviously untrue. Only two shipyards are involved. Swan Hunter is the preferred bidder. When it is given the detailed designs it will come forward with a bid, there will be negotiations with the Ministry of Defence, eventually a decision will be made, and Swan Hunter will be either successful or unsuccessful.

If Swan Hunter does not get the work, Harland and Wolff will have the opportunity to obtain it. No third parties are involved. There is no other shipyard from which this commercially confidential information must be kept. It is highly unlikely that Harland and Wolff, and certainly not Swan Hunter, would give this information to a third yard. By doing so, they would be cutting their throats. It is absolutely ludicrous, therefore, for the Ministry of Defence to say that this information is being vetted for commercially confidential information.

Because the explanation that has been given is so plainly ludicrous, those who take an interest in these matters look for another explanation. The suspicion is that the Ministry of Defence is still making adjustments to the designs with Harland and Wolff — designs which I understand have not yet been cleared by the Department of Trade and Industry for seaworthiness or, for that matter, by Lloyds. Harland and Wolff is still taking steps to conceal the extent of the Northern Ireland Office subsidy, which is undoubtedly underpinning the operation. The truth of all that may not emerge until after the event, but the entire episode will remain a public scandal, the more so because it betrays the privatisation that the Government say that they believe in. Undoubtedly the most serious point of all is that the Government are appeasing the terrorism that they say that they are committed to fighting.

12.10 pm

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): I join with other hon. Members in congratulating the hon. Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward), who opened the debate. He and I disagree on some matters, but he has timed the debate very well as it has enabled both sides of the House to take part in an important debate on Nimrod, and to have our views aired in the House before the Government reach their final decision.

I join with the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) in saying that arms exports are a good thing, but we must be careful to whom we export. We must try to have some criteria by which we can assess the "worthability" — if one may put it that way — of the people to whom we sell our weapons of destruction. We cannot sell them to despotic, tyrannical regimes that threaten their neighbours and, perhaps more tellingly, their own populations. It becomes very difficult, in those circumstances, to understand how and why the scandal of the submarine lifting gear announced earlier this week came about, and how and why international salesmen in London have taken part in discussions on the sale of arms to the contestants in the Gulf war, especially when one of those contestants has been the protector of terrorists in the Lebanon who have taken hostages from many nations.

Out of the £18 billion defence budget, 46 per cent., or nearly £8 billion is spent on procurement. Britain probably spends more on procurement than any of its NATO allies, including the United States. That has an important economic effect on us. Nearly 400,000 people are employed in the United Kingdom defence industry and about 120,000 jobs are tied up directly with exports. It is an important industry for Britain and it needs to be supported, subject to the caveats that I mentioned earlier. Despite the vast sums that have been spent on defence and procurement, jobs are still being lost in our defence industries. Our defence industrial base is crumbling and our Service men do not always receive the standard of equipment that they deserve.

The Ministry of Defence has many plans and projects but those projects are either being stretched or never get beyond the feasibility study stage. The great gift from this Administration in regard to our defence problems and procurement is that they have probably commissioned far more feasibility studies than they have ever commissioned ships for the Navy of major equipment systems for the Armed Forces. The main reason for that is the demands that Trident will make on our defence procurement budget during the next few years.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) mentioned the way in which the acquisition of Trident was affecting the Fleet. I do not intend to proceed in that way. The Minister and the Government may argue that, over the period of acquisition Trident will account for only 3 per cent. of the defence budget and 6 per cent. of the procurement budget but within the next few years and stretching on into the next decade, it will take considerably more of the new equipment budget — perhaps as much as 30 per cent. That money, which should be spent on conventional weapons, and on helicopters for the British Army of the Rhine, on frigates, on improvements in our forces, on our Harrier squadrons, and so on, will not be available.

We know from the Defence Estimates earlier this year that the Secretary of State has delayed and cancelled conventional projects. Trident is absorbing so much of our money that the British people will have to decide whether they want to go ahead with it and so see our conventional forces rapidly weakened, or whether they want sensible and strongly organised conventional forces, but without Trident. There is a straight military choice, because the money does not exist for both, and the Government know that.

The Government are already cutting the defence budget. It is one thing to talk about taking new weapons systems through during a period of budget expansion, but is quite another to do that when the budget is declining, as it is now. The folly of it all is that when there is little

[Mr. Kevin McNamara]

money available, the Government have apparently decided to spend about £1 billion on AWACS instead of going ahead with our own better aircraft, the Nimrod.

One problem facing all Governments is the inexorable increase in the cost of new weapons systems. A type 22 frigate costs four times as much as a Leander did. The Phantom cost only 50 per cent. more per aircraft that the Lightning did, but he new generation Tornado F2s will be 175 per cent. more expensive. That trend affects us and our allies, and the problem is becoming more acute because we face an increasingly sophisticated threat.

Thus there is a vicious circle within our own arms industry. Equipment costs increase, so obsolete systems are retained in service. Because of the increase in costs, fewer new weapons are ordered. That means shorter production runs, which means that unit costs increase. Because the weapons are coming later, the services want gold plating. We understand that, but that increases the cost again and weapons take longer to develop. Admiral Lamb once made the off-the-cuff remark that

"One day the Navy will have one absolutely supership, and that's all."

Mr. Nicholas Brown: Probably built at Harland and Wolff.

Mr. McNamara: We have the problem of the gold plating of weapons systems and of systems being duplicated within NATO. I should like to take up the point made by the hon. Member for Woolwich, who has great experience of the North Alantic Assembly and of the military committee there. Many problems are involved in trying to standardise weapons systems and equipment throughout NATO. There are conflicting forces at work. We want to maintain our defence industries, just as the French, Belgians, Dutch and Americans do, but we must recognise the level of duplication. It means that we spend more than the Warsaw Pact countries on defence and are getting less for it. It is a myth that somehow the Warsaw Pact is shovelling roubles, zloty and whatever else into an enormous war machine in order to threaten us, because we spend far more than it does. We are also losing any technological advantages that we may have because of the duplication.

In general, the Warsaw Pact uses one specification when it comes to major capital investments such as tanks and aircraft. As a result, it can produce more, has better standardisation and benefits from long production runs. We have to take that on board when we consider our procurement policies.

Mr. Wilkinson: And why we should buy AWACS.

Mr. McNamara: In 1977, the House agreed unanimously that we should go forward with Nimrod. There was not one dissenting voice.

Mr. Wilkinson: I was not here then.

Mr. McNamara: The hon. Gentleman had been in and out, with obvious results.

We should not now throw good money at an American system and discard what we have already built. We must consider what is the best use of our money. Many people argue that we should buy off-the-shelf from the United States, that that would get us more weapons and that we should have all the benefits of United States production. That would be a policy for disaster in high technology and industry in Britain. It would make us overdependent on the United States. Our remedy, which is accepted on both sides of the House, is that, for the majority of equipment for our Armed Forces, we should depend on British industry.

There will, however, be major capital projects on which we have to collaborate. We often collaborate with the United States, but we should try more effectively and purposefully to secure greater European co-operation. There was very little until the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) came along, and I pay tribute to him on that score.

So far, there has been only limited co-operation with Europe, but some of the projects have been highly successful—Tornado is the finest example. If we are to work with our European colleagues, we must strike a more positive and aggressive attitude. We must identify projects, as has been done with the EIPG, and be seen to be going about them more purposefully. That is where Trident and the European fighter aircraft come in. The hon. Member for Kingswood has had no clear, categorical undertaking and no contracts have been placed for the EFA.

The hon. Gentleman talked about TSR2. We should get the record straight. More military aviation projects were cancelled by Conservative Governments between 1945 and 1979 than were cancelled by Labour Governments—nine to six. I am not challenging those decisions, but on the basis of that track record one would be more wary of a Conservative Government than of a Labour Government.

As for the figures about Trident, the problems that face the Secretary of State, who has refused to produce a White Paper on defence, arise out of his trying to get a quart into a pint pot. The result is that conventional forces will suffer. The surface fleet is as likely to suffer as the EFA.

When the EFA prototypes are ready, however, we want the aircraft to be powered by a Rolls-Royce engine, as the hon. Member for Kingswood said. It would be nonsense to accept an American General-Electric engine as a fall-back, as that would indicate that we lack confidence in Rolls-Royce, which has produced a highly successful and very exportable engine, and would stop the EFA being a European concept and make it a transatlantic one.

There is a real fear about what happens to European technology when it goes across to the United States. I agree with the hon. Member for Kingswood and I hope that when the Minister replies to the debate he will give those categorical undertakings that will delight both the hon. Gentleman and the workers of Rolls-Royce and British Aerospace. I trust that he will say that the Government will go ahead with these contracts and that the aeroplane will fly. If the Minister is prepared to do so and to tell us where the money will come from we will be even more delighted.

If we consider what is happening with regard to the Nimrod system we can see that we would be giving to the United States a complete monopoly in early warning systems. The arguments have been deployed from both sides of the House and I will not go through the great number that I have written down. I wish to make one or two points that are important and that should be borne in mind.

First, the supplier of the Nimrod system is a major electrical company in Britain, the biggest that we have in the multi-national league, but the signal from the Government is that they do not have confidence in it. That

is what it amounts to. They do not have the confidence in the British system so they are going to the United States. If they did that the repercussions would cross the whole of our export field and would be profound. Secondly, the hon. Member for Kingswood spoke of the American failures, such as the shuttle, and various others. That is true, but one cannot compare like with like.

Britain has one major company, whereas the United States has half a dozen. Those companies have enormous defence budgets and the United States has an enormous economy. But we have just one company. The blow would be tremendous. We would be signing away £960 million worth of equipment and 2,500 jobs. The Government would be saying to British industry, in the private sector, that it cannot meet the competition from abroad in those areas of the highest technology. I do not think that we can afford to do that.

What has been interesting is that, apart from the contributions of the hon. Members for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) and for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), the almost unanimous cry in this House has been for Nimrod. Perhaps, we may create a new silly season. Last Christmas it was Westland and this Christmas it could be Nimrod. The Government seem to be willing to go across to the United States continually to find their remedies. They tried to do it with Land-Rover, British Leyland, Westland and now with the airborne early warning system. There are two reasons why it is not good enough that the Government should behave in that way.

First, the Secretary of State said on ITN that Nimrod was up to the job and that the system works. If it works, it works, but if it does not we should not have it. But if it does work we should have it because it is British. Not only has the Minister said it works, but *Flight International* in its editorial said:

"The RAF choice must be for quality. It is becoming evident now that the GEC equipment is performing almost impeccably, and is at least the equal to the Westinghouse equivalent in the E-3A, if not some years in advance of it."

That is an important comment from an independent source.

If we are to maintain our position we must examine the way in which the Government are pursuing their competition policy. Many criticisms were made when Mr. Peter Levene was appointed and many of us still doubt the wisdom of the contract under which he is serving. However, in fairness to Mr. Levene, one must say that he has attemtped an almost impossible task with tremendous courage and determination, and his work seems to be bearing fruit.

The parts of the Government's competition policy are contradictory. One example is Defcon 19 under which one person develops designs which can be passed on to someone else for production. That does not encourage firms to think that they will get long production runs after they have done the basic work. Companies do not think that they will be given the job of producing systems that they have helped to design. Competition policy needs to be re-examined carefully. The terms, conditions and appointments of contracts should be looked at.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eccles (Mr. Carter-Jones)—we sympathise with him and understand why he has had to leave—pointed out that on Monday the first PC-9 for the Saudi air force will be rolled out and handed over at Brough near my constituency. The PC-9 was the preferred choice of the RAF as a basic trainer and we are still awaiting delivery of the Tucano. It would be helpful if the Minister could tell us when we shall have our first squadron of Tucano trainers, how far behind time they are and whether the problem with the engine has been solved. When will Shorts fulfil its contract?

We are still running the old Jet Provost, at increasing cost. We were promised that that would not happen, because Tucano would be on time, there were no problems and eveything was excellent. It is interesting that Shorts has not received one export order for the Tucano, but the PC-9—our first choice: the one that we said would be part of the family of PC-9, Hawk, Tornado—is being built and developed in Brough, with Swiss partners, and is being exported to the Saudis, well ahead of the Tucano coming into service.

There have been other problems with contracts. Strange procedures were followed in the contracts that were awarded to Shorts. There was the strange case of the telephone call that was or was not made.

The mention of telephone calls bring us neatly to the Boughton saga. Boughtons is a small family firm in Amersham which has spent about £4 million in the past 12 years on designing its own ammunition and equipment carrier for the Army. The system is known as DROPS. Despite its work, the company was not selected to take part in feasibility studies in 1983. That did not seem to be particularly fair and was certainly not consistent with what Lord Trefgarne had been saying about giving small firms an opportunity to take part in important contracts.

We all know that the Amersham firm did not get the contract and much controversy surrounds the case. I am not competent to judge whether the right decision was made in terms of the Army's requirements and whether DROPS came up to it—though DROPS seems to be highly suitable for the American army.

I wish to put a number of questions to the Minister about this case. I trust that he will listen carefully to this matter. I also trust that his hon. Friend will be ready to rush to the Box to get the replies to my questions. They are of the utmost importance.

First, can the Minister confirm or deny that Multilift, the company that was awarded that part of the DROPS contract concerned with lifting equipment and hydraulics, is beneficially owned in Finland and that its Finnish parent company, or another subsidiary of the Finnish parent company has been, or is currently, engaged in a collaborative venture for similar equipment with the Soviet authorities for the Soviet armed forces. Can he confirm that this work has been carried out at the Kama river truck plant? If this Finnish company has this dual relationship, supplying NATO and the Warsaw pact, although I am sure the company is happy, it raises important questions about our technology going to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Ashdown: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising this matter. I wonder whether it will help if I read a brief extract from a Soviet trade magazine of 1982, which covers this matter, and which he might draw to the Minister's attention. I translate it from the French. It states:

"We have developed the conception of a system of interchangeable boxes on the back of trucks by Multilift which is sufficiently powerful in order for us to guarantee efficient usage."

The article goes on to state:

"In one year—"

[Mr. Ashdown]

—this is from Kamaz, the Soviet company that the hon. Gentleman mentioned—

"In one year we have constructed 150 systems using Multilift on the chassis of Kamaz trucks. These materials made by Partek are extremely in demand by our customer which shows that there are considerable possibilities for development and co-operation."

Surely it must be our concern that that development and co-operation does not include the passage of British information to them for further use in the Soviet army.

Mr. McNamara: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. It has saved me another two and a half paragraphs. He succinctly made the point.

My second question concerns the behaviour of the noble Lord Trefgarne in his relationships with the company. In the press last week, there was an article entitled "How minister 'gagged' MP". The hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Ottaway) said that he had written to Lord Trefgarne

"as, magically, the Chief Whip has got to hear about this matter, I have told him I accept your assurance and you can consider me suitably gagged for public utterings."

We must find out why he thought he was being gagged and what those utterings were about. Behind the controversy associated with this matter, did the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne have a private meeting with the hon. Member for Nottingham, North at which he told him to stop his opposition to the Defence Ministry's handling of the DROPS questions, on the grounds that, as a PPS, he must therefore support and not oppose Government policy and that he must support all Government decisions?

Surely, it is one thing for a Government Minister to ask a PPS to support some plank of Government policy, but it is quite another thing to try to tell an hon. Member that, because he is a PPS, he cannot make inquiries about the placing of highly valuable Government contracts. Can the Minister confirm what we read in the paper—some of us have copies of the correspondence—that the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour), himself a former senior Defence Minister, has taken the step of writing to the Secretary of State complaining of the way in which the noble Lord seemed to be abusing parliamentary privilege in his conversation with the hon. Member for Nottingham, North. Can he confirm that the actual words used by the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham were that the hon. Member for Nottingham, North was warned off and told to keep quiet, and that the former Secretary of State wrote to the present Secretary of State saying:

"My understanding is that for a Member of the House of Lords to seek to stop a Member of Parliament performing his parliamentary duties is a breach of privilege."?

That is a very grave charge. Was the noble Lord breaching parliamentary privilege in his treatment of the hon. Member for Nottingham, North?

There are other matters concerning this contract and the way in which the Government seem to have responded to criticism. A number of questions arise from the BBC Panorama programme on 7 July. In that programme, the BBC strongly implied that there had been serious impropriety in the handling of the DROPS contract in the treatment of the British engineering company, Boughtons, by the Ministry of Defence. However, the one major weakness in the charges made on Panorama was that the chairman of Boughtons did not say that his company had been mistreated. Indeed, a letter from the chairman of Boughtons specifically said that Boughtons had no complaint.

The Ministry of Defence, particularly Lord Trefgarne, made much of this apparent general silence by the chairman of Boughtons on Panorama and of the fact that it had received this letter from him. Now it appears that the reason for this silence was not the Boughtons had no complaint about its treatment by the Ministry of Defence but that the Ministry had made it totally and starkly clear to Boughtons that, if it did complain, it could say goodbye to any further Ministry of Defence business. Boughtons is heavily dependent on Ministry of Defence business and, in particular, is tendering for contracts at the present time.

As for the disgraceful intimidation of Boughtons by the Ministry of Defence, I have specific matters that I should like the Minister to answer. I am told that on 17 June this year, some three weeks before the Panorama programme, Major-General Stopford — then, as now, Director General of Fighting Vehicles and Engineer Equipment at the Ministry of Defence—telephoned the chairman of Boughtons at home in the evening to discuss the forthcoming Panorama programme. Despite having made it clear that Boughtons was not involved and did not intend to become involved in the making of the Panorama programme, the chairman was left with the clear impression that the programme would still result in serious damage to his company's interests.

General Stopford's call left Boughton's chairman noticeably shaken. What is more, he immediately described the call to third parties as being

"a final warning from the Ministry of Defence".

Thus it was clear to Boughtons that the consequences for the company would be disastrous if it was to complain publicly about the Ministry of Defence. In the weeks following, Boughtons also received warnings from other third parties connected with the Ministry of Defence who suggested that the company should write to General Stopford's department formally to dissociate the company from Panorama.

Worse was to follow. I have already mentioned the letter in which Mr. Boughton said that he had no complaint. Lord Trefgarne said in a letter to the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) after the Panorama programme that the chairman had written this letter on his own initiative. In another letter, the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham was informed by the Secretary of State that the chairman's letter to the Panorama programme was sent

"entirely at his own initiative well before the programme was screened".

It was not so. The noble Lord and the Secretary of State were guilty — I hope unwittingly — of giving false information. The letter had not been written on the initiative of Boughton's chairman. I now understand that General Stopford again telephoned Boughton's chairman on 30 June, the very day before Lord Trefgarne was to be interviewed by Panorama for the forthcoming programme. General Stopford asked Boughton's chairman on the telephone to fax an urgent letter to him saying that the company had no complaints about the Ministry of Defence. In the words of the chairman's letter to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North,

"I felt this was a request I could not refuse"

Nor did he. He wrote the letter under pressure and intimidation and it stated the reverse of the truth.

In those circumstances, I must ask the Minister to tell the House whether either of those telephone calls was made at the instigation of the noble Lord. Were they made on the initiative of General Stopford? If they were made on his initiative, why has he not been disciplined for engaging in such conduct? If they were not made on his initiative, but under the direction, at the suggestion or on the nod and wink of the noble Lord, there is a serious case for Lord Trefgarne to anwer. That is why we want to know why the Minister brandished the letter on Panorama, making exaggerated claims about its importance. The letter had been carefully written and said that, while the company had no complaints, it wanted continuing inquiries to be made.

What was the role of Lord Trefgarne? What was the role of Major-General Stopford? Why were pressures put on the chairman? Who made the telephone calls? Why? Why did the noble Lord and the Secretary of State need those letters when the information they contained was patently untrue? That raises serious matters about the integrity of the noble Lord and the way in which the Ministry of Defence has been conducting its business. The House and the country are entitled to full answers to those questions.

I thank the hon. Member for Kingswood for giving the House the opportunity to consider the importance of the defence industry to our national defence and as an export earner. We have had the opportunity to deploy our various cases about Nimrod, Westland and the Fleet and, in particular, to raise the case about Boughtons on the Floor of the House for the reasons put forward by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and me. Are we passing our technology on to the Russians? Will the Minister give a full explanation of Lord Trefgarne's conduct in his treatment of that company?

12.47 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton): It gives me great pleasure today in my first debate as a Defence Minister to welcome the motion on behalf of the Government and to congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on his choice of subject. He said that the debates on Fridays saw the House at its best and I support that and commend most of today's debate as being of an interested rather than a partisan nature. I also congratulate my hon. Friend on his capacity to speak without notes. That is something that I shall have some difficulty in emulating.

Many important issues have been raised, the first of which is the question of engines, which is of particular concern to my hon. Friend because of his constituency interest in it. He mentioned the RTM322 engine, the uprated Pegasus and the XG40. We are assisting Rolls-Royce and Turbomeca by funding one sixth of the development programme of RTM322. That is going well. We cannot say that it will definitely be the engine that goes into the EH101, but we have high hopes that that will be the case.

We have no formal requirement on the uprated Pegasus, but, in conjunction with the United States, we are looking at a Rolls-Royce proposal. I can assure my hon. Friend that we are maintaining progress.

The Government and Rolls-Royce are funding the XG40 as a technology demonstrator programme and we fully expect that its results will contribute substantially to the new engine which the European fighter aircraft nations agreed in Turin last August will be required. Rolls-Royce is the United Kingdom's member of Eurojet — the international consortium formed to co-ordinate the development of the EFA engine.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood and the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) referred to the strategic defence initiative. I entirely agree about the need for British industries and universities to be at the table when SDI contracts are handed out. In answer to a question from the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mrs. Shields) on Tuesday, I was able to announce that the overall value of SDI research awards to the United Kingdom had risen to $34 million. That first year total is a solid foundation on which to seek more work in 1987, but it is worth pointing out that these are very much initial contracts and that one would not expect the larger money to come through until later.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood and the hon. Member for Eccles (Mr. Carter-Jones) referred to the British Aerospace Hotol project, a dramatic concept at the very forefront of technology. We are fully aware of what the company is doing and we are watching developments closely.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood stressed the importance of maintaining an adequate level of research and development and of expenditure in support of the defence procurement programme. Government support for that proposition is reflected in our current expenditure on defence research and development amounting to £2·3 billion, of which £1·7 billion will be spent outside the Ministry of Defence, the great bulk being spent on development contracts for weapons and equipment placed with British industry. The Government are examining the relative priorities of civil and defence needs for scarce scientific and technological resources with the aim of increasing the contribution made by those resources to the wider economy.

In this context, we recognise that the MOD research establishments are unique national assets. Although they exist first and foremost for their defence function, they have an important contribution to make to the broader economy. We have assisted in setting up a private company, Defence Technology Enterprise Ltd., with the object of helping to identify potentially marketable ideas and technologies generated in the research establishments and to promote their exploitation by the civil sector. The company now has ferrets in place at four of our major establishments and has more than 160 firms on its books as associate members. More than 450 items on its database are potentially exploitable and it has granted its first licences to entrepreneurs.

The Ministry of Defence and the Department of Trade and Industry are conducting joint military and civil research programmes with industry based on the research establishments, notably in information technology and space technology. The Ministry of Defence has also joined the research councils to sponsor programmes in universities and will contribute to the Link project announced by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister this week to stimulate co-operation between industry, Government Departments and research institutions of all kinds in the translation of research concepts into marketable products. These are all valuable moves, but I should emphasise that, important though they are, they

[Mr. Archie Hamilton]

are complementary to the primary purpose of defence research and development to ensure that our forces are equipped to meet the threat at best value for money.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood mentioned the European fighter aircraft. There is a strong political will in Britain and in Europe for that project to succeed. We are committed to playing our full part in, the development of a cost-effective colloborative project, for which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence signed the general memorandum of understanding in October. It is self-evident that we cannot order the European fighter now because there is no aircraft to order, so it is entirely misleading for the Opposition to accuse us of wavering on this. Our forward planning takes account of our requirements for the replacement of Jaguar and Phantom aircraft in due course. At the moment we are persuading EFA to meet that requirement.

Mr. McNamara: Will the Minister tell us what sums of money have been set aside for which years for the purpose of those replacements?

Mr. Hamilton: I have already explained that we have large amounts of money available for research and development, and EFA is clearly part of that.

The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) mentioned helicopters and the problems that are being faced by Westland. My hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) mentioned his concern. I support the hon. Member for Yeovil in congratulating the company on its year-end results, which were announced yesterday. I think that we would all accept that it has done great things to haul itself up from the rather low ebb that it had reached. We are well aware of the industrial position, and the key aspects from our point of view are affordability and military requirements. We cannot forecast our decisions, but we recognise fully the need to review our position on helicopters and to come to a decision next year, which we have said we shall do. That will be done as soon as possible in the new year.

Mr. Ashdown: I am sure that the Minister will understand that that should be done as early as possible next year. Will he give an undertaking that the decision will be made known early next year? If possible, will he say January or February, or later?

Mr. Hamilton: I can say only that I hear what the hon. Gentleman is saying and that a decision will be made as early as possible in the new year.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood mentioned exports, which constitute a key element in Westland's future. He congratulated the company on the enormous efforts that it has been making in pursuing export markets. It is talking to the Ministry of Defence about having the Government's close co-operation in helping it to meet delivery dates, for example. We give serious consideration and every sympathy to these requests from the company if the result is to help to weld in export orders with our own requirements.

My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) raised the "tanks or helicopters" question. It is complicated and of great military difficulty. There seem always to be great dangers in terms of defence procurement in making dramatic and radical decisions to sweep away an armament and move on to another one. A Government many years ago decided that the future of the Royal Air Force was to have pilotless aeroplanes, and much planning was carried out on that basis. That is probably one of the radical decisions that has since been regretted at leisure. I prefer to await the considered advice of our professional military advisers, who are considering the role of helicopters.

The hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) complained once again about the auxiliary oiler replenishment vessel and said that he feels that Swan Hunter has not been fairly treated. It seems that there is no gratitude in this place. As we all know, the order was switched from the best bidder for the contract. The order has been presented to Swan Hunter, and if it can come up with the right sums it will get it. That should be appreciated at Swan Hunter, and I am sure that it is.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: The Minister is clearly new to these matters. I would stop banging on about Swan Hunter if the Minister, or one of his colleagues, were to answer my questions. Will he explain why the Ministry of Defence is still going through the details of the design about six months after the Prime Minister assured the House that the bid of Harland and Wolff had been properly costed? Will he give us firm assurances in specific terms that public money is not being funnelled through by the Northern Ireland Office to underwrite the contract from Harland and Wolff's point of view?

Mr. Hamilton: We have been informed and assured that the Harland and Wolff bid is not subsidised by the taxpayer. It is a matter of when the details and drawings come through. At that stage it will be possible for Swan Hunter to bid for the AOR. There has never been any question about that.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: Will the Minister tell the House how he can say that the bid of Harland and Wolff was costed comprehensively if the details of the design that form the basis of "comprehensive costing" cannot be released to Swan Hunter? If the bid has been costed comprehensively, the details of the design should have been in existence when the Prime Minister gave her assurance way back in April, and should have been handed over to Swan Hunter last summer rather than next January.

Mr. Hamilton: I am sure that it was possible to produce a comprehensive costing of the ship without the detailed drawings, and we are waiting for them to come through.

The hon. Member for Woolwich raised the issue of International Military Sales and Iran, which arose the other day at Question Time. We are talking about pre-revolution contracts when we refer to IMS. Money is outstanding and that is why negotiations are still taking place. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that none of the existing contracts has led to the export of lethal equipment to Iran. No new orders are being planned for defence equipment because we fall in totally with the terms that have been laid down by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary, which are that there should be no equipment sold that will extend the conflict. That applies to Iran and Iraq. None of the export sales licences being given for equipment going to either of those countries should extend the conflict. The hon. Member for Woolwich also mentioned the Libyan ship lift. Let me put

that into perspective. In practice, such ship lifts are used extensively across the Arab world. The ship lift was sold to the Italians. Therefore, the matter of export sales licences did not arise. There should have been no reason why one was needed to sell such equipment to the Italians.

We get into terrible difficulties on equipment which, in certain circumstances, can be used for defence. If we applied the rule that if equipment could have any conceivable use for military purposes we should not sell it to a country we would end up selling no equipment to a country such as Libya. We have substantial financial and commercial negotiations with Libya. It would be a pity to prejudice jobs in this country because we took the view that if we sold someone a pot of paint it could be used to paint defence equipment. Somehow a balance must be struck.

Mr. Cartwright: I accept that we must have a balance. I said that I recognised the difficulty with the potential use of a range of equipment, but there seemed to be a general understanding in the yard that constructed the ship lift that it was going to a naval base near Tripoli.

Surely that shows that a military end use was laid down from the beginning.

Mr. Hamilton: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says. All that I can say is that I do not know the details of where such equipment is going.

The hon. Member for Eccles (Mr. Carter-Jones) referred to Tucano. He says that that is not the right trainer for the RAF. We believe that it is a significant example of value for money from competition. We got Tucano at 35 per cent. less than the price that was originally envisaged, which is good evidence of the advantages of competition. I accept that there has been slight slippage in the programme, but I am sure that there is no major technical problem.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) came up, as usual, with the Labour story of the cost of Trident and the fact that it is making it impossible for us to buy other conventional equipment. It is interesting that that comes up on Trident. Perhaps I was not listening carefully at the time, but I do not remember people endlessly saying that they were absolutely appalled by the Tornado programme, which would have a devastating effect on our capacity to order equipment.

The hon. Gentleman agreed that Trident represents 6 per cent. of our defence budget overall in the peak years and 11 per cent. of our procurement budget, but Tornado was 8 per cent. of our defence budget in the peak year and 18 per cent. of our equipment budget. Therefore, Tornado, at the peak time, must have put infinitely more pressure on other areas of conventional spending. At the end of the day, anything that we buy, we buy to deter our enemies. When it comes to the deterrent effect of Trident, there is no doubt whatsoever that, for every pound that we spend on it, we get a much better deterrent effect than with other forms of equipment.

I do not share the peaceful views about the Soviet Union felt by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North. If I were a Hungarian, a Czech or an Afghan who had seen Soviet tanks rolling through his city, I am not sure that I would share his views about how peaceful the Soviet Union was then. It is a serious threat to the Western world. We may be seeing changes in the Soviet Union at the moment, but there is no evidence that those changes will necessarily lead to a more peaceful Soviet Union. Indeed, the reverse could be the case if we start to see the break up of the whole country.

Mr. McNamara: I know that the hon. Gentleman would not wish to mislead the House. At no time did I give the opinion of the Soviet Union that he has just attributed to me. Secondly, if he had listened carefully to what I said earlier he would have heard me and the hon. Member for Yeovil express grave anxiety that some of our technologies might be going to the Soviet Union. The Minister has not yet answered that point. Thirdly, if the Trident defence system is so good, why are we bothering about anything else? Fourthly, should we not have SDI rather than spend money on Trident?

Mr. Hamilton: As the hon. Gentleman knows, SDI has a long way to go before it is perfected. Of course we should not only have Trident; we need to have all forms of defence equipment so that we can deter many different forms of attack. I shall be seriously worried if we ever reach the point where the Soviet Union on the other side of the divide in Europe has an enormous numerical superiority in conventional forces and nuclear weapons.

Mr. McNamara: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hamilton: I shall give way in a minute.

In those circumstances, there is no way in which Europe could build up its conventional forces to meet that threat.

Mr. McNamara: The hon. Gentleman knows that the superiority of Warsaw pact conventional forces is a complete myth. That assertion was demolished by the American Secretary of State when he said that there is a precise balance. It has been demolished by the Institute for Strategic Studies. It is one of the myths that the Government keep trying to put forward. If the hon. Gentleman reads his own defence statement and looks at the footnotes about the figures on conventional defence, he will see that they are questions 1, 2, 3 and 4, do not compare like with like, and do not add up.

Mr. Hamilton: The Defence Estimates prove conclusively that the Warsaw pact has an enormous superiority in conventional equipment.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): I listened to the allegations made by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). As my hon. Friend has said, they are quite incorrect. If the hon. Gentleman wants objective evidence which he might more readily accept, he should consult the latest yearbook by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute from which he will discover that what my hon. Friend the Minister has said is right.

Mr. Hamilton: I appreciate my hon. Friend's intervention.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North also spoke about DROPS. That needs a certain amount of clarification, and I am grateful that the subject has been raised. There has been much innuendo and press speculation about DROPS and in the Ministry of Defence many hours have been spent examining the matter in minute detail.

I shall begin by telling the House what DROPS is and about its value to the Army. DROPS is a demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system, and is essentially a sophisticated skip. The container holds up to 15 tonnes of

[Mr. Hamilton]

ammunition and the system is designed so that one man can load the container on to his lorry from a storage site or railhead, transport it to the battlefield, unload it and then drive away.

It is worth noting that this broad concept was to be found in a demountable body for water transport developed by Scammell in 1929. The reason for wanting the capacity to transport large quantities of ammunition to the battlefield is that our new weapons fire shells which are twice as big and twice the weight of older shells and need to be replenished five times as quickly as previously planned. If we did not have DROPS we would face substantial increases in manpower and vehicles.

I should like to turn to the difficulty that has arisen over the Ministry of Defence and Boughtons. I am a newcomer to this saga, which has been running since 1982, but I shall try to paint in some of the background and that may help hon. Members to understand why feelings have run so high. In 1969 a Royal Armoured Vehicle Research and Development Establishment study about the future logistic needs advocated the adoption of demountable body techniques combined with the capacity to adapt to rough and muddy terrain.

Transport staff requirements started in 1975, using the Multilift load handling system. On the question of this firm being owned by the Finns and the technology being available to the Soviet Union, the hydraulic system supplied by Multilift was unclassified, in military terms. However, I shall need to check that point, and also the ownership of the company. Nevertheless, we have sound procedures to guard our information and technology. I remind hon. Members that we are referring to a hydraulic lifting system, not to top secret electronics.

Another point that is worth making is that we have the advantage of Finnish technology that may already have been made available to the Soviet Union. The Boughton load handling system was fitted to an in-service vehicle and was trialled in 1976. A further four Boughton land handling systems, not vehicles, were subsequently bought and fitted to Army trucks for operations concept trials. During this period Boughton staff worked closely with Army technicians.

Mr. Ashdown: The Minister has moved away from the question of the ownership of Multilift, but I should like him to confirm what he seems to have said: that the Ministry of Defence Procurement Executive has chosen, as the firm to fulfil this essential task for the British army, a firm that is owned by Finland—which is neither here nor there—and that also supplies the Soviet Union with very similar equipment. Is that what he is saying?

Mr. Hamilton: I am saying that Multilift has provided us with the possibility of this technology. What the firm does with it otherwise is up to it.

Mr. Ashdown: In other words, the Government have no objection to selling the DROPS equipment, which Multilift is providing for the British armed services, to the Red Army? Is that correct?

Mr. Hamilton: I am saying——

Mr. Ashdown: Is that correct?

Mr. Hamilton: Multilift already had the technology. I have no idea what else the firm has been doing with it. However, it offered it to us, and if it is the best technology it seems to us to be sensible to use it.

Mr. Ashdown: This is a very important point. In other words, there is nothing to prevent Multilift from selling this system, which was developed in Britain for sale to the British Army, direct to the Red Army. The Government do not seem to care what is done with it. Is that correct?

Mr. Hamilton: I am saying that Multilift already had the technology and that it has merely been developed further. Therefore, we are taking its technology.

During the trialling of the Boughton equipment, Boughton gained the impression that the production order would be given to it. When it failed to reach the final qualifying round of the tendering process, I suspect that, understandably, it was very disappointed. It used to be commonplace for the Ministry of Defence to select a preferred contractor for certain projects and then to negotiate the contract with that manufacturer without allowing other firms to compete for the order. However, we decided to go for competition. Accordingly, we allowed industry the maximum freedom in its submission of competitive proposals.

From an initial canvass of over 70 firms, eventually we were able to identify 11 main contractorship proposals involving over 20 firms, with Boughton among them. After a most intensive and careful examination, we were able to choose two main contractors, Foden and Scammell, to supply vehicles and two firms, Multilift and Powell Duffryn, to provide three different types of load handling systems for the further competitive trialling and evaluation stages. These trial occupied over a year and were among the most comprehensive ever staged for a logistics system in modern times, covering the full range of operations and soldier use in BAOR, as well as engineering proving in our research and development establishments. They provided firm evidence about the viability both of the concept and of the system choices that we had made earlier.

Thus, we were able to go on to discern the Multilift mark IV as our standard load handling system and to invite the competing main contractors to incorporate it in their final design and production proposals. These have provided the basis for the decisions that I announced last week, namely, the award of production orders for DROPS. These orders, worth about £220 million, will comprise about 2,000 vehicles and a range of ancillary equipment, including flat racks, trailers and rail transfer equipment. The contractors will go to Foden Trucks, Leyland Vehicles Ltd (Scammell Motors) with Multilift supplying the load handling systems and Marshalls of Cambridge and King Tractors of Market Harborough supplying the flat racks and trailers which are also vital elements in the system.

I emphasise that Boughton remains a valued contractor for Ministry of Defence business. We have no doubt that, although unlucky in the tender for jobs, it will surely be more successful in other opportunities on offer. We look forward to continuing to do business with it in the future.

The hon. Member for Woolwich asked about an inquiry. The Comptroller and Auditor General will make an examination of the entire DROPS programme and will

report to the Public Accounts Committee in due course. The Ministry of Defence has nothing to hide and so nothing to fear. We welcome that examination.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North mentioned my noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement. He told the hon. Gentleman that a parliamentary private secretary should accept Ministers' assurances. As the hon. Gentleman will know, a parliamentary private secretary is a member of the Government, and it is not unreasonable to ask him to accept Ministers' assurances. The hon. Gentleman also mentioned the telephone call to Trafford Boughton. General Stopford hotly denies that he put any pressure on him.

Mr. McNamara: That is not the interpretation that has been put on those telephone calls by other people. Will the Minister answer the question that I raised? Where the telephone calls made at the instigation of the Minister, or by the general off his own bat? When did the Minister learn about them, and when were those letters—which patently contain misinformation—sent out and why?

Mr. Hamilton: I cannot answer precisely for my noble Friend on all those questions, but I shall certainly write to the hon. Gentleman.

It would be remiss of me if I said nothing about our airborne early warning system. That matter was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood. The hon. Member for Eccles showed great technical expertise, no doubt as a result of his time in the RAF. He commented on the price involved. I am sorry that he is not with us, but I can assure him that his comments about the price were wrong. That is my final word on price.

The competition was set to meet the United Kingdom's airborne early warning requirement. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North emphasised what a critical part this early warning system will play in our future defence requirements. The competition is now in its final stages. The company's proposals have been subjected to a thorough evaluation and we aim to reach a decision soon, with an announcement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State next week.

Hon. Members will readily understand that I cannot say anything today to anticipate the outcome of the competition, but I can certainly give an assurance to the many hon. Members on both sides of the House who are interested in the outcome that our final decision will be taken only after the fullest consideration of all the relevant factors, including technical, commercial, industrial and operational issues. Nevertheless, the major considerations in the evaluation of the two systems will be the ability of each to meet the Royal Air Force's pressing operational requirements and their comparative value for money.

We are being entirely even-handed in dealing with the two competitors, whatever rumours there may be to the contrary. What must be said about the competition and about the desirability of the recent tendering process is that we are now genuinely able to make a choice between two fixed-price contracts on the best way forward. Before we had no such choice.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood on the skill shown in choosing his subject for debate today, which has raised several important issues. I shall emphasise the essential elements of our procurement policy. The Department is the United Kingdom's largest customer. We intend to be a tough and demanding customer, and no less commercial than our suppliers.

Financial resources are, necessarily, limited and must always be used cost effectively. In the interests of the Ministry of Defence, the taxpayer and our suppliers, we are not prepared to underwrite industrial non-competitiveness. Competition in the domestic market should improve the competitiveness in the export market of those companies that rise to the challenge.

Collaboration is now an essential route in a world of international duplication and fragmentation. It has to be an opportunity for companies as well as Governments. It will require tough decisions to be made today, but we must take the long-term view or live to regret in the future.

The new regime in the Procurement Executive is helping us to understand the affairs of our suppliers, to work with them with greatest effect, and generally to raise our standards in the procurement of equipment.

The motion recognises those steps which the Government have taken towards obtaining greater value for money yet reminds us of the effort which we will need to maintain if we are to meet the challenges of the future with success. It recognises the effort that the Government put into supporting British industry to sell its defence equipment overseas. I pledge the Government to maintain that effort, and commend the motion to the House.

1.20 pm

Mr. Hayward: I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on the reply that he has given. As he said, it was his first speech from the Dispatch Box, and given his delivery, I look forward to hearing many more such speeches in future, particularly on the subject of defence. He has been surrounded by hon. Members of great expertise. For example, we were all impressed yet again by the knowledge shown by my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) about a whole range of subjects, but particularly about helicopters and aviation weaponry.

I agree with the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on many points. However, I still disagree with his analysis of the position of the European figher aircraft. Judging by what he said, it is now under as much threat as any other defence project. Presumably, that gives him carte blanche to visit every constituency, suggesting that the project under development there is also under threat. He has not answered the point that no commitment is every given while a project is in its development stage.

Several hon. Members emphasised the importance of European and international collaboration. We must recognise that we collaborate with many countries on defence projects, and long may that continue. I share the concern expressed by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North—just as he shared my concern—about the F404. From my conversation with Ministers in this Government I have no doubt about their commitment to ensuring that a European engine is used for EFA when it goes into production. I was worried about other Governments, elsewhere.

Mr. McNamara: I am sure that we shall have a European engine. But it is that much more difficult for the European engine if there is an American engine too, even though a perfectly good European engine could be put in now.

Mr. Hayward: I think that we can both agree about that.

There has been considerable discussion about Nimrod and AWACS. My hon. Friend the Minister has said that there will be an announcement next week. However, concern has been expressed that if Nimrod does not succeed, that will have a dramatic effect on all the technologies being developed in our defence industry. We have a rare capacity to denegrate ourselves unduly. If Nimrod does no succeed, it will be a comment on the technologies involved in that part of GEC. However, it should no be forgotten that the head-up display system was developed within that section of GEC has just been sold for aircraft in the United States. Thus the Americans recognise that company's expertise in that sector, and believe that it is worth purchasing because it is a world leader. That is the context in which different technologies should be judged.

I welcomed all the speeches that were made, but particularly that made by the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown). Most speeches have revolved around aviation, but the hon. Gentleman reminded us of the importance of naval defence. There are other projects such as the NFR90 and the aviation support ship, which he did not mention, to which we shall have to address ourselves as they evolve.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House notes the importance for jobs and exports of the British defence industry; and welcomes the Government's continuing support of the industry in its drive for a greater share of the defence export market and the industrial technologies appropriate to the 1990s.

Employment and Training Initiatives

1.24 pm

Mr. Lewis Stevens (Nuneaton): I beg to move,

That this House notes the wide range of education and training initiatives providing opportunities for employed and unemployed people to obtain and enhance skills; welcomes the greater publicity given to the schemes by television advertising; notes that now all 16 year old school leavers are able to have two years training and that 460,000 places are on offer; recognises the importance of the review of vocational qualifications and the extension of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative programme; further notes that adult training measures have been increased to assist over 250,000 people; acknowledges the need for continuing education and training in industry and business; notes the proposed increase to 100,000 places per year on the Enterprise Allowance Scheme due to the demand brought about by its success; and recognises the important part played by Local Enterprise Agencies and other schemes in helping small businesses.

Parliament has been aware of employment and training initiatives for some time but it has tended to overlook them in general debates. The Government have put in place a wide range of measures to help the unemployed and people in employment who want to enhance their skills or obtain new ones. Such measures are among the most important factors in industrial and business life today.

By tradition, we are not as aware or as forceful about training in industry as some of our continental competitors. Even between the two world wars, our training provision was significantly smaller than that of Germany, which trained to a far higher level and on a broader basis. We had apprenticeship schemes and various other provisions, but we still had a restricted system which did not recognise the importance of training for the future.

Schemes that are run by the Department of Employment or which are run in association with it are being advertised in the press and other media. I welcome that. People are affected by advertising on television more than by any other source, and the people whom we are trying to communicate with concerning the availability of schemes are sometimes at home, depressed and watching television. Television advertising is therefore a successful method of getting the message over.

I have been impressed by the advertising of the youth training scheme, which shows people what opportunities are available to them and encourages them to explore what it offers. We want to communicate with people who have had difficulty in the past. The restart programme, which incorporates an interview procedure and counselling, has shown that, although several schemes have been in place for some years, people have not taken them up, perhaps because of lack of knowledge, lack of advertising or lack of communication in jobcentres.

The extra advertising has been shown to be helpful with the restart programme as it has got over to people the fact that their needs are recognised. That is extremely important in any training programme. The idea within the restart programme is the knowledge that many people go along with the same job or the same type of job that they did before. It is understandable that people who have worked in a trade or industry for some 20 years—I recognise that some industries may end completely—will, if they are looking for another job, seek one to which their skills will contribute directly. It is harder for them to look for something entirely different—to move from the manufacturing industry into a service job. Such people

may have thought that they could never do a job that involved being in direct contact with the public. It is very difficult for such people to recognise that there are opportunities for them to undertake such work.

Having said that, there are the contradictions of skilled people in the engineering industry who were made redundant during the 1970s—perhaps they were skilled grinders — who did not look for another job in the industry but rather looked for a job as a milkman or something of that nature. Often they have been satisfied and happy in the new environment that they have chosen. However, most people are reluctant to retrain, or unaware that they can be retrained. Such retraining is not necessarily for unskilled or semi-skilled work, but there are skilled jobs that require a considerable amount of training.

One of the biggest advantages of the restart scheme is that it opens the eyes of people. The counselling and understanding of the interviewers will help such people to try to find out their aptitudes, which they may have been waiting to use. In the past, very often industry has not looked at the aptitudes of people and what they may have to offer. Those companies which have been facing redundancies and have carried out some redeployment that involveed considering the aptitudes of particular individuals have been successful. People have been taken from clerical work and put into something different, or vice versa.

This attempt to consider the aptitude and willingness of people to relearn, at all levels, is of great value. The restart scheme is successful in helping people to go out and retrain, to take the opportunities or at least, to consider those opportunities available to them. All this has been done within the general umbrella of the Government's measures and it is welcomed.

With regard to YTS, television advertising has been particularly successful. The first scheme came in for a great deal of criticism and perhaps it was not run in the same way as the present one. There have been a number of satisfactory developments. The young people I have spoken to who have been on YTS have welcomed the opportunity it offers. They consider that YTS has made a worthwhile contribution to their lives.

It is also important that, in a great many cases, YTS has enabled young people to acquire qualifications that they thought were impossible to achieve. The young people may have left school with modest or no qualifications, but under YTS, they are willing to take opportunities to qualify or to start qualifying for a particular trade. Something like a quarter of the people coming off YTS have some new qualification.

I welcome the Government's extension of the scheme to two years. There were many criticisms from people on the previous scheme that, just when they had got to grips with the work, they were having to leave and get a job. The extension was welcomed by both sides of the House and I think that that is a much more satisfactory basis on which young people can learn and be introduced into the work situation.

Whatever happens with the YTS, there will always be some individual criticisms, but I am encouraged by the fact that although there were many criticisms when the scheme started, the problems have diminished and the monitoring and control of schemes and agencies seem to be much more successful, which gives us hope that those coming out of the scheme will have a sound background for work.

Considerable progress has been made in the review of vocational qualifications. We have a proliferation of qualifications and bits of paper that people can pick up. I do not demean qualifications, but they are not readily understood or comparable, particularly by small employers.

The review of vocational qualifications up to higher national certificate level—the HNC is no mean standard to achieve — will produce a rationalisation and understanding of qualifications and that will encourage young people to look at the worth of courses when seeking qualifications that will help them when they look for jobs.

Not only individuals will gain; industry and business will gain enormously when people obtain qualifications on schemes. We need a sufficient number of well-trained and qualified people if our businesses are to prosper. It has not been uncommon for us, especially in the past 25 years, to have a shortage of skills in some areas. Companies have often not developed and the lack of skills has made us comparatively inefficient in our use of labour.

As training becomes available, companies will have a better source for the skills that they need. The issue is wider than the employment and training initiatives, because we have a long way to go in developing our education systems to give us what the country needs. The system has been too fragmented and too ad hoc. A rationalisation towards a more understandable system will be helpful.

The technical and vocational education initiative is being expanded and it is hoped that about 100,000 school leavers will be helped next year, at a cost of about £250 million. That is good, because it brings in the relationship between industry, the education system and the Manpower Services Commission. Through collaboration, many schemes are becoming more realistic and more in tune with the needs of an area.

In my own area, at the north Warwickshire college, the collaboration between the MSC and business has been successful. Any initial reluctance to see the MSC and employers directly involved was overcome without much trouble. There is a genuine willingness to have co-operation and involvement in these ongoing schemes. I refer to people of all ages, not just those who are leaving school or those still at school. Older people are embarking on other schemes involving open learning and the Open Tech, which provides an excellent opportunity for the development, extension and acquisition of skills.

I was impressed by the way in which the Open Tech system allows people to work at their own speed and ability. Many of us became used to set courses at technical colleges. Now, 50,000 people will take Open Tech courses. That is an important contribution to the development of skills.

The Government's proposed adult training measures are significant. They range from local training grants, job training schemes, training for enterprise, the Open Tech, and so on. About 250,000 people will take advantage of those schemes at a total cost of around £270,000. That is a major contribution towards helping industry and the unemployed. Many people taking part in the adult learning schemes will be unemployed. At that cost and with such a large number of people, it is a significant contribution. The training and employment initiatives are worthwhile. A number of people are engaged in community programmes and the Government are making a further 250,000 places available.

[Mr. Lewis Stevens]

The criticism that they are not real jobs or that they do not help does not alter the fact that schemes help people to learn new skills and encourage people back to industry. As well as restart, there are other programmes, such as the community programme.

Another successful course that I am glad to see the Government recognise every few months by extending it is the enterprise allowance scheme. That scheme is expected to increase to 100,000 places a year. It has provided an opportunity for people to have a go at something. Those who have faced a bleak outlook will no longer be penalised. This scheme is successful and is attractive to people who have been absent from industry through redundancy. They know that they have some help. One hundred thousand places are available, and that shows the success of the scheme. So far, 190,000 people have taken advantage of the scheme. All hon. Members would welcome those who are enterprising. It makes the forceful point that we are creating new businesses, small though they may be. About 90-odd jobs for every 100 firms will be offered. That is one of the most successful and attractive schemes and every bit of advertising helps to promote it.

Local enterprise agencies have helped in setting up many small businesses and they have been very successful, although I am sure that their success varies from area to area. The Warwickshire enterprise agency has given enormous help to those starting on enterprise allowances and to those who already own small businesses. The Department of Employment has recognised the many difficulties faced by small businesses, which benefit from being able turn easily to enterprise agencies for assistance in continuing and expanding. In some cases, those agencies have enabled people to start small businesses.

There are more than 300 local enterprise agencies, and I am sure that the numbers will increase. Their work fills a gap. The Government provide £2·5 million to the enterprise agencies, but it is important also that such agencies are privately based. They give invaluable advice to small business men. The Government have set up other schemes to help small firms. It helps small firms to know that they can obtain impartial advice, some of which is free.

Small businesses still have some problems. Some large companies do not pay their bills quickly, which creates tremendous cash flow problems for small companies. A small company's very survival may be determined by how quickly large companies pay. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State is more than aware of this problem, which has been drawn to his attention many times. There must be careful consideration to determine what pressure will make large companies recognise the needs of small business people.

The Government's measures to build businesses, not barriers, are important. Many small businesses face financial problems, not just because they are unsuccessful but because of the reaction of the banks and other financial institutions. Manufacturing businesses have fairly large investments in relation to their size, so there may be difficulties in paying for supplies. The set-up is much more complex than it is for retail businesses. Many are at times threatened by the financial world's lack of understanding of their needs.

The Department of Employment and the Department of Education and Science have been involved in important training initiatives to alleviate unemployment and to enable people to look forward to new or better jobs. Even if people are involved in industry and commerce, a problem remains.

The Engineering Council in its document "A Call to Action" mentioned the problem of continued education and training. That is important and needs to be considered by industry and commerce. Even professional people in industry and commerce need to update their knowledge, awareness and skills. The Engineering Council has suggested continual education and training of engineers, whether qualified, chartered or technical. Many people in industry and commerce retain and attend courses to update their knowledge, but it is logical and important for most professions to produce a structured way of doing that. I certainly support that view and I know that the Department of Education and Science has been sympathetic and given universities some help with that.

Training does not end after initial training or after a job is found. It is continuous. All hon. Members know that it is important to retrain people who leave one job and go to another and we must recognise that training thereafter is equally important. A range of schemes is available through the Department of Employment, which provide opportunities and have a significant contribution to make to employment. They will give us a better trained work force in future. It is important that that information is conveyed in the most suitable ways to those who can take advantage of it. Television advertising and the restart programme have contributed.

We have the technology and the schemes to give people a better opportunity to return to work and to enhance their skills in work. Now is the time to use them.

1.51 pm

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): First, there can be no question but that we in the Labour party welcome training and retraining schemes when they are proper schemes. One could hardly do otherwise considering that we have the highest level of unemployment anywhere in the industrial world and one of the highest levels of long-term unemployment in the industrial world. Indeed, the Department of Employment is getting itself a rather shady reputation. The notice outside its door states:

"Department of Employment: official Government massage parlour."

For the Department, any method of massage for employment statistics is considered. The notice continues:

"Eighteen methods currently in use. Reducing is our speciality."

If only the Government showed the same dedication to, obsession with and imagination for, dealing with the problems of employment that they show in dealing with the employment statistics, they might have a record of which they could speak with pride.

We are discussing training and retraining against the background of the worst trained work force in the developed world. That is astonishing considering that we used to be the workshop of the world and considering that we are told that the future of our economy must lie in high value added and new industries. How can it when there are not the people to man those industries?

In January, the *Financial Times* carried the headline,

"MSC warns of growing skills shortage".

The article stated

"British industry faces continuing and in cases increasing shortages of skilled workers across a widening range of jobs, says a report by the Manpower Services Commission."

That is the view of the MSC, the Government's own quango. The article continued:

It says various indicators point to skill shortages not only in the new advanced technology areas of engineering and electronics but in service sectors on which the Government's hopes of economic growth are pinned.

In new technology areas such as electonics and software, research indicates growing shortages at all levels of the engineering industry—craftsmen, technicians, professional engineers and computer specialists."

We are preparing ourselves for the economy of the future and the markets of the future with diminishing skill levels and the replacement of previous schemes with new schemes which are largely synthetic and cosmetic in aim. It is hardly surprising that at both skill level and graduate level we trail behind virtually all our competitors.

A remarkable feature of British industry is the idea that training is someone else's job. Business men turn up at meetings to bleat about the schools, the universities and the technical colleges, but they do nothing themselves. They do not put their money where their complaints are. In this country, industry spends 0·15 per cent. of turnover on training — about one sixth of 1 per cent. The Germans spend 3 per cent., so it is hardly surprising that their products tend to win in the market and that their efficiency is greater than ours. Productivity is not just a function of the work force. It is a function of the quality of the work force, the quality of investment and the quality of management. The best workmen in the world cannot match productivity if they do not have the equipment or if the firm is not adequately organised.

Before anyone comes out with the nonsensical argument that people in this country are incapable of matching productivity levels, let him talk to Japanese, American and German firms using their managerial techniques with a British labour force and obtaining productivity levels as good as those anywhere in the world. Yet according to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research productivity in West Germany is now 60 per cent. higher than in this country.

As I have said, productivity involves a combination of elements. I have quoted the view of the MSC that there is a desperate and galloping shortage over the whole spectrum of skills, especially in the new technologies. How much investment is being made in those areas? Are we making up for the skill deficiencies in the engineering of our products? Are we putting in equipment to provide the inbuilt engineered skill that the work force does not possess? The answer is no. Only today there are newspaper reports on this. I quote from a press notice from the Department of Trade and Industry, so the Government cannot question its authenticity. We are told that

"Total investment by manufacturers . . . is expected to rise by around 2 per cent. in 1987 compared with 1986."

That is wonderful. At that rate of matching resource to need—if the Government can sustain that marvellous increase in manufacturing investment—we shall only have to wait until 1995 to get back to the level of investment in 1979. They are making progress! The Opposition cannot be blamed, however, for being rather dubious even about the claim of 2 per cent. growth from next year, which is what the Government envisage. During Trade and Industry questions and questions to the Prime Minister during the year, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Prime Minister have said, "We are on our way." We have been told that investment is on the upturn. The right hon. Gentleman and the right hon. Lady have said, "Investment is growing and our predictions are being fulfilled." It must be noted, however, that the press release from the Department of Trade and Industry to which I have already referred shows that after a year of "marvellous" progress as a result of "highly successful" Government policies, investment will be £150 million less than a year ago. It seems that that will happen despite all that we have heard said from the Government Dispatch Box. Even if the increase is achieved next year that the Government are claiming, we shall return to the pathetic level of performance that the Government achieved a year ago.

British industry must shudder when it sees what is happening elsewhere. There is a shortage of manpower skills across the board. If we are lucky and if the Government can sustain the rate of growth in investment, we shall return to the level of 1979 only by 1995. How proud the Government must be of their success and achievements.

Industry seems to show no more sense of urgency than the Government. A recent report in the *Financial Times* showed that 56 per cent. of the companies surveyed had no formal training scheme. The investment figures suggest that companies do not have formal investment plans either. If the three components are a trained and skilled work force, adequate investment and good quality management, what can be said about the quality of our management when we are faced with an across-the-board shortage of skills because it will not train, and a lack of capital equipment to match that which is provided by our competitors because British industry will not invest because it has no confidence in the Government's policies and progress?

Various schemes are coming forward, some of which are interesting and some positively fascinating. Preliminary results in the nine pilot areas where the restart scheme is being operated show that only 1 per cent. of restart interviewees were placed in proper full-time jobs after leaving the scheme.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): No.

Mr. Williams: I shall be glad to hear why that is wrong when the Minister replies. I shall be delighted if he can provide some information that is not as dubious as the unemployment statistics. I suggest that he sends a message along the Government Front Bench to the Box to ask whether the figures that he is to give when replying to the debate will have been massaged 18 times between leaving the Box and his receipt of them, bearing in mind that the unemployment figures have been massaged 18 times by the Government.

The hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) used the term "real jobs". I can recollect the indignation that the Prime Minister displayed during Prime Minister's Question Time when she was told about the need for public expenditure. That was put to her by the CBI, the TUC and the Opposition. The right hon. Lady did not want to know and said, "We want real jobs". She argued that jobs created by public expenditure are phoney jobs. The clarion cry for years was "real jobs". We do not see any real jobs being created. Nearly all the improvement in

[Mr. Williams]

the employment statistics is as a result of the creation of unreal jobs, using the very public expenditure that the Prime Minister was supposed to be disdaining.

Let us look at the phoney jobs and the statistical method used by the Government—the massage parlour approach, which removed over 1 million people from the employment record. The motion tabled by the hon. Member for Nuneaton mentions employment schemes. About 600,000 or 700,000 people are on those schemes, which, coincidentally, takes them off the unemployment register, but there is no guarantee that there will be a job at the end of the scheme for which, temporarily, the Government are using public expenditure.

The enterprise allowance scheme is mentioned in the motion, and the hon. Member for Nuneaton spoke about it. I gather that it is one of the Government's great success stories. An article in the "Financial Guardian" on 24 November this year examines the scheme and, to his surprise, the writer discovers:

"one man's job creation can become another's job loss."

There has been a new study of entrants to the enterprise allowance scheme, based on its operation in Strathclyde, Tyneside and London. It was carried out by the small business unit of the polytechnic of Central London. So the figures and effects have been looked at. It was fascinating to see what emerged. Nearly two out of five—40 per cent. — of the firms surveyed were sure that their business activities had either partially or completely displaced competitors. Surveys by the Manpower Services Commission, which controls the scheme, give a displacement rate of 50 per cent., so the very scheme that the hon. Member for Nuneaton is lauding in his motion is in fact destroying one job for every two that it claims to create. That displacement figure may be on the low side.

Mr. Trippier *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Williams: The hon. Gentleman knows that. He need not shake his head. He knows my background on the creation of small businesses, and so on. I think that I know as much about the matter as he does. Most of the people entering those schemes are going for the jobs for which entry is easiest. One cannot blame them. That is understandable and natural. They go for the sectors where the capital cost going in is lowest because they do not have the capital and, as the hon. Member for Nuneaton said, the local bank managers make sure that they do not find it easy to obtain the capital. Then those people try to knock out existing businesses so that they can take over their work. The newspaper article states:

"More than one third of survivors indicated that their preferred business strategy involved cutting prices, 'presumably below that of their competitors.' A further 15 per cent. used advertising and 14 per cent. said that they offered a faster service than their rivals."

This is the important point:

"In other words, more than 60 per cent. of surviving firms employed a strategy aimed at taking customers from their rivals rather than creating a new market."

The report goes on to suggest that the real 12-month job creation rate could be as low as 17 per 100 surviving firms when one excludes the number of people who have lost their job as a result of the consequences of the scheme. In many cases the schemes are not only fraudulent about what they purport to be, but are destructive of the objectives that the Government claimed in advancing them.

Far from having anything to be proud of, the Government should answer to the House why it is that the Manpower Services Commission is so worried about the future supply of skill. The Government chose to abolish the training board system and many of the other training systems. If these were genuine training proposals that in any way related to the scale and quality of our needs we would applaud them. Unfortunately, they are not.

2.10 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) on his success in the ballot and on his choice of subject for this debate. I welcome to the debate the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams). We are old sparring partners from the time when I was a junior Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry. We shared many interesting hours together in Standing Committee on what became well known as the Co-operative Development Agency and Industrial Development Bill which is now an Act.

I shall not devote as much time as the right hon. Gentleman would wish me to devote to answering all his points, because if I did that I would be deflected from my main purpose, which is to thank my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton for his support for the "Action for Jobs" campaign. However, the right hon. Gentleman will not be surprised if I take him up on one or two issues. We have spent an enormous amount of money, £3,000 million, to provide opportunities and help for over 1 million people in more than 30 schemes and programmes.

We introduced our campaign in April because research told us that far too few people knew about the help that we offered through our employment enterprise and training measures, and both employers and employees proved to have little knowledge of our measures and suggested that we should do more to publicise them. That is why we produced the "Action for Jobs" booklet. It is an easy-to-read guide to the support and opportunity that we make available.

So far more than 3·3 million people have picked up a copy of the booklet. Many people, including my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton, have told us how useful it is. That view was endorsed this week because the "Action for Jobs" booklet was one of the winners of the Plain English award. We in the Department are proud of that because only eight awards are given in any one year. The Department of Employment won two awards and one went to the Department of Health and Social Security. I think it is unique for one Government Department to win two such awards.

It is clear that we are effective in putting across our message and we shall continue to put it across in a straightforward and simple way. Our principal aims are to make people more aware of the range of measures introduced by the Department and to improve the awareness of individual schemes. That is why we have also used television advertising because we want to get the message across to people who want to open more doors to more opportunities. That is why our campaign slogan "Action for Jobs, Opening more Doors" has caught on, and the evidence shows that our campaign is working.

I was fascinated to hear the right hon. Member for Swansea, West speak about 18 different changes. The Labour party constantly speaks about those changes. In

many different ways the right hon. Gentleman accuses the Government of exaggeration. In reality, there have been just six changes that can be detailed and have already been detailed by my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment and my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General when they were giving evidence to the Select Committee on Employment.

How on earth the Labour party can come up with 18 changes stretches credulity to breaking point. It is up to the Labour party to explain which of the six changes that have taken place it would reverse. Which category of people that we have removed would Labour put back on the register? It is up to the Labour party to explain what it would do. The Labour party's shadow spokesman on employment admitted on television that if he had been advised by the Chief Statistician in the Department of Employment, as Ministers have been advised, to change the methodology, he would have accepted his advice. By that admission, he blew the Labour party's cover. We have referred to that time and again in the past, and we shall certainly do so in the future.

The right hon. Member for Swansea, West said that the enterprise allowance scheme will lead to displacement, and he referred to the Manpower Services Commission's figures. There is an element of truth in what he said. It would be wrong of me to mislead the House; there is bound to be some displacement. The Manpower Services Commission's figure was agreed with the Treasury, which calculated that the cost of each job under the EAS would be £2,300. However, there should be detailed research of the displacement that will be caused by the scheme.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton rightly said that about 192,000 people have been set up under the scheme and that 99 additional jobs are created by every 100 businesses that succeed. Many of the small firms that have been set up under the EAS will employ even more people, and that figure will eventually be higher. Most of the firms that fail do so within the first 18 months. This scheme has been running for three years and three months, so we are able to compare it with other schemes on a three-year basis.

On the help that is available to the long-term unemployed throught the Action for Jobs programme, the central feature is Restart. By March 1987 we shall have invited 1·4 million people who have been out of work for over a year to an interview at their local jobcentre. We aim to offer everybody we interview a positive way back into employment. Restart has been amazingly successful. In the nine pilot areas to which the right hon. Member for Swansea, West referred, 91 per cent. of those who were interviewed were offered positive help. The right hon. Gentleman did not refer to the enterprise allowance scheme, because he thinks that those people are not employed. But they are in a job; they are self-employed. Therefore, I challenge his figures. They are completely wrong.

Included in the Restart package are a number of positive and practical opportunities, such as a job interview or a place on a Restart course or in a job club. The right hon. Gentleman and the labour party are quick to rubbish a number of these initiatives, despite the fact that they have been successful. The right hon. Gentleman is an honourable man in every possible sense and meaning of that word, but I challenge some of his colleagues, who do not, I believe, want the unemployment figures to come down. They do not like the fact that, for the last three consecutive months, the unemployment figures have come down. As the general election approaches, they do not like the fact that we are on top of the problem; it is unacceptable to them. Again I make the point that I do not accuse the right hon. Gentleman, but I am absolutely convinced that many of his colleagues are of that opinion.

After Restart, many people will go into the community programme, our principal scheme for providing help for the long-term unemployed. About 250,000 places are available on the programme, and this year 300,000 people will benefit from the scheme. Jobs are offered that last for up to a year on projects that significantly increase the long-term employment prospects of the participants and that result in the creation of something that is of practical value to the local community.

We are doing quite a lot to assist the long-term unemployed, and so we should. However, we are not neglecting those who are still at school or those who have recently left school — far from it. Young people need and deserve an education and training system that allows them to develop their talents and that equips them for future employment. Therefore, we have developed policies that are designed to reform and modernise our education and training system.

The technical and vocational education initiative programme announced by my right honourable Friend the Prime Minister in 1982 has rapidly become one of the most exciting and far-reaching developments in the school curriculum since the war. In my view, it was long overdue. In that programme emphasis is placed on the development of initiative and problem-solving skills. Its benefits are numerous — improved motivation, a more relevant curriculum and the giving of more impetus to school—industry links. But the main thing that hits one when one visits a TVEI school or college is the infectious enthusiasm of the pupils and teachers. That is why the £250 million being spent on the pilot projects is money well spent, and why, even at this early stage, we have committed £900 million over the next 10 years to extending TVEI to all secondary schools and colleges in Great Britain.

Of course, many young people will continue to leave school at the age of 16 or 17, and for them there is the new two-year youth training scheme, which builds on the enormous success of the one-year YTS which we launched in 1983. Opposition Members are far too quick to criticise or to rubbish the scheme. That is staggering, because it is an insult to those young people who are on such schemes. My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton was right to say that the vast majority — 83 per cent. — were well satisfied with the training that they had received on the YTS.

In acknowledgement of a point made by the right hon. Member for Swansea, West, one must admit that Britain still lacks an adequately trained work force. The Conservative party has said that since 1979. We consider that a combination of the two-year YTS and the review of vocational qualifications is the one thing that will put that right. The two things go together. It is absolutely vital that we come out with a new system of vocational qualifications which will be respected and recognised by employers. Otherwise we are wasting our time.

I welcome the opportunity of paying a warm tribute to Mr. Oscar DeVille, chairman of the review vocational qualifications, for all the work that he is doing.

The motion refers to

[Mr. David Trippier]

"the need for continuing education and training in industry."

The Government entirely agree that effective training at all levels and throughout working life is an essential element in ensuring the competitiveness of British industry. It is primarily industry's responsibility to train its work force. Industry should consider that as an investment and not as a cost.

Hon. Members may be interested to know that a few weeks ago I had the privilege of visiting Sir John Egan, the chairman and managing director of Jaguar plc, in Coventry. I was interested to see what he was doing about management training, because no hon. Member would deny that Sir John Egan has effectively turned that company round. He puts its success down to two factors: first, quality assurance, and, secondly, management training.

The thing that I find interesting — the right hon. Member for Swansea, West will welcome this as much as I did—is that Sir John Egan insists that everyone, from the lowest rungs of management right up to the top, must take two weeks out a year to go on a management training course. That should be broadcast from the roof tops. When I asked Sir John whether that included him, he said that it did. I asked him where he went for his management training and he replied "The London Business School". He considered that it was important for him to get out of the company, perhaps to take a wider view and to find out what was going on in other companies. Jaguar plc, with Sir John Egan at its head, recognises the importance of management training. It knows that that permeates all the way down to the shop floor because, obviously it has concentrated on skill training with the company and that has led to the company's undoubted success. The company deserves to be warmly congratulated.

The right hon. Member for Swansea, West got it wrong when he referred to the article about skills shortages and to the MSC's statement. The truth is that skills shortages are not as he said, desperate and widespread.

There are shortages in some specific skills, such as in the new technologies, and in specific geographic areas, such as in London and the south-east. Indeed, only yesterday, I was dealing with a particular problem. I must admit that there are shortages, particularly in the construction industry, but we shall do something to try to put that right pretty quickly.

I should like to respond to the praise in the motion for our enterprise programmes, because I believe that the Department's prime aim is to encourage the development of an enterprise economy. To that end, the Government attach considerable importance to the local enterprise agency movement. My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton has a very distinguished and successful enterprise agency, known as the Warwickshire enterprise agency, which covers his constituency. It applied to my Department for grant under the local enterprise agency grant scheme, and I am pleased to say that we were glad to support it in August, by giving it a £16,000 grant.

Tribute should be paid to Mike Whitfield, who has done a tremendous amount to build up that agency. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton and many of our colleagues use that agency when dealing with constituency problems in relation to small businesses. It must be said time and again that, if only small businesses took advantage of the hand-holding service provided by enterprise agencies, they would be much more likely to succeed. The failure rate is one in 12 over a period of three years, compared with the average failure rate of one in three. Therefore, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton also referred to the enterprise allowance scheme, which the Department regards as the jewel in the crown. We are extremely proud of it. My hon. Friend made some forceful remarks about the importance to small businesses of being paid on time. He urged large companies to pay their bills to small businesses on time. I have been crusading for that for many months.

As a result of research that we had done, a new Government code of practice entitled "Payment on Time" was issued. It was well received, and has had to be reprinted. The most important thing that I had to do was to write to the chairmen of the top 100 companies in this country, saying that it was important that they should recognise that delaying payment to small businesses could make all the difference between survival and failure. If the reverse happens, the large firms could withstand the pressures.

But it is also important to point out that the procurement departments within Government must also pay their bills on time. I am pleased to say that they are under standing instructions to pay on time. If any hon. Member has evidence of that not happening, I hope that he will write to me so that I can endeavour to put things right very quickly.

In the short time available, I hope that I have given the House an indication of how wide-ranging our employment, enterprise and training initiatives are. It has only been an indication, and there are other important initiatives that I have not had time to mention. I again congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton on his initiative and enterprise in initiating this debate, and I am very happy to support the motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House notes the wide range of education and training initiatives providing opportunities for employed and unemployed people to obtain and enhance skills; welcomes the greater publicity given to the schemes by television advertising; notes that now all 16 year old school leavers are able to have two years training and that 460,000 places are on offer; recognises the importance of the review of vocational qualifications and the extension of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative programme; further notes that adult training measures have been increased to assist over 250,000 people; acknowledges the need for continuing education and training in industry and business; notes the proposed increase to 100,000 places per year on the Enterprise Allowance Scheme due to the demand brought about by its success; and recognises the important part played by Local Enterprise Agencies and other schemes in helping small businesses.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at the sitting on Thursday 18th December, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) and No. 15 (Prayers against statutory instruments, &c. (negative procedure)), Mr. Speaker shall—

(1) at Six o'clock put the Question on the Motion in the name of Mr. Neil Kinnock, relating to the Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations (S.I., 1986, No. 1961), if not previously disposed of; and

(2) at Ten o'clock put successively any Question already proposed from the Chair and the Questions on such

of the Motions in the name of Mr. Secretary Fowler relating to Social Security or to Terms and Conditions of Employment or in the name of Mr. Neil Kinnock relating to the Housing Benefits (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulations 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 2183) as may then be made, if those Motions have not been previously disposed of.—[*Mr. Durant.*]

Queen Mary's Hospital for Children

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr. Durant.*]

2.28 pm

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): On Tuesday 11 November, the Merton and Sutton district health authority decided to recommend to the South-West Thames regional health authority the closure of acute services for children at Queen Mary's hospital in my constituency, and the future provision of those services on an enlarged site at St. Helier hospital, which is also in my constituency.

On Sunday 16 November, I issued a press release deploring the recommendation and recalling that I had consistently favoured the option of rebuilding and modernising acute services for children at their present site at Queen Mary's. I drew attention to the high standard of medicine and nursing at the hospital, the popularity with parents of the family-centred care for which it is renowned, and the fact that opposition to the relocation and support for the development of those services on their present site was by far the best-supported position taken by members of the public during the recent consultation process. I also emphasised that I would make further representations in an attempt to influence the outcome before any final decisions were taken.

It being half past Two o'clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr. Durant.*]

Mr. Forman: I am so committed and concerned about this subject that, perhaps, I jumped the gun.

This debate is an important part of the further representations that I have mentioned as I want the Minister whom I warmly welcome to her new responsibilities, to be fully aware of the shortcomings of the district health authority's recommendation and of the powerful reasons why I favour a different course of action.

The district health authority eventually decided to recommend what was identified as option 1 in the pink document that it published following formal consultations on the earlier proposals, which were contained in a document entitled "The Strategy for Acute Services, 1986-94". Option 1 amounted to closing acute services for children at Queen Mary's, rebuilding them on an enlarged site at St. Helier and providing acute services for adults at St. Helier, Sutton and Nelson hospitals. I intend to concentrate on the shortcomings of the proposal with regard to acute services for children.

The first point of criticism of the district health authority's recommendation is that its preferred option 1 would not be the cheapest in terms of capital cost at a time when that consideration is bound to be an important factor in the regional health authority's mind. In terms of the four options which were deemed realistic by the district health authority, option 1, at something over £23 million, would be the most expensive in terms of capital cost according to the district health authority's estimate.

The second point of criticism is that there is nothing to choose between option 1 and option 2 according to the district health authority's estimates of the revenue consequences of each in 1993 and 1994. Indeed, both options, to use the words of the district health authority's report,

[Mr. Forman]

"meet the 1993-94 targets, as near as needs to be."

There is, therefore, no decisive financial advantage for option 1 over option 2 on revenue-saving grounds.

The third point of criticism is that the district health authority recommendation was arrived at by fairly dubious statistical methods, dressed up in the usual pseudo-scientific language of cost-benefit analysis. When one takes the trouble to look into this bureaucratic mumbo jumbo more closely, it soon becomes apparent that the figures used are highly tendentious and certainly open to challenge on grounds of their inevitable subjectivity, especially in terms of the weightings given to the various factors.

For example, according to something called the sensitivity analysis on the cost side, option 2 leads the field if the revenue savings on all of the options turn out to be 95 per cent. or less of the forecast for 1993-94 and if the capital costs turn out to be 105 per cent. or more of the forecast for that same year.

In view of the well-known fragility of all such financial forecasts over a period as long as seven or eight years, it seems wise to question any dogmatically expressed preference on these grounds alone. When we examine the benefit side, the outcome seems to be even more subject to the arbitrary weightings and value judgments of those who drafted the district health authority report. For example, the figures used appear to penalise any tendency towards centralisation of provision when, logically, that ought to be the hallmark of any rationalisation scheme.

In the scoring for quality of service for children it is not clear why Queen Mary's hospital scores lower than St. Helier when the former is a specialist children's hospital with an established international reputation. It is not clear why bureaucratic considerations, such as planning flexibility, scores 12 points, timing 12 points and compatibility with other strategies seven points. Together they amount to 31 points, yet the much more important consideration of public acceptability and staffing acceptability are weighted as low as seven and five points respectively.

The fourth point of criticism concerns the apparent inconsistency between what we know to be the policy of the regional health authority and indeed of the Government, in favour of concentration of services, and what appears to be the district health authority's preference, in option 1, for dispersing its acute services among no fewer than three different hospitals in the district. The merits of centralisation, when resources are scarce, were clearly recognised in paragraph 19·3 of the regional strategic plan 1985-1994 and included the need to rationalise capital-intensive radiological services, the concentration of high technology facilities and making the most effective use of specialist skills and equipment. All those factors strengthen the argument for option 2 in the district health authority report rather than option 1.

The fifth point of criticism concerns the failure of the regional health authority to ensure the most cost-effective and rational provision of acute services for children within its region. This may have been achieved by preventing Mayday hospital at Croydon from developing its children's unit at the expense of Queen Mary's and by discouraging the mid-Surrey district health authority from following suit and building its own children's unit at Epsom general. Such replication of expensive, specialist facilities, within a comparatively small geographical area, does not appear good policy at a time when resources are inevitably scarce.

It would be much more sensible to continue to take full advantage of Queen Mary's reputation for excellence in child services and to regard it as a specialist, regional centre for children in much the same way as St. Helier hospital, also in my constituency, is regarded as a regional specialist centre for renal dialysis and kidney patients.

A letter from Mr. Rolls, the director of planning for the mid-Surrey district authority, to my personal assistant, Mr. Robert Marshall, made it clear that facilities such as the Guthrie unit at Queen Mary's, which screens babies for physical and mental handicap, are complemented by the general paediatric provisions at the hospital. That hospital undertakes 25 per cent. of the total paediatric work load in mid-Surrey. Mr. Rolls refers to:

"the disadvantageous effect upon Mid-Surrey of a reduction in services from Queen Mary's."

A similar point in support of Queen Mary's was made during the consultation process by the general manager of the Royal Marsden hospital of London and Sutton, who expressed concern that the district health authority document does not take account:

"of the increasing needs of this Authority for paediatric services currently provided at Queen Mary's."

Once again, here is an example that concerns the care of children with leukaemia and solid tumours and which supports the many ways in which Queen Mary's, at its present site, provides an invaluable service for the whole region.

The sixth and final point of criticism—this is perhaps the most problematic aspect of the entire proposal—is that there seems to be considerable doubt and obscurity surrounding both the feasibility and the timing of the proposed translation of acute services for children from Queen Mary's to an enlarged site at St. Helier.

With regard to feasibility, it is already clear that capital shortages, especially for bridging finance, are worrying the regional health authority notably for the years between now and 1990. The regional strategic plan states:

"The full amount is unlikely to be affordable."

That means that any scheme, such as the district health authority's option 1 that is forecast to cost £23 million, must be regarded as financially doubtful. That does not take into account the other difficulties that may arise from the need to obtain planning permission for the development and extension of St. Helier hospital on what is now classified as metropolitan open space. Naturally, the London borough of Sutton wishes to protect that land as green belt for the benefit of the local community.

Even if all the other problems could be solved, great doubts would still surround the period of transition. For example, if the existing acute child services at Queen Mary's were reduced too soon or if the new services proposed at St. Helier were delayed for any reason, there would be serious problems for the children of mid-Surrey and elsewhere in the short to medium term.

Equally, the transfer of specialist staff and equipment from one hospital to another is always problematic and often results in poorer quality or less extensive provision for the patients during the transition period. I suggest that that would be another form of disruption and dislocation from which the children concerned should be protected.

For all those reasons, I believe that it would be wrong to go ahead with option 1 in the district health authority's

document. In my view it would be far better for the regional health authority to endorse option 2 or something like it, as that would involve the rebuilding and modernisation of acute services for children at Queen Mary's hospital on its present site or, conceivably, on part of its present site and the concentration of all other acute services in the district at St. Helier, which would be consistent with the principle of centralisation.

That solution would be cheaper in capital costs and about the same as option 1 on revenue savings. It would enable Queen Mary's to continue as a specialist child services centre for the entire region and beyond. It would be more cost-effective than allowing the duplication or triplication of acute child services in quite a small geographic area. It would also be less likely to fall foul of planning difficulties than would some of the other proposals.

Above all, option 2 or something like it would be popular with the children, their parents, the nurses at Queen Mary's hospital, whom I know, as I have visited the hospital on many occasions during the time that I have had the honour to be a Member of Parliament, with the league of friends and with the general public in my constituency.

Therefore, I urge my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary to see that if the matter is referred to her Department the best decisions are taken in the interests of the children and all who care about them.

2.42 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Mr. Forman) on his success in the ballot and I thank him for his kind personal comments. My hon. Friend has again shown the great dedication and care that he devotes to his constituents, and I am sure that they know what efforts he has put into securing good NHS services for them.

I pay tribute to a long-established centre that provides specialist services for children. Queen Mary's hospital in Carshalton has been a special children's hospital for more than 70 years and I have no doubt that in the early years of this century the same agonising went on about what sort of services should be provided, the location of the unit, whether the money could be raised, and so on. We are seeing what is almost a 70-year cycle.

I also join my hon. Friend in paying tribute to the marvellous caring work done by all the staff at the hospital. Their dedication and expertise must be given the praise that they deserve.

I start by picking up a comment made by my hon. Friend. This is not a closure, and we should not use the word "closure". It is a reprovision of services in, we hope, new facilities and possibly on a different site. If we do nothing, it is certain that sooner or later Queen Mary's hospital will fall down. Given the age of the buildings, that will probably be sooner rather than later.

We have an obligation not to close the hospital or to have a closure forced on us by the poor condition of the buildings, but to make adequate and timely planning and provision so that the services can continue into the next century in more modern facilities.

I understand that the fabric of the building at Queen Mary's is substandard and is giving some cause for concern. The heating, electrical and building services need renewal. The wards alone might cost about £8 million to upgrade and, even then, the district would be left with an old shell and an inappropriate collection of buildings. I understand that many involved, including the staff and the community health council, have recognised the need.

The changes for paediatric services are part of Merton and Sutton district health authority's strategy for acute hospital services. Like every other district health authority in the country, Merton and Sutton has had to draw up a strategy for its health services up to 1994. This must take account of demographic changes, the needs of priority groups such as the elderly, the mentally ill or mentally handicapped, and flows of patients into and out of the district. Unfortunately, Merton and Sutton are some way behind most other districts in finalising their plans for acute hospital services. The DHA endorsed the proposals only a month ago, and they were considered by the region, as my hon. Friend said, only two days ago.

The district has about 1,000 acute beds for a catchment population of just under 250,000. That is a lot of beds. The problem today lies in the fact that they are spread over five different sites. This is costly in terms of overheads, and it means that essential diagnostic and back-up facilities have to be spread thinly or are sometimes available not at the levels that are required. The district decided that it wants to concentrate acute services on three sites in future instead of five. They are St. Helier, the present DGH; Sutton in the south of the district; and Nelson in the north. They propose to make the Wilson hospital a specialist hospital for the elderly, and indeed expect to increase beds for acute geriatrics and rebuild the acute part of Queen Mary's hospital on the same site as St. Helier.

There are three components to the services at Queen Mary's. They are general paediatrics, child psychiatry and regional specialty surgery for children. The hospital now provides some services for children from neighbouring districts. Future needs for child psychiatry will depend on the results of the option appraisal which the regional health authority is conducting on its policy document. A policy review is being undertaken for the region as a whole on facilities for surgery for children—that is, paediatrics and neonates. It is not on general paediatrics.

The people of Merton and Sutton, and especially the children, enjoy a high level of health services. Waiting lists are among the shortest in the country, plenty of beds are available, and they are well staffed. This is partly due to the determined advocacy and great efforts of all concerned, including the efforts of my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington. But some factors suggest that there might be room for improving efficiency. For example, the turnover interval in paediatric beds—that is, the time when they are empty—is way above the national average. In fact, it is higher than the length of stay. Consequently, bed occupancy is about 59 per cent. at Queen Mary's and only 34 per cent. at St. Helier. The throughput of patients is low and the incidence of day cases is also low. There are nearly 200 beds at Queen Mary's. They are clearly not being used as they might be. This raises several questions. Either the beds are over-provided or the patients are not being counted,—they could be there but are not forming part of the hospital census—or the patients are not being served. Something needs to be tackled. Nurse staffing levels in Queen Mary's are nearly three times the national average, and they have much higher doctor-patient ratios than average. That might be because of good working conditions, high morale

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

and so on, but the fact is that the health authority has to consider whether that pattern of service provision may be draining resources from elsewhere in the district, where they are also needed.

I understand that, at its meeting on 10 December, the regional health authority received the acute services strategy for 1986-94 from Merton and Sutton district health authority. After discussion, the region agreed to support the central principles of opton 1, that is moving the children's services to the St. Helier DGH site and providing adult acute services on fewer sites within the district. It was agreed that the officers of the region and district should undertake further detailed work on the feasibility of this option, in terms of most of the points that my hon. Friend raised such as revenue, capital, land resources, and so on, and make a further report.

Given that that is going on — I am sure that our comments will be taken into account — I shall answer the eight points that my hon. Friend made. He said that option 1 would not be cheapest in terms of capital cost. That is true, but the trouble is that none of them will be cheap. Option 1 would cost £20·5 million, option 2 £18·8 million, option 3 £19 million, and option 4 £19·6 million. None will be feasible unless the money can be found. Therefore, the difference between them is not great. My hon. Friend said that options 1 and 2 are approximately equal in terms of revenue.

Mr. Forman: Revenue savings.

Mrs. Currie: That is right. His statement is not strictly true. The revenue savings on option 1 — if they are accurate—are about £2·79 million a year and on option 2 about 1·9 million a year. There is a difference of not quite £1 million, but it is still a fair amount.

My hon. Friend in his seventh question asked about land availability and option 2. It is worth pointing out that, if option 2 is pursued, it will mean the closure of three hospitals—Nelson, Wilson and Sutton. I have no doubt that that will mean at least three Adjournment debates on the subject. This will mean that even more land at St. Helier would be needed to take on board orthopaedic, psychiatric and geriatric facilities provided at those hospitals, and they tend to be land-hungry specialities. If there is a problem in getting land for some children's services at St. Helier now, there will be tremendous difficulty in getting even more land for those other services.

My hon. Friend's third point was that the cost-benefit analysis is not credible. In fact, he used terms such as "pseudo-scientific", "highly tendentious" and "subjective" — all of which may well be true, but we are not in a position to criticise the methodology of the exercise. It is for the district and regional health authorities to satisfy themselves about that. The options appraisal was carried out with oversight by the regional planning department. As I said, at a meeting on Wednesday, the authority asked the officers concerned to look again in depth at, among other matters, the revenue feasibility of the option.

My hon. Friend's fourth point was that policy seems to be to centralise acute services as far as the region and the DHSS are concerned but the district health authority is planning to disperse services on three sites. I mentioned that the district health authority is operating on five sites, so reducing them to three is a version of centralisation. It is worth pointing out that the Queen Mary's site is on green belt land. There might be some difficulty in abandoning its use entirely, simply because the site would not be of much capital value to the authority. I understand that it is not intended that all services should move from Queen Mary's.

The fifth point was about the duplication of paediatric services in adjoining districts. My hon. Friend suggested that we should have discouraged developments elsewhere — for example, at Mayday and Epsom general hospitals — to take advantage of Queen Mary's facilities. The trouble is that those district health authorities want their services and feel that it is in everyone's interest to have local paediatric services on their district general hospital sites. Croydon plans to provide all its paediatric services by 1 April. If we said that it should not open those facilities in order to maintain the service at Queen Mary's, I am sure that it would be outraged, and we would have another Adjournment debate on the subject. Queen Mary's hospital now has 199 beds. The occupancy of those beds, even now, is not much above 50 per cent. There is already a sign that perhaps some of the beds, even while the districts elsewhere are using them, are under less pressure than they might be. The problem, therefore, will get worse and the result will not be the one suggested.

My hon. Friend's sixth point was about feasibility and timing. That is under consideration. The feasibility of the district's option is now being considered in detail, and the availability of land, timing, revenue and planning permission, and so on form part of that discussion. As I understand it, there can be no question of Queen Mary's hospital being closed before alternative services are provided.

The district must now go back and discuss with the local planning authority whether it can obtain the land to rebuild St. Mary's on the St. Helier site. The borough of Sutton has specifically resisted extending the hospital into the borough's open space. It seems that there is a long way to go before the matter is resolved. If, or when, the site is made available, the health authority will have some detailed and time-consuming work to do on planning and preparing for the building work needed. The regional health authority has to find the cash to finance the scheme. In today's climate, with such a large-scale capital building programme in the NHS, I would not expect the plan for Queen Mary's hospital in Carshalton to come to fruition for many years. In case there is any question that the facilities at Queen Mary's would not be available, I must say that they will not be withdrawn unless and until better alternatives are available to the children of my hon. Friend's constituents. I am glad to make that statement categorically.

While I am glad to have had the opportunity to discuss the future of Queen Mary's hospital and to pay tribute to all concerned, I believe that we are jumping the gun by some time. If and when a proposal to close the buildings which at present house Queen Mary's hospital, goes ahead, the district health authority will have to carry out the normal consultation procedures, which are lengthy, specific and written into law. If the community health council objects to the plan, the proposal must come to the Secretary of State for a decision.

I can comment as freely as I have done because it is unlikely that I shall still be standing at the Dispatch Box in 1993. That is way in the future. The closure may happen in this current strategic period, that is by 1994, and it may not. Nevertheless, I know that my hon. Friend will find it helpful, in years to come, to have raised the question now and to have taken the chance to express to the House the depth of local views on the planned changes.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at five minutes to Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 15 December 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

CITY OF LONDON (VARIOUS POWERS) BILL *(By Order)*
Order for Third Reading read.
To be read a Third time upon Thursday.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (STANSTED) BILL *(By Order)*
Considered; to be read the Third time.

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Thursday.

PRISONS

Resolved,
That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, That she will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before the House a Return of the Report of an Inquiry by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons into the escape of Alan Richard Knowlden from St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington on 8th April 1986.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Oral Answers to Questions

ENERGY

British Coal

1. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he next intends to meet the chairman of British Coal to discuss investment in the industry.

The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Peter Walker): I have regular meetings with the chairman of British coal to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

Mr. Dorman: Is the Secretary of State aware that British Coal's borings off the north-east coast have led to the discovery of millions of tonnes of new coal reserves? As north-east pits already go miles underneath the sea, will the Secretary of State do all that he can with the chairman of British Coal to ensure that the new reserves are exploited and so safeguard the jobs of thousands of north-east miners, especially in an area where there is no alternative employment?

Mr. Walker: I know that the Coal Board's policy is to invest heavily in areas where good seams of coal are discovered and, therefore, that it will be tapping those areas. As I have said, it is anticipating about £2 billion worth of new investment in the coal industry over the next three years. I am sure that it will carefully consider prospects in the north-east.

Mr. Fallon: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the north-east coalfield is now profitable for the first time in years? Does he look forward to the day when those who work for British Coal have the same opportunity to invest in their own industry as those who work for British Gas? If he sees Arthur, will he tell him?

Mr. Walker: Productivity in the north-east is at an all-time high and I welcome that. As I have told the House, there are no plans for the privatisation of the coal industry at present——

Mr. Janner: At present?

Mr. Walker: That is so because substantial losses are being made. That is what I have always said to the House. If there comes a time when the miners can participate more directly, I shall be delighted.

Mr. Mason: On future investment, what is the Secretary of State's view about the introduction of the pit-by-pit productivity schemes, with all the inherent concerns about safety in the mines? What will be the total investment involved if it is extended throughout all the coalfields?

Mr. Walker: I know of no such scheme.

Mr. Marlow: May I put it to my right hon. Friend that one way to secure increasing investment in the pits is to offer groups of miners the right to lease their mines, to hire their own management and, as a co-operative, to raise money on the open market, thereby involving themselves directly in their own jobs?

Mr. Walker: I am pleased to say that the Coal Board has given a direct interest to miners through the various productivity incentive schemes. I must point out that one of the complications for the coal industry is that one customer takes the majority of coal in this country and has a dominating position. Therefore, the marketing of coal has to be carefully organised.

Mr. Orme: When discussing investment, did the Secretary of State raise the serious exodus from the mining industry? I am sure that he will agree that investment means money not only for machinery and development but for recruitment and training? Does he agree that a serious situation will arise next year if that exodus continues at its present alarming rate?

Mr. Walker: As the right hon. Gentleman knows, with his great interest in this topic, a major rationalisation of the industry will have taken place by March next year and the results are—I think he will agree—staggering. In the week before last, for example, coal production in this country was 2 million tonnes in one week, which is similar to what it was before any dispute, with a third fewer people employed. I think that rationalisation and improved productivity have proved to be correct and very much in the industry's interest. Of course, training and recruitment are important for the furture.

Oil Trade Revenue

2. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what overall surplus or deficit accrued to the United Kingdom in its oil trade revenue for the last two years for which figures are available.

The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith): The monthly review of external trade statistics shows a surplus of £6·9 billion in 1984, £8·2 billion in 1985 and £3·55 billion to October 1986.

Mr. Janner: How long does the Minister expect the United Kingdom to remain in surplus, and how long will our reserves last? During the time that the Government remain in power, which we hope will be very brief, will they continue to squander these assets in the disgraceful way that they have done so far?

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: We expect to remain self-sufficient well into the 1990s. We are still discovering new reserves, and we reckon that we shall continue to do so for many decades to come.

Mr. Bruce: Does the Minister acknowledge that the present drive by OPEC to secure a stable oil price of around $18 is in the United Kingdom's interests and that the British Government could make a useful contribution towards achieving that stability, not least because it would restore confidence in the North sea oil industry and maintain the drive towards energy efficiency?

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: If the hon. Gentleman supports the policy of production control and full co-operation with OPEC, I should be interested to know whether that policy is supported by his party and the alliance. If the hon. Gentleman is serious about it, he ought also to spell out how he envisages that policy being applied on the United Kingdom side of the North sea. He ought also to acknowledge that if production were to be cut, jobs would be lost.

Mr. Rowlands: Does the Minister accept that, although there is an £8 billion oil surplus, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is now forecasting a deficit of nearly £8 billion in manufactured goods next year? Will he confirm that since 1979 this Government have collected £50 billion in direct taxation from the North sea? If those figures are taken together, is not my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) right when he says that the Government have squandered the great and marvellous opportunities provided by North sea oil?

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Once again the hon. Gentleman is completely wrong. Compared with the Government of which he was a member, this Government's policies and the programmes that they are carrying through mean that this country is now paying its way in the world.

Power Supply Industry

3. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when the Minister of State last met the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to discuss the question of the power supply industry.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Alastair Goodlad): My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman regularly and discuss a wide range of issues.

Mr. Eastham: Has the Minister read the reports that prophesy a power crisis in the 1990s, which will lead to possible blackouts? I remind the Minister that his Government promised that one order each year would be placed for a new power station. Although this Government have been in office for nearly eight years, not a single order has been placed for a new power station. Energy from France is being imported to two power stations, yet the NEI and GEC are making people redundant because they have no orders. What does the Minister intend to do about it?

Mr. Goodlad: The Government fully appreciate the importance of maintaining the capability of the industry when home orders are lacking. Considerable aid and support have been provided to the industry to win overseas contracts to help maintain its capability. However, ordering is essentially a matter for the electricity supply industry. The only current application for consent to construct a station is that for Sizewell B. Recently I met representatives of GEC and NEI, and I have passed on their representations to the CEGB.

Dr. Michael Clark: When my hon. Friend met the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board, did he discuss with him any contingency plans that would be necessary if a decision were taken not to have a family of pressurised water reactors in this country? If they were implemented, what would those contingency plans mean in terms of power supply in this country?

Mr. Goodlad: No, Sir. Discussion of such matters must await my right hon. Friend's decision on the Sizewell B inquiry.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: When is that likely to be?

Mr. Goodlad: Next year.

Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson: Can my hon. Friend confirm, or deny, the reports in the weekend press that plans are going ahead for coal-fired power stations on the Channel coast? Will he further confirm, or deny, that those plans include two power stations in south Hampshire, on the edge of the New Forest? Would it not be unusual to build coal-fired power stations so near to the largest oil refinery in Britain and the sixth largest in the world?

Mr. Goodlad: I understand that the CEGB is considering the possibility of building new coal-fired power stations, but my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received no applications to construct new power stations, apart from that for Sizewell B. The CEGB has identified a number of possible sites for future coal-fired power stations, but has made no firm decisions about where they might be sited.

Mr. James Lamond: Is the Minister aware that the design and building of a power station involves a specialised team, including many hundreds of members of my trade union, the Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section of the Engineering Union, in the design part of that work? Will he bear in mind that the dearth of orders over the past seven years has led to the real danger of those specialised teams being broken up and not being available when the Government decide that another power station is needed?

Mr. Goodlad: The hon. Gentleman makes an important point, which is why I said that the Government have helped the power plant industry to maintain its capability by providing aid and support to win overseas contracts.

Mr. Hickmet: Is my hon. Friend aware that the chairman of the CEGB has stated that to abandon a nuclear power programme in Britain would mean an increase of up to 50 per cent. in electricity prices, that continuity of supply could not be guaranteed, that far

from being competitive British industry would be hampered, and that for the British Steel Corporation, with an electricity bill of £100 million per year, the consequences of pursuing policies proposed by the Opposition would, frankly, be disastrous?

Mr. Goodlad: My hon. Friend is right.

Mr. Orme: Is the Minister aware that his reply about the Sizewell report is completely unsatisfactory? We understand that part of that report has been given to the Secretary of State. The House and country are entitled to see and debate that report at the earliest opportunity. When will we see it?

Mr. Goodlad: As my right hon. Friend has told the House, Sir Frank Layfield has delivered the bulk of his report, but my right hon. Friend can make a decision only on the full report. However, he intends to reach his decision as quickly as possible when he has the full report. He is legally obliged to have that full report before making his decision. The timing is a matter for the inspector. My right hon. Friend expects to receive the remaining sections of the report by the middle of January.

Mr. Dicker: To ensure that industry has the power that it requires, and to make sure that the lights keep burning at home, did my hon. Friend impress upon the chairman of the CEGB that the three options of coal, oil and nuclear power are essential, and that research into and development of wave, solar and wind power are also required?

Mr. Goodlad: My hon. Friend is correct. A mix of sources is important.

Coal Imports

5. **Mr. Eadie** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will initiate discussions with the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board and British Coal with a view to reducing coal imports; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. David Hunt): Coal imports by the CEGB are a commercial matter for the board. I understand that as part of the agreement announced last June the CEGB has undertaken to purchase 95 per cent. of its annual coal burn from British Coal. In line with this agreement the CEGB expects to continue to limit the amount of coal that it imports.

Mr. Eadie: The Minister must be aware that nearly 5 million tonnes of coking coal, and nearly 500,000 tonnes of anthracite, were imported in the first nine months of this year. He must also be aware of the impact that that will have on Britain's balance of payments and that such a scale of imports will inevitably mean a loss of jobs in our coal industry. Will the Minister give us other than a complacent reply and tell us what the Government will do?

Mr Hunt: The hon. Gentleman should know that the United Kingdom cannot do without imports in the foreseeable future because of the demand for special quality coking coal by the steel industry and because of demand for anthracite in excess of what can be supplied by British Coal.

On general policy, in 1979, when we inherited responsibility from the Government in which the hon. Gentleman had special responsibility for coal, the United Kingdom was a net importer of 2 million tonnes of coal. In 1983 the United Kingdom was a net exporter of 2 million tonnes, but the strike destroyed that position. We are not at all complacent, but the hon. Gentleman seems to have been before he left power.

Mr. Rost: Does my hon. Friend agree that if we had an efficient and competitive coal industry we would not need to import because we would be exporting to the huge market over the Channel in Europe?

Mr. Hunt: My hon. Friend is right. The best protection against imports for the United Kingdom coal industry lies in the industry achieving full production at prices which are competitive in the world market. The House should praise the efforts of men and management for achieving that.

Mr. Mason: What tonnage of South African coal is still coming into Britain, and when will it cease?

Mr. Hunt: The right hon. Gentleman should know that the CEGB does not import coal from South Africa.

Severn Barrage

6. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the proposed route or alternative proposed routes of the electricity transmission line which would be necessary to link the proposed Severn barrage with the national grid.

Mr. David Hunt: If a Severn barrage were to be constructed, reinforcement of the Central Electricity Generating Board transmission system would be required. Actual requirements will need much more detailed study and the routeing and extent would depend on other developments before the time of installation of a barrage.

Mr. Stern: As my hon. Friend is no doubt aware, the existing main transmission line passes close to homes, factories, offices and warehouses, through Avonmouth in my constituency. If constructed, the Severn barrage would require a much strengthened transmission line. My hon. Friend will realise that there is considerable worry in Avonmouth about the potential effects of that more powerful transmission line. In the light of that, will he do what he can to at least make an announcement at the earliest possible date?

Mr. Hunt: I recognise that my hon. Friend is voicing anxieties on behalf of his constituents. I hope he will recognise that the main objective of the programme, which is supported by the Department, the CEGB and the Severn Tidal Power Group is to reduce uncertainty to the point where it will be possible to make decisions about whether to plan for construction. I shall, of course, bring his remarks to the attention of the CEGB.

Coal-Fired Power Stations

8. **Mr. Orme** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to discuss the ordering of new coal-fired capacity.

Mr. Peter Walker: I meet the chairman regularly and we discuss a wide range of issues.

Mr. Orme: Did the Secretary of State discuss the urgent need to order two new coal-fired stations? As hon. Members on both sides have said, there is some worry

about this. I recently met representatives from NEI and GEC. We are aware that the CEGB is anxious to go ahead with such orders. When will the Secretary of State give the go-ahead?

Mr. Walker: I assure the right hon. Gentleman that there is no lack of go-ahead on my part, because I cannot give the go-ahead or make a decision until an application is made. I have received no application from the CEGB for any power station other than Sizewell B. I assure the right hon. Gentleman that if I do receive applications they will be quickly and carefully considered.

Mr. Hannam: When my right hon. Friend is notified of any proposed coal-fired stations, will he try to ensure that the best use is made of generated heat by utilising combined heat and power?

Mr. Walker: Yes. The prospect of combined heat and power should be looked at in connection with any power station.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: The Secretary of State was in the House last week during Trade and Industry questions and will have heard what was said then about the need to secure a base domestic work load for the power plant industry so that it can compete in export markets. What discussions about these matters does he have with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry?

Mr. Walker: We work closely together on a whole range of areas. For example, the Department of Trade and Industry has done a great deal in assisting the acquisition of export orders when little has been going on in the home market. Likewise, my Department has helped in export drives and Ministers have gone out to help with that. Only last week I had a meeting with the chief executive of NEI to discuss problems. There is a close liaison.

Mr. Andy Stewart: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the record outputs per man shift from Britain's coalfields deserve an announcement before Christmas about two new coal-fired power stations in Nottinghamshire?

Mr. Walker: I shall have to wait for applications for power stations before I can make any announcement.

Mr. Dormand: Will the Secretary of State see whether he can get some firm information on the rumours referred to by his hon. Friend some time ago about the possible building of coal-fired power stations at deep water ports on the south coast? If those rumours are right, is it not obvious that the CEGB has in mind importing yet more coal?

Mr. Walker: I gather that a whole range of sites have been considered all over Britain. I genuinely do not know which of those sites, if any, the CEGB favours. When it makes an application, I shall consider it.

Energy Efficiency Conference, Birmingham

9. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the energy efficiency conference in Birmingham.

Mr. Peter Walker: The tenth national energy management conference and exhibition was an outstanding success, the largest event of its type ever held in this country, or, as far as I know, in western Europe.

Mr. Thompson: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply, particularly in Energy Efficiency Year. Does he agree that it is particularly important now that homes, particularly the homes of the elderly, are well insulated and energy efficient? Will he join me in commending the work of the community insulation project, and will he speak to my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment to find out whether all local authorities have taken up all the moneys available to advance this worthwhile project?

Mr. Walker: There has been an enormous increase in these projects during the year. About 5,000 people who would otherwise have been unemployed have been working on the projects this year. By the end of the year, about 230,000 homes of elderly people and those on low incomes will have been insulated, and about 100,000 of those will have been done this year. I am glad to say that the number of groups being organised is being substantially increased.

Mr. Allen McKay: The Secretary of State has made a good statement about the insulation of homes. Will he talk to the Secretary of State for Social Services to ensure that the Bill he will be introducing does not stop these community projects?

Mr. Walker: I assure the hon. Gentleman that in my talks with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services I have found him keen and enthusiastic. I am sure that he will collaborate in every way.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Is my right hon. Friend able to report that the local authorities were strongly lobbied at the Birmingham conference to set up their own energy cost efficiency departments? Can he give some guidance to elderly people who can be taken advantage of by some of the shoddy work that a few of the cowboy companies offer?

Mr. Walker: Yes, such people should seek advice. The local authorities' management advisory service has suggested that more than £100 million a year can be saved by applying the best management techniques to local authorities.

Mr. Rowlands: Despite the figures quoted by the Secretary of State, is he aware that 5 million dwellings have no loft insulation, and that 9 million households have no effective central heating? Do not the figures show the need for a more comprehensive and widespread energy efficiency programme than the one that we have?

Mr. Walker: With respect, the hon. Gentleman has the figures wrong. The figures given in an answer the other day related not to any loft insulation but to loft insulation to a particular depth. About 87 per cent. of homes have loft insulation.

British Coal

10. **Mr. Powley** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about the latest productivity in British Coal.

Mr. David Hunt: For the week ending 29 November, average revenue output per man shift was 3·64 tonnes, the eighth time the record has been broken in 10 weeks. This continued improvement shows the growing confidence of miners in the future of this great industry.

Mr. Powley: Does not British Coal deserve the heartfelt congratulations of the House and the country for the productivity improvements that it has achieved, which have resulted in a much more economic price for coal and more coal being delivered—which will help inflation and old-age pensioners during a severe winter? Would my hon. Friend care to speculate whether these improvements would have been achieved under an alternative Government with the support that the Labour party gave to the National Union of Mineworkers, which inhibited the efficiencies that have taken place?

Mr. Hunt: These tremendous efforts by the miners and management are good news for the consumer, the industry and the country. Weekly output per shift is an impressive 49 per cent. higher than the average in 1983-84, the year before the strike.

Mr. Skinner: As the Minister is praising a few miners for having achieved this extra productivity, and as he refers to figures such as the 49 per cent. increase, will he follow up his words with action and recommend to British Coal that it should consider a proper pay increase for the miners to reward them for this productivity—not on the bonus scheme, but on the flat rate of pay in a similar fashion to the Government's reward to the top generals and top civil servants? If it does that, the miners will be rewarded for their extra efforts.

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Gentleman should take some time to reflect on what he has said. The result of these magnificent efforts, as the "New Earnings Survey" shows, is that miners have once again been restored to the top of the pay league, and long may that remain their position.

Mr. Forth: Will my hon. Friend confirm that, notwithstanding this impressive increase in productivity, obtaining energy from coal and oil involves a much higher proven rate of accidents and fatalities than nuclear power? Will he bear this much in mind when considering the next stage of development of Britain's energy-producing industries?

Mr. Hunt: My hon. Friend draws a comparison between the coal industry and nuclear power. Safety is paramount among men and management in our great coal industry and, fortunately, the safety record is improving. As my hon. Friend observes, however, there is still some way to go.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: In congratulating the management and workers in the mining industry on achieving these targets, may I ask whether the Minister agrees that the best way to add good news to our congratulations is by ordering further coal-fired power stations? Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that there is no reason why that should not be done in advance of the decision on Sizewell?

Mr. Hunt: No, Sir. The hon. Gentleman has already heard my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State respond to that question. It is only by reducing costs and winning markets that the coal industry can build a secure future and protect long-term employment.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: Does my hon. Friend feel that this growing confidence is undermined by the deplorable conduct of Opposition Members, who have sat silent and rooted to their seats while the Coal Industry Bill has been considered in Committee, thus showing a deplorable attitude to British miners?

Mr. Hunt: I was sad that the official Opposition should have chosen to remain silent on clauses that are vital for the industry's future and for democracy in the trade union movement.

British Gas

13. **Mr. Rost** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the public response to the privatisation of British Gas.

14. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many individuals have purchased shares in British Gas, and if he will make a statement.

18. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the results of the public issue of shares in British Gas plc.

Mr. Peter Walker: I am delighted at the public response to the British Gas sale. More than 5 million people have applied to become shareholders in British Gas and more than 2 million people became shareholders for the first time.

Mr. Rost: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the 2 million first-time investors who are the result of the sale of British Gas means that there are at least 9 million investors now compared with 2 million in 1979? Is this not a tremendous achievement, there being as many investors now as there are members of trade unions? Will my right hon. Friend confirm that criticisms of the cost of the privatisation are thoroughly unfounded as the cost of the issue was about 2 per cent. of the proceeds, which is well below the average cost of any new issue that is launched on the stock exchange?

Mr. Walker: I confirm what my hon. Friend asked in the latter part of his supplementary question. The sum spent in informing the public of the details and communicating with them was relatively small compared with the remarkable result that was achieved. There has been a remarkable change since 1979, when on average one home in 12 owned a share. More than two homes in five own shares now, and I hope that soon the majority of homes will own them.

Mr. Greenway: Does my right hon. Friend agree that under nationalisation the British public neither owned nor felt that they owned British Gas in any way? Do we not now have genuine public ownership of this great and important industry?

Mr. Walker: Yes, Sir. It is important to realise that now, for the frst time, 99 per cent. of the employees of British Gas have a share in their own industry.

Mr. Dykes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, with the attractions of this investment and the concept and principle of share owning in general, the public are manifestly not selling immediately after an issue? They are holding on to their shares instead. They understand the idea of mass share ownership and are enthusiastic about it.

Mr. Walker: The great majority of people who bought British Telecom shares are still shareholders. I am sure that that will be true of British Gas shareholders in several years' time.

Mr. Donald Stewart: In view of the insider dealing scandals on both sides of the Alantic and the drop in

profits of British Airways, which is the next industry to be privatised, does the right hon. Gentleman not agree that, instead of trying to widen share ownership, the Government should be advising people that dabbling in shares could damage their financial health?

Mr. Walker: The right hon. Gentleman's party, the Scottish National party, has been totally against privatisation and deeply deplores the millions of people who have taken advantage of it.

Mr. Michael Morris: Is my right hon. Friend aware that, following the privatisation of Britoil, which left a substantial body of stock with the underwriters, the British Gas stock seems to have been launched at about the right level to ensure a fair price for the British people and a reasonable return for small investors?

Mr. Walker: The flotation went well. Basically, 64 per cent. of the shares went to individual members of the British public and 24 per cent. went to British institutions. The fact that 99 per cent. of employees have equity in the business shows that it was the right thing to do.

Mr. Bruce: Does the Minister acknowledge that, given the amount of hype involved in promoting British Gas, there was some resentment among people who did not have an opportunity to be customers of British Gas—such as people living in Northern Ireland, rural areas and some urban areas—because they were excluded from the premium allocation of shares? Was that not an unfair allocation of an asset that belonged to all the people before it was privatised?

Mr. Walker: I watched with interest the position of the alliance on this matter. I hope the country will realise that the alliance was totally opposed to privatisation. I hope that the 2 million gas customers who were guaranteed an allocation and obtained it will notice that the alliance was against them, too.

Mr. Orme: Does the Secretary of State say that, out of the 16 million gas consmers, 2 million have purchased shares? Does that not mean that he has created two classes of ownership and that some of the poorest consumers not only do not have shares but will not benefit from any reduction in prices?

Mr. Walker: The poorest consumers who have no shares are unlike those consumers who, at the time of the previous Government, had about a 20-odd per cent. increase in gas prices to help the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Radioactive Waste

15. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if the Central Electricity Generating Board has made financial provision in its reserves to cover the expected costs of long-term storage or disposal of radioactive waste; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: At 31 March 1986 the provision made by the Central Electricity Generating Board for the cost of nuclear waste treatment, storage and disposal, totalled approximately £500 million. The charge to the board's profit and loss account in 1985-86 amounted to some £70 million.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Is it not the case that there is no provision for compensation payments for the purchasers of private property around the proposed sites for the dumping of low-level nuclear waste? Will the Minister state what additional costs would be required for such provision?

Mr. Goodlad: The costs of nuclear waste management represent about 0·03p per unit. As a proportion of the overall price paid by consumers in England and Wales, those costs represent less than 1 per cent. of the total price of electricity. I shall examine the point raised by the hon. Gentleman and shall write to him.

British Gas

23. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the recent flotation of British Gas.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Erewash (Mr. Rost).

Mr. Chapman: I have hurried back from abroad to ask this question only to find that it has already been answered. May I say to my right hon. Friend that the flotation of British Gas has been an undoubted success, and that many people look to the Governmeent to see further opportunities for similar flotations?

Mr. Walker: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for discovering Sid on the beaches of Barbados, and note the speed with which he returned. The flotation has been a widespread success and has given people the opportunity to participate in this important industry.

Mr. Skinner: Does the Secretary of State expect the flotation of British Gas to be more successful in the long term than Slater Walker?

Mr. Walker: Yes, so long as I remain Minister.

Chernobyl

24. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about his visit to Chernobyl.

Mr. Goodlad: My right hon. Friend will be visiting the USSR from 16 to 18 December at the invitiation of the Soviet Government. In the course of the visit he will visit Chernobyl.

Mr. Adley: I thank my hon. Friend and wish my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State an interesting and enjoyable visit. Will my hon. Friend confirm that those of us who listen to the advice that we receive about learning the lessons of Chernobyl have learnt, first, that the Russians intend to get that station back into operation at the earliest opportunity and, secondly, that unilateral abrogation of nuclear power is not on their agenda?

Mr. Goodlad: Yes, Sir.

THE ARTS

National Railway Museum

40. **Mr. Adley** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement following his recent visit to the National Railway Museum.

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): I was pleased to be able to visit the National Railway Museum on 27 November and to meet the keeper and some of his

staff. The museum is a marvellous, living, record of the achievements of the British railway industry, in a city that boasts a variety of excellent museums, both public and independent.

Mr. Adley: I shall switch quickly from nuclear to steam power. Does my right hon. Friend accept that the size of the exhibits at York and the space that they need puts that museum in a different position from museums which, for instance, hang pictures on walls? Museums such as the Science Museum and the NRM need not only more space but more facilities to carry out their job properly. As the working locomotives at York are seen by many thousands of people far beyond York, will my right hon. Friend bear all those things in mind when the museum's allocation of funds is considered?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I think that the whole House knows of his interest in this subject and, indeed, of the role that he plays. Another important aspect is that we are now seeing the development of the national museums and galleries at stations outside London. The NRM at York is one example. The National Museum of Film, Photography and Television in Bradford is another.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Is the Minister aware that Stockton borough council is considering a proposition to open a transport museum on a site on the line of the old Stockton-Darlington railway? Will he encourage co-operation by the nearby National Railway Museum at York with Stockton borough council in bringing that to fruition?

Mr. Luce: That is only partly on my patch, but I shall draw the hon. Gentleman's points to the attention of the Science Museum.

Sponsorship

43. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the progress of encouraging business sponsorship of the arts.

Mr. Luce: Business sponsorship of the arts continues to increase. Under the Government's business sponsorship incentive scheme a total of £10·7 million new money for the arts has been raised and over 370 businesses have sponsored the arts for the first time.

Mr. Chapman: I welcome very much the initiatives taken by the Government, including the business sponsorship incentive scheme and tax relief on one-year deeds of covenant. Does my right hon. Friend agree that £10 million, although welcome, is a relatively small amount, and that the potential for much greater sponsorship is very great? Will he keep those initiatives open and make sure that many more businesses are made aware of the tax advantages and opportunities that they have?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's continuing interest in the problem and the support that he gives to sponsorship. He is right that, although the business sponsorship incentive scheme has allowed 370 new businesses to sponsor, there is scope for a much larger number of businesses to sponsor. This is the time to get across, nationally and in our constituencies, the fact that the scheme exists and that a wide range of tax incentives and reliefs are available to businesses, so that they can give their support to the arts.

Mr. Heffer: No one is opposed to business interests giving more support and assistance to the arts. However, as one who was on an arts committee in my city for many years and who learnt that business interests were not usually very interested in helping the arts, I ask this question: is it not clear that the only way forward is for the Government and the local authorities to give every support possible so that the arts can flourish on a public basis?

Mr. Luce: Only recently I presented an award under the business sponsorship incentive scheme to a firm which had given solid support in Liverpool last year. I am pleased to have been able to do that. I hope that more firms will do the same. We should view the arts, not in a very narrow sense, but as part of a broad strategy whereby the public sector, the taxpayer and the ratepayer; through the local authorities, and, above all, the private sector, through businesses and private individuals, in partnership give their support to the arts. That is how I see sponsorship developing.

Mr. Cormack: Will my hon. Friend take time during what I hope will be an enjoyable recess to write to all chambers of commerce drawing their attention to the schemes available for business sponsorship of the arts? Will he also write a special note to Sid telling him what British Gas might be able to do?

Mr. Luce: I am not sure about which Sid my hon. Friend is talking. I have written to 500 managing directors of the top firms, drawing their attention to the range of tax incentives available for giving to charitable bodies, and I hope that that will help. I shall certainly bear in mind the suggestion about chambers of commerce.

Mr. Freud: Will the Minister consider providing some incentive to American theatregoers, who have such deep affection for the British theatre, so that they can contribute to theatre sponsorship and get some contribution from the Government?

Mr. Luce: The best contribution that American tourists can make is by coming here and going to the theatre. I hope that I understood the hon. Gentleman correctly.

Mr. Greenway: Is my right hon. Friend aware that, for some years, local business in my area sponsored concerts for pensioners, at my request, as a post-Christmas activity for them? Those concerts were always held in a public hall, which was loaned by Ealing Council at no charge. The new Ealing Labour council is now charging for the hire of the hall, but business has come to my aid and is putting up the money for pensioners—many of whom are poor and disabled—something which the Ealing Labour council refuses to do.

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing that matter to my attention. That is yet another illustration of what businesses can do to support the arts. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his efforts.

Mr. Buchan: Does the Minister stick by his proposition that all future expansion or development must come from private sources, as he has repeated three times in the past 12 months? Is that still his position? Will that not force arts directors and administrators into becoming fund raisers? Is not the main consequence a collapse in basic public funding? For example, does the right hon. Gentleman defend the situation in which he announced on Friday last

week a standstill in cash terms, and therefore a cut in the amount of money going to national museums and galleries, which meant that the National Gallery, if faced in the past fortnight with the cost of purchasing a Manet or Rembrandt in the salerooms, could not have afforded even one third of the canvas space?

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman looks at the arts in a very narrow sense and appears not to know what is going on in the arts. There is an increase in attendance at theatres and in the number of arts centres. I have always made it plain that the Government's commitment is to keep up our support for the arts, but that our broad strategy is to fuel expansion of the arts by encouraging the private sector to play a much more prominent role.

Arts Council Grant

44. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received on the Arts Council grant for the forthcoming year.

Mr. Luce: I have received a number of representations. The basic grant has been increased by 3·5 per cent. together with an increase of £3 million in the sum to compensate for abolition of the Greater London council and metropolitan county councils. In addition, I look to development in the arts through an increasing emphasis on plural funding.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Is the Minister aware that there is concern among some of the major companies, such as Opera North, that if the Arts Council grant increase is limited to the 3·½ per cent. that has been announced, and if it is spread equally over the country, it will take no account of the problems that are faced in raising business sponsorship in different parts of the country? It is not in our nature to whinge, but is it not possible for the Minister to consider assisting such things as Outreach to new possible operagoers and to ethnic minorities separately rather than having it lumped in with the general Arts Council grant?

Mr. Luce: I have great admiration for the work of Opera North. Its budget is a matter for the Arts Council to settle, but the increase of 3·5 per cent. is broadly in line with expected inflation for next year. That is in line with the undertaking that we would keep up our support for the arts. It is a matter of partnership and not just central Government funding. Local authorities and the private sector should play a prominent role as well.

Sir David Price: Will my right hon. Friend take into account the fact that it is absolutely essential to retain the strategy of "Glory of the Garden" in Arts Council funding —that the provinces get more of a fair share than they have hitherto? It is not enough to go on supporting the prima donna companies in London without giving adequate support to the many provincial companies which have been underfunded.

Mr. Luce: I am happy to agree with my hon. Friend. It fits in with the strategy that arts should be available to people in all parts of the country, not just in cities and other selected parts. I therefore strongly support the Art Council's policy, which is to support "Glory of the Garden".

Mr. Tony Banks: Is the Minster aware that he is generally regarded in the arts world as one who has completely betrayed the arts by his total failure to fight the arts corner in terms of public expenditure and that what he has asked the Arts Council to do next year is to administer a real cut in the money from the Government?

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman, with the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan), said last year that the whole of the arts world was coming to an end and that a whole lot of institutions would close down. In view of that, I am not prepared to take any judgment from him. If he regards an increase of 5·5 per cent. in the overall arts budget, which is in line with the increase in public expenditure, as a failure, he had better think again.

CIVIL SERVICE

Civil Servants (Court Appearances)

52. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Minister for the Civil Service what terms and conditions of service apply to civil servants giving evidence in courts abroad on behalf of Her Majesty's Government.

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce): The normal arrangements for civil servants on duty visits abroad apply in these circumstances.

Mr. Dalyell: Does the right hon. Gentleman quarrel with £120,000 a day as the cost of that action in the New South Wales court? If he does not accept that figure, will he give his own figure, or the total cost to date, regardless of the judgment?

Mr. Luce: I am not answerable for the court case that is going on in Australia. Matters of security are for my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, but I think that she said in an answer not too long ago that, since the court case has not finished, we cannot give a precise figure. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman ought to be able to wait.

Sir John Page: Are any special arrangements made when civil servants give evidence which might last quite a long time at the Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg?

Mr. Luce: I am afraid that, without notice, I cannot answer that question directly, but I shall try to give my hon. Friend an answer by letter.

Dr. McDonald: Does the Minister agree that the Minister who is chiefly responsible for the Civil Service —the Prime Minister—should, in view of the doctrine of ministerial responsibility, make a formal apology to the Australian courts because of the way in which Sir Robert Armstrong, the head of the Home Civil Service, has been obliged to mislead the courts there at the Government's behest?

Mr. Luce: I find that kind of question deplorable. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister puts the national security of this nation first. I hope that the hon. Lady does that as well.

Mr. Marlow: To follow the point made by the hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald), if anybody has come out of this event with banana skin wrapped all over his face, is it not the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Luce: The whole nation sees that now.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the Minister's reply, I give notice that I shall seek to raise this matter on the Adjournment at the earliest opportunity.

Civil Service Unions

53. **Mr. Soley** asked the Minister for the Civil Service when he last met the Civil Service unions; and what was discussed.

Mr. Luce: I have informal meetings from time to time with the Civil Service unions. Topics of mutual interest are discussed.

Mr. Soley: When the Minister next meets the unions, will he discuss the need for civil servants to have someone to go to if they have a complaint about the way in which they are used by Ministers? Are there not too many examples of the Government putting civil servants in the hot seat and expecting them to take responsibility for what the Government should take responsibility? Will the Minister discuss with the unions the need for such an arrangement?

Mr. Luce: The procedures are perfectly adequate, and in a reply during the summer months to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee the Government made it plain that we would work out in discussions with the unions a procedure which gave them ultimate appeal to the civil servant head of the Home Civil Service. That will be a new procedure, and once these procedures have been discussed with the unions they should be perfectly fair and reasonable.

Mr. Latham: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the poor level of morale among Civil Service staff at both the British Geological Survey and the Building Research Establishment? Will he discuss with his departmental colleagues the need for early decisions on the future of those establishments, so that at least the civil servants know where they are supposed to be going?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Frind for drawing that to my attention and I shall certainly look into the two establishments what he mentioned. On the professional side of the Civil Service, whether accountants or scientists, special moves are being taken now to ensure that we deal with recruitment, retention and motivation problems by giving them, for example, pay additions to the basic pay of the Civil Service.

Mr. Madden: What will the Minister do to deal with the staffing crisis in the Department of Health and Social Security?

Mr. Luce: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services is well aware of that and has already announced, as the hon. Gentleman must know, an increase of 5,000 in the number of civil servants over the next few months. That is designed to relieve some of the areas of strain at work.

Mr. Stanbrook: Has my right hon. Friend discussed with the union concerned the fact that all branches of the public service get credit for pre-appointment war service in their pensions, except when that service was performed abroad? Is that not a great injustice? Will my right hon. Friend please see our right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary to ask him to remove that anomaly and injustice towards a small, mostly elderly, group of people whose lives were spent mostly in adverse conditions, serving Her Majesty abroad?

Mr. Luce: As both my hon. Friend and I had the privilege of being in the Overseas Civil Service, serving Her Majesty abroad, I shall certainly undertake to look into his point.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Does not Sir Robert Armstrong's appearance before the court in Australia illustrate the urgent need for an update of the Armstrong memorandum on the appearance of civil servants before Select Committees and other such bodies? Will the Minister consider accelerating the discussions with the trade unions to complete that review?

Mr. Luce: We are slightly confusing issues. At present the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee has given its recent report and view on the whole issue and the area in which civil servants should be questioned by Select Committees. We are now awaiting material from the liaison committee, and no fresh guidelines will be given until we have heard from it.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: Has my right hon. Friend received any representations from the Civil Service trade unions in respect of Mr. Brian Gentleman, who was traduced by Mr. Gerry Gable and accused of being a Czech spy? Can my right hon. Friend tell the House anything about that?

Mr. Luce: I am afraid that I cannot. If my hon. Friend could give me more information later, I shall certainly look into the matter.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Has my right hon. Friend received any representations from the executive of the Civil and Public Services Association regarding the fact that, in the recent election of the general secretary, the result of which is due soon—indeed, my right hon. Friend may know it — 21 branches were denied the right to vote in the election that Mr. Macreadie won? Is he aware that that amounted to 2,240 people?

Mr. Luce: As my hon. Friend has already said, there has just been a re-run of that CPSA election and we await the outcome. It could be some time this week.

Mr. Heffer: Will the Minister tell his hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) and the press to keep out of the internal affairs of trade unions, that it is for trade union members to decide whom they vote for, whoever it is, and that Tory Members, the Government and the press should mind their own business?

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman seems to be a little sensitive today. I do not know why. The House and the country await with interest the results of the CPSA election re-run, which will come out this week.

THE ARTS

Sadler's Wells Theatre

48. **Mr. Pavitt** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will now take further initiatives to ensure adequate funds to retain Sadler's Wells theatre for the fiscal year 1987-88.

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): The problems of Sadler's Wells have been satisfactorily solved in the current year by a combination of sponsorship and grants to Arts Council clients using the theatre. It is for the Arts Council and the other bodies to determine funding levels for subsequent years.

Mr. Pavitt: Although I am grateful to the Minister for his staving-off operation for 12 months, he has missed the purpose of the question, which concerned fresh initiatives for the longer term. He has informed the House of the initiatives that he announced some little while ago. Those see Sadler's Wells clear for 12 months. However, one cannot plan for opera, ballet and the sort of thing that that company does in a 12-month period, because there are ongoing commitments. Will the Minister now take fresh initiatives so that Sadler's Wells can plan for the future, and not first the present year, which is safeguarded?

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman continues to take a keen interest in this subject. There was major new sponsorship this financial year from the Digital Equipment Company, which covered not just this financial year but next year. In addition, the Arts Council must decide how much it can allocate to the companies which use Sadler's Wells, because it is those companies which are being supported by the Government. The Arts Council must decide that, although I give it indicative figures which look to two to three years ahead.

Airborne Early Warning System

3.33 pm

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed Government purchase of an early warning system for the Royal Air Force."

That the matter is specific is self-evident. It involves the largest Ministry of Defence contract in the field of the high technologies of electronics or avionics to be awarded this Parliament. It has already cost nearly £1 billion. If the contract goes to GEC, it will cost another £450 million. If it goes to Boeing, it could cost upwards of £1 billion.

The matter is important because our national defence interests and our NATO commitments depend on a correct decision being taken. If the contract goes to foreign competition, the Government will be abdicating their responsibility for their role over the past seven years. They have moved the goal posts on several occasions. They have turned off the financial tap at crucial times. They have failed to provide leadership.

Over the past weekend there has been the unprecedented spectacle of a public slanging match between a former member of the present Administration and the Royal Air Force, each accusing the other of being economical of the truth. GEC has claimed that, of 100 hours of flight time, 91 hours and 14 minutes included the perfect working of those avionics.

GEC has offered a contract with penalty clauses of unprecedented magnitude, yet the Government still go for a foreign option.

It is urgent that we should discuss the matter, because the Government should have the advice of the entire House before coming to a conclusion. It is too late in the life of this Parliament for the Government to come to a decision of such magnitude without satisfying all quarters of the House of the wisdom of their action. They could even now agree to an independent assessment, away from the recriminations and the soured atmosphere that exists at present. They could agree to clear the air.

It is urgent that the Government should consider the implications for British industry and for national pride. Last Christmas, the Prime Minister gave United States industry, as a present, Westland Helicopters' technology. Last spring she tried to give it Land Rover, but only this House and the country's rebellion prevented that from happening. This Christmas she will give the United States industry 2,500 jobs and nearly £1 billion and so she will abdicate from one of the most important areas of high technology for British interests.

The matter should be discussed in the House. It is far too important for the Cabinet to take a decision without hearing all our views.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed Government purchase of an early warning system for the Royal Air Force."

I listened with great care to what the hon. Gentleman said. As he knows, my sole duty in coming to a decision under Standing Order No. 20 is to decide whether the matter should be given priority over the business set down for today or tomorrow. I regret that the matter that the hon. Gentleman has raised does not meet all the criteria set down under the Standing Order and, therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.

Harrier GR5 Mission Simulator

3.36 pm

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the Government's award of a contract for the Harrier GR5 Mission Stimulator"

[Interruption.] I am glad that I have stimulated the Government, and wish that I could do so more often. I should have said,

"Simulator Singer Link Miles, using its own United States associate's proposal and the rejection of the United Kingdom's Marconi visual system".

The matter is specific in that it refers to one vital contract. It is urgent because the decision has just been taken. It is crucial to my constituency, because the factory involved is on New Parks estate. The issue is also crucial to Leicestershire, because 280 man years of work are involved in the initial contract and many of the workers come from various parts of the county, as shown by the joint representations made by the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham), the right hon. Member for Bosworth (Sir A. Butler) and myself, to the Secretary of State for Defence, to which he has not listened.

The matter is vital to the nation as it involves yet another sell out to the United States. If the contract is retained here, the benefits to United Kingdom industry are that it would secure the position for Marconi and this country in world markets, would promote the United Kingdom development of a very important high technology product, would encourage the United Kingdom in developing supporting products, would promote Commonwealth and industrial co-operation and it would contribute to the maintenance and growth of United Kingdom employment opportunities. All that is to be thrown away in return for a very small additional temporary benefit. It is a disgrace, and the House should consider the matter now and not simply hand over such technology to the United States without giving our industry a chance to develop and use it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. and learned Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the Government's award of a contract for the Harrier GR5 Mission Simulator Singer Link Miles, using its own United States associate's proposal and the rejection of the United Kingdom's Marconi visual system."

I regret that I must give the hon. and learned Gentleman the same answer as I gave to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). I do not consider the matter that the hon. and learned Gentleman has raised to be appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and, therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.

Points of Order

3.33 pm

Mr. Nicholas Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I must raise a serious matter that arises out of Friday's debate on defence projects. During that debate the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement seriously misled the House, and I seek your guidance, Mr. Speaker, on how the matter can be corrected.

The House will know that for some time I have challenged the integrity of the decision-making process over the auxiliary oil replinisher contract, and I specifically raised that matter with the new Under-Secretary of State. I asked him to explain why the designs were not to be released until January, despite the Prime Minister's assurance that they had been comprehensively costed in April 1986. The Under-Secretary of State replied:

"I am sure that it was possible to produce a comprehensive costing of the ship without the detailed drawings, and we are waiting for them to come through".—[*Official Report*, 12 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 726.]

That cannot be correct, because, if it is, the Prime Minister must have misled the House last April.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I stand by what I said on Friday, as it was factually correct. The hon. Gentleman will know that shipbuilding companies regularly quote fixed prices before all the drawings have been produced.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry, but we cannot have a further debate on this matter.

3.39 pm

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point of order relates to the important matter that is about to be discussed in a Cabinet Committee on Wednesday, I believe, and in Cabinet on Thursday about the question of the Nimrod and AWACS systems. As an ex-RAF man, one of the points that concerns me——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is very interesting, but it is not a point of order for me.

Sir Kenneth Lewis: Perhaps you will bear with me a minute, Mr. Speaker. We were the pioneers in radar——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has been a Member of this place for even longer than I have, and he knows that what happens in Cabinet is not a matter for the Chair.

Sir Kenneth Lewis: Further to that, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that I can help the hon. Gentleman.

Sir Kenneth Lewis: You might be able to, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I honestly do not think that I can. I would love to be able to, but I do not think that I can.

3.41 pm

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) and the

hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) have referred to contracts that relate to highly technical matters. Is it in order for hon. Members who are not experts in these matters and who really are laymen to presume to supplant the judgment of the experts?

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is it on the same subject?

Mr. Heffer: Surely you would not stop an ex-member of the Royal Air Force from speaking in the House of Commons——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would have to stop anyone, whether he was from the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy or even the Indian cavalry, if the point of order was not a matter for the Chair.

Sir Kenneth Lewis: Further to that point of order——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet. I must tell the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) that all that concerns me when I consider an application under Standing Order No. 20 is whether it is in order for the application to be made. It was perfectly in order for the two applications to be made today.

BILL PRESENTED

TOBACCO SMOKING (PUBLIC PLACES)

Mr. Roger Sims, supported by Mr. George Foulkes, Mr. Archy Kirkwood, Rev. Martin Smyth, Mr. Alistair Burt, Mr. Laurie Pavitt, Mr. Jeremy Hanley and Mr. John Home Robertson, presented a Bill to limit smoking in public places; to make provision with regard to smoking and employment; and for purposes connected therewith: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 13 February and to be printed. [Bill 37.]

Security Services

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), I must tell the House that I have not selected the amendment on the Order Paper.

3.43 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): I beg to move,

That this House calls upon Her Majesty's Government to set up a judicial enquiry to examine the circumstances surrounding alleged attempts by officers of the security services to subvert the government of Lord Wilson of Rievaulx in the 1970s, and to carry out all party discussions with a view to repealing official secrets legislation and to the introduction of a new legal framework giving appropriate and necessary protection to official secrets and, in particular, official secrets in relation to national security; and calls for consistency in the application of the law.

There are two motions on the Order Paper and they are almost identical. One is an early-day motion and the other a motion for debate. The early-day motion carries the names of 153 hon. Members. Therefore, I start this debate with the support of 153 hon. Members and I intend at the end of the debate to divide the House, if possible, and to pick up more hon. Members in support of the principles set out in the motion.

On my way to London last week a colleague I was travelling with asked me what I was trying to prove. During the course of this campaign I have been trying to prove that the law as it stands is not working, that the law is an ass in so far as it is being inconsistently applied, and that there are those who are beyond the law. Those who are beyond the law include certain groups of officers within the security services. Some authors and journalists who rely for their daily bread on being fed information on the security services are also beyond the law. They are in the business of buying and selling secrets, most notably Mr. Chapman Pincher. Mr. Rupert Allason, a Conservative party candidate otherwise known as Mr. Nigel West, has also sold secrets.

I include among those who are beyond the law a number of security officers, including specifically Mr. Arthur Martin. Mr. Martin is a former Clerk to the House.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge): The hon. Gentleman is making a speech about those who consider themselves to be outside the law. Would he dare to make the rest of the speech outside in the street without the benefit of parliamentary privilege? Is that not a far worse abuse of the law?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has intervened, because it gives me an opportunity to say to those who wish to intervene that I shall be dealing with all of these matters. If at the end of my speech the hon. Gentleman still feels moved to intervene, I shall give way to him.

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster) *rose*——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Mr. Arthur Martin was a Clerk to the House of Commons from the mid-1970s until approximately 1981. He worked for MI5 until 1965 and then worked for MI6 until 1975. Mr. Arthur Martin remained very close to the security services during that period.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman *rose*——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Indeed, he remained so close that he was able to brief Mr. Rupert Allason in detail for his book, "A Matter of Trust".

I also include among those who are beyond the law the two Conservative Members of Parliament who, if Mr. Wright's allegations are true, were involved in action against the Crown.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman *rose*

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Mr. Wright names the two Conservative Members in his book, but I ask the Government to deny that that is the case and that they are named.

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it fair for the hon. Gentleman to refer to certain people who are allegedly making money while not saying anything about the gentleman in Australia who is probably making a packet out of his memoirs?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question as to whether that is fair is for the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours).

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you will now understand why it may not be necessary to give way again during my speech.

According to Mr. Wright, those Conservative Members of Parliament, only one of whom is now sitting, acted as conduits for the smear campaign against Harold Wilson which was organised from within MI5 by some 30 security officers, some very senior. They knew that the information they were receiving came illegally from within MI5. They did not stop it, nor did they report it to the Home Secretary. They just passed it on in the knowledge that it would destabilise the Labour Prime Minister and his Government. I do not intend to name the Members of Parliament involved, I am simply approaching one of them and asking that person to make a personal statement prior to Mr. Wright's book being published.

The whole affair has been plagued by inconsistencies which derive directly from deficiencies in the law. Far worse is the fact that the Government, in a desperate attempt to plug the dyke of inconsistency, have had to practise deceipt and duplicity. That was what Sir Robert Armstrong was doing in the Australian courts. He was lying for the Crown. He lied over the Attorney-General's failure to stop the Pincher book; he lied over the crucial question of how copies of a synopsis of Pincher's book came into the hands of the Government; and he lied over the arrangements for the clearing of Mr. Allason's book. It is better not to answer than to tell a lie. He has disgraced his country and earned the justifiable contempt of Australia. He has also done irreparable damage to the historic relationship between our two peoples. It is only the existence of close family ties at a very personal level between those at home and those in Australia which will ensure that the historic relationship endures. I am at a loss to understand the lack of public protest over his indiscretions.

What has happened to the old values, or was I brought up to believe in a myth? I was able to predict all this in July 1986, when I raised this matter on three occasions in the House of Commons—on 14, 21 and 25 July. I did so with the single intention of smashing the injunction that was pending against *The Observer* and *The Guardian* newspapers. I did it by reading into *Hansard* the Cathy Massiter evidence. I wanted to secure an open debate without the courts breathing down the neck of Fleet Street, because I believed that this affair was not about not the Hollis affair, or about security officers publishing their memoirs, but about one issue — the allegation that attempts had been made to undermine the Wilson Government by security officers.

It is the biggest political scandal of this century. It is a story of collusion between the British Right and the security services. It surpasses in importance the Zinoviev letter which effectively sealed the fate of the Labour Government in the 1920s. To quote "Man and an institution — Sir Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet Secretariat and the Custody of Cabinet Secrecy" by Mr. J. F. Naylor, published by the Cambridge University Press, on the Zinoviev letter he said:

"there is no longer room for doubt that 'the political bomb which exploded in the last days of the Labour Government was planted by the intelligence community' . . . the 'Zinoviev letter' was deliberately manipulated by a number of hands to secure a political end, namely Labour's defeat at the polls . . . from a historical perspective, the shocking aspect of the sordid electoral proceedings is the joint intrigue of the intelligence community with leading Tory party officials, including the chairman, Sir Stanley Jackson, and the treasurer, Lord Younger, to ensure the publication of a document bound to influence the latter stages of the campaign."

It happened then, it happened in the 1960s and in the 1970s and it will happen again, unless we intervene. Down the years, there have been repeated reports of collusion. Today I want to concentrate not on collusion but on the specific issue of the interfence by the security services with the Labour party and the Government of that time.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): Has the hon. Gentleman had time to study the *Official Report* of 8 December 1977 when the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) said:

"The Prime Minister has conducted detailed inquiries into the recent allegations about the Security Service and is satisfied that they do not constitute grounds for lack of confidence in the competence and impartiality of the Security Services".—[*Official Report*, 8 December 1977; Vol. 940, c. 1645.]

Is the hon. Gentleman saying that what was said by his right hon. Friend was not true?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I shall send the hon. Gentleman a copy of the whole statement by my right hon. Friend. The hon. Gentleman proves once again the need for me to finish my contribution, because I intend to deal with these matters. The hon. Gentleman should not be so impetuous.

On 12 May 1977 Mr. Barry Penrose and Mr. Roger Courtiour were summoned by Mr. Harold Wilson to his house in Lord North street. During that conversation he set out in detail and at subsequent meetings his allegations against the security services. "The Pencourt File", a book that was published about these matters, said:

"Sir Harold spoke in detail about the burglaries that he and some of his Labour colleagues in the Government had suffered. He spoke too about the extraordinary 'dirty tricks' which he said had been aimed against some of his Ministers in order to discredit them. He said the culprits were connected with South Africa and with intelligence circles in Britain itself. There was an important story to be investigated, he said, and more than once he used the name Watergate to describe what had been happening in Britain."

Sir Harold is quoted as saying:

"I am not certain that for the last eight months when I was Prime Minister I knew what was happening fully, in Security".

The book goes on:

"He"—

Sir Harold—

"really would not rule out the possibility that individuals working inside MI5, and even MI6, had contributed to the 'smears' which, he complained, had frequently appeared in the Press and elsewhere while he had been at Number 10".

That is all on tape and available today to be heard by those who want to know the truth of what happened in that period because those two journalists made a point of taping what they were listening to.

Mr. Chapman Pincher, who will feature later in my contribution, also had much to say on these matters. In his book, "Inside Story" he said:

"Wilson was reported as having accused certain officers of MI5 of having tried to undermine him and his government. He was quoted as believing that some of the disaffected faction in MI5 with extreme right-wing views' had even suggested that there was a Communist cell in the Cabinet and that he and Lady Falklender, his political secretetary, formerly Mrs Marcia Williams, were part of it."

Mr. Pincher went on:

"I have confirmed that these were indeed Sir Harold's views and that long before his feelings about MI5 became public knowledge he had been in the habit of sounding off about them in private . . . This had come to my notice when a most eminent Oxford Professor wrote to me to describe what had happened at a literary lunch he had attended in Leeds in January 1977. 'I happened to sit next to Sir Harold . . . He told me that MI5 had spied on him when he was Prime Minister, plotted against him, tried to secure his downfall. I was embarrassed by this conversation. Finally, I said "But isn't MI5 under the Prime Minister?" He replied, "Oh yes, on paper, but that didn't make any difference."'"

Mr. Pincher went on:

"Some of Wilson's friends also told me that he had gone much further in his condemnation of MI5 in conversations with them."

There is much in Mr. Pincher's book on these matters and I do not want to detain the House by quoting them because they are there to read for all who are interested in these matters.

There were a number of articles in the newspapers at the time. I have a file of articles in the British press, and, in particular, from *The Times*, which sought to take these allegations seriously and published much material. Indeed, it did further investigative work.

We also have the words of Mr. Nigel West — Mr. Rupert Allason, the Conservative candidate to whom I have referred — who commented on a plot which took place in the 1960s. He said:

"It seems that an invitation extended by Lord Mountbatten to various public figures, to engage in talks to discuss the country's decline under Socialism, led to allegations to MI5 of an attempted coup d'état."

Sir Martin Furnival Jones comments on those in an interview with reporters on *The Times*, much of which is also available today, in a form of which he may not be aware.

All those attempts involved security officers. Indeed, the discussions on the allegations that we hear today of what took place in the 1960s involved, to some extent, the same officers who were involved in the 1970s.

The only dissenting view on these matters is the voice of Mr. Joe Haines, a very reputable journalist on the *Daily Mirror*, but I am told that Mr. Haines has had his differences with Lord Wilson and it might be that those differences account in some part for the varying views on these matters.

The question is, why was not Lord Wilson taken seriously at the time? The first reason is that the whole issue was overshadowed by the Thorpe affair which dominated Parliament for months and prevented a realistic debate from taking place on security matters. At a time when even reference to the security services was frowned upon in the House, it was seen as the accusation of a retiring politician and Prime Minister. When it was raised in the early 1980s it was once again crowded out by the debate on the Hollis affair and Blunt. Now there is a distinction, a difference, and that is because Mr. Wright has surfaced. He is directly involved in these allegations and is the first security officer to whom I give full credence on these matters. He says that he was involved and that, to some extent, he masterminded the operation. He speaks about

"burgling and bugging all over London."

We cannot quote directly from Mr. Wright's manuscript, but we know that by one means or another over the past one and a half years parts of it have come into the hands of the media in Australia and especially into the hands of freelance journalists in New South Wales. That was before the matter became an issue of public controversy.

The matter is of immense importance because the allegations strike at the heart of our democratic institutions. The assumption that everyone plays by the Queensberry rules has been shattered. The implications go far wider because, if we look at Zinoviev, the 1968 discussions about a coup and the 1975 discussions about a coup—erhaps in some ways irrelevant but nevertheless important — we see the destabilisation of a Labour Government. One has to ask what could happen to a future Labour Government. Could this happen again? If there is any chance of it happening again, Parliament has a duty to act fast.

Where dos this stop? The security services could effectively assassinate the character of any politician, and we all know how. Indeed, they could assassinate this Prime Minister by way of rumour and innuendo. The Prime Minister has not the persuasion of my hon. Friends, but in many quarters she is seen as radical in her own way, and all radical Prime Ministers and politicians are threatened by a security service which, in defence of the interests of the establishment, might choose to take action to destabilise its Government. There is a special responsibility on the Prime Minister to act because over the past few years she has upset many interests in Britain. If those interests sought to destroy her, they could do it and the Prime Minister must know that.

The hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) has referred to the response by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan). The hon. Gentleman came in to make an intervention and now he has disappeared to have his press conferece. We know what happened in the inquiry that the hon. Gentleman spoke about. It was small and drew its information from a few people. My right hon. Friend took soundings from the director-general of MI5 and MI6, the very organisations which we now condemn for irresponsible acts. At that time I do not think that my right hon. Friend was fully aware of the implications of the accusation by Sir Harold Wilson. I am sure that he did his job within the confines of his being responsible for the security services.

If my right hon. Friend were faced with that decision today, I feel sure that he would undertake a far more detailed and profound inquiry. That is what would happen

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

in the United States of America in the event of such allegations being made there. If such allegations were raised in the United States, Congressional committees of inquiry would be set up to examine them. That is what happened over Watergate, and it is happening today over the supply of weapons to Iran. When Americans feel that their constitution is being challenged by anti-democratic bodies, the first thing they do is to bring into action their Congressional investigative committees to establish the truth. That is the sort of thing that we should do. If such an inquiry were held here, it would reveal the truth. That is at the heart of the first part of the motion. Such an inquiry could well take us down some strange routes and could lead to some interesting doors.

The inquiry would have to take evidence from a number of organisations and individuals. It would need to take evidence from Sir Martin Furnival Jones, the former head of MI5, and from MI5 and MI6 officers, including Mr. Wright, if he could be induced to come back to the United Kingdom. It might even have to take evidence from General Sir Walter Walker about civil assistance, and from David Stirling's GB75—and what about the elusive Mr. Greenwood, with his so-called 700 security vetted members, or perhaps from Mr. G. K. Young, a former deputy director of MI6 and his UNISON committee for action?

At first glimpse they may not appear to be elements within MI5, but these fringe organisations operated in conjunction with MI5 officers. That is what an inquiry would establish. Indeed, it might establish that some of the people involved were in the mainstream of British politics. As I have said, two Conservative hon. Members are identified by Mr. Wright.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Does my hon. Friend agree that Field-Marshal Lord Carver, who was Chief of the Defence Staff at that time, said that in February 1974 some Army officers at Army headquarters were talking about the possibility of military intervention? That talk was condemned by Field-Marshal Lord Carver, because he would have been the last person to show any disloyalty to Britain and its democratic institutions. Is my hon. Friend aware that, when I raised these matters in the House, among those who pooh-poohed the whole business was the hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow), who I understand had some MI5 connections in the past?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I do not know of the connections about which my hon. Friend speaks. All such matters would be dealt with exhaustively by a judicial inquiry, if one were set up. It would establish the truth, because we need to know the truth. We need to know the connection between the Conservative party, the security services and these private armies, because that is most embarrassing to the Government. Perhaps that accounts for the Prime Minister's refusal to allow the Wilson allegation transcripts to come out in the Australian courts. The Government allowed the transcripts about Hollis to come out, but they blocked the transcripts about the Wilson allegations. Ministers should tell us why they did that. We need a judicial inquiry and it ought to have most of its hearings in open session, because the matters that I have spoken about have implications for our democratic system.

I should now like to turn to the Official Secrets Act, the reforms sought in my motion, and the matter of lifetime obligations of confidentiality to the Crown. Ministers have frequently spoken about that. Ever since I first heard the allegations by Mr. Wright, my overriding objective has been to destroy the case in the Australian court. That is not because I have any sympathy for Wright; on the contrary, to sell information to Summerpage was an act of treachery, and it was equally treacherous of Pincher to buy it.

Lord Rothschild's role becomes more mystifying day by day, but a lot has still to come out. I have asked for prosecutions under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act, because that section makes it an offence to incite and persuade civil servants to provide information which is officially secret.

When Pincher and Allason appear on television slagging me off and protesting their innocence over section 2 inquiries and hiding behind Treasury solicitors and D notice authorisations, they are missing the point. I am asking for their prosecution not under section 2 of the 1911 Act, but under section 7 of the 1920 Act. No authority can authorise illegality under that Act. I am about to table a parliamentary question asking for the prosecution, under section 7, of Rupert Allason, prospective Conservative parliamentary candidate for Torbay, for soliciting, inciting and persuading Mr. Arthur Martin, the MI6 officer to whom I have referred, to provide information for his book "A Matter of Trust".

As I have said, Mr. Martin was a Clerk in the House of Commons until 1981. He was Clerk to the Agriculture Select Committee and I am told that he was a pleasant character. He was a member of MI6, and the House is entitled to know what was the relationship between Mr. Arthur Martin and MI6 while he was a Clerk to the House. It was Martin who confronted Blunt with the allegation that he was a spy, and he debriefed him. Martin was a key figure in MI5 and later MI6. I find it curious that no mention of him was made in any book on the security services until the beginning of 1981, after his retirement from the House of Commons, and then in Pincher's book. There was no reference in Pincher's book "Inside Story" in 1978, but Martin left MI6 in 1974, or thereabouts. For whom was Martin working when he was working in the House of Commons? We are entitled to know. Is there an MI6 man in the House of Commons today?

The House will know that I have been the subject of repeated accusations of irresponsibility in naming names. Only those in the Press Gallery know how careful I have been not to breach national security in my campaign. My bid to destroy the case was not only to secure the publication of the Wilson allegations but to focus on the nonsense of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act and the inconsistency in that Act. This meant that I had to name names. All the names that I have tabled on the Order Paper are of people who have surfaced themselves and made statements publicly, thereby declaring their interest and identifying themselves as former security officers. They have all broken section 2 of the Official Secrets Act in talking to journalists and authors. All their names are to be found in books available in every public library in the United Kingdom that cares to stock them.

I tabled the names to show the inconsistency in the Government's position. I had 43 names the other week. I have tabled two since and I have a further 41. I have no desire to carry on tabling names, but what does one do

with those people who have broken the law? Does one ignore them, as the Government seem to have been doing over the past few years? The Government's position is totally inconsistent. It is inconsistent to drag Mr. Wright through the courts while ignoring others in the intelligence community who have leaked information. I have been tabling their names, and it has been interesting to see the Government's response. The names have either been referred to the Metropolitan Police for their investigation or drawn to the attention of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Government have admitted that prosecutions are now being considered. Inquiries have been set up as a result of names that I have tabled and letters of reprimand have been sent out to former security officers. So much for the allegations of irresponsibility tabled against me.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Surely the point that my hon. Friend is making is that the Government are wrong in doing what they are doing. That does not mean that peoole who have given evidence and declared what they were should be prosecuted, because, if we do that, we would be no better than the Government.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend is correct. I have tried to explain that my campaign is to show inconsistency. One must table questions to draw attention to those who have not been prosecuted.

Mr. Heffer: It is one thing to table questions, and another to argue for prosecution.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend takes the words out of my mouth.

Who are the rest of the security officers? West, or Mr. Allason, in "A Matter of Trust" says:

"Meticulous research backed by hundreds of hours of interviews with agents, double agents and case officers has resulted in answers to these compelling questions."

He was interviewing agents and people in the security services, to whom, somehow, he had access. Every one of those agents, in speaking to Allason, broke the law, but the Government took no action.

In Pincher's book "Too Secret Too Long" one is able to identify 32 MI5 and MI6 sources, but what action did the Government take against those sources when they fed Mr. Pincher, a high-ranking member of the Conservative Party? In the book "Conspiracy of Silence", Penrose and Freeman identify 18 officers, all of whom are quoted. All 18 are quoted in default of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, but there has been no action by the Government. I asked the Government what action had been taken under section 2 to silence them, and the answer was none.

In all three cases, no action to prosecute was taken, because the Government gave clearance to the books and in doing so sanctioned leaks from officers. They would never have given clearance for those books unless they had been sanctioning leaks from officers. That is why I tabled a question, to which I have just received an answer from the Secretary of State for Defence, about the operation of the D notice committee. He tells me that he is not in a position to answer questions as to criterion considered and work carried out by that committee. The Government replied that Wright is a former MI5 employee. Are former MI5 employees bound by lifetime obligations to the Crown? If that is true, how did they respond to Friday's letter to the editor in *The Times* from Mr. Pincher, in which he said:

"I have never paid Mr. Wright anything. Mr. Wright received royalties on a jointly-authored book".

Mr. Pincher now says that Mr. Wright was the author of the book. Last Monday, in a BBC transmission, Mr. Pincher said that he had received approval from the highest levels of the Government. The Government, in the words of Mr. Pincher, if he is to be believed, sanctioned a book by a former MI5 officer. It might be that Mr. Pincher is so worried about the questions I have tabled calling for his prosecution under section 7 for paying money to Mr. Wright that he is wriggling so much that he is now having to mislead the British media into believing that his role was not quite what Parliament is being told and what Ministers are saying behind cupped hands behind closed doors. He is wriggling, and it is interesting to see the way in which he is responding.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): Does my hon. Friend agree that the revelation by Chapman Pincher in the letter on Friday is incredibly hard to reconcile with the Attorney-General's comment

"the idea that we can allow officers or ex-officers of the security services to write books would probably end with us not having any important secrets which should be preserved." —[*Official Report*, 1 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. 620.]

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My right hon. Friend draws attention again to an inconsistency, but then this whole affair is riddled with inconsistencies, and that is why we want to change the law. All these matters would come out if there were some form of inquiry for, in that case, there were in existence the scrutiny arrangements which were the subject of debate only a week and a half ago in the House of Commons.

Many books have been produced by security officers. For example, there is "Handbook for Spies" by Courtney Young and Michael Serpell, both MI5 officers. That book was written on the request of Sir Percy Sillitoe, the director general of MI5. "Cloak without Dagger" was written by Sir Percy Sillitoe with the help of Russell Lee, another MI5 officer. I am told that the journalist, Andrew Boyle, is currently researching a biography of Sir Dick White, another former director-general of MI5. What does the Minister intend to do about that book? It may be that it should come into the public domain. We should like to hear what the Minister has to say about that. I am sure that those in Australia want to hear what he has to say about these matters. It is a pity that those involved in the Peter Wright case are summing up now and not examining these matters in evidence.

"A Man Called Intrepid" is the biography of Sir William Stephenson, a former head of intelligence. It was written by Hartford Montgomery Hyde, another intelligence officer. Hyde wrote another book entitled "The Quiet Canadian", and included the name of the chief of the British secret intelligence service, Sir Stewart Menzies. He obtained official permission to do so. Sir John Masterman wrote "The Double Cross System". As a former MI5 officer he obtained permission from the Government to publish the book in the early 1970s. I am told that that permission was obtained from a Government of whom the Minister was a member. Perhaps he will deal with that when he replies.

Another example is the interesting book which was written by Mr. John Moe which I dug out of the woodwork for the Minister the other week. The book was published only nine weeks ago, and when I tabled a question about it I received the famous blocking answer

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

that it would be inappropriate to discuss how the book was published while proceedings are going on in the Australian courts. That book, which was written by a security officer, has been made available in British shops.

I brought Joan Miller's book into the public domain, and when I tabled a question about it the Government decided in desperation and in haste to run to the Irish courts to take out an injunction. A lady judge of the Irish courts gave them a good smack in the face. She realised that it was a lot of nonsense for the Government to apply——

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): A lot of baloney.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That seems to be the in term today.

I have mentioned only some of the many books which have been written and published over the years. I have a list of them which came off the computer of the House of Commons. It has become fashionable to hold up in the Chamber lists which have come from Library computers for relating to party conferences, for example. These books all include statements by security officers or are drawn on their experiences, and all these officers have over the years broken the nonsensical law that exists.

The Government have turned a blind eye to these happenings——

Mr. Heffer: My hon. Friend may not like this, but of great importance is a book written by Sir Paul Dukes about the secret service operations in the Soviet Union at the end of the first world war. I think that it was published in 1933. It is something that the Government have forgotten. Indeed, most people have forgotten about it.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend is right. I saw him studying the papers on these matters last week when he was sitting next to me in the Chamber. He has provided another example which goes back 40 or 50 years. I did not introduce it because I felt that it was important to introduce contemporary material.

Another interesting name is David Cornwall. I am told that he is known otherwise as John Le Carré. I am sure that I shall be corrected if I am wrong. I am told also that he is a former MI6 officer—a former section chief in Berlin. Under the guise of novels he has released a substantial amount of information on what Mr. Wright has referred to as tradecraft, which is an interesting term.

The Government's policy is being applied inconsistently. Certain writers are given the green light, most notably Pincher and Allason. What is Chapman Pincher's relationship with MI5 and MI6? In my view, it is questionable to say the least. We know that he is a prominent Conservative, but, putting that aside, he claims a friendship with a former director-general of MI6, Maurice Oldfield. He claims to know innumerable members of the security services.

The Prime Minister used Chapman Pincher to deal with the Hollis allegations, and the right hon. Lady's statement of 26 March 1981 is a classic. It was as if she were introducing a Green Paper or White Paper. She said:

"Mr. Speaker, with permission, I will make a statement about the security implications of the book published today that purports to give a detailed account of the investigations into the penetration of the Security Service and other parts of the public service"—[*Official Report*, 26 March 1981; Vol. 1, c. 1079.]

In other words, the Prime Minister waited for the publication of the book, and on the very day that it came into the public domain she made a statement in the House. I say that the Prime Minister's hand is behind the book that was published by Pincher. If Pincher is right in what he wrote in his article that appeared in *The Times* last week, the right hon. Lady has sanctioned a breach of the law. Some might say that she, too, should be prosecuted.

I believe that Mr. Chapman Pincher is very close to some elements in MI5, and so close that a deal was stitched up to ensure that his book was published. It was Bernard Sheldon, a junior solicitor in MI5 for the Security Service—I do not know whether he was in MI6—who cleared the book. We learn so much from that. If Pincher did not know that he was getting the green light, he certainly knew that by the beginning of 1981.

I know that Mr. Pincher denies that that was the position, but anyone reading the *Sunday Express* over these past weeks, however — it has been delightful reading—will take all that he has to say with a pinch of salt. His predictions do not come true. He was writing only a few days ago about how my hon. Friends and I were being used by Mr. Turnbull. He claimed that all would be revealed when Mr. Wright went into the witness box. We know now that nothing happened. Readers of the *Daily Express* and the *Sunday Express* are entitled to know what went wrong with his predictions.

What of Mr. Allason's relations with MI5 and MI6? His relationship is especially interesting. His book, "A Matter of Trust" is an encyclopaedia of information on the security services. At the front of his book there is a plan which sets out the structure of MI5 until 1965, which I hold up for the House to see. How did Allason obtain that information? How did he know what was going on internally? We know that the Government sanctioned the book, because the Attorney-General told us that he had done so. It seems that all the obstacles were cleared. The Government made a few amendments and removed a few names, but all the material contained in the book came into the public domain. I am not saying that it is wrong that this information should be made available publicly, but as the law stands it should not be made available publicly. We know, however, that there were no prosecutions. If the Government are willing to allow that material into the public domain, they should change the law. In providing the information they know that security officers have broken section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, yet they are refusing to take action.

Hundreds of names were deleted from Mr. Allason's book, but having written it he was invited by MI6 to write another, and it was quickly produced. Indeed, it seems that someone in the background must have been writing it for him. I am told that it was produced in only a few months, yet it dealt once again in great detail with the internal workings of MI6 during a crucial period of its existence.

Perhaps even more remarkable is Mr. Allason's book that is entitled "GCHQ". It seems to be a compendium of signals intelligence from the second world war to the present day. How did he get that information? Has someone been leaking? If someone has been leaking, why have prosecutions not been brought under the Act which the Government know is not working in the way that, many years ago, was intended by Parliament?

Every author in this business wants to know how Mr. Allason gets his material. He is being systematically fed. This is no ordinary researching effort by Mr. Allason.

Could it be his Tory connections, and the fact that he stood in two general elections as a Tory candidate and today stands for the constituency of Torbay? He seems to know more about security services successes than failures, which leads me to believe that he is being fed from on high, and not just my Mr. Arthur Martin, the former Clerk to the House of Commons. I want to know to what extent he was involved in revealing to MI5 Mr. Wright's intention to write a book. The *Sunday People*, as it is now, published a letter about that matter some years ago. Did he give advance warning to MI5? If he did, why? What was his motive? He has become the unofficial spokesman for the security services, with some form of special access, and with some form of special immunity from prosecution given not only to him but to his sources.

The Attorney-General's position confounds me. I cannot understand how he survives politically. From Wright's letter to Pincher, we know that he revealed the innermost considerations of his office on why Allason should not be prosecuted and also told him of Martin's indiscretions in revealing classified information. The Attorney-General himself breached section 2. The Government responded by claiming self-authorisation as a defence. That is rubbish. It does not justify what he did. I have read every word on self-authorisation, including Franks. Self-authorisation is permissible only when it is part of one's duty, as a Minister in this case, to reveal information. Pincher had no right to that information; he had no duties in regard to it. He had no responsibility to receive it, but he was given it by the Attorney-General. Under section 2, the Attorney-General had a responsibility to prosecute Pincher for revealing that that which Armstrong said in the Australian Court breached security.

The story is sordid and squalid. It is a cover-up of the Attorney-General's position. A Labour Attorney-General would not be allowed to get away with it. I am told that the Attorney-General is desperate for the Woolsack. How desperate can a man be for his 30 pieces of silver? History will judge him harshly.

I have had two objectives in this campaign. They have been to secure the Wilson revelations, to ensure that they were made public, and to show the deficiencies in the Official Secrets Act. We need a more open, accountable, yet effective security regime. We should seek to protect information of operational importance and information which, if published, would be prejudicial to national security.

We should have followed closely the American system. In the United States of America, the director of the CIA appears on television. His office location is not a national secret. The CIA is so open that, only last year, Stansfield Turner, a former head of the CIA, was able to publish his memoirs. Indeed, 400 former CIA security service officers have published articles and books. They have all published works with authorisation from the CIA management review board. If a system can be set up in America that allows those people to write books and to ensure that they are published, surely we can set up a similar system, particularly if we have the scrutiny committee for which my hon. Friends have called.

Over the past weeks, I have been repeatedly asked what I should have done in the case of Mr. Wright. Under existing law, the Government have an obligation to make stick the lifetime oath of confidentiality and to use injunctions and the Official Secrets Act for the protection of official secrets of a national security nature — only those. But the law should have been applied to all. It was not. That means no selection and no special favours because of connections. In so far as the Government have turned a blind eye to the law for years, it simply cannot be justifiable for them to take action against Wright's book, particularly when Turnbull, when he came to London, offered the Treasury Solicitor a deal that would have erased from the book any references to Security Service activities of a sensitive nature affecting the security of the nation. Under existing law and in the light of Government practice over years, the Government should have done a deal with Turnbull. Under the law as it should be, that is to say with the repeal of Section 2 and the retention of the body of section 1, a freedom of information Act in place, and the proper definition of classified material of a national security nature — which should be defined as information of operational importance which, if revealed, would be prejudicial to national security — Wright would have been able to publish. He would have had to secure clearance of sensitive material and delete, where necessary, on the instructions of a security clearance committee, but he would have been able to publish, particularly his allegations on Wilson.

I have written to the Prime Minister, asking her to ensure that that part of the book that deals with the allegations against the security services involving Wilson is published, irrespective of what happens in the Australian courts. There is no reason why that information should not be brought into the public domain this week. The great British public want to know the truth. They want to know whether it is true that a small group of people set out to undermine a democratically elected Government.

Mr. Williams: I am sorry to interrupt my hon. Friend, but this is a critical point. Does he agree that we are here to discuss not just the contents of the book but one of the major offences that can be committed under our law — the act of sedition? "Halsbury's Laws of England" states:

> "Sedition in the common law means acts done, words spoken and published or writings published with a seditious intention, that is an intention (1) to bring into hatred or contempt, or to excite disaffection against, the Sovereign or the Government".

In his book, Wright admitted that he and his colleagues were guilty of sedition against the then Labour Administration. In those circumstances, it is beyond credibility that the Government do not set up some form of investigation.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The law must apply equally to all — the highest and the lowest in the land. That is what the public want. We do not want special treatment of certain people. We want the law to apply to everyone. If the law is an ass, repeal it.

4.39 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Waddington): The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) asked what had happened to the old values. Having heard his speech, many of us may be asking ourselves that same question — what, indeed, has happened to the old values?

The hon. Gentleman is entitled to say that the House should be indebted to him for using this opportunity to debate these matters. I do not cavil at his having selected this matter for debate. We should be grateful to him for being so delightfully frank with us.

[Mr. David Waddington]

The hon. Gentleman said that the explanation for his behaviour over recent weeks was that he had one overriding objective — to destroy the case in the Australian courts. That case was brought by the British Government to preserve the principle that a person employed by the security services has a life-long duty of confidentiality, which, if my understanding is right, the hon. Gentleman acknowledged at the close of his speech. That has been the hon. Gentleman's ambition. Some of us may think that it is a curious ambition to set out to destroy the British Government's case in the Australian courts, but at least it is as well that the British public know.

I should think that almost everyone in the country accepts that we have to have a security service—that it is a crucial element in the safety and security of the people. I should think that there is also a general agreement that the responsibilities of the Security Service cannot be carried out effectively in a blaze of publicity. That is why it has been the general policy of successive Governments not to comment on the operation of the Security Service, even if it means that false and misleading allegations have to go unanswered. But I think that we ought to bear it in mind that, when wild allegations are made and not answered, it must be very disheartening and dispiriting for the people working in the service in our interest.

The present director-general is known personally to some in the House. He is a man of considerable breadth of experience and, as those who know him will agree, a man of quite unshakeable personal integrity. He is supported by a staff who are scrupulously careful in their role as defined by the directive. The staff do not and cannot receive public and detailed recognition for their work: but I do hope that among all today's controversies about what happened some time ago, the House will not treat lightly the debt that we owe to today's members of the Security Service. Unfortunately, one sometimes wonders, when listening to contributions by Opposition Members, what has happened to the old values.

Mr. Winnick: No one would dispute the need for a security service, especially in the fight against terrorism, and so on. I have previously paid tribute to the Security Service in that role. However, is there not a sharp distinction to be made between the legitimate work of a security service in a democratic society and otherwise? Miss Cathy Massiter, who worked for the MI5, said that the National Council for Civil Liberties was under active inquiries by MI5, and that anyone who was on the executive council of that organisation or who worked for it had a file in MI5, including, apparently my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), who, prior to coming to the House, was the legal officer of that organisation. While recognising that the Security Service overall plays an important role in safeguarding the security of our state, what possible justification can there be for such activities?

Mr. Waddington: Before the hon. Gentleman made those allegations, he must have known that I would do no more than other Ministers have done, whatever party they have belonged to, and whatever Government have been in power, and that is to observe the convention — the purpose of which is obvious to all of us—that Ministers do not allow themselves to be drawn into comments on allegations of that nature.

Mr. Heffer: I should like to draw the Minister's attention to a programme on Granada television on which he and I appeared many years ago, and on which he suggested that I and all members of the Tribune Group in those days were agents of the Soviet Union. I do not accept his position at all.

Mr. Waddington: I did not say anything of the sort. I remember that meeting clearly. It was in Rossendale town hall. During that meeting, I had cause to say that I doubted the complete conviction on the part of all members of the Labour party that our parliamentary democracy was the right form of government, and the hon. Gentleman was very cross with me — *[Interruption.]* I am only answering the hon. Gentleman. He was very cross with me. That is what happened.

The well-established policy of not commenting on the operation of the Security Service has been followed by successive Governments, but I can comment on the part of the motion of the hon. Member for Workington calling for the setting up of

"a judicial enquiry to examine circumstances surrounding alleged attempts by officers of the security services to subvert the government of Lord Wilson of Rievaulx in the 1970s."

I can comment because the allegation was dealt with long ago — during the period in office of the previous Labour Government, whom the hon. Gentleman supported.

I have to remind the House of the statement by the then Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), on 23 August 1977, which was referred to in the House on 8 October 1977 and is set out in the amendment on the Order Paper in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind). During a reply to an intervention by my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames), the hon. Member for Workington said that my hon. Friend had not read out the whole statement. Let me read it out now:

"The Prime Minister has conducted detailed inquiries into the recent allegations about the Security Service and is satisfied that they do not constitute grounds for lack of confidence in the competence and impartiality of the Security Service or for instituting a special enquiry. In particular, the Prime Minister is satisfied that at no time has the Security Service or any other British intelligence or security agency, either of its own accord or someone's request, undertaken electronic surveillance in No. 10 Downing Street or in the Prime Minister's room in the House of Commons."

In the House on 8 December 1977 the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth also said—this is of some importance in view of press comment over the weekend:

"My right hon. Friend"

—meaning the former Mr. Harold Wilson, now Lord Wilson—

"associated himself with the statement that I made". — [*Official Report*, 8 December 1977; Vol. 940, c. 1644.]

It is necessary to add only one thing. It is necessary because of some of the wilder comments made this afternoon about officers being beyond the law. No one is above the law in this country, and members of the Security Service are no more immune from prosecution than anyone else if they commit criminal offences.

The Security Service operates under the directive issued to the director-general by the then Home Secretary, Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, in 1952. The directive was made public in paragraph 238 of Lord Denning's report and still applies today. It makes the director-general personally responsible to the Home Secretary for the proper and

efficient implementation of the tasks set out in the directive, and it is through that relationship that ministerial control is exercised. The director-general is expected to seek direction and guidance from the Home Secretary as to the way in which the service goes about its business. But with one exception, the Home Secretary does not concern himself with particular operations. That one exception is when an interception warrant is sought, when of course the Home Secretary must be given sufficient supporting information for him to judge whether the application comes within the established criteria. But in general the Home Secretary is not concerned with particular cases. As paragraph 6 of the directive makes clear:

"Ministers do not concern themselves with the detailed information which may be obtained by the Security Service in particular cases, but are furnished with such information only as may be necessary for the determination of any issue on which guidance is sought."

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): The hon. and learned Gentleman has referred to the statement of 8 December 1977 with which, of course, I was associated. That statement refers to a detailed inquiry. I know the nature of that inquiry. A Minister of State in the Home Office—I make this point only to clarify the facts—is not briefed on security matters. What the Minister of State is reading has been supplied to him. That is true of all Ministers of State.

I am concerned about whether Wright's allegations were investigated at that time. They have been made more recently. They infuriate me because I stand by MI5. I know many of its members. They have served me well. I am angered that a small group under a man such as Wright, of little political intelligence, should now write a book saying that this sort of thing was taking place. I want the hon. and learned Gentleman to tell me not what was investigated then—I accepted that in good faith—but that Wright's allegations were investigated then. If they were not, surely they should be looked at afresh, or I, at least, was fooled at that time. I want the matter cleared up.

Mr. Waddington: I want to make absolutely clear the context in which I read that extract from *Hansard* and referred to that statement. In ordinary circumstances, no Minister would stand at the Dispatch Box and answer allegations about what is or what is not in a book which is or is not going to be published. The only reason why I read that statement is that I am in the rare position of being able to answer some of the allegations which have now been made in the press because a specific statement was made in the House about them. I do not put the matter higher than that. I am in no position to argue with the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) as to what is or what is not made known to a Minister of State in the Home Office. I am entitled to tell the whole House what the Prime Minister of the day told the House at the time about those allegations, which was precisely what I said this afternoon—that the allegations had been investigated and had been found wanting.

Mr. Merlyn Rees: I am grateful to the Minister. Given what I said about MI5, for which I accept full responsibility during my time as Minister, in the terms of the remit which we were given, I again ask: is the hon. and learned Gentleman saying that he has found out that the allegations—they are no more than allegations and it will all come out—made by Wright in a book were covered in 1977? That is all that I want to know.

Mr. Waddington: The House may or may not at some future time wish to return to some of these matters. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I do not know why hon. Members express such surprise. They would have been surprised if I, a Minister of State in the Home Office, was the first Minister of any Government to stand at the Dispatch Box to answer questions put in a debate of this nature about the contents of a book that has not yet been published. The right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South may have his fun, but he knows what the answer has to be because it is that which would be given by any Minister of any Government.

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): I understand what the Minister is saying, but, basically, it adds up to the fact that he does not know. We understand that. The powerful intervention by my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), speaking as a former Home Secretary, must carry a lot of weight. Will the hon. and learned Gentleman undertake to ask the Home Secretary in the near future to answer my right hon. Friend's question?

Mr. Waddington: I was not saying that I do not know, although the truth may well be that I do not know. I was giving the classic answer that, whether I had known or had not known, I certainly would not have disclosed the matter, even to the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South, whom I much admire, as he knows.

I was referring to the passage in the directive that explains that Ministers do not concern themselves with the detailed information which may be obtained by the Security Service in particular cases. There are good reasons for that policy. The Security Service is not, as some have alleged, in the business of obtaining information on behalf of the Government. It is there to protect the state against external and internal dangers, and must, as the directive makes clear, do this in a way that avoids any suggestion that it is concerned with any matter other than the defence of the realm as a whole. There must be no political bias or influence in its work. That is why the operational judgments must be for the director-general to make. If he gets them wrong, and the safety of the state is jeopardised or civil liberties unjustifiably infringed, he must answer to the Home Secretary.

Mr. Heffer: I am sorry to keep interrupting the Minister, but will he now explain who determines the internal enemies? Who lays that down? Surely that must be a political decision. If it is not, who says who are the internal enemies—a Labour Government or members of Cabinet?

Mr. Waddington: I am afraid that I must bore the hon. Gentleman by referring him to the statement made by Lord Harris of Greenwich, a Minister of the Labour Government in 1975, who gave the classic definition of "subversion", which is by way of a direction to the Security Service. Subversion means:

"activities which threaten the safety or well-being of the State, and which are intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means".

[Mr. Waddington]

That definition was closely examined by the Home Affairs Committee in last year's inquiry into the Special Branch. The Committee agreed that the definition was broadly correct.

The director-general is personally responsible to the Home Secretary but it is also well established that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister concerns herself with major Security Service matters. The Maxwell Fyfe directive provided that the director-general must approach the Prime Minister on matters of supreme importance and delicacy; and my right hon. Friend amplified this role, in her statement on the Blunt case in November 1979, by stressing the Home Secretary's responsibility to inform the Prime Minister or make sure that the Prime Minister is informed, in that type of case. She added that, in practice, both the Home Secretary and she make a point of keeping in close touch with the director-general.

Some of those arguing for some form of external oversight——

Mr. Heffer: The enemy in the trade unions.

Mr. Waddington: I have been very generous in giving way. There is no point in the hon. Gentleman bawling from a sedentary position.

Some of those arguing for some form of external oversight seem to think that present arrangements for ministerial responsibility for these matters are static and uninformative. That is not so, and this Government can claim to have discharged their responsibilities to Parliament in as full and open a way as is consistent with the need to preserve national security—indeed, there has been greater openness under this Government than ever before.

On 21 November 1979, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made her statement on Blunt, deciding that it was right to confirm that Blunt was a Soviet agent, a fact of which previous Governments had been aware but had never informed Parliament. On 26 March 1981, the Prime Minister made a further statement on the implications of the Chapman Pincher book, "Their Trade is Treachery", indicating that the positive vetting procedures had not been reviewed since 1962 and that she had asked the Security Commission to review the security procedures and practices then followed in the public service and consider what changes were required.

In 1985, we came to Parliament and secured approval for the Interception of Communications Act which made unauthorised interception a criminal offence and, for the first time, provided a statutory and public framework for authorising practices of interception of communications which had, in fact, been carried out under the authority of Ministers of successive Governments for many years. That step hardly lends support to the story put about by some Labour Members that the Government have been unwilling to make any changes and have been less open even than their predecessors. The facts prove the reverse.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the Minister answer a very simple question? Why is he delaying telling Parliament whether Mr. Pincher will be prosecuted for paying Mr. Wright for information which he knew was classified?

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Gentleman knows the answer to that question as well. He would be the first to rise in his wrath if anything was said which suggested that the decision to prosecute was not for the Attorney-General alone.

There was then the report to the House by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on the results of the inquiry by the Security Commission into Bettaney. She made a full statement on the commission's criticisms and said that she and the Home Secretary were determined to see that action was taken to remedy management weakness within the Security Service.

The present director-general has devoted a major part of his time to that management task, particularly in relation to personnel. Earlier this year he put forward a report which the Prime Minister made available to the Security Commission, and the Security Commission has informed my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister of its approval of the more open style of management which the director-general has introduced throughout the service, and of the changes in procedure affecting the appraisal, posting and promotion of staff.

The commission also noted with approval that the vetting procedures were being improved, following the recruitment of more investigating officers, and that the division of responsibility between line management and the specialist personnel managers had been tackled and clarified. In short, the Security Commission considers that the director-general is to be congratulated on the way in which he has tackled the problems which it identified.

The record shows that this Government have been far more open and receptive to fresh ideas in this field of security than the Labour Government. The principle of ministerial responsibility has shown itself able to adapt to particular events and situations. Discussion is bound to continue, but we are not at present persuaded that any of the proposals for changes in the system so far put forward would provide marked advantages.

The public have a fairly clear view of these matters. They understand the need for a security service and they are, I believe, becoming impatient with those who wish to undermine that service by removing the confidentiality which must lie at its core. This is an area in which fair sounding compromises can be particularly dangerous. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary will maintain to the full their responsibility as the points of contact between the Security Service and this House. In a dangerous world we shall continue to do all that we can to preserve the integrity and the necessary confidentiality of that service.

Lastly, the motion calls for the repeal of official secrets legislation and its replacement by a new framework to protect official secrets and, in particular, official secrets in relation to national security.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Can the Minister tell the House whether the security officers who gave information to Mr. West broke the law?

Mr. Waddington: I have not the slightest intention of being drawn into that matter for the reason that I gave a short time ago. All Opposition Members who think about it for one moment will understand why Ministers have said that, in all circumstances, it is wrong for them to be drawn into discussion about what is or is not correct——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Did they break the law?

Mr. Waddington: ——about the various allegations made about the Security Service.

There is another reason why it is impossible for me to be forthcoming—it has already been stated. Whatever may be the sub judice law in Britain, we are still under the judge in Australia.

Mr. Tony Banks: But we are in England.

Mr. Waddington: We are now dealing with that part of the motion which calls for the repeal of official secrets legislation and its replacement by a new framework to protect official secrets, especially official secrets in relation to national security. We have to consider what that would entail.

I do not think that anyone seriously objects to section 1 of the Act, which is concerned essentially with spying, pure and simple. It is section 2 which has attracted the criticism, and it may be helpful if I remind the House of the background.

In 1971, the then Conservative Government appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Lord Franks to review the operation of section 2, and the committee's report recommended repeal and replacement of section 2 by an Official Information Act containing narrower and more specific provisions. The first category of information which the committee suggested should be protected was information relating to the defence or security of the realm, or to foreign relations or the currency or the reserves—information which had been classified on the ground that its authorised disclosure would cause serious injury to the interests of the nation.

Before any prosecution could have been undertaken, the responsible Minister would have had to confirm the classification personally, and the prosecution would have had to satisfy the court that the information fell within one of the prescribed categories and had been classified.

The committee also recommended that certain other categories of information should be protected if disclosed by a crown servant contrary to his official duty. These categories included information likely to be helpful in the commission of offences, all Cabinet documents irrespective of subject matter, information given to the Government by private individuals or concerns, or any information the disclosure of which was for private gain. The receipt of official information would have ceased to be an offence, but the unauthorised disclosure of such information would have remained one.

It was not until some six years after publication of the Franks report that the then Labour Government published, in July 1978, a White Paper setting out proposals for legislation, but when they did so their proposals were, broadly speaking, based on the Franks recommendations. I remind the House that the last part of today's motion suggests that new legislation should concentrate on matters relating to the nation's security. That reads rather oddly in view of the fact that both the Franks report and the Labour Government's White Paper made plain the obvious — that any replacement of section 2 would have to go far wider than national security and have, for instance, to guard against corruption and the commission of crime.

Mr. Merlyn Rees: The Minister is doing us a service by reminding us of what the Franks committee, of which I was a member, recommended. When, in October 1976, I announced that the Labour Government would follow the Franks report, the Attorney-General asked me to announce that he would not prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act except under the classification of secret and above. That was a profound step and thus, under the Labour Government, de facto, the Attorney-General carried out a major part of the Franks recommendations. That was the only reason for my speaking as an expert witness for Mr. Ponting—his was not a security matter, as the Government made clear. I made it clear that that was why he should not have been prosecuted under the Act, although I do not say that he should not have been dealt with in some other way because I do not like people who leak. Will the Minister ensure that those facts are included in Ministers' rubric in future?

Mr. Waddington: That came out at the time, but the right hon. Gentleman is perfectly within his rights to put that on record. However important it may be, it was not the matter with which I was dealing.

I was giving the history of the establishment of the Franks committee, its report, that it considered that any offence should go wider than releasing information about national security and the fact that when the Labour Government left office in 1979 no legislation had been introduced to implement the recommendations of the Franks report.

Unlike the Labour Government, which sat on the Franks report, this Government acted and the House knows what happened. The Protection of Official Information Bill which would have repealed section 2 of the 1911 Act and replaced it with provisions based broadly on Franks got its Second Reading in another place, but it was clear that there was not sufficient agreement to enable it to proceed further.

That potted history illustrates the whole difficulty. While it is easy to say that section 2 should be repealed, nobody has yet put forward proposals which would give both proper protection to matters which must be kept secret and seem likely to command a sufficient measure of agreement. No doubt the hon. Member for Workington and others will keep on trying. I did not think much of his effort today. But I wish he and some of his colleagues would be sufficiently frank and generous to admit that this Government, unlike their predecessor, the last Labour Government, have already tried and should be given credit for it as they should also be given credit for the Interception of Communications Act and the other steps which they have taken in this immensely difficult field of security since 1979.

5.11 pm

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has proved the substance of his motion well. Throughout his time spent on the issue he has shown, above all, first, that the Government have been incredibly inconsistent in their interpretation of the law and, secondly, the nonsense of the Official Secrets Act.

I would have been more impressed with the Minister's response if he had made it clear that the passage of the Interception of Communications Act 1985 was the result, not of a voluntary effort by the Government, but of a case at the Strasbourg court which forced the Government to act. I agree strongly with the Minister that the British public will not forgive people who undermine the effectiveness of the British security services. That is why the British public will not easily forgive the Government. Whatever else has been shown by this dreadful affair in

[Mr. Clive Soley]

Australia, it is that the way in which the Government have managed this and every previous case has severely damaged confidence in the security services.

My hon. Friend showed the Government's inconsistency. We recognise that the Minister is not the Attorney-General, but he is a lawyer and knows well that he, like any other hon. Member, can say whether he thinks that the law has been broken. It is almost impossible to conclude other than that Mr. Chapman Pincher's efforts have involved a breach of the law. It is a matter for the Attorney-General whether to prosecute and he must make several judgments to reach that conclusion, one of which is whether the law was breached. No one can reasonably conclude from anything that has come within the public domain that the law has not been broken.

One good result may arise from this sorry saga and that is that no hon. Member can seriously believe that the present way of controlling the security services will continue for much longer. I doubt whether it will continue beyond this Government. The Prime Minister will probably have to stick to the present method, but no other Prime Minister, political party or Government is likely to continue with a system that has brought the security services into such disarray in recent years.

The Government have got themselves into an acute mess because they tried to stop Mr. Wright's book being published. Yet, both MI5 and MI6 knew that Chapman Pincher was writing a book with MI5 help two months before — Sir Robert Armstrong has said — the Government knew. We understand from Mr. Chapman Pincher that Mr. Wright was a co-author who received royalties. If that is the case, clearly the law is being interpreted inconsistently.

MI5 and MI6 apparently released secret information without telling the Prime Minister. Sir Robert Armstrong is the principal adviser to the Prime Minister on security and intelligence matters, yet it appears that he did not know that information had been released. As he is the principal adviser to the Prime Minister, clearly we must assume that neither the Prime Minister nor the Home Secretary knew of that disclosure. If that is the case, what sort of accountability exists through Ministers to the House for the security services? The answer must be virtually none.

MI6 knew that Mr. Pincher's book would refer to allegations that Sir Roger Hollis was a Soviet agent. Worse still, Sir Robert was told that the advance copy of Mr. Pincher's book was obtained

"on conditions which made it impossible to take any action about it."

What does that imply and what did Ministers know about the way in which the copy was obtained? If they knew nothing, what sort of accountability exists through Ministers to the House?

The Government's actions have seriously damaged the security services and the way they work in the eyes of the public. Since 1979 the Government's approach has been a mass of confusion. Clive Ponting and Sarah Tisdall were treated differently. Cathy Massiter was treated differently again and there was an incredible mess over GCHQ. Few people knew how GCHQ operated until the Government tried to ban trade unions there. Now people throughout the world know more about the activities of GCHQ than ever before.

In 1979 the Prime Minister started by giving the House more information in advance and detailed information about the Blunt case. Yet in response to an intervention the Minister said that it would be wrong for Ministers to give detailed answers. In 1977, as Leader of the Opposition, she asked my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), then Prime Minister, for a statement on the bugging of Lord Wilson's office. Despite the fact that the Prime Minister, whom the Minister serves, asked for a full and detailed statement on the bugging of Lord Wilson's office in 1977, and in 1980 gave a detailed answer on Professor Blunt, the Minister has said that the Government do not want to give information.

As the Prime Minister and the Government got themselves into a series of confusing positions over Clive Ponting, Sarah Tisdall, GCHQ and others, they began to clam up. My hon. Friend the Member for Workington was absolutely right in saying that then the information came out in diverse ways, revealing in the worst possible way the contradictions and absurdities of the present legal position.

The Prime Minister has given up answering questions which could be answered simply. Some weeks ago a national newspaper carried a major story about the possible bugging of the office of my right hon. Friend the Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock). The Conservative party leapt on that and used it as a red herring, but no Opposition Member ever argued that the office of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition had been bugged. Our argument was that in some way the Prime Minister appeared to know about that in advance. There are several ways that she could have known about it. One way, as I said on one occasion, was through a perfectly normal conversation, perhaps with a solicitor in Australia or perhaps with a Conservative Member.

I must emphasise that when I wrote to the Prime Minister telling her what I had told the media, I made no allegations about the bugging of offices because I did not consider that that was likely to have happened. In my letter I wrote:

"I said that I recognised there might be a perfectly conventional explanation, but another very real possibility is of course that the information came to you through the normal daily work of GCHQ in monitoring overseas communications where the question of security is concerned."

We all know from the previous debates on GCHQ that that is part of its normal work. If information relating to security was passed upwards in the normal way, and eventually came to the attention of the Prime Minister, that is one way in which she could have found out.

The answer that I received could have said that the Prime Minister obtained the information in a perfectly straightforward way by word of mouth, or it could have said that the Prime Minister obtained the information from the GCHQ tapes. That, again, would have been perfectly understandable, but the answer said:

"The Government's policy on telephone tapping remains as set out in 1966 by the then Prime Minister, Lord Wilson of Rievaulx. Lord Wilson said he had given instructions that there was to be no tapping of the telephones of Members of Parliament. He said that that remained the policy of the Government and if there was a development which required a change in the general policy, he would, at such moment as seemed compatible with the security of the country, on his own initiative, make a statement in the House about it. I reaffirmed that this Government stood by that undertaking on 6 February 1980 and on 31 October 1983. The position remains the same today."

No one quarrels with that and no one asked that question. The letter gives no answer to the question of the GCHQ tapes. The easiest and simplest way for the Government to deal with that part of the question is to release that tape, if it exists. It would not cause any problems to any hon. Member and there is no reason why the tape should not be released.

We should be given more detailed answers, especially if the Prime Minister and the Government consider, as they appear to have considered in the past, that it is appropriate to give such information. Indeed, the Minister has made great play of the argument that the Government are prepared to do that.

What is to be done in future? I said that the mess that we are now in is largely of the Government's making and that it has done immense damage to the country's security services. But we must also look to the future and accept that no future Government will allow the present situation to continue. One of the greatest nonsenses is that the two security services — MI5 and MI6 — have no statutory existence, yet are probably the best known security services in the world. It is time that we gave some attention to placing them on a proper statutory footing. If we could do that, we could then deal with some of the problems, which several Opposition Members have mentioned, such as how the security services should operate, whether they should operate outside the law, which of course they should not, and whether they should operate against trade unionists, the National Council for Civil Liberties, or any of the others. We could also talk about the guidelines that existed for such security services instead of pretending that those services do not exist and instead of having a system which, when it breaks down, is disastrous for the morale of those security services and indeed for security generally in Britain.

When I have spoken on Home Office matters relating to security and so on I have pointed out that in the 20th century the United Kingdom has allowed itself, for very understandable reasons, due primarily to two world wars, to become excessively obsessed with secrecy. In this country it is almost impossible to get to the truth of matters which are, or should be, in the public domain. That undermines the confidence that people have in the system. Worse, if there is a rumour about, such as that Lord Wilson's office was bugged, and no one can disprove it, it gathers pace. Whether it is true or not—I am not in a position to know that — my hon. Friend the Member for Workington is saying that a rumour which has been around for many years has never effectively been put down. It is our contention that it will not be put down until we have a system of considering such things which satisfies the public. We must be able to do that if we are not to have constant problems of this sort.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Workington said, the Official Secrets Act needs radical change. It needs to be underpinned by a freedom of information Act. That concept has received support from every significant sector of the House except for the Conservative party. That is the one party that resists moving towards, or giving public support to, a freedom of information Act. I exempt the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) and one or two of his hon. Friends, who have spoken out in favour of such a measure.

Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act is absurdly and dangerously wide. The democratic and civil rights of the British people have been undermined by an excessive obsession with secrecy resulting partly from two world wars, partly from Northern Ireland and partly from other issues that have troubled us from time to time. Section 2 is far too wide. It drags far too many people into the net. If it did not exist or if the wording of that section was more appropriate, the Government would not be in the mess that they are in with Mr. Wright.

We also need a Select Committee to deal with the security services. That is long overdue. I was about to say, as I suspect I heard sotto voce from behind me, that the Select Committee should not, in the Opposition's view, be composed of Privy Councillors.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Not only Privy Councillors.

Mr. Soley: I accept that gracefully. If we have confidence in our parliamentary system, we must have confidence in the hon. Members who are elected and the way in which they are selected to serve on committees. No one has said that it should be only Privy Councillors who serve on the Select Committees on Defence. Secret information is discussed in Select Committees, and they can go into secret session when it is necessary to do so.

Other countries such as Australia, Canada, the United States and several west European countries have confidence and trust in their elected representatives, and that enables them to carry out the discussions necessary to ensure that the security services operate effectively and efficiently, and at the same time act in a way which does not destroy or undermine the confidence of the public in their democratic and civil rights.

Mr. Winnick: Does my hon. Friend agree that, in some respects, opposition to such a Select Committee denotes a feeling that, although there should be every confidence in those who serve in the Security Service, there should not be the same feeling of confidence about hon. Members on either side of the House and that, therefore, in essence, hon. Members are not to be trusted with such matters?

Mr. Soley: That is precisely the trap that I am talking about. We are saying that our Members of Parliament, elected by the people, are not sufficiently trustworthy to do the job. All hon. Members, wherever they stand politically, have a duty to refute that. If people are given responsibility, they normally discharge it well. There are perfectly satisfactory safeguards, within the democratic system as it is operated in Britain, to ensure that the security services can operate effectively and efficiently under the system that we propose.

There must be someone to whom personnel in the security services can turn if they consider that they are being misused or have obtained some information which they consider they cannot pass on within the existing service. We should consider, say, an inspector general or an ombudsman for the security services. Indeed, my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) said, in another debate, that we should consider a parliamentary commissioner for civil rights. We certainly need someone to do the whistle-blowing operation for those who serve in the security services.

The Minister made much of Lord Harris's definition of subversion. During the passage of the Interception of Communications Bill, we said that the definition should be reconsidered. I understand the importance of Lord Harris's definition, and I do not rule it out of court. However, although I am not always the greatest supporter

[Mr. Soley]

of Lord Denning's interpretations, he came up with a very good definition of subversion. He said that it must mean the overthrow of the state by unlawful means. It is the unlawful part that should worry us. When allegations have been made to the effect that the security forces have been used in an inappropriate way against trade unionists, the NCCL or some other group, it is assumed that it is unlawful to challenge the Government. That idea must not be allowed to gain ground. A challenge to a Government should not be allowed if it is unlawful, threatens to bring down the Government by violence, or if there is criminal dishonesty, such as corruption, which is designed to undermine the stability of that Government. Such challenges would be unlawful, but other challenges would not be.

There is a strong case to be made for the motion, and it was put very powerfully by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington. The Minister was unable to answer all of the questions. I do not criticise that, as I realise that the Home Secretary or Prime Minister should have been here to answer them. However, this debate will not end today; it will continue until the security services are put on a much better footing in the House and until we have a much better way of dealing with the sort of problems that we have faced recently.

5.32 pm

Sir Ian Percival (Southport): I am sorry that the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) should have put the weight of the Opposition Front Bench behind the attempt made by other hon. Members to make my hon. and learned Friend the Minister say something that he should not say. My hon. and learned Friend, however, dealt with those questions in the only manner open to him, and did so with firmness and dignity. I for one appreciated that the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) made his point and was then good enough to show that he accepted that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister had to give the answers that he gave. The hon. Member for Hammersmith should know that, if he was a Minister, he would have to answer all questions relating directly to security in the same way as my hon. and learned Friend the Minister has just done.

Mr. Merlyn Rees: I render unto the Minister just as one might render unto Caesar, in that he is doing his job, and I have no complaints about that. However, he prayed in aid the 1977 statement. New allegations have been made by that man in Australia, for whom I have no time. They are serious allegations, and I just want to know whether they were taken into account. I feel very strongly about the fact that a small group of men like that in MI5 should have acted in such a way.

Sir Ian Percival: The right hon. Gentleman made his point clearly in his previous intervention. I thought that he then acknowledged that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister could only have given the answers that he gave. Perhaps I misinterpreted the right hon. Gentleman's gestures, but it seemed clear to me that he was doing that. Those who read this debate will realise that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister could only give the answers that he gave with such firmness and dignity.

There were many tempting items in the speech of the hon. Member for Hammersmith. He referred to the matter that we debated last Wednesday, but he seemed to overlook the fact that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said that we were not closing the door on the issue, and may wish to come back to it in a calmer atmosphere. We regard the position as being far from fixed. Indeed, it is the oldest question in history: who guards the guards, or who watches the watchers? One day, someone will find the answer, or at least a better answer, and we shall all embrace it with open arms.

Let us by all means return to that issue, but it is sufficiently important for it to be debated on its own. Even in this short debate, the references to it show some of the difficulties that will have to be met. Some say that Privy Councillors should be involved, while others say that they should not be. Some say that there must be secrecy, and others say that it is not necessary. I accept that all those points must be debated, but not in this atmosphere.

My criticism of the speech made by the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) will be brief, as I wish to be constructive. However, I thought that in many respects what he said was deplorable——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Havers?

Sir Ian Percival: No. That was cheap and nasty. I shall have something to say about those comments, and I am not surprised that the hon. Gentleman's immediate reaction should be that I might have something to say about his sordid and squalid remarks concerning my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The right hon. and learned Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival) is now quoting me.

Sir Ian Percival: I am, and I am turning the hon. Gentleman's comments back on him. It is deplorable that the hon. Gentleman should have speculated to that extent. It is also deplorable to use the privileges accorded to the House to say things about people when they may long to have the opportunity to clear up the matter in the courts. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman had been a Member of Parliament for long enough to know that he should be more careful. It is deplorable to use this subject for scoring party political points. However, the hon. Gentleman apparently cannot resist that.

The hon. Member for Workington accused my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General of behaving in a sordid and squalid fashion. When the hon. Gentleman looks at his speech, he may well conclude that it was his attack that was sordid and squalid. My right hon. and learned Friend has served the House faithfully and well, and with a dignity that some others may well wish to try to emulate. We can all differ, but not in the way that the hon. Gentleman did.

I should like to start my next remarks on common ground. There cannot be any argument among us about the fact that if any of us received information in confidence we should never publish it without permission. The critical words are "without permission". What we learn as lawyers, Members of Parliament or, a fortiori, as an employee of the security services should not be divulged without permission. The hon. Member for Workington obviously agrees with that, because in several of his recent speeches he has put it even higher than that. He says that it is treachery for an ex-member of the security services to publish information received in that capacity without permission. Those last two words must always be there——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: For money.

Sir Ian Percival: The critical words are "without permission". I do not disagree with the hon. Gentleman in that regard.

The next part of his argument is that there are many cases in which either we should not have given permission, or we should have prosecuted. But he is not being consistent in this case. He says that we should have prosecuted other cases beforehand. I have just realised that I have fallen into the error of not drawing a distinction between prosecution and civil proceedings. But the hon. Gentleman argues that we should not have taken civil proceedings in this case. From the start, his aim has been to destroy our chances of preventing publication of information, although he acknowledges that publishing it is treachery. The hon. Gentleman must consider that to be an inconsistency.

I do not concede that permission was granted where it should not have been, because I do not know the facts. However, if it has been given and it should not have been, that is a fit matter for discussion because, ex hypothesi, the material is in the public domain and we can all have our say as to whether permission should or should not have been granted. There may be differences of opinion as to whether civil or criminal proceedings should have been taken in previous cases. However, surely to goodness, there can be no question about what should have been done in this case.

The Wright case involves a man who was in the service who is bound by his oath. He is publishing for money—without permission—the information that he obtained in the service. By the definition of the hon. Member for Workington, he is engaging in treachery. Should we say, "Never mind, we will not prosecute this time because there might have been errors."? I do not accept that there were errors. I do not know the facts and I will not speculate. However, even if there was fault to find in previous decisions, should we say "Here we have a case"——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Ah, yes.

Sir Ian Percival: I wish that the hon. Gentleman would remember that he had an hour in which to address the House. I am trying to make my comments in less time.

By common consent, Wright is engaging in treachery for money, yet should we not take proceedings against him? That is ludicrous, especially when we realise that he has moved outside our jurisdiction so that we cannot deal with him here. He knows better than anyone that if he tried to publish here, the odds are that civil proceedings would have been commenced against him and he would have been prosecuted. However, he knows that we cannot do that now.

Another feature of the case is that the hoohah of the past weeks has destroyed confidence. Confidence is really destroyed when someone from the inside engages in treachery. Wright is breaching confidences given him by his fellow members of the service. Confidence is destroyed when those working in the service can no longer rely on their colleagues not taking the kind of action that Wright has taken. The fact that Wright's actions received so much support from politicians on the Opposition Benches must also do much to destroy the confidence of those in the service.

What are we trying to do in Australia? We are asking for the assistance of the courts of a friendly country to stop a man who, by common consent, wants to engage in treachery for profit. I would hope that if a friendly country—or indeed any country—came to us to protect itself in similar circumstances, we would have a ready ear to listen to that country. However, it is not simply our security that is at stake. Opposition Members seem to have lost sight of the fact that it is the present Labour Government of Australia, who are not in the business of helping the British Government—not Mr. Gough Whitlam who has no reason to be that pleased with our actions—who have put their senior civil servant before the court to say that, in the Government's opinion, Australian security interests are at issue as well. He has said that there is a danger to Australian security interests. I would not be surprised if there is not more reference to that before the proceedings are ended.

It is almost unbelievable that Opposition Members can express views about the case without taking into account the fact that the Australian Government have had their senior civil servant give evidence on oath to state that Australian security interests are at issue. In such circumstances, it is extraordinarily inconsistent of the hon. Member for Workington not to separate certain matters. The Peter Wright case must be considered separately from the other cases. We must consider what that man is trying to do and, by our common definition, he is indulging in treachery for profit.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has misunderstood the body of my speech. He must consider Wright's motive. Wright does not believe that he has been treacherous because he cites the precedents of others who have been allowed to go to print. We are considering Wright's view and position and the right hon. and learned Gentleman's speech is based on the wrong premise.

Sir Ian Percival: The hon. Gentleman had an hour in which to state his case. I am not mixing up anything. We must clarify these issues. The question here is whether someone in the secret service may publish for money information gained in the secret service.. The hon. Member for Workington has said that, prima facie, that is treachery.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The right hon. and learned Gentleman is misquoting me.

Sir Ian Percival: Very well, if the hon. Gentleman did not say that——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The right hon. and learned Gentleman can read my speech tomorrow.

Sir Ian Percival: I gave the hon. Gentleman credit for saying that.

However, I do not think that he would go so far as to say that he would agree that anyone with such confidential information is entitled to publish for profit. I do not believe that the hon. Gentleman would say that for a moment. That is exactly what Mr. Wright is trying to do. Mr. Wright cannot be the judge of whether he has a motive to justify actions that people in his position are not allowed to take. That is a very dangerous approach to the matter and one that I would not have expected to hear from the hon. Member for Workington, as that is unsustainable and unworthy.

I urge the House to consider the case in Australia on its own. If we do that, there can be only one answer. It was

[Sir Ian Percival]

right and necessary to take proceedings, whatever had happened before. We can only hope that right will prevail and that the publication — *[Interruption.]* We can only hope that what should happen will be the right outcome and that the book will not be published.

I urge Opposition Members to consider the fact the some people have had a lot of fun speculating about the case. In the course of today's debate and in other debates, other subjects have been raised that deserve further consideration. However, we must put the case in Australia into the right perspective and we should stop playing party politics with national security. I urge Opposition Members to re-examine their position. In the light of day, when emotions are cooler, how can Opposition Members justify setting out with an overriding desire to ensure that the Government fail in an action in a foreign country?

5.49 pm

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): I shall come to what I consider to be the core of the speech by the right hon. and learned Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival), but first I must make it clear to him that at no time in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) or at any time during the proceedings have the Opposition been engaged in any party political fight — *[Interruption.]* It is clear, if the confessions and boasts of anyone are justified, that there is one person who was engaged in a party political fight of the most outrageous kind and that is Mr. Peter Wright himself and some of his associates. If what Mr. Wright says is true, they were engaged in a treasonable attempt to attack the Government of the day.

The Minister's speech touched on some of the points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington but did not answer the central question. The right hon. and learned Member for Southport had no right to say that the question had been answered. The question is, what have the Government done about the recent revelations made by Mr. Wright? I do not know whether those revelations are true but they deal with what happened in the days of the Government of Harold Wilson. All the Minister did was quote from what was said by the previous Labour Prime Minister, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan). I am sure that when he and my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) conducted their inquiries at that time they listened carefully to what they were told by the security services and, of course, they conducted a proper inquiry and took the proper action of coming to the House to state the position as they knew it. At that time, among other things, they did not know about the claims of Mr. Peter Wright, who was a long-time member of the Security Service. The Minister and the right hon. and learned Member for Southport have not attempted to answer that question. I would have thought, whatever differences we may have on these matters, that all of us could agree that, if Mr. Peter Wright's accusations are correct, it is a serious matter.

The security services have a greater interest in getting the matter examined and dealt with than anybody else, because otherwise the slur will hang over the modern secret service that it engaged in a treasonable conspiracy against the Government of the day, in breach of its undertakings, just as history shows that the secret service did engage in such a treasonable outrage at the time of the Zinoviev letter. If anybody reads the records now he will see that the way in which the secret service behaved in 1924 was palpably wrong according to its undertakings. Today it would also be a monstrous scandal if Mr. Peter Wright's charges are correct. Therefore, the charges must be examined. They have not yet been examined. The Minister has come to the House today and had to confess—I do not blame him — that there has not been any examination.

The motion argues—I certainly agree with it—that there must be a proper examination. We propose a judicial inquiry, where a judge is appointed to look into it. It would have to be a secret inquiry because I do not believe that we can have a full-scale public inquiry into the operations of the secret service. If my hon. Friend the Member for Workington was asking for that, I do not think it is right. In any case, if the Government do not like the exact form of the inquiry we are asking for, it is their business to come forward with an alternative.

This matter will not go away. These are serious charges, and the Government have less right than anybody to say that they do not take any notice of Mr. Peter Wright's charges. If Mr. Peter Wright is doing sufficient damage to the Security Service by the publication of this book on the other side of the world, then, in heaven's name, surely the Government cannot say that they will take no notice.

I might be able to say that I do not give a damn about what Mr. Wright says about anything, which is probably my considered view, just as it is my view about Mr. Chapman Pincher. However, the Government have thought it necessary to have the whole process of a prosecution on the other side of the world which has made fools of our eminent civil servants. That contraption has had to be wheeled on to deal with Mr. Wright's accusations, so it is impossible for the Government to shelter in the way in which the right hon. and learned Member for Southport so ill advised them to do. The Government have said that it is an important case. They are prepared to spend large sums of taxpayers' money to present their case. When part of that case—not all of it — revolves around the question whether the charges about a conspiracy in 1974 were correct, there has to be an examination. If the Government do not agree to that now, they will have to do so at some later stage.

One of the most objectionable features of the issue is that it is inextricable from secret service operations. I am not complaining. Secret service operations have to be kept secret and they cannot be discussed at every available opportunity. However, occasionally inquiries are made by the Government and one important inquiry was made by the present Government into the case of Sir Roger Hollis; in fact, I believe that two or three inquiries were made. The last inquiry came up with a clean sheet for Sir Roger Hollis. The Prime Minister, quite rightly, made a statement to the House saying that Sir Roger Hollis was cleared. I accepted that, as did the House. I believe that every decent citizen of this country accepted that, in those circumstances.

Therefore, what in heaven's name were the Government playing at in the court in Australia when they tried to smudge that issue? I know that there is some legal excuse for it, but the common, ordinary, sensible people do not always understand obstruse legal obfuscations. It was said in the court that the case against Sir Roger Hollis was to be accepted. I know that that does not mean that

the Government are saying that he is guilty. However, the Government have no right anywhere other than in the House to put any new charge against him. If there is any new charge or suspicion against Sir Roger Hollis, the Prime Minister has a special duty to come to the House and say what it is.

Until that happens, the previous statement of the Prime Minister stands. It would be a gross injustice to the memory of Sir Roger Hollis, his family and those associated with him if such rumours should be peddled and if the Government did not take clear steps to knock them on the head as they sought to do a few years ago when the charges were made by Mr. Pincher and a few others.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Obviously my right hon. Friend has some knowledge of Sir Roger Hollis and the family and feels for their distress. I have no such knowledge and that must be typical of most of the population. The request my right hon. Friend makes to the Government to clear one family is an impossible task when the people have no confidence in the Government's oversight of our security services. The only way in which people such as Sir Roger Hollis and his family can be secure is when, if the Government say that we have a sensible security service and that it is under control, it is believed. At the moment, whatever they say is not believed.

Mr. Foot: I understand my hon. Friend's argument. However, I am in favour of the proposals made by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington. There should be a new method of surveillance over the secret service because these events have made that essential, not only in the interest of Sir Roger Hollis but in the interest of others. The well-paid vultures are happy to make charges against the dead, whether it is Sir Roger Hollis or others. They believe that once people are dead they can make any charge they wish, make any kind of money they like out of it and make the accusations in the wildest possible terms. That is most unjust, and in the interests of fair play and justice and also in the interests of the security services the Government should take steps to try to protect the dead.

A major revelation by Mr. Peter Wright relates to the attack on the Labour Government. That must be cleared up. However, there are other so-called revelations. Mr. Wright is supposed to have said that when he was in the security services they engaged in a conspiracy to murder President Nasser. I should be bitterly concerned if a British Government agency had engaged in the preparation of acts of terror. It would be an outrage if the security services were told in 1956 by Sir Anthony Eden and the Government of the day that they could prepare a plan for the assassination of President Nasser. I hope that the charge that the British Government gave instructions to engage in an act of terror can be repudiated. That is why there should be a proper investigation of these matters.

I was in Cairo a few days ago, before these revelations were made. Heaven knows what injury they will do to the future operations of the British security services. They must not engage, either in this country or elsewhere, in illegal acts, in particular in criminal acts, because eventually it comes out into the open and when that happens it can do appalling damage to the security of the state.

That is happening in the United States. The exposure of the arms sales to Iran, behind the back of Congress and of those with responsibility for these matters after a section of the security services had been given orders by somebody, has wrecked United States foreign policy in the middle east. Many of the worst acts of terror have been carried out with Iranian money and Iranian backing. The Iranians helped to kill the previous President of Egypt, and I have no doubt that many other killings have been carried out by them.

If the United States security services are prepared to engage in such operations, we should be all the more determined to keep our security services out of them. It would do nothing but harm to the effectiveness of the security services if they were to engage in such manoeuvres and such trickery. This squalid business should be cleared up in the interests of the security services, and that cannot be done effectively unless that part of the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Workington which relates to a judicial inquiry is adopted. A judicial committee would be the best body to carry out such an examination.

Mr. Robert Rhodes James (Cambridge): I hope that in his remarks about 1956 the right hon. Gentleman is not giving credence to Mr. Gough Whitlam's allegations relating to events that took place long before he held public office and for which there is no evidence whatsoever.

Mr. Foot: I am saying nothing against Mr. Gough Whitlam, although I should examine what he has said on this and other matters. I am referring to what Mr. Wright says in his book. Mr. Wright says that he engaged, with others, in a treasonable conspiracy in this country and that MI5 or MI6 engaged in the preparation of an act of terror to murder the President of the republic of Egypt. If that is the truth, it should be examined. If it is a lie, let it be exposed. But if it is the truth, or if there is any element of truth in it, I and, I should have thought, every decent citizen in this country would want our security services to be cleaned up.

I do not agree with all that my hon. Friend the Member for Workington does. However, it would help to improve the effectiveness of the future operations of the security services if this motion were to be passed and if the Government were to act upon it.

6.5 pm

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): I am pleased to be following the former Leader of the Opposition. If he has done nothing else, he has livened up our proceedings this afternoon, which I felt were in danger of achieving the remarkable result of making the exciting subjects of security and espionage excruciatingly boring. He asked a few pertinent questions with which I shall deal later.

The speech of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) was a strange and curious mixture of tedium and hysteria. However, it contained a few perceptive passages and it is to those and to the motion itself to which I shall refer. The motion breaks down into three main parts. It calls attention to the

"management and operation of the security services".

Just about everybody in the world seems to have been doing that lately.

The most interesting comments on the management and operation of MI5 were made in the 1985 report of the Security Commission. It highlighted many management weaknesses, many of which we are told, and believe, have to some extent been remedied by the present director

[Mr. Jonathan Aitken]

general. However, it is germane to ask why there is such a sharp difference between the management of MI5 and that of MI6. Almost all the criticism that one hears of the security services zeros in on MI5, whereas MI6 appears to have a relatively trouble-free and criticism-free record. There is a lot to be learnt by looking in detail at the comparisons, but there is no time to do so today—whether those comparisons relate to selection, management methods or the lack of introspection in MI6, which is a comparatively open organisation in the sense that it mixes and mingles with other people in the world of foreign policy, whereas MI5 personnel are so hunkered down in their bunker that sometimes quite extraordinary things seem to be able to go wrong without anybody taking much notice.

If I understand correctly the hon. Gentleman's main criticism of the management of the security services it is that at times they are outside political control. That also seemed to be the main point of the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot). The second part of the hon. Gentleman's motion highlights that criticism most dramatically. It calls for a judicial inquiry into the allegations relating to the Government of Lord Wilson. The most interesting intervention this afternoon was that of the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) who asked a question to which no satisfactory answer has been given.

There is no need to worry about this matter if the 1977 statement that was read out by my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State applies precisely to the alleged events. However, if that statement does not cover those allegations, it is a completely different ball game. I, too, should like a judicial inquiry to be held if that matter has not been covered in any way.

I know nothing about these matters and I make only one comment. It is almost inconceivable that any operation of the kind that seems to have been alleged could have been carried out on a completely unauthorised, freelance basis. One only has to think of the mechanics of an operation of that kind. To get into a former Prime Minister's residence without authorisation and set up the technical equipment and then to take the tapes away and have them read, analysed and stored at headquarters enters the realms of speculation and fantasy, as does the original allegation. Nevertheless, there is an unanswered question which the right hon. Gentleman exposed in a devastating way and at some stage we need an answer.

More interesting about the management of the security services is the issue that we touched on at great length in the debate on 3 December. There is no point in going over the same ground again, but I want to comment on two things that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said in his fine speech on that occasion.

First, my right hon. Friend's main objection to the proposal for some sort of oversight body was that such a body would have to be inside the barrier of secrecy. He said that it would be a constitutional contradiction because

"if it is inside the barrier, it cannot communicate its findings convincingly to those who remain outside." — [*Official Report*, 3 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. 942.]

On reflection, I did not find that part of my right hon. Friend's argument convincing simply because the Security Commission frequently goes inside the barrier and then comes out with a report on what has gone on, some of which is put into the public domain in a report to Parliament and parts of which are not. The report on the Bettaney affair is a classic example of that. That report took us all well inside the barrier of secrecy, but the published document, which took us some way inside, nevertheless also contained two unpublished annexes which, presumably, took us still further inside. I hope that when we return to the debate on oversight my right hon. Friend will reconsider the views that he expressed on that area.

Secondly—here I have more sympathy with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, particularly as my views on the matter are changing—my right hon. Friend argued convincingly that ultimately the management of the security services must depend on somebody reporting to a Minister. The more one considers the idea of a Select Committee of Privy Councillors, or, in the view of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), non-Privy Councillors as well, reporting to somebody other than the Home Secretary or the responsible Minister, the more doubtful the edifice becomes. If we are to have an efficient oversight body—that is surely first prize—it must be a body that reports to Ministers. That is a theme for a future debate on the oversight issue.

The motion calls for reform of the law on official secrets and, in particular, for consistency in the application of the law. I can only say "Hear, hear, and amen" to that. Any logical look at the problem shows that the Official Secrets Act is in a mess and the Government's recent efforts to be consistent in their handling of such cases clearly has not succeeded. Ask any man in the street, let alone any Member of this place, and no one will pat the Government on the back for their consistency in handling the Wright case and previous incidents, including the books.

In making the simple point that the Government have been inconsistent, instead of waiting for most of us to say, "Hear, hear", the hon. Member for Workington shot off into the realms of the most extraordinary demons, hobgoblins and fantasies. Although one or two of the things that he said may have contained a glimmer of truth, most of them were wildly over the top and should never have been said in a speech in the House.

The recent arguments about the security services have done much more harm than good to the morale and efficiency of the services, but at the end of the day perhaps one good thing will emerge. Instead of continuing to rake over the dead leaves of the past, we may start to look to the future to make sure that such blunders, errors and inconsistencies are much less likely to happen again. The service will never be error-proof, but with a greater parliamentary input than we have had so far, with an oversight body which I am sure will come one day, we shall soon have a better and more effective Security Service.

6.13 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Truth is stranger than fiction and the history of these matters from the Philby case through to the revelations of Mr. Wright provides a mixture of stories better and more fascinating than those in many novels, some of them written, as has been pointed out, by the practitioners of this very activity of security and espionage.

The almost Victorian melodramatic tones with which the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) opened the debate were not needed to draw our

attention to some of the problems. He sounded as though he could take a good part in a pantomime at this season of the year, given the sheer tone of malignant horror-mongering in which he managed to engage. The truth is serious enough not to need that and I must differ from the hon. Gentleman in some respects, even though I shall say later why I will advise my right hon. and hon. Friends to support the motion.

First, I did not agree with the conclusion or form of the hon. Gentleman's attack on the Attorney-General, who has succeeded, where others have failed, in distinguishing his position in standing firm for accuracy and honesty at several points in recent events. I might have wished, and indeed have argued, that he should have given up his office in doing so, but the manner of his conduct in no way justifies the tone of what the hon. Gentleman said about him.

Secondly, I did not like the way in which the hon. Gentleman has used the Order Paper so indiscriminately to list the names of large numbers of people and, in particular, I did not like the way in which he developed his attack on Mr. Arthur Martin, for whose record of service in the security services Britain has particular reasons to be grateful. Indeed, he was dismissed from the service in circumstances which still give rise to many of the questions at the heart of the debate.

The Minister of State's reply held a note of complacency which I thought had begun to be dispelled when the Home Secretary spoke earlier and said that the door was still open to further consideration. Indeed, the Conservative Members who have spoken today have themselves said that they see the door as still open as we look for a way of establishing some decent scrutiny of the security services which can help to deal with some of the problems about which we are all concerned.

That same complacency is to be found in the amendment on the Order Paper, welcomed by the Minister, proposed by some Conservative Members, none of whom are present in the Chamber and all of whom have absented themselves during most of the debate. That amendment lays particular stress on the statement made by the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) on 8 December 1977, and it misses the point in two ways: because it does not deal with what the statement fails to talk about—what happened in places other than 10 Downing street and the Prime Minister's room in the House of Commons; and because it fails to recognise that on several occasions in recent history Prime Ministers, including the present one, have appeared at the Dispatch Box and made statements about which there is now every good reason to have considerable doubt.

I should say that I do not believe that the Prime Minister was at fault in some of the errors that occurred in her statement at the Dispatch Box at the conclusion of the Blunt affair, or indeed the statement she made after that. In some cases, errors or misleading aspects can be pointed to based on the briefing she was given. I hope that we can get rid of the complacency and recognise on both sides that there is a real problem.

If one looks at what can happen to the security services, it is obvious that if there is not some way of intensifying the effectiveness of oversight, a number of different problems can emerge. One is that, in an atmosphere of complacency, treason can flourish. We have had that long list of traitors—Philby, Blunt, Bettaney and the smaller fry at lower levels—and in every case it is possible to point to extensive complacency without which such people could not have operated and could not have continued to hold the responsible positions that they did. An atmosphere of complacency contributes to outright incompetence in the security services, such as that which allowed an absence of positive vetting in MI5 of the kind to which the Security Commission drew attention after the Bettaney case. That simply could not have gone on if anyone beyond Ministers had been regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the services and questioning Ministers so to encourage them to ask the right questions of those who were responsible to them. Complacency can breed many problems in the security services.

Secondly, the absence of scrutiny can preserve a climate of opinion completely divorced from that to be found in the world outside. The hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) pointed out that that may be a greater tendency in MI5 in its particularly enclosed world than in the intelligence services. It is easier to take an older example. It is the kind of climate which allowed Philby just before the war to establish, successfully, cover for being recruited to the service on the basis of his pro-Fascist connections, such as his involvement in the Anglo-German Society of that time. Such was the distorted climate of opinion in the service at that time that it proved not only to be an acceptable cover then, but helped to defend him against criticism and suspicion at later stages. It is now contended that during the war a considerable group within the service continued to believe that the real battle they were fighting was against the Soviet Union and they were much distracted from the war against Fascism in which Britain was engaged.

Distinct from what was going on in the real world, that climate of opinion was allowed to remain in the security services. One sees the same danger at the time of the alleged events surrounding the Wilson Government, to which I shall refer again, of the possibility that there may have been within the security services people who somehow believed that, because a Labour Government had come to power, the end of the world had arrived. I am opposed to Labour Governments and in favour of preventing them from happening and of making sure that they cannot pursue their more foolish policies by voting those policies down—as we were able to do when we had the political power. But Britain is a democracy, and if the people elect a Labour Government, even under our distorted electoral system, it is not the business of those who work for Government to look for ways to get rid of them or to discredit them. The possibility that there may have been a climate of opinion in some quarters in MI5 which held that the presence of a Labour Government justified the taking of illegal actions is extremely worrying. That possibility is generated when there is insufficient scrutiny of the security services.

There are other dangers that arise in the absence of scrutiny. They include the possibility that actions approved by the Executive but not by Parliament may be undertaken. That has been a problem in the United States and is now being examined by Congress which has the machinery to do so. Congress is examining the pursuit of a policy in clear defiance of declared Government policy of not supplying arms to Iran.

We may imagine that such things cannot happen here, but of course such a thing did happen in the immediate aftermath of the war. It was not public knowledge and was certainly not known in Parliament that British forces were

[Mr. A. J. Beith]

involved in assisting in the parachuting into Albania of supporters of the exiled and deposed king of Albania. Had that been known to anybody, some questions might have been asked about what happened to those people because, of course, when they arrived in Albania the security authorities there knew perfectly well when and where they would land; they had been informed of that by Mr. H. A. R. Philby. He was at the heart of the operation. It was perhaps the least noticed but the most evil of his acts of treachery that he condemned those people to death because he knew about their departure and communicated the information to the Albanian Government, who were and are ruthless. The fate of those people is now well known.

That action took place under a Labour Government and was designed deliberately to destabilise a Communist Government in Albania. The Executive approved and undertook that action knowing that it would be unlikely to obtain parliamentary approval. That is a dangerous kind of action to undertake and is one of the reasons why there must be better scrutiny. Equally dangerous in the absence of scrutiny is the possibility that actions not approved by anybody outside the service can more easily take place. That is because no questioning takes place. The Maxwell Fyfe directive rather conveys the flavour, "Don't call us, we'll call you." It gives the impression that Ministers are to be told of things when the service determines that they need to know. Of course Ministers can ask questions, but it has always been my submission —one which the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth accepted when I put it to him during the debate in 1979 — that Ministers are less likely to ask questions if nobody is asking them questions. That is the danger in the present arrangements.

If actions are undertaken by the security services without the approval of anybody outside the services, either by the service as a whole engaging in freelance activity or by groups within it doing so, then the horrifying Pandora's box is open and that is where we come to the allegations about what went on in the Wilson Government. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) said — he was the Home Secretary at the time—he was never informed of any such action, and if it took place it must have been illegal because it was not authorised as it should have been. As my right hon. Friend also said, it would have been the product of a diseased mind to imagine that such action was necessary or desirable. It is an utterly monstrous proposition to say that any such action should be undertaken against an elected Government.

Of course, there is a world of difference if the security services communicate with the appropriate Minister if they have reason to believe that a member of the Government presents a security risk. That is not impossible: it can happen and there must be a mechanism for dealing with it. But that is a long way from the happenings now being alleged during the years of the Wilson Government.

Ms. Clare Short: What the hon. Gentleman says has major implications. He says that if a member of the Government is a security risk it is the duty of the security services to communicate that to the Government. The logic of that statement is that if the security services think the Prime Minister is a security risk they should check and communicate. Are the security forces entitled to supervise and check and report on members of the Government? The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to say that somehow they can supervise Ministers but not the Prime Minister, because if he says that he is not consistent.

Mr. Beith: There are ways in which it could come to the notice of the security services that, heaven forbid, the Prime Minister was an agent of a foreign power. But the proposition is so unlikely because of the many checks and balances in existence that it would require a fairly major effort on the part of any security service to contemplate that it was the case. If it were, it would be their duty to report that to the appropriate authorities.

Ms. Clare Short: That is what they did.

Mr. Beith: That is a long way from what is alleged to have happened. It is alleged that Harold Wilson was being framed, that he was being burgled in an attempt to establish incriminating evidence, and that when such evidence was not found it was manufactured and communicated to the outside world by a variety of groups. Those are allegations of monstrous activity and if they have any weight or credibility they deserve to be examined. I do not think that the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth was in possession of the full substance of the allegations when he made his statement to the House. For that reason, the matter must be looked at again, but at this stage we do not know whether it will go to a full judicial inquiry. If the motion goes to a vote, one of the reasons why I shall advise my hon. Friends to vote for it is that I think the matter should be looked at again.

Mr. Alan Williams: I agree with the hon. Gentleman about having to look at it again, but after we have had the result of the court case. That is because the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General will have to account for themselves to the House. My advice to my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) is that we should not have a vote tonight but should wait until we have statements from the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General.

Mr. Beith: There is wisdom in that advice, that we should come back to this matter as soon as the court case is over. The matter is in the hands of the hon. Member for Workington, but this might not be the occasion to press it to a vote.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I accept that.

Mr. Beith: These issues are so grave that some further attempt must be made to establish whether or not there is any substance in them. That brings me to one aspect of the Wright case about which it would be proper to speak even though the court case is going on. It is that, whatever criticisms we make of Wright—and I make a number—one of his motivations was that he believed things had been brushed under the carpet and he embarked on a crusade. He believed that matters had not been brought to a head and that deception was being allowed to continue. However much we criticise his subsequent actions, we must recall that he sought to interest Conservative Members, including the Chairman of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, in his allegations and to try to get them by various routes to the Prime Minister.

There is a crusading aspect to all this, and although it does not vindicate his subsequent actions it was serious in itself and leads me to remind the Minister that at the very

least there ought to be a proper internal mechanism by which an officer who believes that something is seriously wrong can ventilate his grievance. That was one of the issues discussed by the Security Commission and the Prime Minister spoke about it in her statement to Parliament. I gathered from the Home Secretary when he replied to an intervention by me in the debate on 3 December that it is still under discussion and is one of the aspects of the Security Commission report which has not been fully resolved. Something must be done about that.

I see that in the end as linking naturally to some external oversight, because people are likely to have more confidence in an internal inspector-general, or whatever he may be, if he reports, as does the Ombudsman, ultimately to some external or parliamentary body. If there is no internal mechanism, that is yet another reason why people may believe that they have an excuse to go outside. I agree with the right hon. and learned Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival) that no one can be allowed to be the sole judge of whether he has sufficient reason to break the confidence which is enjoined upon him in his position as an officer or former officer of the Security Service. He cannot be the sole judge, but if he has no other recourse and nowhere else to go, he is left in a very unsatisfactory position. I speak not only of Wright, but of very many officers who have found themselves in this position—*[Interruption.]*

Sir Ian Percival: Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that the officer should be his own judge of when to speak? That really is a slippery slope.

Mr. Beith: Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman was unable to hear me because of the noise behind me. I was agreeing with his statement that no security officer should be the sole judge of whether what is on his conscience or mind should be brought into the public domain. That cannot be right. Therefore, we must look for other mechanisms whereby people can ventilate grievances in a proper manner and feel that their case is being heard.

There are many things we have discussed today to which we will have to return. The Minister of State said in his speech that the public understand perfectly well what is at stake, and that they know and have a basic feeling about what is right and wrong in these matters. That is so, but the public at large also can see the total inconsistency of the position of the Government. The public can see that there is no distinction, as the Government pretend to draw, between someone who publishes a book in his own name, disclosing secrets learnt in his office, and someone who supplies that information, whether for money or not —in this case, it was for money—to another author to be included in a book which is subsequently described as being co-authored by the two individuals. There is no difference, moral or otherwise, in the importance of confidentiality in those two cases.

The Government are right to be concerned about ensuring that the confidentiality of the security services is kept, but they have undermined their case both by their inconsistency and their consistent failure to recognise what really matters. It is absurd that we should go on pretending that we do not have an intelligence service and for Sir Robert Armstrong to be expected to deny in court that there is such a thing as MI6. But there are things which have have to be kept confidential. If the Government were more consistent and offered genuine opportunities for oversight and for the aggrieved officer to raise his grievance in a suitable manner, they would be in a better position to work for the preservation of the confidentiality and day-to-day secrecy on which the security services depend to do their job on our behalf.

6.32 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): First, let me say constructively what I believe should now be done. The Security Commission should be converted into a tribunal of inquiry under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921. The Security Commission consists of Lord Griffiths, Sir Anthony Lloyd, the deputy chairman, and Lord Allen of Abbeydale and four others. Therefore, they have the legal firepower and are already in the business of security matters. I have discussed this with two former permanent secretaries of the Home Office and one former permanent secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and believe that it is a sensible proposition.

To save time, I quote the powers. On 23 January 1964, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the Prime Minister, in announcing the setting-up of the Security Commission, said:

> "Exceptionally, the Commission might find that they were unable to make progress without powers to compel evidence. In such a case, Parliament would be asked to pass the necessary Resolution under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act, 1921, to vest the Commission with the powers of that Act for that particular inquiry. The Commission would then proceed in all respects as a Tribunal of Inquiry." — [*Official Report*, 23 January 1964; Vol. 687, c. 1272-3.]

I am glad that we are not voting tonight, because I would have been uncomfortable about doing so, believing that these matters are very serious and that we must wait until the end of the court case in Australia. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) for agreeing to this.

The Security Commission or tribunal should discuss certain specific matters. The first of them concerns Anthony Blunt. I do not think it edifying for people like me, or most of us in this generation, to try to pass censorious moral judgments on men when in their late teens or early twenties in Cambridge or elsewhere in the 1930s. The lines between pro-Communism and passionate, and justified, anti-Fascism were blurred. From 1941 to 1945, Russia was on our side. For my part, I will remember Anthony Blunt as an inspiring lecturer who awakened my interest in the French impressionists.

What I am about to say I am perfectly prepared to repeat outside the Chamber. I do not shelter under privilege, but the House of Commons is the right place for a Member of Parliament to make such statements for the first time.

I believe that Anthony Blunt left a collection of documents compiled by himself and that those documents were bequeathed to his brother, whom I have not approached. The condition was that the documents should not be made public for 20 years. I do not know whether Mr. Blunt's brother has read them. The papers were transferred to an institution in London for safe keeping.

However, I am informed and believe that a Government agency has had a sight of those papers. They revealed to the agency not only who the so-called fifth man was, but many other names and facts. Because the Prime Minister said that there was no proof that Sir Roger Hollis was a Soviet spy—that is before the papers being read,

[Mr. Tam Dalyell]

so I am sure that the Hollis statement was made in good faith by the Prime Minister on the basis of knowledge available at the time—it is difficult for the Prime Minister to admit any knowledge of who was a spy at this late stage. I take on board what was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot).

This brings me to the subject of burglary. For a Government agency to have read these papers was strictly illegal. Illegal or not, it has now been done. The parallel case is the break-in at Sidgwick and Jackson. That was illegal. That was six weeks before the book "Their Trade is Treachery" was published.

I ask the direct question: have Ministers been told about the documents bequeathed by Anthony Blunt? Have they been told whether knowledge that Hollis was positively identified as being a spy has come from these documents? I am not asking that the documents, which are very personal, should be made available, but I am asking that the Security Commission, either itself or—better still—as a tribunal under the 1921 Act, should have a sight of what the Government agencies know.

I am concerned about ministerial control over house-breaking by state agencies, which is akin to the problem of state telephone tapping. Is there effective ministerial control over breaking into and entering houses? This is a legitimate and important question, unless the House of Commons is told that there was no authorised breaking and entering.

House breaking is illegal, just as phone tapping is illegal, infringing the right of privacy. A Minister may authorise phone tapping on internal matters. Which Minister is responsible for any rules of breaking into and entering houses, be they private houses or those of publishers? Peter Wright was the senior case officer when Blunt was supposed to have confessed. I understand that it is simply not true that he confessed all. Apparently, there is an affidavit that the Prime Minister misled the Commons on Blunt. Furthermore, parts of Blunt's testimony were kept out. Why? A tribunal should be told. After all, the Prime Minister came in with a great fanfare of trumpets, saying "I am going to get control of the security services", and then did nothing about it. Why have the doubtless good intentions gone astray? As I told him at the Islwyn constituency Labour party Chartist rally in November 1985, I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock), when he becomes Prime Minister, must give his mind to those problems. Does the Blunt testimony reveal who tipped off Burgess and Maclean? The late Colonel Marcus Lipton told me before he died that he believed that Burgess and Maclean had been tipped off by a senior figure of the so-called establishment, who did so out of the kindness of his heart on an old-boy network, and not by a spy or agent. This issue should be clarified by a commission or tribunal.

Another matter to which a commission or tribunal should turn its attention is a letter from Sir Michael Hanley to Wright, which reads:

"The firm is doing well and has passed recent examinations."

Was this a reference to a private inquiry by Sir Robert Armstrong into MI5's activities against the Wilson Government? If so, on whose initiative and authority does the Security Service investigate some 30 persons such as Lord Kagan? Was it freelance or part of coherent control, and where was the accountability? What could Peter Wright have meant by using the words "deniable, authorised, illegal" when referring to activity in the Wilson years? It is the opinion of Mr. Richard Morton Taylor, who was in court, that he did not make this up.

The tribunal must consider the Attorney-General's role. Why did it take 10 days for Sir Robert Armstrong to apologise? The apology came 10 days after my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition—this is in column 426 of *Hansard* of 27 November—had asked about the Attorney-General's role. Why was the Attorney-General not consulted about Rupert Allason? Why was he not consulted about Chapman Pincher? These are all questions to which there must be sensible answers.

For reasons of time, I shall omit other questions that could be asked about the Attorney-General, save for one. The Government cannot have it both ways. They cannot say that they have MI5 in control and then say at the same time that the Attorney-General did not know. Either the Government are in control—they are indivisible, are not they?—or they are not. When did Sir Robert Armstrong know about "Their Trade is Treachery"? Was it February 1981 or December 1980? How could Mr. Pincher be quoted as saying, "All is well now. All is hunky-dory"? I asked the question of the hon. Member for Stroud (Sir. A. Kershaw) about the time in 1984 that he was sending Clive Ponting's letter to me to the Ministry of Defence. He sent another document to Sir Robert Armstrong, which was a dossier from Wright. Why were Her Majesty's Government not as active about the Wright dossier as they were about the Ponting dossier?

It is important that the Labour party is committed to the Cirencester and Tewkesbury amendment of the Bournemouth conference of 1985, when it was promised that we would have some sort of tribunal to which civil servants who felt that they had been abused could go. Did Sir Robert Armstrong hush up the Kershaw note concerning the memorandum from Wright? Were other members of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs told? If so, should a chairman of a Select Committee keep such a matter to himself?

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it may be within your recollection that I raised with Mr. Speaker the issue of Members' telephones. My hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) has received a letter which I have cross-checked, which I think should be the property of the House. It reads:

"First of all, let me make it plain that I am not and never have been subject to the Official Secrets Act."

This is an anonymous letter. It continues:

"I will not identify myself because I am apprehensive of the Security Services. For 12 years, from 1968 to 1980, I was associated with the modernisation of the Government's telephone network covering the Whitehall area. The project consisted of eight central branch exchanges, each covering a geographical area of Whitehall, and all included all Government offices and buildings within that area. Each of these CBXs was connected to each other and to the outside public network via a CBX tandem exchange located in the building known as the North Rotunda under the Department of the Environment at the entrance on Great Peter Street. Also in this building were located three of the eight CBXs, the others being located around central London. The Palace of Westminster was served by a CBX located in an underground bunker in Storey's Gate, since modernised, I believe.

You will appreciate from the above that the key to the whole network is the CBX tandem access, which would give anyone access to all telephone calls internally and externally, which is open to some 70,000 telephone lines. These included all MPs' telephones, Downing Street and any other

telephones serving Government Departments for roughly one square mile around Whitehall. Access to the North Rotunda building is via a door to the right of the Great Peter Street entrance of the Department of the Environment, and required a pass issued by the authorities to visitors, who were allowed to fill in a visitor's pass that had to be handed over on leaving the building. On entering the building one is confronted by a flight of steps, opposite which is a glass-fronted office that is manned at all times by uniformed security officers. Over a period of time, mostly outside normal working hours, a room immediately to the left at the bottom of the steps was installed with extensive and very sophisticated equipment.

One day two severe-looking men turned up at the site and refused to show either identification passes or to fill in a visitor's document. After being refused admission, uniformed security guards received a telephone call instructing them and their colleagues to give all these men access day and night without question. These men and others manned the equipment in this room 24 hours a day. They never spoke or acknowledged normal greetings and access to the room was barred, of course. I cannot remember when this started, having no access to records, but it was a few weeks after MPs received push-button telephones instead of dial telephones. I am sure that this can soon be ascertained.

It soon became accepted by all the Post Office BT staff and the contracting engineers that the only possible purpose for which this equipment could be used was intercepting telephone calls. I am sure that you realise the implications. Imagine the political advantage if you were the Government of the day and you had access to every telephone call made and received by Opposition MPs, every civil servant in Whitehall, not to mention"—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. I hope that the extract is about to come to an end. The hon. Gentleman should be making a speech rather than reading a letter.

Mr. Dalyell: I merely say that it is not explained how telephone calls between my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and Australia were intercepted. The answer that Mr. Speaker gave me was to refer the matter to the Prime Minister. Many hon. Members are concerned about what has happened and I believe that the information that came to my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East rings true.

6.48 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall North): I am sure that the concluding point of my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) should be taken up by the authorities in the House. It is a serious matter which cannot be dismissed out of hand.

The only thing that I would say about the case in Australia, which my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) made much of, and rightly so, is that it was a mistake in the first place for the Government to pursue the case. I doubt whether they will win it, and the Government will be left with much egg on their face. The case has done nothing for the reputation of the Cabinet Secretary, who had an embarrassing brief, to say the least. In the eyes of many in Australia, and perhaps in Britain as well, he made rather an ass of himself.

When the Select Committee on Home Affairs decided to look into the activities of the special branch, a number of witnesses came before the Committee to assure us that there was nothing to worry about. We know that the special branch works closely with the Security Service, and we were told that the work being undertaken by the Security Service and by the special branch was legitimate and that there was no question of anyone being inquired into because of his political views, that political dissent was legitimate, and that there was little to worry about. The majority of the Committee came to the conclusion that the evidence was sufficient to justify a report which stated that the work being undertaken by the special branch was perfectly in order.

Some Labour Members, however, were not convinced. I am sure that much of the work undertaken by the special branch is necessary and justified but many people — certainly many people in the Labour movement — are concerned that some activities carried out by the special branch have little to do with the security of the state.

It was near the end of our inquiry into the special branch that a television film called "MI5's Official Secrets" was shown. Some people have said that we should not take too much notice of what Mr. Wright told the court — that he has exaggerated, and so on. In the television film, Cathy Massiter, a former official of MI5, stated that a number of people and organisations were the subject of inquiries because of their political views. They are people and organisations who in no way can be described as trying to undermine our democratic institutions.

One of the organisations mentioned by Miss Massiter was the National Council for Civil Liberties. She said, as I remarked in an intervention in the speech of the Minister, that anyone who worked for the NCCL, anyone on the executive council and anyone who is active enough to be a branch secretary of that organisation is subject to inquiry, and a file is kept by MI5. One of the people who was the subject of an investigation—and certainly a file by MI5—was, apparently, my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) when she was the legal officer of that organisation. Is it suggested that my hon. Friend wants to undermine our democratic institutions and that she wants to turn this country into a Soviet republic? Therefore, inevitably, an argument that those activities are going on must give rise to a great deal of anxiety and undermine our confidence in the Security Service.

I wish to give another illustration. When a journalist of some 30 years resigned as the editor of the CND journal — he had fallen out, as people tend to do in various organisations—he was subject to several questions from the special branch. It wanted to know who lived with whom, and what was the leadership style of the then general secretary of the CND. What is the purpose of such questions? If it is claimed by Ministers, including the Prime Minister, that it is perfectly legitimate to argue that one can be in favour of nuclear disarmament without being a security risk, why are those questions asked? They must give rise to much concern.

From reports in the press and from what Miss Cathy Massiter states, I understand that in MI5 there is what is known as an F branch. It is sub-divided into other branches. For example, F2 investigates trade unions, F7 investigates various political groups, including Members of Parliament — that is interesting to know — teachers, lawyers and journalists, F4 is responsible for putting agents into political parties and organisations, and F6 is responsible for trade unions.

Mr. Martin M. Brandon-Bravo (Nottingham, South): What a load of crap.

Mr. Winnick: The hon. Gentleman made a comment that I do not wish to repeat. *[Interruption.]* One of my hon. Friends says that it is possible that F7 has a file on the hon. Gentleman. If so, I deplore it.

[Mr. Winnick]

The recent allegations arising from the court case regarding a plot against the Labour Prime Minister at the time add further reasons why there should be a Select Committee or some form of parliamentary oversight of the security services. What would be the position if it were stated in court by a former MI5 official that certain MI5 officials had plotted to undermine a Conservative Prime Minister? I doubt whether Conservative Members would take such allegations in a light-hearted way. Surely at the end of the day we must persuade the House and the country that MI5 officials act in a politically neutral way. The first requirement of anyone who works in the Security Service is that he is totally committed to parliamentary democracy. Would anyone suggest that Mr. Peter Wright and some of his cronies who carried out what can only be described as subversive and criminal acts in 1974 are dedicated to parliamentary democracy? We know about Mr. Peter Wright. Do some of his colleagues, who worked with him at the time, remain in the Security Service? If so, is it not time that they were thrown out? Is it not time, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), the former leader of the Labour party, stated, for MI5 to be cleansed completely?

That we need a Security Service is without doubt, but we need a Security Service that is politically neutral and is determined to defend parliamentary democracy. It is no good talking about fighting subversion while at the same time members of the security services do their utmost to carry out subversive activities. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) has changed his mind about the parliamentary Select Committee. It is essential, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) said, that there should be such a Select Committee to oversee the Security Service. It will not come into being during this Parliament. I hope that, when my party returns to office, such a Select Committee will be set up.

6.55 pm

Mr. Waddington: With the leave of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall speak again.

I think that all hon. Members will agree that this has been an interesting debate. We should thank the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) for having selected the subject, even though I do not think that there was much in the content of his speech for which to thank him. I have already commented on his speech, so I shall refer to the remarks by the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). He suggested that the best alternative to the present system was the setting up of a Select Committee which, in some way or another, would survey the work carried out by the Security Service. If that course is suggested, we must face, in the starkest fashion, the difficulty that was posed by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House in the debate last week—whether the body responsible for surveillance will be within or outside the barrier of secrecy.

It is difficult to contemplate a Select Committee on which there would be not only Privy Councillors but people who are not Privy Councillors, being privy to operations carried out by the Security Service. If the Select Committee, with that role, is not to go within the barrier of secrecy, it is highly unlikely that it will satisfy the critics of the present system. It is difficult to see how it will be any improvement at all on the present system.

I was interested in the remarks made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival). He pointed to the inconsistency of the case put forward by the hon. Member for Workington, who seemed to say that what Wright did was wrong, yet it was equally wrong to take action to try to prevent him from doing it. One could have understood it if the hon. Gentleman had said that what Wright was doing was wrong, that it was impolitic to do much about it, and that there were more dangers involved in the Government trying to do anything about it than to do nothing. I thought that my right hon. and learned Friend was right. The hon. Member for Workington said that while Wright was doing what was treasonable, we should do nothing about it, and that indeed he was entitled, as an hon. Member, not just to object but to bend all his efforts over the weeks and months to destroy the British case in the Australian courts. That strikes me as one of the most bizarre cases to have been but forward by any hon. Member over recent years——

Mr. Robert Atkins (South Ribble) *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question, That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to.*

Main Question put and negatived.

RETIREMENT

Motion made, and Question put,

That this House would welcome measures to introduce the opportunity of flexible retirement ages equally for men and women with appropriately adjusted state retirement pensions; urges employers to help their employees to build up a personal pension fund to provide for a comfortable standard of living in retirement; and calls on all political parties to support the Government's efforts to control inflation to protect the value of people's savings for retirement.—*[Mr. Henderson.]*

Question agreed to.

Adjournment (Christmas)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That this House at its rising on Friday 19th December do adjourn until Monday 12th January, and that the House shall not adjourn on Friday 19th December until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.—*[Mr. Biffen.]*

7 pm

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): Whether or not it is getting near Christmas, the House of Commons likes to forget about Ulster, to which our country owes its survival. For one thing, the obsession with devolved government drives a wedge of difference between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, and cuts the Province adrift, as it were, from our party politics, especially because the historic Tory-Ulster Unionist alliance has become so tenuous.

We all deplore the absence from their places of Northern Ireland Members, but it would be wrong to adjourn without the House being given up-to-date knowledge of a situation that might be described as creeping anarchy. Despite the courage, efficiency and diligence of the security forces, and, indeed, their successes, and despite the efforts of my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Northern Ireland Office and the large investment by our taxpayers in an ailing economy, the majority in Northern Ireland are embittered and estranged and, largely in consequence, the minority are afraid.

Bishop Daly of Down and Connor, speaking at the funeral of a victim of the UVF, said:

"the Sectarian blood-lust of the 1970s might return."

Sometimes the security forces find themselves between two fires. Public representatives, including those who sit for Northern Ireland constituencies, refuse to meet and to work with Ministers in the Northern Ireland Office. Before we rise for the recess, we should have at least an assurance from those Ministers that they are taking stock of what has gone wrong and what they should do now.

The situation was summarised by the distinguished chairman of the Northern Ireland Economic Council, Sir Charles Carter, in an article that he wrote in *The Times* of 20 August. He said:

"Many responsible people in the province feel that the government has allowed itself to assume a quite unacceptable risk and that, if nothing is done, there could be a spiral of further depression and violence until Ulster really does become ungovernable except by a massive military effort, which would consume even greater amounts of public resources."

How could the agreement not be destabilising when the offending Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, established under the agreement, was commended to the Republic by Dr. FitzGerald as being "as near joint authority" as can be? The House will remember that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister roundly rejected joint authority for Northern Ireland in a memorable press conference. I wish that the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) were here to tell us of his American conspiracy. If there is not an American conspiracy, the two Governments have made it appear as if there were. There was a Congressional chorus hymning the signature of the Anglo-Irish Agreement at Hillsborough castle. The agreement has been accompanied by international aid, primarily United States dollar aid, which Her Majesty's Government should not have stooped to accept. I ask my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to tell us when we may debate and even reject the International Fund for Ireland in respect of Northern Ireland.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement has thrust Northern Ireland still further away from us. If it has driven Ulster mad, it is all the easier to say, "Those people over there are mad, and the sooner we have nothing more to do with them, the better." That appears to be a conspiracy to some people. Thus, the idea of an independent Ulster, paradoxically advocated by some Loyalists, an idea that received official sympathy when the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, gains ground. The despair of British intentions strengthens it. It is as though the Province and its people were being softened for separation.

When I criticise the Anglo-Irish Agreement and its consequences, people are inclined to say, "What would you do?" I could reply as the Irish peasant did and say that I would not have started from here. However, I should like to be constructive and make two suggestions, one concerning the administration of the Province and the other concerning the future of the agreement. I suggest to my right hon. Friends that they should not rule out so contemptuously the full integration of Northern Ireland with the rest of the United Kingdom. They are inclined to say, "Never can this happen." I remind them that the use of the word "never" destroyed the career of a distinguished Minister of the Crown, the predecessor of my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann). He is now Lord Colyton, happily still with us. He used the word "never" in connection with Cyprus. I ask Ministers not to say never will they ever consider full integration or administrative devolution, call it what one will. That brings me to my second point, on the future of the agreement.

If one can make sure of the union and convince the Unionist majority that one has made sure of the union, they will feel free to stretch out their hands, as they have often in the past, to the minority in the Province and to the Republic to the south. It would be nice, but I do not expect to hear from the Government that they propose to rescind the agreement or even seek its abrogation with Dublin. But my proposal is to replace or supplement it with a larger agreement—not an unequal agreement but an equal treaty—covering not only the security of these islands but all the aspects of common concern in our unique relationship.

That relationship came about, and that phrase came into use when Mr. Haughey was Taoiseach. I do not know what will happen in the election shortly to take place in the Republic. It is not my business to comment on it——

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): But.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: But it is noteworthy that, when Mr. Haughey was Taoiseach, the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council—not to be confused with the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference — was instituted. That institution, the secretariat that accompanied it and even the idea of a parliamentary tier were acceptable. They were on the right lines. But the intergovernmental conference is not.

Ulster is not England. When Ulster says no, it means no. I invite Ministers to take to heart the words of Lord Salisbury in 1878, because I believe that there is no health or life left in the agreement. He said:

[Sir John Biggs-Davison]

"The commonest error in politics is sticking to the carcases of dead policies."

7.10 pm

Mr. Michael Cocks (Bristol, South): I shall not detain the House long. I think that the motion for the Adjournment is a little premature. There are still a couple of days before Christmas that could be utilised to discuss other matters, especially a constituency point — the activities of the Hanson Trust and Lord Hanson. I shall eschew references to Lord Hanson's previous activities and not make any of the possibly rather cheap points that might be made. I ask the Government to consider whether Lord Hanson and his operatives could give much greater information to the workers involved in the takeovers which are following his activities. He has succeeded in making the phrase "asset stripping" one which is in common usage by the general public and which is now understood in a completely new way.

In Bristol the Imperial Group was taken over. The great factory in East street, Bedminster, which stood for many years, has been demolished. There is great concern about the new factory, which was built at Hartcliffe not long ago. The tobacco industry is and will continue to be under siege, not only from my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) but from cheap imports from the continent. The Government could well consider this aspect, because those imports are undermining the interests of my constituents.

The problem has been reflected in a number of recent redundancies at the factory. Rumours are rife that the factory is to be closed. It was purpose built some years ago, and it is known that it is suitable for conversion to other uses. I make this plea to the Government: although it may not be easy to restrain Lord Hanson's commercial activities, he could be asked to give much more information to the workers who are affected by his activities. There is nothing so destructive to a man's morale and his family as uncertainty about job prospects. If an assurance were given that, as long as there is a demand, tobacco will continue to be manufactured at Hartcliffe, the Government could be helpful in persuading Lord Hanson to remove the uncertainty that dogs so many people.

I ask the Leader of the House to note my points and to pass them on to his colleagues to ascertain whether uncertainty can be lifted by discussion with Lord Hanson so that his intentions become clearer. That is what is needed—not his making a cheap buck from flogging off parts of the companies that he takes over.

7.13 pm

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): I shall not follow the interesting speech by the right hon. Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks), but I thoroughly agree that the House should not adjourn until it has had the opportunity to debate the defence scandal over the demountable rack offloading and pick-up system. The Government have agreed to set up an independent inquiry into the whole seedy affair.

DROPS is equipment for transporting ammunition to the battlefield. I know something about these matters because I was the Minister who set up the procurement executive and was in charge of it in its various manifestations during the first few years. The concept of DROPS was very largely that of a firm in my constituency, Boughton. It pressed the concept on the Army for many years. So confident was Boughton of its ideas that it built the equipment at its own expense and sold it to four foreign armies. Its equipment was in existence by 1975, and the Ministry of Defence could have bought it then. The equipment that was available to the Ministry of Defence is substantially the same as that which, after years of incompetence, duplicity and cover up, the Army will eventually receive in 1989.

However, there is a great deal more to it than mere incompetence in this disgraceful and scandalous affair. Indeed, the House will probably find the story scarcely credible as I briefly tell it. As I said, the concept is largely Boughton's, although I am sorry that my right hon. and hon. Friends have sought to deny that and have said—no doubt in good faith — that other firms were very much involved and that it was not Boughton's concept.

In 1978, the chief of staff, British Army of the Rhine, said:

"During the last two years the MOD have been examining the various systems used by commercial operators in the UK to allow one vehicle to perform two or more functions. The examination concluded that only one, the Ampliroll"——

that is, Boughton's——

"possessed sufficient potential to warrant trials being carried out".

In September 1981, the defence sales section of the procurement executive wrote to the vice chief of the general staff, saying:

"The Boughton Group have promoted the concept to DGTM since 1974 and developed most of the equipment which is central to it. They are the principal authority in what is technically feasible."

That should be borne in mind when the Ministry of Defence is attempting to say that Boughton was not the leader in this development. However, Boughton pressed this equipment on the Ministry of Defence and eventually convinced it. The Ministry issued a statement of requirements and invited Boughton to tender for a feasibility study.

Boughton was clearly better qualified than any other competitor. Above all, it was the only company that had a complete working system in existence. All the others were still at the drawing board. Boughton had fully fledged equipment in existence. Boughton's design was wholly British. I know that the Ministry of Defence does not seem to be attached to British equipment these days, but to most people it is surely a considerable advantage. Furthermore, Boughton met all the specifications better than its competitors, and it was cheapest. The Ministry tries to blur that inconvenient fact by weasel words.

For the feasibility study vehicles, competitors were asked to produce prices backed by detailed documentation. Boughton was easily the cheapest—sometimes by up to 80 per cent. Competitors were asked to produce production estimates for 2,000 vehicles—just a one-line estimate backed by no evidence. Boughton produced its actual production costs — because it was the only company that produced the equipment, it knew the costs — and the others produced estimates bristling with hedges and caveats. In any case, for what Boughton was asked to do, it was the cheapest. The independent assessors, who were used on the "Panorama" programme

and were recommended by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers as being the best in that business, supported Boughton.

To sum up, Boughton offered the most for the least, yet, incredibly, it was excluded from the trial. That was a shameful and improper decision. That is the most scandalous feature of the affair. One of the reasons for it was, I think, that the people in the procurement executive were so besotted with their own ideas and estimates of their abilities that they preferred a design which Boughton had many years before shown not to work.

The procurement executive then wasted much time and money proving that its ideas did not work—which we knew already—and, since then, it has been drawn back to Boughton's ideas and equipment while trying to conceal that it has done so. That is the second scandalous feature of this affair.

The third scandalous feature is the cover up that has gone on and the fatuous nature of the explanation that the procurement executive has attempted to make for its exclusion of Boughton from the competition. If anybody was in any serious doubt that there was a scandal here, he would only have to read the attempted explanation of it by the Ministry of Defence. Indeed, when "Panorama" was thinking of doing a programme, because it thought that there was something seriously wrong, it became fully convinced of that fact only when it had listened to a major presentation of the Ministry of Defence's case.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House is by nature very sceptical, but if he gets any briefing from the Ministry of Defence I strongly advise him to treat it with even more than his usual scepticism because, on all previous form, it is highly unlikely to be anywhere near true. Some of our right hon. Friends have suffered because of that already.

When I first raised this matter in July 1983, it took the Ministry of Defence six and a half months to give me a substantive reply. It is true that during that period my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), then the Secretary of State, was courteous enough to see me. Nevertheless, it took six and a half months to get a reply, and then it was so staggeringly thin and unconvincing that, as I stated in my rejection of it, I would have regarded it as gravely inadequate if it had been sent to me the previous July. Put forward as an attempted justification of the Ministry of Defence's conduct six and a half months later, it was little more than a plea of guilty.

Not only does the Ministry of Defence's attempted replies starkly reveal the poverty of its case, but so bad is that case that it attempts to shut its opponents up. We all know of the intimidation of an hon. Member, but, on more than one occasion, people in the Ministry tried to intimidate the firm. That is not the behaviour of people who possess confidence in a just case; it is the frightened and guilty behaviour of people who know that their case is bad and is not defensible by decent methods. That is not so, of course, of all at the Ministry. People change so quickly in the Ministry of Defence that few of those who were responsible for this blunder or crime are still in the same spots. I think that some of their successors do not know what happened then and are acting in good faith. Others, out of misplaced feelings of solidarity, are just determined to cover up.

I have always refused to ascribe motives for what was done because the facts are enough in themselves. The reasons may have been personal animosity, blind dogmatism, sheer dismal ineptitude or something more sinister. General Mans, when he looked at the matter in 1984, thought that the unfair and improper exclusion of Boughton had been influenced by personal considerations. That is certainly true, but I do not exclude additional motives.

Like others, I have a high regard for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. We were Ministers together in the Ministry of Defence many years ago. He has a great deal to do and a great deal on his mind. Here he has made a natural but, in this case, disastrous mistake of believing what he has been told by his advisers. That has already involved him in some embarrassment because what he said—on Ministry advice, of course—about Boughton not being intimidated turned out to be wrong. Although I understand his difficulties, I find his refusal of any inquiry, at least up to now, indefensible.

It is true that the Comptroller and Auditor General is interested in this contract. Indeed, we drew his office's attention to it last August. That should be a useful inquiry, but everybody knows that the Comptroller and Auditor General is concerned with financial irregularity and the spending of public money. He looks at the Ministry's documents and examines civil servants. He does not hear outside evidence. Welcome as his researches are, they should be in addition to, not a substitute for, an independent inquiry.

I shall summarise the case. In 1983, the Ministry of Defence selected equipment which was of a lower specification than Boughton's, offered at much higher prices than Boughton's—some were 80 per cent. higher—in virtually every respect inferior to Boughton's in its compliance with the stated requirements, and years behind Boughton's in development. In making this selection, the Ministry neglected to verify compliance with the stated requirements, introduced new and arbitrary requirements which were designed to favour systems other than Boughton's, were irrelevant or wrong, were at variance with previous trials experience, Ministry policy or the majority of "expert opinion" in the Ministry, and are now seen to be incompatible with achieving the stated requirements for DROPS.

When dealing with complaints and inquiries since 1983, the Minstry of Defence has lied about the relative prices of competing equipment, lied about that lie about prices, intimidated Boughton to suppress its legitimate complaints, lied to hon. Members about that intimidation and attempted to suppress legitimate and proper inquiries in private by an hon. Member.

How can anybody now have any confidence in the procurement process for any other equipment if the procurement executive is allowed to get away with such behaviour and nobody is punished for it? Unless the Government want us to believe that this sort of behaviour in the procurement executive is quite normal, they have a clear duty to set up an independent inquiry. Unless they think that injustice, incompetence, dissembling and deceit are fine and proper as well as normal, the case for an inquiry is overwhelming. Unless the Government believe that the right response to a scandal is to attempt to hush it up, they should order an inquiry now.

7.26 pm

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): The right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) spoke in forthright terms on an important issue

[Mr. James Wallace]

and I am sure that the House is grateful to him. He can expect the full support of this Bench for the independent inquiry that he seeks.

If time permits, I also would want to raise issues concerning defence procurement—the supply of arms by the United Kingdom to Iran and the Government's choice of an airborne early warning system. They are separate issues, but both raise important questions which require a full Government response before the House adjourns for the Christmas recess.

The Government's stance on the supply of arms to Iran was set out by the Foreign Secretary in a written answer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) on 29 October 1985. He said that the following guidelines would apply:

> (i) We should maintain our consistent refusal to supply any lethal equipment to either side;
> (ii) Subject to that overriding consideration, we should attempt to fulfil existing contracts and obligations;
> (iii) We should not, in future, approve orders for any defence equipment which, in our view, would significantly enhance the capability of either side to prolong or exacerbate the conflict;
> (iv) In the line with this policy, we should continue to scrutinise rigorously all applications for export licences for the supply of defence equipment to Iran and Iraq.—[*Official Report*, 29 October 1985; Vol. 84, c. *450*.]

That seems reasonable, but closer examination reveals that it might not amount to all that much. Contractual obligations entered into with the pre-revolutionary Government cannot readily be set aside, but it is some time since they were entered into, and the implications of the supply of spare parts or the assistance with maintenance of equipment cannot be ignored when the recipient country is engaged in armed conflict which has already claimed many lives.

Fulfilling contractual obligations is, of course, subject to the overriding consideration that we should refuse to supply lethal equipment. That also seems reasonable until we ask what is the distinction between "lethal" and "non-lethal". I am not aware of the Government publicising a difference, but the sensible approach is that any equipment which keeps the war machine going is ultimately lethal as it will help to prolong or exacerbate the conflict. Indeed, the absurdity of trying to distinguish between lethal and non-lethal equipment was exposed by Mr. Colin Chandler, the head of the Ministry of Defence defence export services organisations, when he spoke earlier this year at the British Army equipment exhibition at Aldershot. He said:

"there is no such thing as a 'non-lethal' weapon."

When one considers the reports in yesterday's *The Observer*, the applicability of the Government's criteria, particularly as to what is "non-lethal", seems to come into question. The newspaper stated:

"Fifty Chieftain tank engines together with spares for Scorpion armoured cars and radar equipment worth a total of £35 million were shipped to Iran from Liverpool last month

The equipment was trucked to Liverpool from warehouses in the Midlands after a final inspection by an Iranian official

Despite Government claims that no British military spares have been shipped for 18 months, *The Observer* has evidence that the trade is being continued with official knowledge, through a series of British middlemen."

Whatever the Government's position, important questions arise. If the Government did not know that such shipments were being made, what sort of policing operation is being mounted to ensure that regulations on export licences for the sale of defence equipment are not being circumvented? In recent weeks concern has been expressed from several sources that London is being used as a trading centre for arms deals with Iran. There is little or no evidence that the Government have appeared worried about that, which begs the question whether the Government did not know or did not want to know about direct shipments from the United Kingdom.

If the Government knew that the shipments were being made, it calls into question the assurances that have been given on many occasions recently from the Dispatch Box that the Government are resolutely abiding by their declared policy in respect of these arms sales. Are Ministers trying to maintain the integrity of their answers by allowing either a wide definition of "non-lethal" or a limited view of what would prolong or exacerbate the conflict, so that almost anything goes and any shipment can slip through?

In a letter to my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale about a fortnight ago, the Prime Minister claimed that the United Kingdom's policy on arms sales to Iran and Iraq was

"one of the strictest in Europe"

and that

"the policy has been maintained scrupulously and consistently."

Surely, having staked out for themselves a position on such high moral ground, the Government have a duty to be more open and forthcoming than they have been until now on reports about arms shipments and sales to Iran.

Increasingly questions are being asked in the House and the press about whether the Government are living up to their declared position. There have been reports of negotiations between Iranian officials and representatives of International Military Sales—a company fully owned by the Ministry of Defence. Those negotiations are alleged to have taken place between 20 and 31 October. In recent weeks the Government have confirmed that they intend to keep open the office of the IMS in Teheran. Last week there were newspaper reports of a multi-million pound order for Plessey to supply a radar system to Iran. In the past two days there has been a report of a shipment of equipment worth £35 million from Liverpool.

All those reports call into question the scrupulousness and consistency with which the Government are applying their declared policy. In recent weeks we have seen on the other side of the Atlantic the consequences of trying to keep arms sales to Iran in the dark. Before the House adjourns for the recess, it should be incumbent on Ministers in the Ministry of Defence to come to the House and declare with greater frankness than before precisely what has been going on regarding the shipment of arms to Iran.

My second issue relates to defence procurement and the controversial choice of an airborne early warning system for the United Kingdom. It is a complex issue, and I certainly do not envy the Secretary of State his decision.

My right hon. and hon. Friends believe that, all other things being equal and both systems being able to come up to the Royal Air Force specific performance requirements, there is no question but that the Government should choose GEC Nimrod.

Mr. Michael Cocks: What a caveat.

Mr. Wallace: I missed that sedentary intervention.

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Which system does the alliance want to buy?

Mr. Wallace: I have made it perfectly clear that we would choose the GEC Nimrod. *[Interruption.]* Ceteris paribus.

Two major considerations weigh with us in reaching that conclusion. The first reason concerns jobs. The employment prospects of many people employed by GEC Avionics and its sub-contractors are involved and a decision not to proceed with Nimrod would doom many of those jobs. Those jobs already exist and are not merely a declared intention. Many of them are for highly qualified technical staff. The great fear is that, even if the offset jobs proposed by Boeing come to pass, they would not be of the same high technical quality of the existing jobs. The offset proposal is, on the face of it, attractive and one would hope that if the Government opted for the AWACs system—which from all press accounts seems to be the course which they are about to take—they would use their strong bargaining power to ensure that a belt-and-braces job is done in any contract to make absolutely certain of the 130 per cent. offset.

The second reason is closely related to employment. It is that we should maintain a high-tech base and expertise in Britain and keep the design teams together. Last year on a parliamentary visit to Japan we discussed the fact that often Britain seems to produce Nobel prize winners but does not fare well compared with our Japanese competitors in taking original inventions through to development. There would be serious consequences for our avionics industry if we lost those highly qualified teams and could not keep that expertise together. That would be a grave loss for the United Kingdom, and I fear that we would rapidly become a simple assembly line, putting together other countries' technical achievements.

The proviso I gave was if both systems matched up to performance requirements. If one system is head and shoulders above the other, the overriding principle must be to secure the nation's defence. We should not dodge that issue. In the long term many fundamental questions will be asked about the project. In July the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General criticised the contract management of the project and no doubt in the long term the Public Accounts Committee and the Defence Select Committee will do the House the service of probing the development of the project and discovering whether GEC had one hand tied behind its back because of the refusal of the Ministry of Defence to co-operate, as was suggested in *The Independent* on Saturday.

In the short term, if a decision is to be made before the Christmas recess we shall expect the Government to be franker than they have been and to come forward with comparative performances of the two systems. If the Government opt for the Boeing system, they know that the House will need a great deal of convincing that it is far superior to Nimrod and that there is no question that, if GEC were allowed a little extra time, there would be no chance of GEC bringing it up to the standard required by the RAF. Clearly, in the past six months GEC has made tremendous strides in developing and improving the system.

Also, in the light of the comments made by the right hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior), we shall further have to be satisfied that there has been no question of the Royal Air Force moving the goal posts in recent months and imposing unfair competition.

Hon. Members will wish to be satisfied on these many points and will demand answers to those questions before the House rises for the Christmas recess.

7.39 pm

Mr. Christopher Murphy (Welwyn Hatfield): Before the House rises for the Christmas recess, hon. Members should consider the privacy of sound, and not just not in terms of an absence of sleigh bells or carol singers! Following an initiative generated by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe as part of European Music Year, there appears to be a requirement for the public to be better informed of the positive and negative effects of music and noise. To encapsulate the problem—people need to learn to master their soundscape.

Music can be described, technically, as a biological pacemaker with therapeutic effect or, untechnically, as a pleasant collection of notes. Whatever the definition, there is a general acceptance now that sound is part of the social environment. However, inherent in that acceptance are certain negatives, for there are direct physiologically harmful effects, especially in exposure to over-amplified music; and possible psychological damage of unwanted music resulting in nuisance. The positives can come about only as a consequence of the individual being aware of the quality of his soundscape and its effects on others. Obvious examples of the pluses and the minuses are the delights of a concert hall versus a television transmission from a neighbouring house, the pleasures of a good recording at leisure versus the musak of the supermarket, the peace and tranquility of the countryside versus the shattering impact of a transistor radio, the quiet meditation versus the half-heard so-called personal stereo.

Conservative Members are especially anxious to increase the individual's freedom and his choice, but, as we know only too well, such freedoms also demand responsibilities, and such responsibilities would be enhanced by the Government assisting in the—dare I say it—broadcasting of the facts and consequences.

The privacy of sound is often considered to include the right of silence. I shall now exercise such a right and fall silent, no doubt, with the Christmas recess before us, to the strains of Silent Night!

7.43 pm

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): The hon. Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy) will forgive me if I do not take up his comments. I share the view already expressed by Labour Members that the House should not adjourn for Christmas yet awhile, and certainly not until we have considered the deteriorating employment position in Scotland, and not least in my constituency.

During the past few weeks 1,600 jobs on the lower Clyde have disappeared. Today it has been announced that hundreds of jobs are to go from the power generation construction industry in Scotland. Last week my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) had the problem of Buchanan whisky closing at Stepps. Now Burroughs Machines at Cumbernauld in my constituency has decided to close its entire operation by June 1987. That same area has seen the closure of Gartcosh steel works and the collieries at Cardowan and

[Mr. Norman Hogg]

Bedlay. This is happening at a time when nearly 16 per cent. of Scottish workers are unemployed. Indeed, in my constituency 18·3 per cent. are unemployed. Traditional industries such as coal, shipbuilding, steel, and heavy engineering are vanishing. It is especially worrying that the industry that is disappearing from my constituency is not a traditional or sunset industry. It is supposed to be a sunrise industry in the so-called silicon glen.

Burroughs Machines opened in Cumbernauld in 1958, a year before the new town was inaugurated. Once it employed 3,500 people. Last February it ended its manufacturing in Cumbernauld. Now as a result of a merger with an organisation called Sperry Ltd. to form a new organisation called Unisys, Cumbernauld has been sacrificed as part of an 8 per cent. reduction in its worldwide work force.

Early this year the elected representatives of the new town fought the loss of jobs. We met members of the Burroughs board, the Detroit management, the United Kingdom management and the European management, but all to no avail. We met the Secretary of State for Scotland. In pleading the case for the new town and for Burroughs, we laid claim to Scotland's place in high tech industry.

I know that the Government sought to retain the company by grants. It is known that in the last quarter of 1984 the Government gave £1·2 million to Burroughs in grant aid and selective assistance. The Government have recovered £750,000 of that because of the closure. Those figures have not been confirmed yet, of course, because of what the Scottish Office calls commercial confidentiality, but I hope that we shall obtain the facts. Conservative Governments are fond of telling us that Governments have no money except for that which they collect from other people. If that is so, I hope that they will put the record straight for us as regards the public money that has been spent on that company. Moreover, Unisys continues to hold considerable assets in my constituency. It has 460,000 sq ft of factory space and 70 acres of land.

Scotland's industry is dying by instalments. The hopes placed in the high tech electronic industries have yet to be confirmed. The notion that high tech Scottish industries are really brand or subsidiary activities of north Atlantic or Asian based multinationals in not set aside by events such as the Burroughs closure. The sunset of a major multinational which is a giant in the computer industry fills Scotland with foreboding for the future of its high tech plants. What is to be done about it?

Certainly the Cumbernauld development corporation has done everything possible in the past 12 months and earlier to attract new jobs. This year 50 new companies —many of them very small—came to the new town, most notably Isola Werke, Store Shield, Seaboard Lloyd, Allivane International and Gateway Superstores. They are important, but they do not take the place of major manufacturing industries such as Burroughs Machines. This tragic business must be compensated for in some way.

The community that I represent gave Burroughs Machines of its best in its commitment to its products and in the skills of the work force. Burroughs once enjoyed a great reputation in the computer industry, certainly in Europe. The people of Cumbernauld made that possible. That commitment, those skills and that reputation are not transient but are a continuing part of the new company of Unisys.

I hope that Unisys will show its gratitude to Cumbernauld and that it will donate its factory, offices and land to the new town so that those who continue to serve the town—in Government Departments, in the Cumbernauld development corporation and in the local authorities—may put the facilities to good use in the creation of jobs. Likewise, I hope that the company will maintain its commitment to Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Enterprise Trust. I also hope that the Government will assist me in those objectives. It is the least that the people of Cumbernauld can expect of Unisys given the tragic events of recent weeks and years.

7.49 pm

Mr. David Atkinson (Bournemouth, East): Before the House rises for the feast of Christmas, in particular, we should spare a thought for all those who will not be spending Christmas with their families because they are in gulag labour camps for being Christians, for being far too active in their faith for the Soviet state to tolerate. As we know from experience, the more often that their names are mentioned in free Parliaments, and in the free press and media throughout the world, the more effective the pressure is for their release. The House was reminded of that last month, when the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) raised, not for the first time, the plight of the Jews in the Soviet Union—the refuseniks for whom emigration today is down to nil.

In my Adjournment debate last month, on the third Helsinki review conference that recently commenced in Vienna, I referred to Irina Ratushinskaya, the Russian Orthodox poetess, who in 1983 became the first woman in the Soviet Union to be sentenced to the maximum imprisonment of seven years in a gulag labour camp, plus five more years of internal exile for the crime of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda for writing her poems.

Earlier this year, fears grew for Irina's health when her appalling prison conditions became known. That led to a campaign on her behalf throughout the free world, including the presentation of 31 petitions by right hon. and hon. Members. I have no doubt that it was because of that pressure that Irina was released on the eve of the Reykjavik summit. From today's edition of *The Times* we learn that, after 16 visits to the emigration authorities since her release, she has now been told that she and her husband will be allowed to come to Britain for health treatment, although she wants to return to Russia to continue her struggle for human rights.

Once again, we learn the lesson to persevere and never to give up on behalf of these courageous people. It is for that reason that I want to draw the attention of the House to the particularly tragic case of Alexander Ogorodnikov, whose situation is now becoming acute. At the age of 22, because he abandoned Marxism for Christianity, he was expelled from the Soviet education system, lost his job, was turned out of several apartments and was always kept under surveillance. In 1974, he helped to found a Christian discussion group called the Seminar. Two years later, several of his colleagues were arrested and interned in psychiatric hospitals.

In 1978, Ogorodnikov was himself arrested and was sentenced to one year in a labour camp on the charge of parasitism. In 1980, he was tried again, charged with the

usual all-purpose crime of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, and was sentenced to six years in a gulag labour camp, to be followed by a further five years in internal exile.

We have a number of horrific reports from Ogorodnikov's friends of the appallingly inhumane conditions that he is having to endure, of ill treatment to break his spirit, and of a number of hunger strikes because he is denied a Bible and not allowed to wear a cross. In April of this year, despite his ill health, the loss of his teeth and the growing loss of much of his eyesight, and shortly before he was to be taken to his place of exile after serving six years in a labour camp, he was re-arrested in the camp and sentenced to a further three years imprisonment. There are reports of a file of materials that the KGB is putting together for further charges against him.

It is little wonder that, in the belief that he has now been forgotten by his friends and the rest of the world, Ogorodnikov has apparently attempted suicide three times, and in a letter has asked his mother to appeal to the authorities to execute him by firing squad. He is reported to have said:

"Only the full glare of publicity can alter my fate, and those of others in the same situation".

We who are about to celebrate Christmas in freedom must not ignore the fate of Christians like Ogorodnikov who cannot speak for themselves. As a result of what he has heard, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will ensure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary will see that Alexander Ogorodnikov's case is raised at Vienna, along with an urgent appeal for his immediate release on humanitarian grounds.

7.54 pm

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South): I rarely participate in these debates because, like most hon. Members who try to do a solid job of work, I am ready by this time of the year to be released from the pressure cooker atmosphere that embraces most of us.

However, I join my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks) and other hon. Members in saying to the Leader of the House that there are important issues that deserve replies from the Ministers concerned. Those replies can be obtained only by allocating time on Monday or Tuesday of next week. That would enable the respective Ministers to come to the Dispatch Box and to argue against the cases made so eloquently by hon. Members on both sides of the House.

I shall raise a point of local concern, but it has national implications. I am concerned about what is happening to the Health Service in my district. I care passionately for the NHS, and have spent most of my time in the House trying to improve and secure its operation for the benefit of the sick and disabled and for the prevention of illness.

After a year of struggle, Neasden hospital, which is a hospital for geriatrics, has been closed. It is the second geriatric hospital in my district to close. The other hospital had 94 beds. I am adventurous enough to ask for this matter to be considered because of its impact on the areas represented by other hon. Members. There should be a full debate on this issue.

Neasden provides us with a classic example of mismanagement, because it will in turn reflect the management of 191 district health authorities. It reveals the reality of implementing the Griffiths report — a blueprint for management that looked extremely good on paper. However, it has now been put into operation, and every hon. Member knows the reality. That is why the House should have an opportunity to debate this issue and why the Minister for Health should answer that debate. People with management expertise may be brought in from outside, but they have no knowledge of people or of the realities of the Health Service.

Neasden hospital was closed last week. The ambulance personnel protested so strongly that the management decided to hire coaches to move the 68 patients. I cannot go into that now, but the shifting and breaking up of a community of 68 elderly people has already had disastrous consequences.

Unusually for me I feel bitter and angry, because an arrogant management has ridden roughshod over the interests of all those who were trying to participate in the decisions made about their families and community. I accuse the district manager, Mr. Lorne Williamson, of arrogantly riding roughshod over the possibility of any compromise or constructive alternative to his own blueprint for managerial decisions. He has even used his managerial expertise to nullify the decisions of his own district health authority committee.

I have been engaged in this campaign since the announcement was made in November 1985, and I made my submissions in February when the time came for consultation. This has been a long and wearisome process in which I have tried to find a compromise. I do not like confrontation between health authorities, local authorities and community health councils. I worked very hard in an attempt to reach a compromise, and that has become known as the "Pavitt plan."

At the last meeting of the district health authority, before the closure took effect, agreement was reached that a working party, consisting of representatives from the local authority, should consider social services, education, under-fives provision and other housing needs in conjunction with the health authority. I pleaded with Mr. Lorne Williamson for that working party meeting to be held before the elderly people were taken away. However, Mr. Williamson managed to close the hospital on 5 December, the meeting having been called for Thursday 11 December. The meeting was called in such a way that it overrode the health authority's intentions. The idea was that there should be joint consultation between the health authority and the local authority on matters of mutual concern and would include from the local authority the directors of development and finance, together with the health authority officers in these fields. The working party, actually convened, consisted of myself as an observer, members of the district health authority, and only one member from social services and one from education from the borough.

Last February, in order to be constructive, I demanded the full figures in order to consider possible ways in which the hospital could be saved. I even wrote to Mr. Speaker and claimed a breach of privilege when I could not get the figures. I also raised questions with the Secretary of State. Finally, on 20 November—too late—I was able to get the full figures for my hospital area. When a Member of Parliament does not receive the same rights as a member of the local authority serving on a district health authority, the House is falling by the wayside.

The technical management skills applied in reaching the decision show no understanding of the community

[Mr. Laurie Pavitt]

context. Neasden hospital is in a highly populated area where most people come from the black community. There are high rise blocks and urban sprawl. However, at Neasden there is a small oasis of health care. The object of the closure exercise was to sell the site for £3·7 million and, laudably, to use the money for projects for which I would give my utmost approval. However, the way in which the object was achieved — the managerial inefficiency and bungling — has entirely obviated the goodwill that could have been engendered by the excellent projects for which that money was supposed to be used.

There are two principal areas involved — Willesden and Wembley. Wembley is an affluent area and Willesden is an urban-aided, deprived inner city area. Neasden hospital is in Willesden, yet the money from the closure will be used in Wembley. That is a complete mess-up on the part of the management. The management should realise that and understand the pressures within the areas in which it is working. The management has shown a misunderstanding of human nature by taking money from the black community and spending it in an affluent white area.

The whole purpose of the exercise is finance. I have already mentioned the fact that a 94-bed hospital was closed four years ago. I received an answer from the Under-Secretary of State about the proceeds of that sale that were intended to help my district. Although the patients were removed four years ago, the answer stated:

"An offer for the former Leamington Park hospital conditional on the granting of planning permission has been accepted, and the parties concerned are in discussion . . . The sale price, and the amount accruing to the Brent health authority, will not be known until the planning situation is resolved."

Therefore, money is supposed to arrive from the Neasden sale but it may not arrive for another four years.

The management failed to explore another possibility for finance revealed in the recent autumn statement. Much to my joy, the autumn statement said that £600 million was to be put into health and social security for new projects. I asked the Department whether the projects for which the hospital was being sold, and for which the old people had been turfed out, could have been financed out of the money set aside in the autumn statement. The Minister replied:

"It will be for the North-West Thames regional health authority to decide on allocations to its districts when it receives its regional allocation." — [*Official Report*, 2 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. *621-22*.]

That was a possibility for alternative finance, but the management did not explore it. It was determined to close the hospital.

I am irate not only because of the way in which people have been treated. Perhaps Mr. Lorne Williamson deserves the title "Bulldozer", because he has bulldozed his way through to the closure. The little oasis to which I have referred in my area has gardens and trees. The old people were able, in summer time, to get out of their geriatric wards. A geriatric ward is a place in which people die. However, the ambience of living in a community promotes longer life. If the site is sold, the area will be bulldozed. The hospital, which was built nearly 100 years ago, consists of lovely red brick Victorian buildings. The whole area is so different from the 20-storey high rise blocks.

It is important that the National Health Service should realise that it is making the same mistake that was made 20 years ago in relation to housing. We tore down solid buildings to erect modern, concrete jungle blocks. In every area, the National Health Service is tearing down good, solid buildings with character in order to put up characterless blocks.

Recently, the Minister announced that he wanted to sell nurses' homes and that no nurses would be evicted. I must tell the House that 30 nurses and other staff were evicted from Neasden hospital last week. On 25 November they were told that they had to be out by 27 November. They were finally allowed to stay until 2 December and then allowed half a day off to move their goods and chattels somewhere else. The nurses are now scattered over the whole district.

The problems of management are continuing because there is a proposal to close two acute wards at Central Middlesex hospital. That hospital is my pride and joy. I served on its committee for several years. It is one of the finest hospitals in the country. However, I have watched it being salami-sliced, piece by piece. The latest cut is being made at a time when there are too many acute operations waiting to be performed. Two wards are to be axed to fit in with the straitjacket of cash limits.

Mr. "Bulldozer" Williamson has ignored the Royal College of Nursing, the unions and the borough council. They have said that they do not want the hospital to close and that they will oppose the closure. He has also shown a great deal of contempt for the North-West Thames region and the Minister. Although the Minister agreed to approve the closure on 12 November — he and I discussed the matter at a long session—I believe that he may have had further thoughts on the matter. However, he was pre-empted because, even before the decision was taken, the management spent £350,000 on refurbishing two wards on the assumption that the decision to close would be approved.

I apologise for the fact that I am really angry and bitter. However, last night I had the privilege of listening to "Songs of Praise." Last night's programme was devoted to the care of the elderly and to Age Concern. Time and again it was made clear that the most important factor for the health of the elderly was their ability to be able to deal with loneliness.

I came across a quotation the other day, which states:

"Solitude is a self-imposed loneliness, and a loneliness which can be ended when it becomes a burden. But loneliness is loneliness and can never be mistaken for solitude because true loneliness is without end and without beauty."

There was an opportunity for real co-ordinated planning between the old people in the community with warden-assisted care and the possibility of the basis in the middle of an urban sprawl and high rise blocks being used as a beautiful centre where elderly patients, inside and outside institutional care, could be looked after. I have been fighting against that for 12 months. It is time that the House looked at the way in which the management of the National Health Service has been eroded over the past few years.

8.11 pm

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley (Surrey, South-West): I shall not follow the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) in his remarks on the Health Service. I share his concern for the Health Service, although perhaps not always his

recipe for how to achieve the goal we all want: to meet the evolving health needs of our nation. I was pleased to hear him suggest that the needs of the elderly are not, in many cases, primarily a question of resources but frequently a question of social needs, isolation and loneliness. I agree with the hon. Gentleman there.

I should like to take this opportunity to raise two matters. The first, is the Lord Chancellor's consultation document the "Interdepartmental Review of Family and Domestic Jurisdiction". The reason for some urgency is that the consultation document took a long time to arrive and the closing date for submissions has already been reached. I know that my right hon. and noble Friend will be in a hurry to meet the wishes of all those impatient Members who feel that the time has come to move towards a family court. Until now I have had the opportunity of referring to family courts only in the context of the Australian model. I want to take this opportunity to talk more about the way it affects us.

We now have approaching 160,000 divorces a year. That figure was around 30,000 in 1954. It is inappropriate to believe that the legal mechanisms that we had for dealing with 30,000 divorces a year can possibly cope with the demand that we now see without causing suffering to the victims of divorce, the children whom my right hon. and noble Friend described as

"innocent, silent, inarticulate, and almost unrepresented".—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 21 November 1983; Vol. 445, c. 30.]

He referred to children in that way during the debate on the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Bill. The interdepartmental review follows the DHSS review of child care law published last year. It is essential to move towards legislation that can integrate the shambles of the different routes by which children enter local authority care — about 20 different routes — together with the incoherent and disintegrated means of obtaining a divorce.

The National Children's Home, in its Christmas campaign, has worked hard to draw public attention to the fact that in every divorce it is the children who are often the victims and who are often most vulnerable. It is too easy for adults to fail to recognise the interests and needs of the children in their desire to desensitise themselves from the pain of the situation.

A family court essentially requires a unified court system, trained and experienced judges and lay people, accessibility by families and their representatives and, above all, a proper forum for dealing with the sensitive area of care proceedings and child abuse, providing a proper focus for the development of specialist welfare services and conciliation. Many have felt disappointed with the Lord Chancellor's consultation document in that it has inappropriately concentrated on the administrative convenience of judges and civil servants and seems to take less account of the users of the court system. Above all, there is some scepticism about his commitment towards moving urgently in the direction of vital reform.

The major strength of a family court lies in procedure. Currently, there are no less than three different family jurisdictions — the High Court, the county court and magistrates courts — each with different powers of procedure, with overlaps, gaps, fragmentations and anomalies. It is fair to say that since Finer legislation has been modified and many of the differences between the substantive law administered by the magistrates and the law applied in the High Court has been reformed. Many other changes have taken place. Divorce has been simplified and conciliation is more widely available. However, it is still remarkably ad hoc, with different courts providing conciliation and regional variations tending to develop. Some cases are held in private and there is great informality. Some judges have a reputation for expertise and sensitivity but there is no overall comprehensive and understandable service.

There have been many sensible piecemeal reforms but they are no substitute for a comprehensive, integrated, legal system for dealing with the tragedy and trauma of divorce as fairly as possible, not denying the pain involved but not, as at present, all too frequently exacerbating the stress and inflaming the hostility felt by the partners and generally being almost incomprehensible to the lay public. The time has come for action not words on family courts. I hope that my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor will take the opportunity of the Christmas recess to consider the responses to his consultation document and to take steps towards concrete action.

The other matter I wish to raise also affects families, especially children. Christmas for too many is hardly a religious festival any more. It has become an orgy of television viewing. Last Christmas, out of a television population of 51·3 million in Britain, over 32 million were viewing. I wish to refer to the impact on our young people of violence on television. I recognise that there is some irony in politicians making allegations about the impact of television. Of all groups, we are otherwise occupied during peak viewing periods and I am sure that the programmes we tend to watch are scarcely typical. However, there is a need to focus on what many increasingly regard as the damaging and cumulative effects of gratuitous violence in fictional programmes. We live in a turbulent, stressful and difficult world. Individuals face contridictory and perplexing choices. Whereas television was once a luxury of the few, it is now only a few who do not possess one or more television sets.

On a recent visit to a school in my constituency, I asked the children between the ages of five and eight whether they owned a set. A substantial number had three television sets at home and about one quarter had a set in their own room. When television programmes appear in colour, by the fireside or in the bedroom we have to re-evaluate the potency of the message of that remarkable medium. It is a medium that can be used to such staggering and good effect — for example, the coverage of the Ethiopian famine, opening the doors to China and involving each family in the Reykjavik summit.

Advertisers have little difficulty in convincing the commercial world of the effectiveness of a few minutes on the screen: that it can undoubtedly influence adults' behaviour. I should like to draw the House's attention to recent material produced by Yorkshire Television. It gives an account of a publicity campaign on behalf of the Flowers and Plants Association. It had two bursts of advertising in May and June and September and October 1985. We are told that it achieved 937 housewide ratings — that is, over 87 per cent. coverage. On average, the advertisement, persuading people to buy house plants or cut flowers, was seen five times a day. What was the result? Yorkshire Television's advisers on research, distribution and promotion said that viewers saw the advertisement five times on average. Further research showed that during the test period sales rose by 43 per cent. over the previous year, in May, and by 86 per cent. in October when there

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

was a second burst of advertising. Furthermore, expenditure rose by 50 per cent. on the first occasion and by 127 per cent. on the second.

Yorkshire Television is equally keen to inform us of its effectiveness in persuading people by the use of its advertising to buy Crosse and Blackwell's Spaghetti-Saurus. This advertisement was shown 36 times and achieved 650 housewife and children ratings. It resulted in the brand share by Spaghetti-Saurus in Yorkshire reaching 6 per cent.

It is incomprehensible to me that television companies that have little difficulty in persuading advertisers that time on television affects people's behaviour are then at great pains to tell us that to show 200,000 violent incidents during an average lifetime has an unproven or a negligible effect. Advertisers are only too keen to spend money on this medium. Television accounts for approximately 40 per cent. of all display advertising. The top 20 brands spend nearly 60 per cent. of their advertising budget on television. British Telecom, Tesco, Nescafé, the Halifax Building Society, Whiskas, Bold and Asda all figure large in the advertising. Similarly, a major part of the advertising expenditure on the Trustee Savings bank's share promotion and on the British Gas share promotion was by means of television.

Advertisers like television because it is intrusive and catches the complete attention of its audience when it is in a relaxed and receptive mood. It involves its audience emotionally and it communicates directly and memorably. The power of television advertising has been recognised since its inception by commercial television. For that reason, it is not allowed to promote cigarettes or full strength spirits. It is told that it must not prey on the fears of its audience and that it must be especially careful regarding children. It is incomprehensible that independent television companies, which are at such pains to claim that their television commercials have no damaging effects and which believe that they have such a powerful effect on human behaviour, then deny the effect of hours of television viewing upon young, impressionable minds or upon vulnerable or unstable individuals.

Similarly, there has been a spate of video learning packages. "Sight and Sound" shows what can be achieved by using a visual and verbal message. Why then deny the effects of the television visual message? Children learn consciously and unconsciously by audio-visual experiences. For many, especially for the pre-school age group, their attachment to television characters may be as great as their awareness, for example, of a distant grandmother whom they hardly see.

The causation of human behaviour is not an exact science, but our knowledge of human psychology recognises the profound influence of early experiences in the development of a personality. A child growing up in a stable home may be protected, but a child who grows up in a more turbulent, unstable setting is especially vulnerable to the impact of violent models.

It is estimated that schoolchildren watch about three hours of television each day. The evidence of psychologists suggests that the more a fictional situation approximates to the viewer's own position the greater the impact. "Cowboys and Indians", "Popeye" and "Tom and Jerry" may be violent but they are pretty remote from the life style of an individual who lives in an inner city area. However, persistent exposure to individuals like oneself who solve their problems by resorting to violence is a source of profound concern. Recent analysis of an American programme, "Miami Vice", found that the two policemen in the programme killed four times as many people as the entire Miami police force killed in a year. They killed at 12,000 times the rate at which the average American policeman kills. If all American policemen killed at the same rate as the two policemen in "Miami Vice", they would kill off the entire population of America within two years.

It is also estimated that by the age of 16 the average American sees on television 200,000 acts of violence and 50,000 attempted murders.

Television violence has particular dangers for the isolated and the elderly, often living alone, who fear violent assault. In my constituency, where fortunately there is little violent assault, the chances of an old lady being attacked in the street are only a little greater than the chances of her being hit by a flying saucer, but the fact is that many old people live in fear because of the frightening films and programmes that they see on television. Much more serious is the cumulative effect that a constant diet of violent television can have on an individual's perception of normality and its influence on standards of acceptable behaviour. This desensitising effect results in individuals becoming more tolerant of violence. Only recently a youth was publicly stabbed at the Embankment tube station while bystanders took no notice.

What is even more serious is the proposition that television actually evokes a violent response. The figures are powerful. In 1955, there were 7,884 crimes of violence. In 1982, there were over 105,000. I do not suggest for a moment that the cause of this violence is simply television viewing, but the increase in violence coincides with the dramatic increase in television ownership. To disregard the influence of a constant stream of violent models is to disregard a significant and important factor. There is evidence of imitation from various sources. When "The Deerhunter" was shown on television in America, there was a spate of suicides by Russian roulette. In Britain there was a significant increase in attempted suicide, following the example of Angie in "EastEnders".

Television owes its potency to the fact that it comes right into the home. Most other forms are distanced from the individual by a journey to the cinema or the theatre or by the written word or a picture. Television is irresistibly lifelike. Some would extend the argument to cover news programmes. In South Africa, the danger of stirring up unrest and causing copycat incidents is given as the justification for censorship. I understand the argument, but I dismiss it. While I believe that this necessitates sensitive and responsible handling of news stories and the avoidance of provocation by news reporters, it does not lead me to the conclusion that we should operate an oppressive news censorship.

We should study productively the development of the link between smoking and cancer. Ten years ago, tobacco companies argued that the case was unproven. Now, many deaths later, the connection is accepted as a fact.

There was a series of splendid guidelines on violence in 1972, 1977, 1978 and 1979. One said:

"There should in all cases be a proper reason for the inclusion of violence in the script of any piece of violent dramatic writing. It is inexcusable to include it if the reason is merely to bring excitement to a dull piece of writing."

However, it is remarkable that 200,000 such proper reasons can be found in the lifetime of an average American. The 1978 guideline said:

"The only safe course is for broadcasting authorities to assume undesirable effects unless convincing evidence to the contrary emerges."

I agree; so do many others. However, there is remarkably little to show for it. Legislation is not an ideal solution, but there is a growing body of opinion that action has to be taken to reassure the public. We should look again at the suggestion that a broadcasting council should be established, whose report the House could debate annually. It is difficult for the BBC governors or for the IBA to distinguish between their roles as guardians of the public and also as broadcasting authorities which engage in a ratings war.

We should review the 9 pm threshold. It is frequently alleged that 9 pm is somehow a watershed. On every occasion that research has been undertaken, it has been shown that many hundreds of thousands of children view television after 9 pm. If the broadcasting authorities wish to continue the 9 pm threshold, they should take further steps to draw it to the attention of the public. It is by no means fully understood as a watershed. This should not be done by the gimmick used by Channel 4. Its red and white triangle inevitably draws greater attention to the particular programmes involved.

Above all, we deserve more research and openness. There should be further research with the sort of investment to which I referred earlier in establishing the effectiveness of advertising. Much of this is appropriate to this discussion. There should above all be more openness. The Wyatt committee—in its last report for the BBC—suggested that the number of violent incidents should be reported to the governors quarterly. I understand that that happens, but it is not made public. We have had a further set of guidelines from the BBC in recent weeks. Once more there have been pious thoughts and ideas with which it is difficult to disagree, but until there is a greater openness and a real commitment to discuss the influence of violence on our young, we shall continue at Christmas to see many of our youngsters watching endless episodes of mindless violence.

8.31 pm

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): The word "sceptical" is not one which initially comes into my mind when I think of the Leader of the House. I prefer to think that he is a sensitive man, and I do not think that he would object if hon. Members thought it right at this stage of the year to remind him to remind the Government that the Disabled Persons Services, Consultation and Representation Act 1986, which was given so much support, has not yet been implemented.

On Third Reading of that Bill on 11 April the House was at its best. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman, being very much a House of Commons man, has not overlooked the fact that the Act was supported by hon. Members on both sides of the House from various parts of Britain and from almost every political group that might be envisaged. Because the Act was given so much support in the House and in the country, it would be a mass betrayal of millions of people, with which the Leader of the House would not wish to be associated, if the present departmental lethargy were allowed to continue and that Act were not implemented in a meaningful way.

The Bill, which in due course became an Act, witnessed a major contribution from civil servants, local authority associations and, above all, voluntary organisations. For a Government who, we are told, believe in voluntaryism, it is appalling that they are paying such little regard to organisations such as Mencap, the Spastics Society, the Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped and many more which gave such support, thought and consideration to the Act and the problems of the disabled.

Because of the concern of hon. Members on both sides of the House about the delay in implementing the Act, I tabled several parliamentary questions — more than a dozen—to various Ministers which recieved replies on 4 December — almost all of them, I regret to say, profoundly disappointing. Let me give just a few examples.

I questioned the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland because the Government, despite the views of the House and of another place, and despite the promises which were given in the House and in anothere place, still have not said whether the Act should apply to Northern Ireland as well as to the rest of the United Kingdom. The hon. Member for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham) told me in his reply that the Government were consulting interested Government Departments in Northern Ireland. There was nothing about other voluntary organisations, disabled persons in Northern Ireland, or those who live day after day with the problems of disability. That aspect of the Government's approach is extremely disappointing.

The hon. Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Major), replying for the Department of Health and Social Security, said that consultations with voluntary organisations would take place only under section 1. It would be a major pity if the voluntary organisations, which have shown such an awareness of the problem and how keen they are, were not emulated by the Government. The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation and the National Association for Mental Health, influenced by such excellent men as John Healey, Peter Mitchell and William Bingley, have published a plain person's guide — the kind of document that I invited the Government to produce, but I had no response. It explains to all who want to know what the Act means and how best it might be applied to their particular circumstances.

The House will remember that sections 5 and 6 were on the crucial question of school leavers. That is a traumatic age for young persons leaving special school and for the parents who find that circumstances have completely changed and who have to meet a huge number of problems, domestic as well as educational. We were told by the Minister that, having consulted local authorities, it was thought that the resource implications were greater than those that were originally envisaged. The House is entitled to know what was said during those discussions. Certainly the local authority associations gave excellent support to the Bill as it made its way through both Houses, and they were aware, and said so openly and honestly, that there would be resource implications. Nobody on either side of the House, including those hon. Members who spoke during the many debates, was in any doubt that there would be resource implications. Therefore, it is not enough for the Treasury to influence the Government to the point where the will of Parliament is being undermined because it thinks that the time is not right to give local authorities the resources that are necessary to give the Act true meaning.

[Mr. Tom Clarke]

On the specific problem of school leavers it should be said that a failure to implement the Act immediately will prevent the identification of 14-year-olds and thus endanger school leavers in 1988 and those leaving further education in 1991. We are falling behind even in terms of planning for the future and I am sure that most hon. Members would regard such lethargy as deplorable.

On 4 July, when we were considering Lords amendments, we were promised that a number of sections within the Act would be implemented in April next year. There is little sign of that and much time has been lost. Orders would have to be introduced well in advance of that time, but they have not been. Circulars would have to be prepared to go out in January, and that is clearly not in the Government's mind.

I hope that the Leader of the House, with his commitment to Parliament and to the disabled, will feel that the 5·5 million disabled persons in Britain and their carers — those who took part in a big lobby of Parliament and influenced our decisions on the matter— will consider that, whereas it was right that this long overdue and comprehensive legislation should have been carried by both Houses, it would be an act of utter cynicism, if not betrayal, if the Government sat aside and did nothing and failed to implement the main provisions of that Act.

We approach Christmas in the knowledge that many disabled people and their carers will have a miserable Christmas because, alas, for them Christmas day is not all that different from other days. It would be a tragedy if the House, having committed itself to this measure, did not encourage the right hon. Gentleman and the Government to apply themselves urgently to the problems that this legislation highlights.

8.40 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): In the second speech in the debate the right hon. Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks) said that he wanted a debate about uncertainty and for that purpose he asked for the Adjournment of the House to be postponed. If there is such an opportunity, I should like to raise two matters about uncertainty to which I hope the Government can give their attention. The first is about the Health Service in Southend. Like many areas in Southend, my constituency suffers from the consequences of a review of our radiotherapy or cancer treatment services. The same thing is happening throughout Britain, and our regional health authority, although recommended by officials to retain Southend as a centre for radiotherapy, opted by a majority to go for a new unit in Harold Wood in Essex which will cost an additional £4·5 million.

This is a matter about which people can argue and about which my constituents have strong views. This recommendation was made in July and cannot come into effect or be rejected until the Secretary of State for Social Services makes his decision. We have been told that under the existing procedures it will not be possible for the Government to come to a decision until about July or August.

I and my colleagues will be seeking to persuade the Minister to make what we regard as the right decision, but it would be quite wrong to take up time in a debate like this on arguments about the merits. Because of this procedure, my constituents, the doctors in my constituency and all the people who work in Southend general hospital face more than a year of uncertainty, delay and distress. The uncertainty certainly causes distress, bearing in mind that we have about 1,600 new patients every year in our hospital. Is it possible for the Government to take steps to ensure that decisions on vital services are made within a reasonable time? I accept that if the decision goes the wrong way for Southend it will cause great grief, anxiety and hardship, but unnecessary further distress is caused by the delays in decision making.

I should like to raise on the same basis the matter of uncertainty in education. We have in our area Essex county council, one of those rather unusual bodies which is extremely good at interfering with things that are working well but not good at sorting out real problems. In Southend we have a rather excellent education service which appears to command general acceptance and appreciation. About a year ago Essex county council published a green paper proposing that sixth forms should be taken from my comprehensive secondary schools to create a new sixth form college, and that a substantial number of our excellent Southend grammar schools should be closed or fundamentally changed.

On the basis of the Government's excellent policy statements, I take the view that there is not the slightest chance of these rather unusual proposals being approved by the Government. However, there has been uncertainty for at least a year and it seems that we shall have uncertainty for at least another year. Bearing in mind that the Secretary of State for Education has clear powers of decision making about accepting or rejecting a major reorganisation, might there not be a case for him laying down clear guidelines about his policies in order to deter county councils from putting forward plans which have little, if any, chance of acceptance?

If we had a Labour or a Liberal Government, obviously the criteria would be totally different from those of a Conservative Government, but the same argument applies irrespective of which party is in power. A huge amount of uncertainty among parents, teachers and children in secondary schools would be avoided if we had clear guidelines from Ministers about the attitudes they adopt to proposals for reorganisation. I have been in the House for some time and believe that uncertainty and delay can cause as much distress and hardship as bad decisions.

I know that, traditionally, the Leader of the House has taken an interest in the rights of the House. Would it be possible to have just an extra half day to discuss the various crises in the EEC? We know that there is a cash crisis which is probably more serious now than it has ever been. We thought we had it under control because of Fontainebleau but, sadly, we heard the other day from the Prime Minister that there seems to be some kind of fault in the Fontainebleau mechanism and that if we want our rebates we will have to give even more money.

We know that there is a crisis in agriculture and that more than £100 million is being spent every week on dumping and storing food surpluses. However, the Leader of the House will be more anxious about the effect of the EEC on our parliamentary sovereignty. I have been summoned to attend a Committee of the House on Wednesday morning to discuss a provisional statutory instrument called the Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations. These are remarkable regulations and the Government have said in

parliamentary answers that they would prefer them not to happen at all. But we have to apply them and that means that we have to set up nine testing stations throughout the United Kingdom for the sole purpose of testing lawnmowers. It is also provided that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will appoint a group of inspectors whose task it will be to go around the country to test the noise of lawnmowers.

People may think that this is a good thing if it curbs the noise made by lawnmowers, but of course it does not do that. That is done by the Noise Abatement Act which is properly implemented by our local authorities. These regulations will ensure that all lawnmowers, from John O'Groats to Salonica, will make the same Euro noise. The job of the inspectors will be to go around testing to make sure that lawnmowers all make the same sweet sound. Although I know that the Committee will look at this matter carefully, urgently and properly, even if the Committee members all decide that the regulations are a load of rubbish that, unfortunately, will have no effect whatever because the regulations are now the law of the land.

The other place is currently discussing the Consumer Protection Bill which is shortly to come to this House. That will make it unlawful for the Government to demand that traders should display on goods whether the goods are made in Britain, Japan, Turkey or Taiwan or anywhere else. The Government's power to do that is being abolished or has been abolished by a decision of the European Commission which we have to implement. Once again, we have no powers because we are told that we have not a hope if the matter goes to the European Court. In about March, we will hear the results of the case in which Britain is being taken to court for the great crime that we do not charge VAT on new house building, on gas or electricity or on industrial clothing.

As the Leader of the House well knows, whatever the court decides we will have to do. Irrespective of whether or not hon. Members think that there are great advantages in having harmonised lawnmower noise throughout the European Community, or whether they think it is a bad thing that people should be deprived of the right to buy British goods if they want them or might think it is a good thing to have VAT on new houses, our powers of decision making have been taken away in these and in many other areas and I am sure that the Leader of the House will agree that it would be wise and prudent if we were to delay our recess for half a day to discuss these rather important points.

8.48 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): The subject that I want to raise has a bearing on the Government, and it is to the Government that I want to address my remarks. My speech is about matters that are happening far away from us in Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador.

Last week a delegation of representatives of the Amazon Indians visited Britain. The delegation was led by Evaristo Aguaruna, a Peruvian Indian and a recipient of the 1986 alternative Nobel Peace Prize with which he received a $25,000 cheque in Scandanavia and which will be used to benefit his people. The other delegates were Jose Narciso Jamioey, the secretary of Colombia's principal Indian organisation, Alvaro Tukano from Brazil and Jose Uranavi, the president of the Indian organisation of Bolivia. Their purpose in coming to this country was to seek support from people in Britain and, indeed, throughout Europe for a meeting that they are holding with the president of the World Bank on Wednesday morning. On Saturday afternoon, I had the pleasure of meeting them and addressing a meeting with them in my borough of Islington. They were describing a process of destruction of their people, their homelands, their lives and the tropical rain forest that they have inhabited for centuries. They were pleading for some understanding and help from people in western Europe of the indignities and humiliations that they have suffered for a long time.

Seventy-five years ago, a young traveller, Mr. W. E. Hardenburg, who had visited Brazil and the Amazon rain forest region, came back to the House of Commons and in a meeting room described and levelled charges against the British Peruvian Rubber Company for what it was doing at that time in the Amazon rain forest. He said:

"The agents of the company force the . . . Indians . . . to work day and night. . . . without the slightest remuneration except the food necessary to keep them alive. They are robbed of their crops, their women, and their children to satisfy the voracity, lasciviousness, and avarice of this company and its employees, who live on their food and violate their women. They are flogged inhumanely until their bones are laid bare . . . they are left to die, eaten by maggots, when they serve as food for . . . dogs. They are castrated and mutilated, and their ears, fingers, arms and legs are cut off. They are tortured by . . . tying them up, crucified head down."

Mr. Hardenburg went on with a description of so many other things that happened to people at that time.

If that was merely a horrific tale of what was happening 75 years ago, it would be an important point of historical document. The tragedy is that the indignities that the Indian people suffered at that time and throughout the rubber boom are continuing. Indeed, from the time that history began in the Amazon rain forest area the Indian population reached a maximum of 6 million and it has been cut to 200,000, most of the loss of population occurring during the past 100 years. People in Britain, Brazil and world wide must understand that the Amazon rain forest is not a place for agricultural colonisation. It cannot support an agricultural system in the way that lands in Europe or America can support it. Nor can it be used merely as a basis for exploitation by multinational mining corporations, which are destroying the lives of the indigenous people of that region.

If the world allows the tropical rain forest, be it in the Amazon, Indonesia or anywhere else, to be destroyed at the rate at which it is being destroyed, the consequences for the world ecosystem are very serious. The Governments of the world must address themselves to this. The illegal gangs that maraud round the rain forests in Brazil and other countries in the Amazon basin, driving people from their land, and murdering people wholesale to make way for the roads, railways and mining companies, are working on behalf of the world's Governments, who choose to do nothing about them. One could quote many examples of what is going on.

Those who have examined and studied the area very closely recognise the danger of destruction of the tropical rain forests. They also recognise that the imperial attitude that Europe and North America have taken towards the rain forest in the past has been a central part of the problem. Claude Levi-Strauss, the distinguished anthropologist, described

"that monstrous and incomprehensible cataclysim which the development of Western civilisation was for so large and innocent a part of humanity."

[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]

He was describing the way in which the lives of the Indian people throughout the Amazon rain forest have been destroyed.

My purpose in raising the matter tonight is partly because it should be raised in Parliaments throughout the world, and this is an opportunity to raise it. I also raise it because the Governments of the world have chosen to turn their backs on what they call the forgotten peoples of the Amazon region, as they have the peoples of other rain forest areas, because in the drive to get raw materials for the industrial world, it means riding roughshod over the lives of people who happen to inhabit land under which there is iron ore, coal, any sort of mineral, oil or whatever else; and also because, despite agreements that have been reached in the past with the representatives of the Indian peoples of the Amazon region, the World Bank and the European Economic Community are still going ahead with funding programmes and projects which are entirely detrimental to the immediate interests of the Indian peoples of that region, and detrimental in the long term to the interests of the whole world.

We must not continue to destroy tropical rain forests at the speed at which they are being destroyed and laying waste the Amazon basin so that it becomes a desert. I visited the Amazon basin long before I came into the House. There is something frightening about seeing a road driven through what one believes is a lush and rich rain forest. Because that vegetation is removed and because of the high rainfall, there is huge erosion and run-off and in a very short time a desert is created in an area of very high rainfall which, traditionally, people would say was impossible to achieve.

The two projects that I wish to draw to the attention of the House are funded by the European Economic Community and by the World Bank. Before I do that, I shall quote something that the World Bank wrote to Survival International in 1981 in response to that excellent organisation's pressure on it to act more responsibly in giving loans to the countries of the Amazon region to ensure the rights of the Amerindian people. The World Bank states:

"The Bank is seeking meaningful agreements with the Brazilian government for the protection of the Amerindians' rights as part of its discussions on lending for the development of the Polonoroeste region. It has carefully reviewed FUNAI's 'Projeto de Apoio as Comunidades Indigenas da Area de Influencia da Rodovia Cuiaba Porto Velho', the contents of which are part of the ongoing dialogue between the government and the Bank. This dialogue has already yielded positive results thanks to the confidentiality of the conversations and we hope that it is not your intention to undermine this progress."

I am not sure what is meant by "this progress", but after some discussion and debate the World Bank adopted a set of criteria for lending money to the Amazon region, which included respect for tribal lands, the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples in that region and an undertaking that medical facilities would be provided for them where developments took place. Specifically and crucially, it included the rights of Amazon peoples to have their lands demarcated and the protection of the indigenous way of life in that region. They are key components to any agreement.

The first of the two projects that I wish to bring to the attention of the House—I trust that the Leader of the House will pass this on to British Government representatives dealing with these matters in the World Bank and at the United Nations—is the Grande Carajas programme in Brazil. Its total cost is enormous. I wish to concentrate on the EEC loan in 1982 of $600 million to this programme. The reason for that loan lies in the importance of the project to future deliveries of iron ore to the EEC steel industries. The contracts contain favourable pricing conditions to the EEC and will help to preserve the competitiveness of the European steel industry. But the hidden costs of the programme have not been given so much attention.

There are land conflicts and wild land speculation. Gangs of pistoleiros are active in the area, evicting peasants from their homelands. About 5,000 Indians are at particular risk. If one dam construction takes place 3,600 Indians' lives will be severely damaged, if not destroyed. One completed dam will flood an area of about 100,000 hectares belonging to one Indian tribe. That will lead to the removal of the Indians from the region and the destruction of their lifestyle, with no compensation.

If the loan is going ahead, I want the Government to ask the EEC Commissioner why and what will be done to protect the lives of Indian people in the region. Equally importantly, what will be done to protect the ecosystem of the Amazon rain forest? Is British taxpayers' money being used through the EEC in the shortsighted and brutal destruction of these people's lives?

The second development that I want to mention is the Polonoroeste development programe in western Amazonia. The project is funded by the World Bank, which at one stage held up funding because it was concerned about the plight of the Indian people in the region. Funding was subsequently reinstated, and that is why a delegation is to see the president of the World Bank on Wednesday morning. The World Bank is continuing to support this notorious scheme despite the death of Indians and despite the fact that funding was suspended because of pressure in the United States that that should happen. It is ironic that these Indian people have lived peaceably and effectively in the region for centuries. They have protected the ecosystem of the river basin; they have protected the forest because they understand it and know how to manage it. There is to be a meeting on Wednesday morning of the representatives of the Indian people of the Amazonia region and the president of the World Bank, and the president, who works in the interests of national Governments and multinational corporations, should understand that the Indian people probably know far more about the Amazon rain forest and protecting the ecology of the area than he will ever learn. He should give them a fair hearing.

Above all, the British Government should understand the depth of destruction and murder that is taking place in the name of Britain because we are hoping to fund the programme. As the settlers, loggers and mining companies move in, the Indian people have been given so-called reserves which have been violated time after time. This has been done by the mining companies which wish to take over the land. Murder takes place on a huge scale along with other illegal activities.

When representatives of the Indian people are prepared to travel to Europe to seek our help, the least that we can do is listen to them and demand that European national Governments pay some heed to what is going on. If these matters were given the publicity that they deserve, there would be considerable support for the case that

Amerindians are advancing to the World Bank and enormous pressure on national Governments to make the World Bank work in the interests of the people in the region rather than destroy their lives.

9.3 pm

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): I hope that the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) will forgive me if I do not take up his remarks. I want to bring the attention of the House to a serious matter which is close to home.

I do not believe that the House should rise for the Christmas recess until the case of my constituent, Miss Maureen McGoldrick, has been debated and the House is of a mind to protect this gallant and wonderful teacher from continuing persecution by the Brent Labour council.

The Brent council must be spending large sums on advertising for teachers. I have an example in which it gaily says in a teachers' publication that teachers should go to Brent. The advertisement reads:

"Brent Education: come and join us. Brent offers a wide range of advantages to teachers. It is a small, friendly and exciting borough that will give every assistance to teachers."

If we consider its actions, the position is very different from this picture. It is not surprising that there is an absence of head teachers in the borough at a number of schools. There is a drain of assistant teachers from other schools and an increasingly serious education position for the children.

I want to ask the House to consider the case of Miss McGoldrick. It is well established that she was accused of racism by the Brent education committee, it being said that she had made a racist remark. The case was considered by her school board of governors, which found her not guilty. The High Court heard the case and found Miss McGoldrick not guilty. It found that the governors were correct in finding her not guilty originally. Brent council then sought to establish in the courts that it had the right to discipline a teacher, and it did so. That right was established.

Although the courts had asked that Miss McGoldrick should be left alone, Brent council returned to the case and said that she would face further disciplinary proceedings. The present position is that she has today been before the courts once more. Brent education committee has been told that, for the moment, it cannot proceed against her, but it said that it will not drop its case, whatever that case may be. It has still not specified its case but it is accepted that it is not one of racism.

Miss McGoldrick, who has been on the line since June this year, continues to be in a state of agony and tension caused by the hard Left Labour authority. It is good that the leader of the Labour party should offer support to Miss McGoldrick and try to dissuade the Brent Labour council from its behaviour against her. It is typical that the Socialists in Brent council have told the national executive of the Labour party that they are not in the least interested in its views. It is additionally bad that it took the leadership of the Labour party some four or five months to get off its hands and support Miss McGoldrick. If the leadership had acted earlier and had supported me and others—the National Union of Teachers among them—who have been working hard on Miss McGoldrick's behalf, the matter might not have reached the present point.

How far should the Brent education committee be allowed to go? The committee continues to persecute Miss McGoldrick, in defiance of public opinion, and in defiance of opinion across the gamut of politics. That persecution is damaging to the lady involved, her school, the children, the parents, the school governors, the community that the school serves, and the concept of a board of governors. It is also enormously damaging to race relations. Still it goes on. I see Miss McGoldrick from time to time. I see the effect that that persecution is having upon her.

The House cannot stand by any longer. We need to have a debate. Hon. Members must urge the Secretary of State for Education and Science to use his powers under section 68 of the Education Act 1944. He must intervene and tell Brent education committee that it must not proceed against Miss McGoldrick and that she must be free to continue to run her school, free of the pressure that the committee had brought against her. There is no reason why that should not be done immediately. If that were to happen, the effect upon Miss McGoldrick would be enormous. At last, she would be relieved of the heavy persecuting hand of an evil Left Labour authority that seems to be prepared to stop at nothing in its harassment of her. That great gain is needed.

The scars that this action has inflicted upon Miss McGoldrick will never be removed. She has said that she will always be scarred by what has happened. She has resolution and a love of her profession, her job and the children in her school. She has the will to serve the community and to do a professional job as a head teacher. Those qualities will combine to sustain her in continuing in her post to the best of her ability. That shows how great a lady is Miss McGoldrick and how small is the Brent education authority.

In calling for a debate about Miss McGoldrick and about the need for the Secretary of State to intervene in the way I have suggested, I hope that we shall see a compromise in the teachers' pay and conditions dispute. A compromise is not only possible but essential. The teaching profession is seriously divided and cannot agree on the offer made by the local education authorities. Unions are divided against unions, and, within unions, teachers are divided against teachers. It happened in 1963, when the then Minister of Education imposed a settlement. I hope that there will not be imposition this time. Unless there is a compromise between the deal put forward by local education authorities and the Secretary of State's proposals, grave difficulties will remain, and the profession will not settle down. There needs to be a compromise between the number of promotional opportunities suggested by the local education authorities and those suggested by the Secretary of State. Between the two, there is room for compromise, and I hope that that will come about.

9.10 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): The House should not adjourn until we have discussed the scandal of poverty pay. Low incomes will mar many a merry Christmas this year and, indeed, in future years under this Government. They will also blight many a happy new year. We should discuss that serious problem.

The trouble is that the Government see low pay not as a problem but as a solution to the country's economic ills. They have deliberately engineered lower pay, for example, by shackling the trade unions and curbing their bargaining

[Mr. Harry Cohen]

rights. They have brought in new laws and used the courts. It is no accident that pay is 10 per cent. lower on average in non-unionised firms than in those with trade unions.

The Government have scrapped the Clegg comparability commission, which compared equal pay for equal work in the public and private sectors. The Government repealed schedule 2 of the Employment Protection Act 1975, which provided for a fair rate for the job. They cut maternity and unfair dismissal rights. They changed the national insurance scales to encourage employers to pay low wages. They abolished the wages councils, which protected 3 million low-paid workers, 2·25 million of whom were women. The Government cut the wages inspectorate by 40 per cent. They have brought in privatisation, which has resulted in low-wage employees having their wages undercut by private firms paying lower wages.

The result of those changes has been a huge rise in poverty. Low pay is now the single biggest cause of poverty. A parliamentary answer that the Government sneaked out just before the end of the summer recess showed that 16·3 million people are living below the poverty level, and that 8·5 million, or one third of the total work force, earn less than the EEC decency threshold of £115 a week. Some 3 million full-time workers earn less than £100 a week and 1 million less than £80 a week.

Women are particularly hard hit by low pay, with half of all those who work full time earning less than the EEC decency threshold. Three quarters of all women in manual jobs earn less than that. The number of men earning wages below the threshold has doubled since 1979 from 10 per cent to 20 per cent. Young people's pay has fallen by almost one third, while youth unemployment has doubled in that time. An increasing proportion of young workers are forced into part-time work, which they do not want because they want full-time jobs. The Government's own so-called training schemes are the worst of the payers, denying those youngsters the opportunity to build independent lives.

The number of families on low pay, who rely on family income supplement to top up their earnings, has more than trebled since 1979. I and many other Members of Parliament see the consequences at our constituency advice surgeries. There is increasing indebtedness, eviction, fuel cut-offs and poor health. There are crises with the Department of Health and Social Security in ever-increasing numbers.

It is the children who suffer most from the effects of those policies. The Government have been trying to justify them with a series of myths and lies, the two biggest ones being that they are creating the conditions for a recovery and that people are pricing themselves out of jobs.

Recovery is nowhere in sight, unemployment is steadily increasing and interest rates are still through the roof. But company profits have risen three times faster than personal income. The bulk has been invested abroad—some £96 million since 1979. The recovery argument is a myth.

As for people pricing themselves out of jobs, that is a falsehood as well. No evidence has been produced that lower wages result in more jobs. The United Kingdom's wage levels are below those of our main competitors, yet we have far and away the worst unemployment problem.

Mr. Corbyn: I thank my hon. Friend for giving way at this point in his interesting speech. Does he accept that, in the area which I represent compared with the rest of London and the south-east, wage levels are low, yet unemployment has always been twice the regional average and is now well above the national average? This seems to disprove the idea that if people accept low wages the jobs automatically follow.

Mr. Cohen: That is a key point which I want to make. Unemployment is highest in the regions. In areas such as my constituency and that of my hon. Friend, unemployment is high but we face the severest low-pay problem.

Low-paid workers are customers, so keeping their wages low makes matters worse, because they have less money to spend. If the Government believe that lower pay creates more jobs, why have they not applied that idea to the wages of the high paid? They have done the opposite.

The London Evening Standard of 6 November contained a list of those people whose pay had increased enormously. For example, Sir John Nott, chairman of the merchant bank of Lazards, doubled his salary to £366,436 last year. As the article said:

"He was among hundreds of top City staff earning six-figure pay packets even before the Big Bang."

The article continued:

"24 directors and nine employees earn more than £250,000 a year.

Another 361 directors and 667 employees in 42 companies earned more than £100,000 prior to the summer round of recruitment."

The article continued:

"'Golden Hellos' of more than £100,000 have become commonplace among merchant banks buying stockbrokers, jobbers and other staff".

Compare that to the wage slips of my constituents in Whipps Cross hospital. Mr. Poole, a district transport driver, worked 40 hours plus 4½ hours overtime on Saturday morning for £85·90. Compare that with Sir John Nott's salary.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Is it right that Sir John Nott is earning £1,000 a day? If so, he had better be doing better for that than he did as Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Cohen: I endorse those comments.

Mr. Jenkins, a stores porter, worked 40 hours in a five-day week for £70·30 a week. It will hardly be a merry Christmas for a family man. That type of inequality is the Tory Government's hallmark.

Tackling unemployment and low pay must be the foremost priority of the next Labour Government, because the Tory Government have failed miserably on both counts. As well as modernising British industry and investing for jobs, the Government must apply measures that will eliminate poverty pay. To do that, we must recognise the reasons for low pay. They include the lack of skills, the fact that those skills that do exist are systematically undervalued, and the lack of trade unions to resist unscrupulous employers. To tackle the lack of skills, we need a programme of real training which uses our colleges—instead of applying financial cuts to them—and encourages apprenticeships.

The systematic undervaluing of skills applies to many women and black workers. We must tackle discrimination in that regard. There should be equal pay for work of equal value and fair work and promotion opportunities. As for the unscrupulous employers, Labour must encourage

trade union protection and collective bargaining. We must strengthen employment protection, not weaken it. There should be an increase in the number of staff in the wages inspectorate, and wages councils should be established with real powers. The enforcement powers of both should be strengthened.

We should work for the replacement of overtime with a higher level of basic pay. With such a level, statutory limits on overtime might be appropriate. It is crazy that, because of low pay, people should have to work long hours when 4 million others have no work at all. The key to those proposals to tackle low pay must be a statutory minimum wage. That represents a massive advance in Labour's programme. The figure must be significant. I should like it to be in three figures, but £80 has been mooted. I believe that that is too low, but even it would benefit 1 million workers. The wage should be uprated annually and apply pro rata to part-time workers. It would have a knock-on effect with those who are paid above the minimum but still well below average earnings.

Labour has made great strides and its proposals will be immensely popular with the public, especially the low-paid. We must make this into an election issue because the comparison between the two major parties could not be more stark.

9.22 pm

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I am grateful for this opportunity to speak as I was unlucky enough to be drawn 35th out of 35 in the ballot for the Consolidated Fund Bill debate later tonight, when I would have spoken on trunk road designation for the Blackburn road bypass in Bolton.

I should like time for a full debate on this matter, which is of great importance to my constituents who have been denied this much-needed road by the council's failure to give the case proper consideration. I have applied each week for an Adjournment debate, and I look forward to debating the matter if the House should sit for longer.

Plans for the bypass were laid many years ago. Indeed, the council has owned the land for more than 10 years. Conservative councillors have consistently pressed for this much needed road, and it was the Labour-controlled Greater Manchester council which first shelved the plans. Now that we have abolished the GMC, the opportunity has returned to Bolton council to go ahead with the long delayed plan for a road which is needed much more today than it was 10 years ago.

The proposed new road would help motorists who use the A667 and the A666 north of the town and pedestrians who live near them. It has been estimated that those two roads—Tonge Moor road and Blackburn road—carry 15 per cent. more traffic than the nearby M61. Last Friday, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister visited my constituency and was a most welcome guest at the Astley Bridge Conservative club, which lies close to Blackburn road where it intercepts the ring road. After leaving the club, I understand, she was delayed by the traffic jam on Blackburn road. I am sorry that that happened, but I am sure that my right hon. Friend now appreciates the problems that my constituents face every day when they are trying to get to work.

Over a year ago I had occasion to present my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister with a petition signed by 3,500 constituents, protesting at the granting of planning permission to build 500 houses on Birtenshaw farm. The principal objection was the extra traffic which would be created, causing the present jams at Bradshaw Brow and elsewhere to become intolerable. I have already mentioned the problems of pedestrians, but I should add that over 700 constituents have petitioned for a pedestrian crossing at Bradshaw Brow where they have to take their life into their hands each time they cross the road. The traffic engineers tell me that there is no easy answer, owing to the extent of the existing traffic congestion.

I have applied to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to make the proposed new road a trunk road and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State has said that he will consider the case for trunking the road to see if it fits the necessary criteria. Whether it does or does not, the decision at present rests with Bolton council. The chamber of commerce has made representations to the council about the economic importance of the road and if the council were prepared to do more than pay lip service to creating jobs, it would not hesitate to go ahead with the road, instead of wasting money on lunatic schemes to display the unemployment total on the town hall.

I am amazed that the Labour council should have turned down the bypass plans on the grounds that the road would serve only the Conservative dormatories on the north of the town. In doing so it seems blind to the need to improve the quality of life of all who live on Tonge Moor road and Blackburn road and of all those who risk injury on the present roads, which have the worst accident record of any roads in Bolton.

How much longer must this carnage persist? One of my constituents has been evicted from his home as a result of losing his livelihood from a serious accident earlier this year. He and his family have no certainty of compensation for his injuries.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has said that Bolton is historically deprived of trunk roads. I should like the opportunity for more parliamentary time to debate the need for this road to be improved, and I trust that time can be made available for this debate.

9.26 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I have a simple request: that the Leader of the House takes a little time to read the speech which I made earlier this evening on four issues.

First, there is a need for the Security Commission to convert itself into a tribunal to consider who in Government authorises house-breaking to gain intelligence. I referred to the break-in at Sidgwick and Jackson and to the break-in for information about Anthony Blunt's testimony. We have heard a great deal about telephone tapping, but house-breaking is parallel, if not more serious. The matter affects Governments, and some statement should be made before we go into recess.

The second issue relates to telephone tapping. On 8 December, Mr. Speaker, you kindly wrote to me enclosing an answer from the Prime Minister to you, in which she stated the policy in parliamentary answers. Since then I have read out a long script which I ask the Leader of the House to look at tomorrow. Mr. Speaker and the Clerks are not a detective agency. It is unreasonable—I flatter you not, Sir — to suggest that you can answer the questions asked. It is incumbent on the Leader of the House to give some explanations about potential interference with the telephones of Members of Parliament.

[Mr. Tam Dalyell]

Thirdly, I came 24th in the ballot, which will have no greater effect than coming 35th, as the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) did, and intended to raise the question of the role of the Attorney-General in the Westland affair. We are coming to the first anniversary of those events. Does the Leader of the House not think that the Attorney-General owes us an explanation why he felt it necessary to threaten the Cabinet Secretary with the prospect of action by the Director of Public Prosecutions or the police if an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the leaking of the Solicitor-General's letter was not authorised? It is no good the Government saying that those matters will go away. The role of the Law Officers in Westland, and in the Peter Wright case, must be discussed, together with the fact that it took 10 days between 27 November when the Leader of the Opposition first asked about what the Attorney-General had or had not done and whether he had been present, and Sir Robert Armstrong's apology in court. It is high time that hon. Members had more than 10 minutes in which to cross question the Attorney-General. I shall sit down at 9.30 pm as promised.

Fourthly, as a new year resolution, will the Leader of the House prevail on the Prime Minister, when she answers questions referring to previous questions, to give the column and date for them in *Hansard*? The practice has developed of the Prime Minister referring hon. Members to previous questions, when in reality the question that has been put has not been answered. That is a parliamentary sleight of hand of which we should be ashamed.

9.30 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): These Adjournment debates provide an opportunity for hon. Members on both sides of the House to raise matters of great concern to their constituents or to them. The speeches made were very worth while. Indeed, no fewer than 16 right hon. and hon. Members managed to fit their speeches into the time available and the Leader of the House will have quite a problem to reply to all the many and valid points that were made.

Opposition Members have, almost inevitably, concentrated on matters of the greatest concern, such as unemployment. That was the first topic mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks) when he spoke about the impact of the takeover of Imperial Tobacco plc and the possible closure of the Hartcliffe tobacco factory in his constituency. Those are obviously matters of great concern. I take notice especially of his point about the growing number of imports of cigarettes from Europe. That is a most unwelcome development at a time when cigarette smoking generally is in retreat—a fact which most people would welcome on larger grounds. But it is very unwelcome for our industry to be faced with the further unexpected pressure of continental imports.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) again spoke of unemployment in Scotland, especially in his constituency, where it has reached the appalling level of 18 per cent. It is indeed disturbing to hear that not just the older industries are suffering from contraction and unemployment, but that, as he put it, the sunrise industries, of which Burroughs Machines is a typical example, are facing closure. That is a tragic warning for the future and a terrible indictment of the conduct of economic affairs in Britain in recent years.

My hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) spoke with his usual eloquence and great feeling about the prospect of the closure of Neasden geriatric hospital in his constituency. As an inner London Member of Parliament, I have a fellow feeling and share his concern. Many parts of the country have suffered from cuts in the Health Service, but I am conscious of the special impact that has been experienced in inner London. There appears to be no end in sight, despite the apparent allocation of additional funds in this year's autumn statement.

My hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) drew attention to the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, which he piloted through the House. He properly asked whether that Act was simply being shelved or, alternatively, when the first steps towards implementation would be announced. I hope that the Leader of the House will give us the answer tonight.

My hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) took an unusual but very proper subject for his speech when he spoke about the destruction of the rain forests in the Amazon and the effect of the appalling continued exploitation of the Amazonian Indians and the whole ecosystem of the planet. The example he gave of the folly of certain developments proposed by the World Bank and the EEC should be taken seriously into account.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) rightly drew attention to the great problem of low pay. As he said, not only do the Government not deplore low pay, but they actively encourage it, because they believe in this nonsense of people pricing themselves into jobs by taking ever smaller wages and salaries. As my hon. Friend said, the proper answer is a statutory minimum wage. I very much hope that we shall see that with the arrival of a new Labour Government.

Proper concerns were also expressed by Conservative Members. I very much agreed with what was said by the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) when he spoke about the continued erosion of parliamentary sovereignty by the European Court and Commission not just in almost ludicrous matters, such as the harmonisation of lawnmower noises, but, more importantly, in prohibiting the labelling of British-made goods and introducing the harmonisation of VAT on new house building and many other things.

In case the hon. Gentleman gets no other mention, I must congratulate the hon. Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) on drawing our attention to the plight of those victims of repression in the Soviet Union who have spoken out for human rights. We at least hope to spend Christmas in freedom in this country. It is disgraceful that people should be sent to gulags for pursuing their religious beliefs or simply for being poets. I am certainly glad that the hon. Gentleman drew attention to that matter.

The debate was opened by the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison). I cannot give him any comfort, as he is a deeply pessimistic man, and perhaps rightly so, about the future of Northern Ireland. As far as I am concerned, the Taoiseach's claim to be exerting joint authority with the United Kingdom over Northern Ireland does not hold. We do not accept that the agreement gives

joint authority. We accept it as giving the Irish Government an input, but that is a very different matter from joint authority.

The right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) justifiably used very strong language when he spoke about the DROPS scandal and the Boughton group. He is right to press for an independent inquiry into what happened.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) spoke about the Government's policy on the sale of arms to Iran, and that certainly needs clarifying. It is not easy to draw a sensible distinction betwen lethal and non-lethal, but in my book 50 Chieftain tank engines are lethal, and that is that.

I want to consider a subject of strong concern not only to right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House but to Britain's high technology industry. I refer to the Government's forthcoming decision and choice between the airborne early warning radar system provided by Britain's Nimrod and that on offer from the American Boeing Westinghouse AWACS. That matter, which has already featured in two applications for emergency debates under Standing Order No. 20 this afternoon, was raised by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland. It is also the subject of early-day motion 91 signed by no fewer than 78 right hon. and hon. Members from all parties.

It is clear from information leaked to the press at the weekend that the Ministry of Defence technical committee has recommended the American AWACS and that the Secretary of State for Defence will support the recommendation at Wednesday's meeting of the overseas policy and defence committee. A decision will then be ratified at Thursday's Cabinet meeting and announced to the House that afternoon.

I strongly share the concerns expressed in the Chamber today. On the question of cost, it is hardly contested that Nimrod is now the cheaper option. A total of £1 billion has already been spent on its development, and completion is estimated to be less than £500 million. To switch to AWACS at this stage will cost at least another £1 billion. There is also the question of timing. We all know that the Shackletons are an aging flight and should be replaced at the earliest possible opportunity. Eleven aircraft adapted to take the Nimrod system have already been built and will be in service just as soon as the GEC system is developed. Against that, it will be at least three years before Boeing can deliver its AWACS aircraft. To cancel Nimrod after eight years of development would be a body blow not just to GEC but to the reputation of British high technology.

The year that began with the American takeover of Westland, and in which the General Motors takeover of British Leyland and Land Rover was only narrowly averted, should not be allowed to close with a further blow to one of the most advanced sectors of British industry.

I press the Leader of the House to convey to his Cabinet colleagues the fact that it would be unacceptable to announce a decision — a fait accompli — in favour of AWACS on the eve of the recess. There should be a debate this week, before the Government take a decision, in which the whole argument, for and against, can be presented to the House. The Government should defer any decision and listen first to what the House has to say. I have no doubt that in such a debate the case for an independent appraisal of the merits of the rival systems would be urged, as the chairman of GEC, the right hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior), recommended in his statements at the weekend.

I cannot say whether the Royal Air Force, as the right hon. Member for Waveney has alleged, has shown a continuing bias in favour of AWACS. However, we are told that the RAF failed to provide detailed specifications until 1980, and in 1982 changed its requirements in one key aspect when it demanded that Nimrod perform as well over land as over sea. It was only in March this year that GEC was given responsibility for managing the whole contract. No one disputes that progress since then has been rapid and marked. GEC has not been blameless, but the MOD is certainly not the body that should sit in judgment on the two projects. The *Financial Times* reports today that the Ministry of Defence decided last month to ask CAP Scientific — a United Kingdom electronics software house, which conducted a technical audit of the Nimrod programme in 1985 — to undertake an independent inquiry. That was cancelled a few days later.

I contend that the House should be given a proper opportunity to debate these complex matters before a Government decision is made. I hope that the Leader of the House will be able to respond postively when he replies to the debate.

Finally, will the Leader of the House give an undertaking that during this week, before the recess, there will be a proper rate support grant statement for Wales? I understand that it is ready. It would be wrong if, contrary to the normal practice, it was smuggled away into a written answer to a planted question.

9.45 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) has reminded us that these are variegated debates and that they cover the most extraordinarily wide range of topics. His own speech demonstrated that, as did the debate itself. I shall try to cover the points that have been raised, and I shall do so in the sequence in which they were made. I shall, of course, refer all the contributions to the relevant Departments so that they can be properly considered.

The debate was opened by my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) with a plea that he makes with eloquence from time to time on the situation in Northern Ireland and the consequence, as he sees it, of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. I note what he argues. I am sure that he will agree that it is not the first time that he has made the point, but it never loses any of its force or eloquence. It is to be regretted that we do not have with us the elected Members from Northern Ireland. They may think that they are making a point more effectively by their absence. I rather doubt it. I know that the House loses by their absence, for if ever a part of the United Kingdom is under direct military assault the proper place for the anxieties and apprehensions to be heard are from those directly affected in this Chamber.

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): May I make the strongest protest at the proposal of the Secretary of State for Wales not to make an oral statement on rate support grant for Wales concerning figures well in excess of £1 billion annually. I am told that the excuse given is that there is parliamentary congestion. Releasing the statement

[Mr. Barry Jones]

by a written answer is unacceptable. I ask the Leader of the House to ensure that there will be an oral statement for Welsh Members to ask questions on.

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman makes his point forcefully. He knows that such matters are normally considered through the usual channels. I take account of his anxieties and promise that they will be considered through the usual channels. He, likewise, will appreciate that I can give no undertaking from the Dispatch Box this evening.

The right hon. Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks) raised the issue of the activities of the Hanson Trust. I thought that it was a trailer for his debate later on the Office of Fair Trading. I shall convey his points to the appropriate Department. I know, too, that the question of the pension funds from Courage Barclay has excited a certain amount of general comment. It is appropriate that those matters should be further considered by the House and by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) made a serious challenge and accusation against the activities of the Ministry of Defence and, particularly, the procurement executive. Clearly he does not expect it to be cleared up this side of Christmas, although I think that that was his original suggestion. I have studied the Order Paper and noted that he has a fair number of questions for answer in early January. Therefore, it is a continuing development and I shall pass on his anxieties to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. I shall also pass on the forceful and formidable way in which he put his case.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) raised an issue which I think properly concerns the House — arms shipments to countries that are combatants. He mentioned the shipments to Iran, but I am sure that he will agree that what he said could apply equally to Iraq. Throughout the Government have tried to make clear their judgment and the criteria by which they operate the export of equipment to such countries. In no sense have we sought to keep this topic "in the dark", to use the hon. Gentleman's words, but I shall pass on his points to my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Defence and for Trade and Industry.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland also referred to the airborne early warning system and expressed his clear preference. I accept that judgments have to be made. However, the most crucial point in any decision will be what is deemed to be most appropriate for the proper defence of this country. There are many other tests, because it is a complex subject. However, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman appreciates that there will have to be a proper evaluation of the technical committee's recommendations. That will take place this week and the matter is expected to be the subject of a statement later this week.

The hon. Gentleman asked me to set aside the planned order of business so that there could be a debate on the matter. I have no plans to do so, but there are, of course, the usual channels through which such a request can be made. Nevertheless, I should mislead the House if I were to give the impression that that door will respond to a gentle tap.

The speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy) on European Music Year stood in charming distinction from the weighty AWACS issue.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: It was a very good speech.

Mr. Biffen: Yes. I thought that he was in cahoots with my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), who referred to lawnmowers. I am wondering whether, between them, they can find some common absurdity between European Music Year and the European regulation relating to lawnmower noise. I have taken on board my hon. Friend's anxieties about the danger of overamplified music and other noises generally. With great delicacy, I think that he was trying to tell me something about Prime Minister's Question Time.

The hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) referred to the serious unemployment in his constituency and the impending closure of Burroughs. He fairly conceded that that company has not been bereft of direct Government support, but anybody who has any understanding of a Member of Parliament's association with his constituency will understand clearly the point that the hon. Gentleman made.

A more general point that bolsters my case is that for six years in succession there has been economic growth and an expansion of the gross domestic product. However, unemployment remains high, notwithstanding the fact that 1 million new jobs have been created since 1983. That illustrates how uphill a struggle it is to bring about a reverse in unemployment, as long as the working population continues to expand as rapidly as it has expanded in the recent past. However, it will be possible to reverse that trend in the next two or three years. I hope that future Adjournment debate motions will not have to include this topic.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) referred in a restrained but effective manner to the sad plight of Russian Christian dissidents, and in particular to Alexander Ogorodnikov. His contribution brought home to us that so many of the things that we take for granted in our political system are not automatically enjoyed elsewhere.

The hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) characteristically played the role that he has played with such distinction throughout the decades as champion of the hospital service, particularly the hospital service in his own area of Willesden, and referred to the proposed closure of the Neasden hospital. My experience in Shropshire of the management that has accompanied the Griffiths report is that it has not been detrimental, and I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman should have had that experience. I shall convey to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services the points that he has made this evening with such great effect.

My hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) talked about family courts in the context of the recent consultation document. I have noted her words that it is time for action, not words, and I shall ensure that they are conveyed to my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor. I am sure that she will realise that this will become an extremely contentious topic. It is one of those areas of supposed non-party political controversy which has the capacity to embroil this place infinitely more effectively than some of our more conventional debates.

I was fascinated when my hon. Friend then talked about television violence. The House would probably accept the general proposition that she put forward, but when it came to identifying the particular forms of television which my hon. Friend would wish to be subject to some constraint, we would soon part company. I would certainly not accept that "EastEnders" would require any of the censorship that I thought was implicit in her comments.

The hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), as the author of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, knows perfectly well that in some weeks or months he will leave this place, alas for ever, but, none the less, leave for posterity something by which he will be remembered. I understand that that being the case he is rather worried about the lethargy — *[Interruption.]* I travel with complete optimism in these matters. It is part of the psychological warfare.

If the hon. Gentleman is finding the Treasury somewhat lacking in social sensitivity in these matters, he is not alone. This is not the only area where one discovers that. However, I shall pass on all the points that he wished me to make.

Mr. Tom Clarke: I had expected a serious reply, Mr. Speaker. Is it in order for me to withdraw my description of the right hon. Gentleman as a person who exercises great sensitivity when he makes such electoral predictions?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman has my unconditional acquiescence to the withdrawal of the description of me as a person of exceptional sensitivity.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East talked about radiotherapy at Southend. I shall ensure that his points are understood by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services where there is a need for an early decision. I understand that he would like ministerial guidelines from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science which would cut short any protracted and misguided debate about the reorganisation of grammar schools in Southend. I am not quite so optimistic as my hon. Friend that I can get the answers he seeks because it implies a rather brisker approach to these affairs by my right hon. Friend than he would generally wish to possess. My hon. Friend is shown to be ever the most persuasive spokesman in that he asks for a mere half a day to deal with about 45 deficiencies of the European Community and the way that we have been practically stripped to our ankles of any sovereignty or self-respect. I have not been equipped with the usual Foreign Office brief, but I understand that the cases are well argued and deeply felt and go much wider than my hon. Friend thinks. I shall see that my hon. Friend's points are passed on to my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary in exactly those terms and with good Christmas wishes.

The House will have listened with great interest to the plea of the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) for the Amerindians. I suspect that the whole question of the rain forests and the attempt to have some policy of global ecology has caught the imagination of the west more than practically any other single topic. I shall pass on his points, as he requests.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) is concerned about the case of Miss McGoldrick, and I am sure that he is right in saying that her behaviour and conduct generally have excited great admiration in the House. I think that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has said that he is studying the papers with a view to the use of section 68 powers and he should shortly be making known his decision.

The hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) gave a robust exposition of the difficulties of low pay. If he thinks that he can cure those difficulties by a substantial increase without raising the whole question of differentials in working class pay, he is underestimating the task that he takes on.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) spoke eloquently about the Blackburn road bypass and his speech was heard by the Minister responsible.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asked me to take to heart his four points. I certainly shall.

It being three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 22 (Periodic adjournments).*

Resolved,

That this House at its rising on Friday 19th December do adjourn until Monday 12th January, and that the House shall not adjourn on Friday 19th December until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will have heard the exchange of views earlier between my hon. Friend the Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) and the Leader of the House when my hon. Friend pressed the right hon. Gentleman to tell us whether there would be a Welsh rate support grant statement tomorrow. It is my understanding that thus far the Government have not said that such a statement will be forthcoming, and the reason they have given for that is that there is congestion of parliamentary business.

I know that Welsh Members and you, Mr. Speaker, have had a long, honourable and traditionally warm relationship, and I am sure that none of us would want to prejudice that. Will you confirm that, if we do not have a Welsh rate support grant statement tomorrow, there is little that you can do other than accept points of order from Welsh hon. Members who wish to press the Government on the matter tomorrow? If that is the case, will not parliamentary business become even more congested if we do not get a statement tomorrow?

Mr. Speaker: I hope that we do not have points of order on this matter. I listened carefully to the Leader of the House and I understood him to say that this matter could properly be discussed through the usual channels. There is business not only tomorrow but on three days after that.

Orders of the Day

CONSOLIDATED FUND BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Question, That the Bill be now read a Second time, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing order No. 113 (Consolidated Fund Bills), and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, pursuant to Standing Order No. 54 (Consolidated Fund Bills), That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

Pilkington Brothers plc

10.3 pm

Mr. John Evans (St. Helens, North): I am grateful for this opportunity to raise an issue of tremendous significance and importance to people in my constituency and in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) and a number of other hon. Members. I regret the necessity for raising the subject, but I do so because the bid that has been made by BTR for Pilkington Brothers plc, whose headquarters are in St. Helens, is wholly unwelcome and completely rejected by almost everyone in St. Helens.

The bid is totally opposed by the company. I should like to quote briefly from the statement by the chairman of the company, because that shows the opposition of Pilkington's to the bid. Mr. Anthony Pilkington, the chairman of the company, in a recent document rebutting the offer by BTR said:

"In 20 years, Pilkington has moved from fourth position in the world to undisputed leader. I would regard it as grossly inequitable if the very substantial benefits which are resulting from our successful strategy were to flow to BTR shareholders rather than to you and the other shareholders of Pilkington. I am confident you will support Pilkington and all that we represent.

It is the clear and strong advice of your Board and of its financial advisers, Schroders and Goldman Sachs, that you should reject BTR.

I need scarcely add that your directors have no intention of accepting the offer in respect of their own beneficial holdings."

The bid is also entirely unacceptable to St. Helens borough council. In a statement on local radio the other day, the chairman of the council said that the loss of local control of the company would greatly harm St. Helens. Mrs. Marie Rimmer, the leader of the council, said:

"We will definitely not keep the head office base within St. Helens. That's something the council have used very seriously, it's quite prestigious to have a multi-national head office within your town. Not just for the jobs that's there, but in attracting other businesses to St. Helens."

It is also clear that the bid is entirely unwelcome to all the political parties in St. Helens. It is unwelcome to the chamber of trade, to the small business people, to those who supply Pilkington and to the shopkeepers who rely on its prosperity. It is also entirely unacceptable to the trade unions in the town and to the entire work force, white collar and blue collar, shop worker and manager.

I shall quote briefly from some of the many letters that I have received on the subject, but I hope that the House will understand why I do not give the names and addresses of those who have written to me. I wish to protect their interests just in case the takeover bid is successful and jeopardises people's future interests. The Minister can have a copy of all the letters that I have received.

A senior manager stated:

"I am a native of St. Helens and a long-serving employee of Pilkington, having experience of the Company from 'grass roots' to senior manager."

It is a sign of the company's policy that many senior managers started on the shop floor. The letter continues:

"As an employee, I have seen the company grow from a relatively small, mostly United Kingdom-based operation to its current position as undisputed world-leader in the industry. This growth has been based principally on its commitment to technology, and clearly the publicly stated 'rust bucket' approach of BTR is totally incapable of maintaining that position for long—let alone permitting further growth. Low technology and Pilkington are incompatible."

An engineering manager at Pilkington wrote to me as follows:

"Pilkington, who have been in the glassmaking business for 160 years, have provided employment for my family for four generations, so it is only natural for me to ask how a low tech conglomerate such as BTR can improve on Pilkington's performance . . . Pilkington are already the best and do not need BTR, particularly at this time when the results and prospects are already improving rapidly after a lot of hard work."

Those two letters are examples of the many that I have received from management and work force. I have also received many letters from trade unions. The district secretary of the south-west Lancashire district of the Amalgamated Engineering Union—my union—wrote as follows:

"I write to express the great concern of the AEU District Committee at the prospect of the BTR takeover being successful. The numbers employed by Pilkington Bros. in the town of St. Helens has of course reduced dramatically over the last 10 years. Nevertheless, it is the view of my District Committee that the present takeover bid, if successful, would result in even greater job losses."

A resolution passed by members of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, which represents the Pilkington work force throughout the country, states:

"This ASTMS Conference of Pilkington Delegates representing 3,000 members employed by Pilkington's in the UK, having considered the bid by BTR is of the conclusion that the takeover makes no industrial sense and would not be in the long term interests of employees at Pilkingtons . . . We have also considered BTR's industrial record here and abroad and we do not believe that our agreements or our trade union rights would be protected under a BTR management."

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): Does my hon. Friend agree that the disgraceful treatment that BTR has meted out to the employees of Hangers, the limb fitters at Roehampton, and the way in which it has treated other companies that it has taken over, are reasons for referring the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission?

Mr. Evans: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for putting forward that point of view. I hope that he will have a chance of developing it if he catches your eye, Mr. Speaker. The treatment that BTR has dished out to workers in other companies that have had the misfortune to fall within its hands is motivating the minds of thousands of trade unionists who are employed by Pilkington.

In this week's special edition of the *St. Helens Reporter*, which speaks for the town and is read throughout the town, the editor writes:

"In three short weeks, St. Helens has become the focus of national, and international, attention. Why? The £1·16 billion takeover bid of 'our' Pilks by the trans-national faceless conglomerate BTR has dominated the pages of the financial press. I say 'our' Pilks because what affects Pilks affects St. Helens. And the effect on St. Helens if the vigorously-contested bid goes through after Christmas would be nothing short of disastrous. For St. Helens, a town proudly built on glass and coal, would end up like the forgotten steel towns . . . a ghastly, ghost world falling apart through financial neglect. The epitome of desolation in a deprived and industrial-degraded north west."

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Is not the real point—the hon. Gentleman has said that BTR has not been a successful conglomerate, but it has—that there is no industrial synergy in it taking over Pilkington, which has been highly successful on its own and has a great industrial future on its own? We need companies in industry which progress in their own sectors in their own way successfully, as Pilkington has, without them being taken over by those who want to make something different out of them. We need industrial giants to progress on their own as Pilkington has, and not financial conglomerates.

Mr. Evans: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his remarks. He has set out the thrust of all the letters and resolutions that I have received. He has expressed the comments which have been made to me during telephone calls and in conversations throughout the town, the thrust of which is that Pilkington must remain an independent company. It is on the record that Pilkington has been part of St. Helens since 1826, and as the company has grown, so the town has grown.

The company's long-term strategy has turned it into a world leader with the best worldwide market position of any glass company. It leads the world in glass technology and innovation and is unique among British companies in building world leadership from a United Kingdom base. It occupies that position as an independent British company that maintains its head office in St. Helens, which was rebuilt a few years ago. It is the only multinational company with its headquarters in the north-west.

Pilkington is not confined to St. Helens and it is obvious that many hon. Members are concerned about the company's future. It is growing in advanced technology and it has plants in Glasgow, north Wales and many other areas throughout the country, including Birmingham, which have pioneered developments in the glass industry. It has a manufacturing capacity in a number of western countries and its famous flat glass manufacturing plant is licensed out to no fewer than 31 manufacturers in 21 countries, including the USA and the USSR, which brings tremendously needed revenue into the company and the country.

Pilkington's commitment to research and development is massive. No less than £50 million a year is spent by the company in operating at the frontiers of glass technology in virtually every sector. That massive investment must be taken into account when consideration is given to the company's profits, which have risen to £86·9 million from £49·4 million for the six months to September 1986.

Pilkington is a profitable, high technology company, and is spending vast sums of money to remain so. It is respected by its work force. that is one of the most important factors about the company. Of course, Pilkington is much more than than. Its involvement with the town of St. Helens is legendary, beneficial and pioneering. In 1978, with the local council, the chamber of commerce, banks and trade unions, Pilkington launched the famous Community of St. Helens Trust. Since 1979, the St. Helens trust has been responsible for the creation of about 450 businesses within the town, and more than 90 per cent. of those companies have prospered and are operating today.

Since 1979, over 5,000 new jobs have been created in St. Helens. Through the work of the trust, new businesses are being formed at the rate of one and a half per week. It is the forerunner of the enterprise agency movement. The trust is still chaired by Anthony Pilkington, the chairman of Pilkington Brothers plc, despite his many other commitments. The trust launched Rainford venture capital, which was established to provide equity investment in small companies, and it has been tremendously beneficial for many small companies within the St. Helens area. The trust also launched Pilkington Properties, to develop sites that were surplus to Pilkington's requirements and could be used for incoming small businesses. The trust launched the index scheme—a youth training scheme—long before the Manpower Services Commission talked about the two-year training programme. The index scheme advocated and put into practice a two-year training scheme for young people.

For every project that it can, Pilkington places orders within a 20-mile radius of St. Helens. Recently, Pilkington responded to an MSC approach to manage a community programme. Two weeks ago, I visited that programme. It now employ no less than 140 people on five separate schemes, all of which are beneficial to the town, particularly to the elderly.

The company has been responsible for promoting good works and employment within the community programme. But Pilkington has contributed to much more within St. Helens. We are proud of the fact that St. Helens is one of the few towns with a live theatre—the Theatre Royal. Pilkington has put a great deal of work into maintaining it. Only a few years ago, Pilkington handsomely contributed to a magnificient centre for handicapped people.

No doubt, some people will sneer, "Paternalism." Some people will say that companies should be responsible only for creating profits for shareholders. Pilkington is one of the best companies. It engages in a wealth-sharing exercise with the community which, in the first place, is responsible for creating that wealth.

The people of St. Helens wish to ask legitimate questions of BTR. Will BTR maintain the commitment to the present level of expenditure in St. Helens? Will BTR maintain the head office in St. Helens? Will BTR maintain the level of expenditure on research and development? It is hardly likely. If hon. Members examine BTR's answers to previous questions, they may judge what its leading personnel have said.

Sir Owen Green, the chairman, was reported in October 1985 as saying:

"We have never seen the ethical need or the material reward for placing research and development to the forefront of our activities. Research does not seem to fit easily into the cut-and-thrust environment of industry and commerce."

[Mr. Evans]

Mr. Jeff Cahill, the chief executive-elect, says of BTR under his stewardship:

"We'll still be known as a rust bucket company, making mature products with a mature life. There'll be no high-tech."

Will BTR maintain current levels of activity and employment throughout the Pilkington group? A most important question for BTR to answer is this: what will it do to improve Pilkington's performance if it acquires the company? The answers to those questions are of interest, not just to the people of St. Helens but to the shareholders, particularly the financial institutions in the City that hold Pilkington shares, and hold the people's livelihood in their hands. They have a question to answer: is short-term, get-rich-quick profit to be preferred to long-term stability and steady wealth creation? That will be the deciding factor. I and my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, South have no doubt that the estimated 10 per cent. of small shareholders from the St. Helens area will be resolute in voting for Pilkington's.

There is also a question that Sir Gordon Borrie, the Director General of Fair Trading, must answer when he considers the bid, and in any recommendation that he makes to the Secretary of State. I am puzzled by the report in *The Independent* on Saturday 13 December, which informs us:

"Popular wisdom is that the OFT will clear the BTR offer and its recommendation will be accepted by trade minister Paul Channon."

That comment is rather odd in relation to the recent speech made by Sir Gordon Borrie in Glasgow. *The Guardian* of 5 December reported him as saying:

"present competition law could be encouraging conglomerates and reducing the number of independent decision-making centres"

That definitely fits the present Pilkington situation. The article went on to say:

"But he criticised the free-for-all view that where mergers did not affect competition everything could be left to market forces. These forces were driven by shareholders and a myriad of financial advisers and experts."

Again, that fits the Pilkington bid. The article continued:

"It was extremely difficult to determine whether so 'excessively short-term a view' was being taken that the merger might be against the public interest. One way of attacking this problem, he said, would be to consider changing the burden of proof, so that companies had to demonstrate positive benefits if a merger was to be cleared."

That was an intelligent and far-sighted way of approaching our problems, with the present mania of takeover bids.

Sir Gordon must acknowledge that the takeover is not in the public interest. That is a ground for referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. As my hon. Friend the Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) said in his intervention, the other ground for referral is the undoubted disastrous effect on industrial relations that would occur throughout Pilkington if the bid were successful. A submission on both those aspects will be forthcoming from St. Helens council and the Pilkington trade unions. They will meet tomorrow to make that submission. It is the intention of the council to call a meeting of all local authorities in Great Britain with Pilkington plants in their towns and cities so that they can make a similar submission to the Office of Fair Trading.

However, the main questions are for the Government, and so they should be. It is not just a matter of insider dealing, which is prevalent in so many deals. The main questions that the Government must answer is: what sort of British industry do they want? Do they believe that the nation's industry should be based on long-term strategic planning, backed by significant capital spending on research and development, as do the German and Japanese Governments? If the answer to that question is no, that market forces, short-term financial and profit motives must prevail, and that the rusty bucket BTRs of this world must be allowed to swallow the high-technology Pilkingtons, God help manufacturing industry. It will have no real future.

However, if the answer to that question is yes, Britain's industry must be based on planning and research and development, the BTR bid for Pilkington must be stopped dead in its tracks. That is what Pilkington's board wants. That is what Pilkington's workers want. That is what local authorities, especially St. Helens, want. I suggest that that is what the majority of hon. Members want.

10.24 pm

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): If the speech of the hon. Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans) were his first speech on industry, one might well have found a point that one could meet. But, as I listened to the harrowing accounts of the destruction of family businesses and the concentration of wealth, I could not help remembering that it was the Labour party which consistently, for 40 years, advocated nationalisation, which eliminated family businesses and concentrated wealth in the southern areas of this country.

I do not think that the hon. Gentleman has served his constituents' interests as cleverly as he might. He hopes that he can deflect the bid from BTR, but BTR has had a track record of success, which means that it has delivered a great deal of improved asset value to the owners of its shares, who will often coincide with the owners of Pilkington's shares. Those shareholders will represent many of the hon. Gentleman's constituents whose insurance policies and pension funds will be invested in the success of those institutional shareholders.

If the hon. Gentleman had really sought to achieve the purpose which I think he genuinely wants, he would have been better advised not to attack BTR, because it is a successful British company which is pursuing its success in the market place. I would have no adverse comment to make on the way in which it goes about its purpose. That is a legitimate thing to do. Rather than look to the Government—that is perhaps more instinctively in line with the hon. Gentleman's philosophy — the hon. Gentleman might have done better to approach this matter from the point of view of Pilkington's shareholders. They are the people who, on reading his speech, will have to decide whether he has deployed persuasive arguments. They are the people who will decide whether to accept the bid.

Mr. Evans: Will the right hon. Gentleman reflect on what he has said in his party-political approach and on the fact that the only words that I used that could be described as an attach on BTR were "rusty bucket"? They were the words used by the chairman of the company. They were his words, not mine.

Mr. Heseltine: I understand that. I listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman's speech. If it is read by the institutional shareholders to whom he is addressing his

message. I do not think that it will find empathy with the assumptions upon which they work. They will be aware that, broadly speaking, for as long as anyone can remember, the Labour party and its supporters in St. Helens have vilified Pilkington and much of what it stood for. Today, we hear a latter-day conversion — and I welcome it for that—but I am not deceived by the depth of the transformation.

Mr. Evans: That is outrageous.

Mr. Heseltine: The hon. Gentleman has made his speech.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Heseltine: I have given way once. This is a short debate, and I wish to pursue my argument.

I have no adverse comment to make about BTR, but I think that it is wrong to approach this matter from that point of view. It is important that BTR should prove its case and that the onus of proof should be on it in making a bid of this sort. I hope that Pilkington's shareholders will carefully consider where their obligations lie and should lie.

Recently, the CBI, in calling for an industrial strategy, determined to appoint a distinguished group of CBI members to go to the City to discuss with institutional shareholders the long-term relationships of owners and managers. That is an overdue step which should be given every support. The managers, who in this context would represent the views that Pilkington's is now expressing, want to talk to the owners of Britain's institutional wealth because they increasingly understand that much of today's investment in manufacturing industry is long term and much of the costs of maintaining an industrial apparatus involve overheads which can, in the short term, be cut. But, if they are cut, there will be a price to be paid in the long term.

The hon. Member for St. Helens, North has rightly pointed out that aspects of potential economy in the short term include training and the research and investment programmes of companies, because they could all be set on one side in the pursuit of relatively short-term gains. It is even possible that shareholders can gain from an immediate return, but, in the longer term, there can be no gain for British shareholders unless the economy, and the manufacturing economy, is encouraged to invest and grow.

The issue at the forefront of the debate is whether the institutional shareholders of the country are prepared to see through some permanent commitment to the companies that they own, or whether they will take relatively short-term views within a capitalist ethos which has no longer-term accountability. I do not think that, in the end, the Government can stand aside from these matters, but I would infinitely prefer it if the shareholders recognised the responsibility themselves.

It is important to recognise that none of the equivalent capitalist economies, which we must in the end compete with or fail, would adopt so simplistic a view as that which maintains that there are no long-term commitments and that the short term is all. Germany, Japan and France have arrangements, an understanding, a community of national approach, which draw managers, shareholders and financiers into a much more coherent understanding of where their long-terms interests lie.

The only economy that would take an approach to the market similar to ours is the American one. It can do that because it operates on such a large scale. If one considers the penetration of low and medium-technology products from Japan into the United States, however, we realise that even the Americans are having to come to terms with an extremely uncomfortable penetration from a much more coherently organised capitalist economy. These are the fundamental issues that we have to address and which Pilkington summarises.

It fell to me — it was an immense privilege — to be associated for some years with the fortunes of Merseyside. It is an inescapable fact that, in that part of provincial England, the great family businesses that created its wealth have gone, not because the market alone dictated that they should, although that is partly the case, but because the tax regimes to which we subjected them made it inevitable that they would sell out.

There was no conceivable way in which family businesses could be more than one generation businesses. They had to pay captial gains tax and death duties and, in the end, they had to put their companies on the market. Local institutions or people who wanted to buy offered cash, but cash was less attractive than the tax-free roll-over provisions of the publicly quoted companies.

There is no escape from the logic of that Government interference within the marketplace. It was not just Tory intervention, but the intervention of all parties over decades. The result is an erosion of local autonomy and power which is dangerous to an economy and which has led to a concentration in the City of London and the south. That is a step better than the nationalisation of industries, but it is a step in the same direction towards central control.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd) said recently in an important speeech on another industrial matter, it is by no means self-evident that the accumulation of power by publicly quoted companies has been beneficial to the country's industrial base. I respect the discipline of shareholders to look after the interests of their investors on whom their future must depend, but I ask them to remember that this company, by any logical standard, has tried to achieve what has been asked of it. It has invested. It has dominated the technology of its industry. It has become a world leader. It has faced recession and, in doing so, it has run down its work force — but with compassion. It has, as far as possible, run down its work force with voluntary arrangements and allowed its people to go at as acceptable a pace as was possible.

The hon. Member for St. Helens, North referred to paternalism. I am a paternalist. I believe that those who have private privilege and power should exercise the responsibilities that go with that privilege. If Pilkington had been copied on a larger scale, the effects of the recession on our industrial economy would have been less harmful.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the enterprise trust. It was one of the first examples of which I am aware — pioneered by Bill Humphries of Pilkington — where capitalist Britain worked in partnership with a Labour local authority to stimulate a climate in which small companies began to appear and job creation was a prime concern in a free enterprise environment. This Government dramatically increased the incentives for that sort of trust, but Pilkington pioneeered that spirit. That

[Mr. Heseltine]

must be one of the finest examples of what a locally based and controlled company should try to do to win the consent of the local people for the ethos of the capitalist system.

When those shareholders come to consider where their votes should be cast, I ask them not only to consider the short-term view but to look to the long-term interests of the company. They have a responsibility, as we all do, for the success of our manufacturing bases. There will be a message and a consequence if they simply think that they can sell today in the hope that somebody else will pick up the pieces tomorrow.

It falls to hon. Members to argue the ethos of capitalism. It is a great deal easier to argue for capitalism that patently cares, and Pilkington beyond peradventure is just such a company.

10.36 pm

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): I found it sad that the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) began his remarks in support of the company that has done so much for the town which I have the privilege to represent with an attack on my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans) and me. On numerous occasions we have supported the employees, trade unions and company through oral and written questions, speeches and comments.

The company is at the heart of St. Helens and it is deplorable that a Member of Parliament who represents a lusher pasture should begin his remarks in defence of the lifeblood of our town with an almost personal attack on its representatives. When the right hon. Gentleman reads his speech tomorrow, I hope that he will realise that his initial remarks could be interpreted in that way.

If the right hon. Gentleman did not wish to attack my hon. Friend or me, we shall be delighted to hear his retractions and clarification; but if such clarification cannot be given, we must take the remarks as we heard them. Tonight I do not wish to make petty party political points. I have a genuine issue at heart.

Those who have shares in a large company have a responsibility, not only to the company, but to the people who produce the wealth that lies behind the value of the shares. The wealth of Pilkington has been a combination of both capital and labour. Labour includes the ingenuity, skill, brilliance, ideas and development over many years of those who work in the company. Most of them are not shareholders. Labour includes the efforts of those who work on the shop floor—the fitters, joiners, blowers and skilled craftsmen. The skill of such men throughout the country in the optical industry makes this product a world leader. It is a combination of their efforts, brains, ideas and lives that creates the background to the work.

I accept that if a business is to grow it needs capital and over the years there has been an input of capital. Hence we have the creation of shareholders within the company. Without that skill, effort, brilliance and technical know-how, the company would never have grown to its present size. In saying that, I pay tribute to every member of the staff, whether the managing director or the youngest recruit and apprentice. Every person plays a part in the company's development.

The pension fund managers and investment houses which own the bulk of the shares should address one simple question. In holding the shares that are often the product of the purchasing power of the pension contributions from ordinary working people, do they have a responsibility to those who made the wealth that gives value to their pension funds? The answer must of course be yes. For too long—I do not seek to be cruel in what I say—the investment managers have often considered a share as a means of making a profit, or a quick buck on a turnover through the shifting of millions of shares. We saw that happen in the Guinness bid and in numerous takeover bids that have occurred during the past few years. Ultimately the decisions of the pension fund managers determine the outcome of a bid and very often that decision has rested on what is most profitable to the pension fund.

That is the sad disease that has begun to destroy the American stock markets where there has been a growth in green mail and the emergence of people like Boesky who wheel and deal and make millions without lifting a hand to create a manufactured product.

If we develop a society in which billions of pounds can change hands at a stroke of a pen, we will create a society that will destroy the base of that society's wealth—the ability of men to create a product that is wanted elsewhere, that can be sold to create wealth, investment, expansion and new work. The bid from BTR is a classic example of the kind of bids that we witnessed in the latter part of the 1960s and in the early part of the 1970s when companies were taken over, broken up, their assets stripped, parts sold and ideas destroyed so that those who struck to create the conglomerate could repay the money that they borrowed to pay for the deal.

Pilkington would be destroyed if it was broken up. As a result of BTR's bid, will we once again witness the destruction of a major industry? We have seen that happen many times already. I do not intend to attack BTR tonight because I do not think that that is a worthwhile exercise and my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North has covered much of that ground. I do not want to delay the House by repeating what he said. However, I absolutely support and endorse everything that he said.

The point that I wish to make above all others tonight is that the Government have a duty and responsibility in these matters, just as the Director General of Fair Trading has a responsibility. The time has come when the Government must accept some responsibility in the corporate market structure. They must stop the nation following the same road taken in the United States where mega-bid follows mega-bid, where groups of companies are taken over simply to be stripped out, broken up and sold off so that the creditor can make a few hundred million dollars here and a few hundred million dollars there by selling the bits that he does not want. He can keep the parts that he wants and can grow. Who are the winners in that game? Are they the employees or the nation involved? The American experience shows that the employees and the nation lose out and that the winners are the arbitrageurs—or whatever they are called today—who are in it to make a buck for themselves.

Our society is bigger than that and must not become a society in which jobs can fall at the whim of an investment manager like the leaves from a tree in autumn so that the investment manager — whether for an insurance company, a pension fund or simply a Boesky-like character—can make a fast pound in profit. We have a greater responsibility than that in the organisation of our corporate structures. I hope that tonight the Minister will give us an assurance, not just for this bid, but for other bids that are mooted, that we will begin to see the Government take on board some responsibility for the organisation of the markets that effect our corporate structures. With Government comes responsibility. The Government fought shy of taking on board the responsibility for organising the market place in the investor protection legislation recently because it took only a few days post the big bang for us to begin to see that the Chinese walls were so paper thin that they had no meaning.

Let the Government on this occasion take a principled stand and say that there is no industrial logic in what is being done and that there is no benefit to the towns and cities throughout this land which have Pilkington industries in them and there is no industrial benefit to the

[Mr. Gerald Bermingham]

glass industry from the proposed takeover bid. Because there is no industrial benefit or logic, the Government have a responsibility to say no. I suggest to the Minister that, if no is what the Government say on this occasion, it may bring just a little bit of responsibility to the corporate barons within the City. As the right hon. Member for Henley suggested, it may make those who hold the bulk of shares in British industry—the investment managers of the major institutions and banks—realise that they have a responsibility as shareholders to the people who work in those industries and those upon whose backs, ideas and dreams they are making their wealth. Let us see whether the Government have the courage on this occasion to try to bring some discipline to the market.

10.47 pm

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): The Floor of the House, the Dee and the Mersey divide me from the hon. Members for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans) and for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham). However, I am glad from north Wales to support the plea for Pilkington which they have both made. I do so from a point of view very close to that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) whose powerful intervention in the debate I very much welcome.

BTR'S hostile bid for Pilkington is bad news for all who work for Pilkington, for those areas where Pilkington plants are situated and for Britain's industrial future. Pilkington has an admirable reputation as an industrial leader and employer. It is the world's leading glass company, and it got to be so by management every bit as shrewd as and a great deal more far-seeing than anything that the whizz kids of BTR could produce and by bold policies for researching and developing new products with a lead time far longer than BTR with its need for demonstrable short-term profits could possibly provide.

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that I visited a Pilkington factory in my constituency at Queensferry this morning? I met leaders of the work force and the management. They left me in no doubt as to their dismay at developments such as the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) is mentioning. I received a petition, which I was asked to deliver to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, which shows the united opposition of the work force at Queensferry to BTR's proposition.

Sir Anthony Meyer: The hon. Gentleman will be aware of the importance of Pilkington to Clwyd and the defects of BTR, as we saw all too clearly at Wrexham.

Pilkington is probably the best employer in my constituency. Its contribution to the local community is important, as it has been in every area where it operates. It pays good wages and offers good conditions of work. Above all—and this is what matters most to me—it offers precious opportunities to the really ambitious school leavers in my area, and, heaven knows, there are all too few such opportunities.

In the best sense of the word, Pilkington is paternalistic. That word is anathema to some parts of the City of London, despite the fact that paternalism has been a notable ingredient in Japan's industrial success story. Paternalism has been an important element in Pilkington's success. Its success makes it attractive to acquisitive operators like BTR, which, ironically, can use paternalism as a pretext for its bid, on the ground that brisker and more impersonal management would create even bigger profits.

BTR's record in north Wales has been lamentable. It took over Dunlop in Wrexham, which had received substantial local authority and Government help, stripped it and then shut it down. BTR then refused to hold any discussions with the local authority on replacement jobs. I wonder how BTR has the nerve to show its face in north Wales. North Wales wants to keep its "Pilks"; it does not want BTR.

What is to be done? There is something worrying about the way in which BTR has set about acquiring Pilkington shares and there is something distinctly suspicious about their sudden rise in value, which might tempt some short-sighted shareholders to try to make a quick buck. If BTR has overstepped the mark in any way—I am not saying that it has—I look to my hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to be especially zealous in using such powers as he has.

However, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley said, there is a much wider question than whether the rules governing takeovers have been strictly complied with. The BTR bid raises the question of Britain's industrial future and puts the Government's policy towards industry under a searching light. It throws into high relief the fact that the requirements of industry and of finance are not complementary, as they should be and as Conservatives would like them to be. In some respects they are sharply divergent.

The City and the financial institutions perform a great service to this country. Without their earnings, Britain would be unable to pay its way in the world. However, they require a fairly quick return on the capital that they are so skilled at raising. Industry — in particular, technologically advanced industry — has to make a profit, too. We should never lose sight of that fact, but in some of its operations it needs to work on a very much longer time scale than is acceptable to the financial institutions.

If industry is to stay out in front, as Pilkington has done, it has to commit itself to some operations which may yield no return, or a very small return, for several years. This, plus the need for far greater industrial co-operation on a European scale, is the central question governing the continued survival of Britain as an industrial nation.

I do not expect my hon. and learned Friend to go so far as some of us would like him to go and say that the state ought to play a more active role in sponsoring carefully selected industrial projects, but the problem will not be solved by market forces alone, if only because the market itself is so imperfect. I am not referring to the much greater help that so many of our competitors give to their industries. That is a major factor, but it is a subject for another speech. I am referring to the inbuilt bias against industrial innovation and enterprise arising out of the way in which our capital markets and tax system operate.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley's observations on that point were extremely shrewd. Ministers cannot just put it on one side; they will have to do something if British industry is not to be sacrificed to the short-term requirements of the City of London. If it cannot modify its free market philosophy, at the very least

it needs to do a great deal more to make sure that it is a free market and not just a well guarded playpen for financiers.

While Ministers are thinking about this, my hon. and learned Friend must use such limited powers as he possesses to prevent this takeover. He must make it plain that BTR's bid is as unwelcome to his Department as it is to Pilkington and that, if it looked like succeeding, he would use such weapons as he possesses to persuade the shareholders not to fall for the offer. The fox has got into the hen yard where our prize hens have been laying so well. It will gobble up the few and wantonly slaughter the rest. This is the repulsive face of capitalism, and it must be stopped now.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It may be helpful to point out that the Opposition Front Bench Member will seek to rise at 11.10 pm and the debate must end at 11.32 pm. If hon. Members would confine themselves to five minutes each, it would be helpful.

10.56 pm

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans), who is a good friend of mine, managed to initiate this debate. I say to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) that no one could defend the interests of the people of St. Helens better than my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North. He knows a little more about the needs of the employees at Pilkington than the right hon. Member for Henley. I noticed the one element that was missing from the speech of the right hon. Member for Henley was the employees of Pilkington. He talked about the shareholders. In St. Helens, of course, people talk about nothing else but the ethos of capitalism. But they understand that capitalism might cost them their jobs and the prosperity of St. Helens.

We are not just talking about a takeover bid. We are talking about profits, asset stripping and predators. There is no greater predator in the market than BTR, nor is there a company with a worse industrial relations record. We do not need to go very far — it is much nearer to the constituency of the right hon. Member for Henley than St. Helens—down the road to see what is happening at J. E. Hanger. Where people have been put out of work. But, if we wish to go much further than that, we can look at South Africa where BTR have been paying disgraceful starvation wages to the workers. No wonder that the people and the employees of St. Helens are fearful of what may happen.

I am the president of ASTMS, which has 3,000 members in Pilkington, so I have a right to speak on this. We are talking about two quite different companies. The idea of a merger between them makes no industrial sense whatsoever. Pilkington is the world's leading producer of flat glass. We should be proud of that and seek to sustain it rather than let a rust bucket company, as my hon. Friend said, in low technology products — in engineering and rubber—take over or make a bid for one of the world's leaders. Not only St. Helens council is worried; West Lancashire district council is also concerned because the research and development centre is at Lathom.

It is right to have this debate because Pilkington is being judged against the ethos of this Government. In other words, it is being judged as a market force that looks for short-term profits rather than at the long-term interests of the nation. That is the tragedy that is befalling us far too often.

A company such as Pilkington must be prepared to put money into a long-term investment in a product that is continually changing and must be prepared to look for new ideas all the time in order to remain the world leader.

What is Pilkington's record? On research and development alone it spends £50 million each year and 60 per cent. of that is spent in the United Kingdom. I go further: it invests more than £200 million each year in new manufacturing and processing plant. That is how it has been able to maintain its place as world leader.

The company looks not at short-term investments but at investments for seven or 10 years ahead. That is the kind of market that the company is in. Glass is not just plain glass these days; it is a very sophisticated product. It needs long-term strategic planning on an international scale. Pilkington's success in float glass means that it has £400 million a year coming in in licensing fees because the company licenses all over the world. That is why the company is important. It has grown from the largest glass manufacturer in the United Kingdom to the largest glass manufacturer in the world.

Let me give one or two other figures about Pilkington. It provides glass for 7 million cars annually. It also provides the windscreens for Concorde. In an even more difficult market it provides the windscreens for Boeing 747s, 757s, and 767s. In optical glass it is ahead of all its competitors. There has been a changeover from optical glass in lenses to the plastic glass, as the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) knows full well from the factory in his constituency. It is one of the world's largest manufacturers and supplies one in five of all lenses purchased in the western world. In insulation products it is also ahead of the field. In medical lasers——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: What constituency does the hon. Gentleman speak for?

Mr. Hoyle: I speak for many constituencies, because I speak for 3,000 union members.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I have two Pilkington companies in my constituency.

Mr. Hoyle: Of course, and the hon. Gentleman is proud of them. I shall finish because I want to hear what the hon. Gentleman has to say. I always listen to him with great interest.

It would be a tragedy if an international firm were taken over by one with a short-term future. The Government have a duty to ensure that that does not happen, and the bid must be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

11.3 pm

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): This is an important debate. It is a pity that it is so short, but we all understand why that has to be.

BTR is not the villain of the piece. It has done tremendous things in taking over many lame ducks and stripping out, not just for financial gain alone, many failing companies and making them successful. It is the successful companies that preserve jobs, so it is no good any of us thinking that BTR is just a financial stripper. Sir Owen Green has done a lot of great good for British industry.

[Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark]

The trouble is that in this case we are not talking about a lame duck. Pilkington is not a lame duck and it does not need to be broken up; it needs a continuing build-up. As the hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) rightly said, Pilkington's industrial processes are long term; and, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) observed, unless Britain's bankers and investors are willing to look to the long term, we shall have no industrial processes left.

We have something to learn from the Germans and the Japanese. German and Japanese bankers and investors are willing to take a long-term view about investing in their industries. Too many investors in Britain look upon investment as a short-term matter, but industrial growth is not short-term. Pilkington does not need charity. It is a highly successful company which has done great things for the glass industry and for float glass. The company is a great innovator and it must not be broken up. Indeed, it needs to be expanded. It is more like a swan than a lame duck.

The Minister must recognise that this may be a watershed for Britain. Many companies, some of them family companies, have sat back and said, "We are okay as we are", but that is not the case with Pilkington. Because of the size of the company the Minister has the power to ask for a pause for breath. This is the time to look at a company that has done well by Britain and by its employees and shareholders, and to ask Britain's investors: what does Britain need most? I was an investment manager and I know something of these matters.

We cannot depend only upon the service industries. We must plan now for what we will have left when the oil has gone; and we will need our manufacturing companies. A company which deserves well of its people, the nation and the Government is Pilkington. I urge the Minister not to use his power to thwart BTR in its normal process, but to say to all inventive and innovative companies that they will not suffer because they are innovative and have invested money. The Government should tell such companies that they will be not protected but supported, because it is support that manufacturing industry needs. Pilkington has a right to expect that from the nation and from the Government.

11.8 pm

Mr. William Powell (Corby): Two years ago my right hon. Friend the Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) opened a small, modern but significant plant for Pilkington in the town of Corby. It is already making a significant contribution to the company as a whole and to the town, which is rapidly becoming a town with one of the most buoyant local economies in the whole of western Europe.

The Government should pay close attention to the case advanced by hon. Members, especially by my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). I should like to underline one point with all the force that I can command, because it is fundamental to the future of Britain—the necessity to preserve local influence, power and decision-making. If ever an industrial issue encapsulated that necessity, it is this bid. Although Pilkington has a significant and growing plant in my constituency, in the world the company is synonymous with St. Helens. The fundamental decisions of the company are made in St. Helens. As has been said, it is the only multinational company based in this country which has its headquarters in the north-west of England. One of the worst features of the structure of industry in this country is the perception that millions of people have that decisions affecting their future are taken in places far from where they live and work and where wealth is created. People living in the north-east and the north-west feel that. Sooner or later we will have to face what is involved and take decisions to reverse that process.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley that nationalisation has destroyed local decision making and local influences. Our tax structure has done the same. We cannot possibly turn the corner unless we address both issues. I have no doubt that if this bid succeeds, decisions fundamental to Pilkington, to St. Helens and to the north-west will no longer be taken there as they have been for a century and a half. That would be one of the most regrettable things that could happen to the industrial structure of this country. With all the force that I can muster, I warn the House that this process, which has been going on year after year since the second world war, has to stop and be reversed. Here is as good a place as any to fight that battle.

11.12 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans) on having obtained this debate and having given the House the opportunity to debate this important matter. Pilkington is a major industrial group of great significance. Despite the contractions of recent years, it is still a large employer situated in an area of low employment. It is a major exporter. It has also, to its credit, developed high technology very rapidly. It is a rare illustration of a company which can develop a new process and adapt it to successful production.

Too often in this country we have seen companies which are capable of producing a new process but incapable of successfully managing the transformation of that new process into successful production. Pilkington has mastered that. It is a British success and it is right that we should debate its future tonight.

It is also appropriate that we should open the last Consolidated Fund Bill debate of 1986 with a case which illustrates one of the major economic phenomena of 1986 —the extraordinary, enormous pace of takeovers in the City.

The House will recall that, when we debated this matter a fortnight ago, I drew attention to the fact that this year the sums staked in takeover bids are five or six times the total volume of takeover bids last year, which was itself a record year. The Minister will be aware, because he and I had an opportunity on Sunday to debate the matter in rather exhaustive technical detail, that one consequence of these takeover bids has been the opportunity for insider dealing. That is relevant to tonight's debate, because the share price of Pilkington went up by 73p in the six weeks before BTR announced its bid. In fairness to BTR, let it be said that it made it clear that it was not buying during that period.

One of the matters I raised with the Minister was that we are aware from the public record that the stock exchange was investigating share dealings in Pilkingtons during that period. One of the questions we should address

to the Minister is whether any reference has been made by the stock exchange council to the Department of Trade and Industry about any suspect dealing during that period in Pilkington shares. There is also a wide economic issue at stake in these takeover bids, which is also illustrated in this debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) quite correctly touched on that. The pressure of those takeover bids creates a short-term time perspective when an industrial company needs a long-term horizon for its investment decisions.

I listened with great interest to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), and I have some sympathy for his point that the shareholders in Pilkington should reflect on the issues at stake and should stick with Pilkington. However, the decisions taken in the City of London during the past decade illustrate an increasingly rapid turnover in portfolio by the financial institutions as, increasingly, they take short-term rather than long-term decisions. With one or two honourable exceptions, such as Pearl Assurance, few of those major financial institutions have shown a significant commitment to sticking with management through takeover bids rather than accepting the short-term cash and running.

A critical tension between the short-term and the long-term perspectives, which is illustrated by the case of Pilkington, is the amount put into research and development. Research and development investment is long-term investment at the expense of short-term profits. If a company invests heavily in research and development, the unavoidable consequence is that its short-term profits will be cut. If that happens, the short-term share price on the market may be depressed. If that happens, the company may become vulnerable to those in the market who may be inclined to value it by its total assets rather than by its total share price. That puts some companies at risk.

I concede that where those companies are run by inefficient managment and where they have developed into conglomerates which should be reassessed, reviewed and rejigged into different component parts, a takeover bid may have a healthy and constructive part to play. But does anyone in this Chamber argue that that is the case with Pilkington? Does anyone argue that Pilkington has an inefficient management or has grown beyond its core business? Moreover, if those were faults in Pilkington, what does BTR have to offer Pilkington in better management of the glass business?

The right hon. Member for Henley cautioned us against being critical of BTR, so I shall try to be as gentle with it as I can. I recognise that, in the terms of the City of London, BTR has been an extremely successful company. Its share price has increased rapidly. But plainly the company's growth has been based on buying other companies. Like the Hanson Group, it has been a hoover company, swallowing others in its path. As a result, BTR has a track record, and the right hon. Member for Henley cannot object to our referring to that track record.

Two clear features should worry us. One is what can only be described as the company's robust attitude towards industrial relations, illustrated by its attitude to J.E. Hanger, which was debated in the House last month. The bid for Pilkington is a bid against the hostility of the united work force and management of Pilkington. What is there in the track record of BTR that would encourage us to believe that it has the diplomatic skills, finesse and delicacy to overcome that hostility of work force and management and to win their support and co-operation, without which the company cannot succeed?

The other aspect of the track record that should worry us is the fact that BTR has been only too willing to divest technology if it can get a decent price for it. One of the first things that BTR did when it purchased Dunlop was to sell to Goodyear Dunlop's experimental centre on the computerisation of tyre production. The computer technology being developed by Dunlop is no longer being developed in Britain. It is being developed in Ohio by a rival company, which will use the breakthroughs pioneered in Britain against British production. That is BTR's track record. Who can be confident that, if it acquires Pilkington, it will not adopt a similar attitude towards Pilkington's unique technology, for which many people would be prepared to pay?

My hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North referred to the extremely interesting speech of Sir Gordon Borrie the other week, during which he said that referrals to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission should be based no longer only on whether the merger is against the public interest. He advanced the case that they should be argued on the basis that those who propose the merger should have the onus of proving that the merger is in the public interest.

I find it extremely difficult to foresee what argument could be lodged to show that a BTR merger with Pilkington would be in the public interest. We do not have such a state of law that would put the onus on the proposer, but referrals on the basis that mergers would be against the public interest have proved extremely flexible. Only the other week the Minister referred the Gulf Resources bid for IC Gas for consideration by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. That was considered a somewhat surprising decision in the market but I welcomed it. The move was to be financed by a leverage bid and it was one which should have been referred to the commission.

If the Minister believes that that bid was a proper one for referral, how much more so is the BTR bid, which will affect a major British industry involving a unique British technology? How much more strong is the case for referring the BTR bid to the commission? Pilkington is a major British success story, and let the word go out from the House that we should leave well alone and that Pilkington should be left to get on with making a success of its own business.

11.22 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): I join the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) in congratulating the hon. Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans) on his good fortune in securing the debate. I congratulate him especially on securing the first debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill, on what will be a long night. I speak as someone who has the privilege of replying to the eighth debate of the night as well as this one.

I have listened with great interest to the points which have been raised by hon. Members on the takeover proposal made by BTR for Pilkington. No one could be in any doubt about the force of the views which have been expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House, who have spoken on the basis of their constituency interests and knowledge. If I may say so, my right hon.

[Mr. Michael Howard]

Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) made a speech of characteristic eloquence. I shall bear all the arguments in mind, as will my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State when he comes to consider the advice which the Director General of Fair Trading will be submitting to him on the proposal, which will be on whether it should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for further investigation.

I am sure that hon. Members will appreciate that I cannot comment further on the merits or otherwise of this proposal while my right hon. Friend is awaiting that independent advice. I have noted also the more general points which hon. Members have made and can assure them that we shall give them full consideration in the context of our review of law and policy on mergers and restrictive trade practices.

I use this opportunity to remind the House of our current policy towards mergers and the procedures which are in place for scrutinising them, and to outline some of the issues which we are considering in the context of the mergers part of the review.

We have what is now a well-established system for examining mergers and merger proposals. It involves a three-tier procedure in which the participants are the Director General of Fair Trading, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and, in certain cases, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The first stage through which a qualifying merger proposal passes—the BTR-Pilkington proposal is at this stage — is that of a preliminary examination by the Office of Fair Trading. The director general examines all aspects of the proposal which might have a bearing on the public interest before making a recommendation to my right hon. Friend about a reference. My right hon. Friend is not bound to act on the director general's advice, but he has the role of investigating qualifying mergers and his advice naturally carries a great deal of weight. His advice has not been followed in only nine cases out of about 1,500 since the Government came to office in 1979.

Those mergers which, in my right hon. Friend's view, raise public interest questions which require further consideration before a decision can be taken on whether they should be allowed to proceed, are referred to the commission for further investigation, and my right hon. Friend—I must emphasise this—has no powers under the Fair Trading Act 1973 to prevent a merger unless it is referred to the commission and it finds that it would be against the public interest.

Only a small minority of mergers are referred to the commission, and this has been the position under successive Governments since the Fair Trading Act 1973 procedures were introduced. The Act itself—by laying down assets and market share tests that have to be satisfied before a merger is considered — recognises that intervention in very small mergers that would not have a significant effect on the market cannot be justified. Of those mergers which do qualify, only between 2 per cent. and 5 per cent. are referred to the commission each year.

In our view, this is justified by two considerations. The first is our belief that shareholders are those in the best position to take decisions about the future strategy and management of companies. It is only when a merger raises particular public interest concerns that we consider an in-depth investigation by an independent authority to be justified. The second is the expense to the taxpayer and to the companies of a reference, and the uncertainty for employees and the market which is unavoidably prolonged. A reference should not be taken lightly; and we do not take it lightly.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Obviously, I accept all that my hon. and learned Friend has said. The interventions of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, or those who held the office before him, have usually been on the side of banks. The only real mergers that were stopped and that did not follow the advice of the OFT were those involving banks, where competition abounds. I hope that, if the Government are willing to support banks against competition, they might, at least on this occasion, support a great industry against a predator, or will they support only banks?

Mr. Howard: I am afraid that the premise on which my hon. Friend based his question is entirely inaccurate. It is very far from the case that the only mergers that have been stopped or the only mergers that have been referred, even the big ones, have involved banks. One that comes very quickly to mind is the proposed merger between GEC and Plessey, which was referred to the commission and which was not allowed to proceed. It was not a merger related to banks.

In deciding whether a merger should be referred to the commission, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State looks particularly at the effects that it could have on competition. That is justified in our view because it coincides with the emphasis in the Fair Trading Act, where merger control powers are linked to powers to control monopolies. It also contributes to our broader objective of promoting competition within the economy more generally, since in our view competition is the most effective way of protecting consumer choice and of ensuring that the customer — whether industry or the man in the street—gets value for money.

There has been some criticism of this policy of making references primarily on competition grounds, a policy that was anounced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in July 1984, when he was Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. But sometimes these criticisms are made under misapprehensions about what that policy actually involves. Some have claimed that the policy does not attach enough importance to the international dimension of mergers, the possible benefits of a merger to the nation's economy which may derive from economies of scale, and the advantages of size when competing in world markets. But the policy does specifically allow us to take into account this type of consideration. My right hon. Friend specifically said in July 1984:

> "In evaluating the competitive situation in individual cases, I shall have regard to the international context: to the extent of competition in the market from non-United Kingdom sources and the competitive position of United Kingdom companies in overseas markets".

Some have claimed that the policy is too narrow and restrictive, leaving too little leeway to refer mergers which may give rise to concerns on grounds other than competition. But we have never said that references would be made exclusively on competition grounds. There have been a number of cases since July 1984 in which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has referred mergers on grounds other than competition. They, doo, to not refer

only to banks. Examples are the bids by Elders for Allied Lyons and by Gulf Resources for Imperial Continental Gas, where issues relating to the financing of the proposals led to the references, and those by Hillsdown and Ferruzzi for S. A. and W. Berisford, where my right hon. Friend had in mind the special character of the sugar market and British Sugar's important place in it. We recognise——

Sir Adam Butler (Bosworth): Will my hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Howard: I have little time left.

We recognise, however, that the business environment is changing. It is right that we should constantly re-evaluate our policies to ensure that they remain suited to changing conditions. It was for that reason that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced in June 1986 that we would be undertaking a review of both law and policy on mergers and restrictive trade practices.

Many of the suggestions for change that have been put forward by those contributing to the review could be implemented only with legislative change. The review—importantly—is considering the need for changes that go beyond the immediate, topical concerns which many hon. Members have raised. There have been several important developments since our mergers procedure and institutions were established by the Fair Trading Act in 1973. The nation's economy has become more exposed to international competition from both within and beyond Europe. We are now members of the European Community, which has its own structure of competition law, directly applicable in the United Kingdom. We have seen considerable changes in economic thinking, which may have an impact on the way in which we assess mergers. Our current policy is, in my view, flexible enough to accommodate such changes in thinking. But that should not deflect us from our duty, periodically, to take stock and to assess whether our policies and procedures are maximising their contribution towards our objective of ensuring a vigorous, flexible and competitive economy.

The hon. Member for Livingston asked a specific question about information from the stock exchange about the increase in the Pilkington share price. We have not received the result of any such investigation by the stock exchange. If and when we do, we shall investigate it in the same way as we have been investigating other alleged cases of insider dealing.

Although I have not—for reasons that I explained earlier—been able to discuss the merits or elements of the merger proposal that is the subject of the motion. I hope that I shall have succeeded in convincing hon. Members of the careful scrutiny which the Director General of Fair Trading and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State accord each individual case. I also hope that I shall have conveyed to the House some of the variety and complexity of the issues with which we are dealing in the review.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

11.31 pm

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): I am pleased to have the opportunity to raise the subject of defence and the future of NATO. I can think of no more important subject to take up the next hour and a half in the House. I am pleased that we have with us the hon. Members for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) and for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace), because I shall raise the differences in outlook between the political parties on the important topic of our approach to NATO and defence policy.

I should like to look backwards before I look to the future. I can remember back in 1958, as a national service man, taking part in the 10th anniversary parade of NATO at Mainz in West Germany. As a light infantryman, I can remember having to hold back before we marched off because the French regiment in front of us went at a much slower pace than we did. But the important point about that parade was the fact that a commitment was being shown by Western Governments to the concept of NATO, an Alliance which now consists of 16 sovereign Western countries, and which was formed in 1949 to counter the aggressive behaviour of the Soviet Union. During the second world war, it had annexed parts of Finland and the Baltic states and later, by the end of 1947, the rest of Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary. Shortly afterwards, in 1948, following a coup d'état, Czechoslovakia also became part of that regime, or sphere of influence. Finally, the siege of west Berlin in May 1949 led to the necessary formation of the NATO Alliance.

As everyone in the House, and, I am sure, in the country, knows, the Alliance is a defensive alliance. An armed attack on one or more of the countries in either Europe or America is considered by the Alliance to be an attack against all. Therefore, NATO would be able to exercise the collective defence that would be recognised under article 51 of the United Nations charter.

It is well known that NATO has preserved peace in Europe for almost 40 years. When one considers the death and destruction that occurred during the two world wars —as an East Anglian Member, I remind the House of the many people in East Anglia and Norwich who gave their lives during those wars — it is important to remember that the NATO Alliance has preserved peace in Europe during that period.

For the future and for peace, security and freedom, it is vital that NATO preserves sufficient forces to maintain the equilibrium in Europe and the world to preserve a credible deterrent. It is vital that nothing should happen to weaken the NATO Alliance. The Alliance has experienced crises since 1949 and recently there have been more serious and pronounced strains. Recent events and political debate have increased the risk — however remote it may be—that the United States may slide into a period of isolationism. We have known of this before in the world's history. There is a danger also that some in Europe may seek accommodation with the other superpower. Those dangers may seem remote at the moment, but they are real.

When looking to the Alliance's future, we must ensure that we do not weaken in any way. In particular, there is a danger that the twin aims of the Alliance—deterrence and negotiation—may be lost in the kind of emotive

[Mr. Patrick Thompson]

debate that often surrounds the subject of defence. I cannot do better than quote a short extract from an article in *The Times* in November 1984 by Roger Scruton, who said:

"Anyone who studies the history of arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union is likely to be struck by a sense of unreality. From the first days it has been Soviet policy to make agreements unverifiable, and to break them with impunity; to vilify the West for the deployment of every new weapon, while serenely deploying the same weapon itself; to sign international conventions which tie our hands, while proceeding to ignore those conventions when interest requires, and to encourage vociferous and independent 'peace movements' in the West, while ruthlessly liqidating them at home."

These vociferous peace movements, of course, must include the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. As has been demonstrated, it has an influence on thinking in the Labour party, particularly recent thinking. Indeed, within the last 24 hours, the recent leader of the CND, Joan Ruddock, has been adopted as the prospective Labour parliamentary candidate for the constituency of Deptford. Doubtless that is part of the trend to which I am referring. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has an influence not only on Labour party thinking but on Libera! party thinking.

What is more, CND has sought, particularly in East Anglia, to foster the kind of anti-Americanism which weakens the NATO Alliance. I am pleased to be able to inform the House that it has had remarkably little effect, because the relationship between the people of East Anglia and the United States forces at Lakenheath and elsewhere in the region have been good and have remained good, despite the peace movements' efforts to push us in another direction.

As one who is interested in education, I point out that the CND has sought to influence our young people to whom, perhaps, because of their age, NATO's objectives seem irrelevant. In an article in the current edition of the "NATO Review", Jan Reinfenberg, the Brussels-based correspondent of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, states:

"To a large extent, these objectives"—

the objectives of NATO—

"have become somewhat irrelevant to a young European generation which has grown up under the protection of NATO and whose prospects for self-fulfilment would be inconceivable without the success of the Western Alliance. Moreover, that generation is often exposed to the influence of educators who, in a grotesque distortion of the facts, nowadays perceive an assertive American policy as posing a greater threat to peace than the behaviour of the Soviet Union, who equate Soviet aggression in Afghanistan with Washington's approach in Central America, and who credit Moscow with far more readiness for arms reductions than the United States."

It is worth stating in passing that we need to be aware of the continuing threat posed by so-called peace studies in schools up and down the country. The problem has been amply described by Baroness Cox and Roger Scruton in an excellent pamphlet. I do not have time to develop the theme today, but I have had complaints from parents in my constituency of this kind of miseducation in schools. The kind of syllabus involved shows a lack of academic rigour and such studies are unworthy of inclusion in our education system. I hope that that theme will be taken up again later as it is a serious matter.

The type of campaign promoted by CND should not be part of the education of young people in our schools. The same problem has occurred in the universities, leading to the declaration in 1983 by the Academic Council for Peace and Freedom, a large group of distinguished academics who were extremely concerned about the effect on young people of the propaganda put out by movements such as CND. We must not lose sight of the need for vigilance in countering those influences on our young people.

A distinction should be drawn between the activities of organisations such as CND and the longer tradition of pacifism. Although I am not a pacifist and do not hold pacifist views, it is important to note that CND is basically a political campaign, continually shifting its ground, first talking about a nuclear freeze, then about unilateral disarmament, then about the star wars strategic defence initiative, whereas the pacifist tradition is quite different. It is important to distinguish between the two.

The dangers to the Alliance have been heightened by the loss of consensus between the major parties in this country. I should like to quote an interesting extract from *The Daily Telegraph* some time ago. It reads:

"But no one in the Atlantic Alliance now doubts that the effective superiority of the Warsaw Powers in conventional military strength in Europe rules out a purely conventional defence of Western Europe against an all-out conventional attack by the Warsaw powers . . . Because NATO strategy has always been founded on the nuclear deterrent against a major Soviet attack, Western Europe has known total peace".

That quotation may ring a bell with those who have been studying recent changes in Labour party policy, but the House may be astonished to discover that the quotation was taken from a speech by the then Secretary of State for Defence, the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), speaking in the House on 4 March 1970. He went on to say that any strategy more reliant on conventional weapons

"could not be carried out unless Britain reintroduced conscription."—[*Official Report*, 4 March 1970; Vol. 797, c. 423.]

In the light of recent reports, it may surprise hon. Members to know that in 1970 one of the present chief Opposition spokesmen on these matters was speaking in those terms. It is good to see that he referred also to conscription as many Conservatives have some sympathy with the idea of reintroducing voluntary national service. I have spoken in support of my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) in a debate on that subject. I also support my hon. Friends the Members for Dorset, West (Mr. Spicer), who I am glad to see here supporting the debate, and for Banbury (Mr. Baldry), who have proposed a volunteer force to strengthen our defence effort.

Since the right hon. Member for Leeds, East made the speech to which I have referred, there has been a drift to the Left in the Labour party. Perhaps it is the result of public pressure, but it might be the result of pressure from CND or the influence of Soviet propaganda. It has succumbed completely to the unilateralist line. It says that it will cancel Trident and spend the money on conventional weapons. If all the money that would be saved by cancelling Trident were spent on tanks, we would make up only 1 per cent. of the Soviet superiority over NATO in tanks. That demonstrates the nonsense of such statements. Other Labour spokesmen say that they will

spend the money on health and education. They will have to make up their mind what will happen to the money if they are able to cancel Trident.

I had the interesting experience on Wednesday 3 December of attending a debate which was opened by the leader of the Liberal party. It was a most mystifying experience. Although many of us tried to intervene, he gave way only to the Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence, so we were unable to challenge him as we would have liked. It was astonishing to see the form that the debate took.

Liberals who carry on the Quaker or pacifist stance in that party must have found it difficult to support the Liberal motion, which they must have regarded as a sell out to the Social Democratic party. Their views are on the record. I should like to quote just two examples. In a joint article called "Across the Divide", which was apparently signed by hon. Members for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) and for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) in September, they said:

"We must ask whether there is any military need for Britain to update the existing weapons or even to keep an independent nuclear capability at all".

If that is not enough evidence, note the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) writing in *Sanity*, the CND magazine, who, in 1985, said:

"I agree with the Liberal Party — which is the only British Party that has always opposed a British Nuclear Deterrent".

I felt for those hon. Members on 3 December.

The Liberal motion reaffirmed support for NATO, rejected unilateral gestures and the expulsion of United States bases and affirmed the need for conventional and nuclear arms. It was a splendid sounding motion, but it was not remotely in line with the policy, even the recently cobbled together policy, that the Liberal party seems to be proposing at the moment. If ever there was a case for investigative journalism, this must be it.

In the debate on 3 December, the leader of the Liberal party set out six options for a minimum deterrent, ranging from extending the life of Polaris to the purchase of a Euro-cruise missile. Both are nonsense because it is well known—it has been stated recently by Lord Lewin—that the life of Polaris cannot in any circumstances be extended beyond 1995. The purchase of a Euro-cruise missile would also seem very unsatisfactory when it is well known that it would be vulnerable to Soviet defences. The leader of the Liberal party admitted that defence was causing serious problems and debate in the Liberal and Social Democratic parties. I do not have time to set out the present policy of the SDP.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): Does my hon. Friend recall that in that debate the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) spelt out his six options and said that while in opposition his party could not choose between them? Does he further recall that, when pressed, the right hon. Gentleman admitted that his party in opposition could have a policy to cancel Trident? Does he also recall that over the weekend the same right hon. Gentleman found it possible while in opposition to opt heavily for Nimrod against the AWAC system without having the technical information? Does my hon. Friend agree that that amounts to complete nonsense?

Mr. Thompson: I agree with my hon. Friend. It is typical of alliance leaders always to choose popular options and not to consider the depth of the problem involved.

I remind the House of the alliance concept of minimum deterrence, which means freezing our independent deterrent at the present level of Polaris and not moving beyond that. The alliance has put forward the ideas of exploring Anglo-French co-operation; of a battlefield nuclear free zone in Europe; and of a ban on nuclear weapons testing which is nonsense if one is considering replacing Polaris, because one cannot replace it if one cannot test a successor.

There is a dangerous assumption implied in those policies. Basically the alliance is talking about de facto unilateralism. Since it will not commit itself to what will follow Polaris, it is sweeping the problem to one side. It is unilateralism in disguise.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): The hon. Gentleman will understand that, as I wish to speak on a constituency matter later, I may not speak in this debate. I cannot fathom his logic when he says that our policies amount to unilateralism. He prayed in aid Lord Lewin. Will he also accept that Lord Lewin said that it was responsible for Opposition parties not to commit themselves to any particular system while in opposition and without access to advice? The fact that we have stated a willingness to replace Polaris if we cannot negotiate its disposal is an important signal and in no way should be construed as unilateralism in the sense that that word may be properly applied to Labour party policies.

Mr. Thompson: I remind the hon. Gentleman that many of his party's supporters are unilateralists, and there is no way that that can be disguised. The leader of the Liberal party made it clear that he would not state which option he chose, and the hon. Gentleman has confirmed that. When will those parties decide which option to choose and what option will they then choose? The position has not been clarified by that intervention.

The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) has staked his entire career on keeping the nuclear deterrent. The so-called gang of four left the Labour party for that reason. I shall illustrate the fact that there is a genuine problem and that this has not merely been cobbled together for the debate. Alan Lee Williams, chairman of the SDP defence and disarmament group, is also the chairman of the non-partisan pro-NATO organisation called "Peace through NATO which does good work, debating against the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and putting the pro-NATO view. In September he said:

"The Liberal Assembly's rejection . . . of the British deterrent as well as a possible European deterrent system highlights a number of current contradictions within the Alliance which have never been realistically faced. I, for example, felt obliged to resign as prospective SDP candidate for Hornchurch and Havering largely because of the unilaterists sympathies of the local Liberals who presumably disapproved of my support both for a British replacement of Polaris and for a viable European deterrent system."

I could quote further from that letter, but I shall not do so because the point is clear.

Mr. Jim Spicer (Dorset, West): Many hon. Members know Alan Lee Williams. He put it—as he would—that he resigned. However, he got out just before the Liberal

[Mr. Jim Spicer]

party could shop him. The Liberal party said that it could in no way support anyone who supported Trident or a "Peace through NATO" campaign.

Mr. Thompson: I could not have described the position better. There is a real problem in the division between the Liberal and Social Democratic parties. Their defence policy was not clarified in the debate on 3 December to which I have already referred.

The challenge to the future of NATO is an intellectual challenge. I agree with those who say that it is a challenge to the consciousness and the will of the people in the West. The numbers of those attacking the Alliance, including Opposition Members — whether they are doing that deliberately or unconsciously — are considerable. We must therefore resist the slogans from those quarters such as the "Nuclear Free Zone" or "No First Use" or the "Free" slogan because they are all part and parcel of the same attack on the strength of the Alliance. To give up freedom is to jeopardise peace.

At the next election, defence will undoubtedly be an issue. The principle that the NATO Alliance must be held firm and strong will be debated during the election campaign. Although the right hon. Member for Leeds, East may have turned his coat since 1970, it is clear that the people of Britain will reject Labour's new defenceless policy that presents weakness as strength. They will, for the reasons that will be outlined by many of my hon. Friends during this debate, back the firm alternative— support of NATO and the policy of this Conservative Government.

11.57 pm

Mr. Gerrad Neale (Cornwall, North): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) on winning a place in the ballot and choosing this subject for debate. Bearing in mind the onerous duties of colleagues on both sides of the House, I am bound to say that on such an issue as this it is astonishing that only one Front-Bench spokesman from the Official Opposition is present. I accept the explanation about the predicament of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) and his wanting to speak in a later debate, but on a subject as formidable as his, and particularly as it is one over which the alliance has tried to raise the political temperature, not to have someone from the Liberal or the Social Democratic parties present to take part in the debate is shameful. To protest, as the Liberals and Social Democrats protest inside and outside the House, that the rift in the alliance has healed is manifest nonsense.

I appreciate that my constituency is a long way from that of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland, but it may pay him to visit my part of the world. Were he to come, he would realise that only 3 per cent. of the electorate in my constituency and not much more than that in adjoining constituencies have not seen the light about the Labour party and 97 per cent. have long since seen the light.

My constituents are in total confusion over the position of the Liberal party in these matters. Those who had the opportunity to read the speech made by the leader of the Liberal party must, as my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North said, have been bamboozled beyond belief. It was a vague speech and it lacked conviction. If ever a speech complied with the definition of the phrase "mudge and fudge" used by the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) the speech of the leader of the Liberal party did. There were perhaps only two points in it that were highly perceptive. The first was:

"One of the first obligations of Government is to provide effectively for the defence of the country. There is no question about that."

As my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North mentioned, he then said that it was not for Opposition parties to decide on various options,

"clouded as they are with conflicting advice". — [*Official Report*, 3 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. 987-90.]

I realise that that is a problem that the Liberal party has always had.

One tries to be charitable to the Liberal party in these circumstances because very few are. However, it is unbelievable that a responsible party can protest, as my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North pointed out, that it has the ability to make up its mind about Trident but does not have the ability to make up its mind about the six options. The leader of the Liberal party listed the six options, but he gave no indication as to how far each one had been considered. He did not seem to suggest that they were anything new. He even admitted that such matters had been considered at length. He talked of the M4 French missiles, for example, and said they were "discussed on many occasions."

The right hon. Gentleman did not seem to suggest at any stage that the Government had not considered them in great detail. I do not know whether he imagines that these matters have just seen the light of day. Of course, they have all been considered.

It has not been made clear how the leader of the Liberal party or the party reached their conclusion about Trident. There was no information given. It was amazing.

Six options were advanced. Previously, the leader of the Social Democratic party had advanced three options. He said that one option was a ballistic system, not Trident. If we look carefully at the Liberal's six options, we can see that that falls in. He said that cruise missiles were another option, and that can be found in the Liberal's options, so one can say that we are still left with a net six. Then he said that a very much reduced Trident was an option. Does that mean that we have seven options or six as that did not appear to feature in the loosely flung together list of options produced by the leader of the Liberal party? The Liberal party is apparently pitted against Trident but the leader of the SDP is saying that a version of it will be acceptable. All I can say is that I do not know how the Liberal party ever expects to convince anyone that it has a realistic alternative in mind.

The critical feature is that Trident is on order. On the admission of the Liberal party, the Government had all the information and they had the responsibility to make the decision and they made it in 1980. I appreciate the constraint of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland, but one of the critical features the Liberal party has been advancing is that there is no need to make a decision yet. More than that, it implies that there is no need to make the decision at all yet whether it was in government or opposition.

I should like to know, and I am sure that the House would like to know, when it has been advised that the decision could be made to replace Polaris. All the information that has reached Conservative Members and

the Government is that a decision has had to be made long since in order to be certain that we have a suitable weapon in place as a minimum effective deterrent to replace Polaris.

The fact is that the Liberal party has no realistic policy. There is no joint policy between the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party. Certainly there is no decisive policy. It is a faint-hearted attempt to say to the multilateralists, "We have a commitment", yet at the same time to say to them, "Don't worry, we shall never make clear what our commitment is." Nobody is fooled.

In recent years there has been a consistent Liberal party commitment to unilateralism. The Liberal party has tried to present to the people of this country the impression that it is committed to a minimum nuclear defence policy, although manifestly it cannot put one together. As the polls have shown, it has sadly underestimated a basic instinct of the British people—their need for a strong defence system. That is why increasingly they are turning to the party that is in power, the Conservatives, and why they want the Conservative Government to be re-elected at the next general election.

12.5 am

Mr. Jim Spicer (Dorset, West): Last week I spent two days in Washington, where I had discussions with Republicans, Democrats and those who are well informed about views in the United States. We cannot take United States commitment to NATO for granted. Even before the provocation of the Labour party's new defence proposals, the Mansfield and Nunn amendments failed very narrowly indeed. They would have led to the withdrawal of American forces from Europe, 80,000 troops being withdrawn each year for the next five years. That should frighten us all. We should tread very carefully.

I am sorry for the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace). He must have mistaken the time of the debate; he came into the Chamber far too early. Therefore, he is being subjected to a barrage of criticism from Conservative Members. Nevertheless, I am sure that he will take it in good part. I intend to follow what has been said by my hon. Friends and to take a hard look at where exactly the Liberal party stands today in defence terms. If the Labour party's proposals spell disaster for this country—and many of them know it, including the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara)—the Liberal party's policy of dither would be equally disastrous, if certain events were to take place after the next general election. We know where we stand over Labour party policy. It has chosen the path of disaster. The Liberal party is just wondering which way to turn and which policy will attract the most votes.

A defence policy must be based upon a long-term commitment, and I wonder what constitutes a long-term commitment in defence terms. When my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces replies to the debate I hope that he will give us his view on this. However, I should have thought that a minimum period of 10 years would be a fair estimate. Unless there is stability in defence policy we shall never be able to plan ahead and do what is right.

Let me therefore take a 10-year commitment, based on 1984, to illustrate the Liberal party's defence policy. In that year the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) led his party by the nose away from the multilateralist approach and into the unilateralist cause that he has espoused ever since he came into politics, and probably before.

Mr. Wallace: Does the hon. Gentleman also accept that in 1984, in the same resolution to which he has already referred, the Liberal party changed the policy of more than 20 years on its attitude to the minimum deterrent, and that what had previously been a policy to scrap it on coming into office was changed to maintaining it to put it into arms negotiations talks? Does he accept that that was a very important change in policy, to which Conservative Members seldom refer?

Mr. Spicer: That is a load of old waffle. The hon. Gentleman is just trying to disguise the fact that the platforms were defeated by the hon. Member for Yeovil and his friends. They voted against cruise, and that was of crucial importance in 1984. At that time, the Liberal party was virtually led by the hon. Member for Yeovil who was, and is, a committed unilateralist, having taken part in CND rallies with the Leader of the Opposition, Ron Todd and others in 1983. In 1984—whatever may be said by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland — the unilateralists prevailed within the Liberal party. The year 1985 was a good year for the Liberal party—because it switched around and the multilateralists views prevailed. I do not know what happened that year. There had obviously been some strict talking to one or two people but the Liberal party changed its policy and became multilateralists. However, the hon. Member for Yeovil said at that conference, or just after it:

"However, I remain totally opposed to the stationing of Cruise missiles in Britain. I wish to see them removed as quickly as possible."

In 1986—which I recall was a non-Yeovil year—we found new champions for the unilateralist cause. There can be no dispute that what happened at the Liberal party conference in 1986 was a major blow for the leader of the Liberal party; he said so at the time. But in late 1986 that conference decision was totally ignored and a new policy, as my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) said in opening the debate is now being cobbled together.

The Liberals and the SDP are in the business of papering over cracks at present. Perhaps the House may remember that, two to three months ago, we were given, after a day's visit to Paris by the two leaders of the Liberal-SDP Alliance the result — it was a remarkable breakthrough, we were told—was lunch with President Mitterrand, dinner with Mr. Chirac and back to announce to the world that there was a new European dimension which we could all follow.

I could not find out from my French friends what that new European dimension was. But eventually a letter appeared in *The Times* from Count Jean de Lipkowski who is a member of the Chamber of Deputies. It said:

"It may be that in the few weeks following the visit to Paris of Dr. Owen and Mr. Steel some misunderstandings have arisen in the United Kingdom over present French nuclear policy and our plans for the future. I would like to set out, very briefly the position as we in France see it.

France has never wavered in her resolve to build and maintain an independent nuclear deterrent. Currently our deterrent force is being updated with the M4 Missile System (just as you in the United Kingdom plan to replace Polaris with Trident), and we expect by 1990 to see a new generation of these more powerful nuclear weapons installed in all our submarines. All parties in France, both government and opposition, are committed to this replacement.

[Mr. Spicer]

I would emphasise again that we are resolved to make the necessary provision for the completion of this expensive programme which we consider vital not only for the future security of France but for the Western Alliance as well.

Naturally we would welcome British support in such an essential matter but with or without it, our national commitment to a continuing nuclear policy is absolute and clear cut."

I do not know what was on offer. The count said it was a very expensive programme. Perhaps the two leaders went out there and said, "If you want money, we are the chaps to provide it and we will help you to update from the equivalent of Polaris to Trident for your French nuclear forces."

If the NATO Alliance is to survive, it needs a clear-cut policy from every party in the House. We know exactly where the Labour party stands and so do the British people, but none of us really knows where the Liberal party stands. We do know where the Social Democratic party stands and all I can say is that my great hope is that its leader may be able to put some steel into the Liberal party and ensure that it holds the line and comes up with a policy that will make some sense to the British people and the NATO Alliance as a whole.

12.15 am

Mr. Stefan Terlezki (Cardiff, West): I regret that of 209 Labour Members only two are present at a debate at midnight on NATO's function and role, which is so important that it affects hundreds of millions of people in Europe. It makes me wonder how they are will be able to take care of the defence of the citizens of Europe. It is a tragedy. I sympathise with the two Labour Members who evidently do not have the support of their colleagues who are not interested in the defence of Europe.

The Social Democratic and Liberal parties are two of a kind. Some people call them the semi-desperate people. I shall call them nothing except to say that the time will come when they have to be responsible to the electorate and state loud and clear their policy for the defence of Britain.

The object of NATO must be to preserve peace, freedom and political stability in Europe for as long, and longer, in the future as it has done in the past. I speak from experience. Freedom is like fresh air. If one does not have it, one misses it, and I know that. I can also echo the voices of hundreds of millions of people who are less fortunate than we are in Britain, and, in particular, in this free and democratic House.

The Opposition have talked about a modern Britain in a modern world. Yes, indeed—I want to see a modern Britain in a modern world and that must be what NATO requires of modern Britain in a modern world. That means that we must ensure that we preserve freedom, peace and stability, not only for ourselves but for generations to come. We must put our resources at the disposal of NATO to pursue the objectives that were set 40 years ago.

I do not believe that a single country will give its unequivocal support to the Labour party's kamikaze defence policy. Today we are in the almost unbelievable position where only one party, the Conservative party, is openly and unequivocally committed to ensuring that we maintain our full guard through NATO.

One does not have to be a student of history to know what happens when a country drops it shield. The Labour party has made it clear that it will campaign on a non-nuclear "Yankee go home" defence policy. It would be a joke if it were not such a sad and serious matter. Labour would achieve at a stroke what the Russians have been trying to do since the war—unhook America from the defence of Europe and destroy NATO. The Russian attitude to that, if they could do it, is, the sooner the better.

If Britain were to give up its nuclear deterrent, the Soviet Union would be left with a virtual monopoly of nuclear arms and that tyrannical regime, which cares not a fig for human rights, would be uniquely able to blackmail the Alliance and the whole of mankind. Unilateralists should consider the lesson of half a century ago. What would have happened if Hitler had been in possession of the nuclear weapons that the Russians have today?

Labour has made a most dangerous proclamation in its policy on unilateral nuclear disarmament. It is a surrender to the Russians and a betrayal of the NATO Alliance and the Council of Europe. We all want peace, and that is what we in Europe have known for the past 40 years. Our children were born and grew up in peace and freedom, and their children were born in peace and freedom. That is wonderful. We want peace, but not at any price. We want peace with honour, self-respect and freedom, and that is what we must have and nothing else. We can only have that by being true to our allies in NATO. A strong NATO defence is a reminder of what we owe to a strong defence for 40 years of peace in Europe. Millions of people have been killed elsewhere in the world in conventional wars, but the nuclear balance has kept peace in our continent, thanks to NATO.

Mr. Churchill once declared that an indestructible nuclear deterrent was imperative for our survival, and Lord Mountbatten later declared that the nuclear deterrent would be capable of inflicting damage on the Russian homeland which the most hard-headed gambler could not regard as anything but unacceptable. The Labour party has established itself as unilateralist and is now gripped by neutralism and a venomous hatred of our friends the Americans who are the guarantors of Western freedom and democracy and the pillars of NATO.

The world is a dangerous place, according to the Labour Party, not because of the Russians but because of the Americans and the Alliance of free, democratic nations. Labour's apologists and fellow travellers are not interested in the fact that the world is in danger and do not what to hear that NATO has kept the peace in Europe for 40 years. It has said that a Labour Government would kick out the US nuclear bases. Labour's shadow defence spokesman has said that Labour's non-nuclear defence policy is the most radical ever presented to the electorate. He can say that again.

Under Mr. Attlee, Mr. Gaitskell, Lord Wilson and the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), the Labour party knew our allies and our enemies. It knew that in the face of the nuclear armed Soviet bully Britain had to preserve an independent nuclear deterrent or have to face nuclear blackmail.

It is no good the leader of the Labour Party and some of its members going to Norway and Luxembourg and to other NATO countries which have no nuclear weapons. We are not Norway or Luxembourg. Our nuclear forces have a political importance in the Alliance far outweighing their role as an independent deterrent. Anyone who believes that we can abandon nuclear weapons, throw out

the Americans and still remain an effective and honourable member of the military Alliance which depends for its survival on American power, I am sure is not speaking with reality or common sense.

By the turn of the century, the Russians will have a strategic defence system capable of rendering ineffective any but the most advanced, accurate and flexible nuclear striking force. The Conservative party has been identified by its opponents as the only party with an honest, coherent and practical defence policy and also totally supportive of NATO.

12.26 am

Mr. John Powley (Norwich, South): I am pleased to support my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) and to speak on a matter that is of grave importance both for this country and for the free world. A number of my hon. Friends have expressed a great deal of sympathy for the Labour party, the Social Democratic party and the Liberal party in their dilemma. I differ from my hon. Friends in that respect because I have no sympathy at all for any political party that adopts a stance that would put at grave risk the security and the defence of this country that I hold so dear.

There is an old-fashioned word that one could use, and that is patriotism. I believe in patriotism and in the defence of my country. I was proud to do my national service. I am proud of my son who is a regular in the Royal Air Force. I am proud to say that I am a patriot. I do not believe that it is patriotic of any of the other parties to adopt the stance that they have adopted which puts the security and defence of this nation at grave risk.

There should not be differences between the defence policies of the political parties in this country. From my memory of politics, many years ago there was no difference between the defence policies of the political parties. They all had a common aim, a common goal, a more or less common defence policy that was followed by political parties after the experience of the second world war. They realised what had happened. They had learnt the lessons from the late 1930s, in particular, and they agreed on a more or less common defence policy.

I am very sad that those defence policies have fallen apart, but I am glad to say that the political party that I belong to, and have always belonged to, has remained steadfast in the policies that it learned through experience during the second world war and successive years. Those policies were right then and they are absolutely right today. They make plain common sense. They ensure that we are properly defended and are able to resist any aggressor who might be intent on incursions into it.

There can be no doubt that Russia and its satellites have aggressive intentions. Indeed, the aim of the Communists, as I understand it, is to secure world domination by whatever means, however long it may take them. After we won the second world war, Russia took over any number of countries and has kept those countries under the yoke of Communism and Russian domination. Using the old domino threat, it is trying to increase its influence in the world. There can be no doubt that some countries have aggressive intentions. That being so, we must retain a strong defensive Alliance.

I have no sympathy for the fact that the Opposition parties have been hijacked by the unilateralists, by the so-called peacemongers and by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. I do not know why they have been taken over. I suspect that they simply did not have the guts to tell those people that their philosophy was entirely wrong and that they wanted no part of it. I suspect that the Opposition parties thought, "We have had peace for a while; there may be some votes in it for us." The policies being followed by the alliance and by the Labour party would lead inevitably to the removal of American bases from East Anglia——

Mr. Wallace: What?

Mr. Powley: That would be the inevitable result.

Mr. Wallace: When have the Liberal party or the SDP produced a policy that would lead to the removal of American bases in Britain? Does the hon. Gentleman accept that, in almost every document, we have affirmed that we would maintain American bases, including nuclear bases, in Britain as part of our NATO commitment?

Mr. Powley: The policies agreed at the Liberal party's conference this year would inevitably lead to the removal of American bases. There is no question about that. The Opposition parties are trying to confuse us. There is an SDP policy, a Liberal party policy and a joint SDP-Liberal policy, which has not been approved by either party conference. The inevitable result of Liberal party policies agreed at its assembly this year would be the removal of nuclear and non-nuclear American bases from East Anglia. Apart from the defence aspect of the removal of those bases, East Anglia would suffer economically as it has not suffered for as long as I can remember. A tremendous number of jobs and a large amount of money depend upon the American bases in East Anglia, and their removal would have a disastrous economic effect.

I hope — perhaps it is a forlorn hope — that the Opposition will see the error of their ways. I do not wish to fight a general election on defence policies, because I hope that we could have a common defence policy. Britain's security depends on and deserves that. But if we must have differences between the political parties, I shall be happy to fight the general election on those differences, and I am confident of the outcome and of the support of the British people.

12.35 am

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): I do not often call in aid the support of the alliance parties, but I am certain that they share my deep concern over the Government's policies. Conservative Members have felt it necessary to spend an hour bashing the opposition parties without once finding one word to say in favour of their own party. I can understand that, because attack is always the best form of defence. If a party has a weak case, it will attack the enemy, shout loud and hope that nobody realises the problems that exist with its policy and system.

I understand that feeling, and there was an example of it today when the Opposition were attempting to alter the business to allow us to have a special debate on Nimrod, which Mr. Speaker decided should not take place. Nimrod is an example of the type of weakness that we see within NATO. For seven years the Government have been responsible for the policy of trying to ensure that we have proper control, and they have failed. They have created a sour atmosphere, which must weaken our position in NATO and our ability to defend ourselves. They have failed to answer any of the questions which have been raised and they have refused even to have an independent

[Mr. Kevin McNamara]

inquiry following the Secretary of State's statement that both systems work, both Nimrod and AWACS. It seems that the Government will favour the American system, and they are pouring out a great deal of disinformation about the British product.

Mr. Jim Spicer: Will the hon. Gentleman give way on that point?

Mr. McNamara: No. I allowed everyone to have his say by not seeking to interrupt, and I shall now have my say.

I am concerned about NATO and its strength, and if Europe loses more and more of its high technology base to the Americans, we shall cease to have a firm European pillar within NATO and will become a satellite to the United States. I do not believe that that is what the United States wants, and it would not be good for Europe, but that is what is likely to happen. I say to the Government, even at this late hour, that they should support the steps already taken by GEC to appoint independent assessors and get away from the sour atmosphere surrounding the early warning replacement system——

Mr. Jim Spicer: Will the hon. Gentleman give way on that point?

Mr. McNamara: The Government should realise that the strength of NATO depends as much on the industrial strength of the European nations as upon the strength of the United States.

When we listen to Conservative Members talking about NATO, it is clear that they have a schizophrenic attitude to it and the American alliance. The right hon. Lady the Prime Minister is often referred to as President Reagan's poodle, but that is unfair to poodles, which often show independence. Basically, at the bottom of the Conservative party's general defence policy and its slavish adherence to the idea of Trident, there is a suspicion of the United States. Its attitude is that we must keep Trident. The Prime Minister wrote to President Gorbachev to say: "It does not matter what you agree with President Reagan, we shall keep Trident." She tries to persuade the European allies not full-heartedly to back the Americans in their desire to get rid of ballistic missiles.

Mr. Keith Best (Ynys Môn): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. McNamara: With great respect to the hon. Gentleman, the answer is no.

The Government say that there is a limit below which a British Conservative Government would not go in maintaining Trident as part of our system. That means that they do not trust the United States in the long run. It seems that in the long run they do not believe that Washington is to be swapped for London in a nuclear exchange. If that is the Government's attitude, we are entitled to say to them what they do not believe in NATO. That is their great problem. They do not know where they stand on these matters. They are schizophrenes over their loyalty. When we start talking about unilateral disarmament, it is the Conservative Government who have disarmed unilaterally. The Government were prepared to accept Sir John Nott's White Paper, which proposed to cut our surface fleet. The Government sold off to the Saudis Tornadoes that were meant for the RAF. The Government have cancelled mines. The Government have postponed towed array radar for our frigates.

Mr. Best: Humbug.

Mr. McNamara: It is not humbug. The hon. Gentleman should read what his own Secretary of State said in the Defence Estimates. These were unilateral actions taken by the Government without any reference to our NATO allies.

The Government have cut defence spending by 6 per cent. That was a straight, unilateral decision. That is within their powers—nobody is quarrelling with that—but to say that only the Labour party believes in unilateralism is to fly in the face of the history of the Government. Therefore, one is entitled to say to the Government that to parade a row of Back Benchers to try to have a go at the Opposition parties' defence policies is a load of hypocrisy. What does the Labour party say that we should do? We should take a leaf from the attitude of the American Government.

Mr. Best: Subjection to the Americans.

Mr. McNamara: Now it comes out—subjection to the Americans. Anti-Americanism is now coming out. Conservative Members say that we will be subject to the Americans. They are the ones who gave them our Westland technology, who are prepared to give them Land Rover and who will give them our early warning system. They are the people who say that we are completely subject to the Americans.

Mr. Best: Will the hon. Gentleman have the courtesy to give way?

Mr. Patrick Thompson *rose*——

Mr. McNamara: The hon. Gentleman must resume his seat. I have to conclude my remarks, or the Minister will not have an opportunity to reply. The hon. Gentleman is pointing at me. I can only return the compliment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. It is quite obvious that the hon. Gentleman will not give way.

Mr. McNamara: The real problem is that Conservative Members, full of their own self-importance, start to parade their patriotism. When we get a little of our own back, they suddenly start to writhe in their seats and get upset about it. They must learn to take it because they will get it continuously. This is the policy that will win the next election, and we are doing it. After all, the Labour party founded NATO. The Labour party strengthened NATO and will continue to strengthen and fulfil its conventional part in NATO. We take the line from President Reagan, who said:

"For too long, we and our allies have permitted nuclear weapons to be a crutch, a way of not having to face up to our real defence needs. We must free ourselves from that crutch. Our goal must be to deter and if necessary to repel any aggression without resort to nuclear arms."

We in the Labour party say that that is a good starting point for NATO. We depend too much upon a multitude of nuclear weapons, to such a degree that it is quite possible that war could accidentally happen. We say to our allies, "Let us step back and examine the proper ways in which we can defend our continent, so that, if we were to be attacked by the Warsaw pact, they would feel the strength of our response, and that response would not be based upon the first use of nuclear weapons and turn our

continent into a cinder box. That is our policy. The hon. Member for Norwich, North has said many rude things about people, including Mrs. Joan Ruddock, who will be a proud Member on the Government benches after the next election.

The hon. Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) also objected to our children studying peace. What does he want them to study—war? Does he not think that we should spend our time trying to decide how to avert war? That is how we should spend our time. The hon. Gentleman wants to pooh-pooh it as, historically, Tories always have done. we must remember that they were the men of Munich, preferring war to peace. *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members should not say, "Ah." They do not like it, but they will have it anyway. We are saying to our allies: we shall fulfil our NATO commitment. We shall fill the gaps in our conventional forces. We shall ensure that the money that we save from nuclear weapons is put into our Army, our Navy and our Air Force to assert our ability to maintain and build up our conventional forces.

We shall not, as the hon. Member for Norwich, North said spend the money that we transfer from Trident on social programmes, much as we should like to, because we realise the desperate state in which the Government have left our conventional forces. Our first duty as a Government is to make sure that our country is safe, and not to put it on a perilous tightrope such as the Government are likely to do, when the only response that we shall have to any sort of threat will be an immediate nuclear response. We know the dangers of that because, after all, a nuclear response will not frighten anyone a great deal, as Lord Carrington himself knew when he was Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. So we shall say to our allies: let us build up our conventional forces.

Mr. Best: How?

Mr. McNamara: Let us ensure that our men are properly equipped——

Mr. Best: How? With what?

Mr. McNamara: —and that we have the best of modern conventional weaponry to deter an enemy.

Labour's defence policy in Europe, and therefore NATO, is based on two principles—first, a continued and positive role within the NATO Alliance, and secondly, United Kingdom unilateral nuclear disarmament and the removal of nuclear bases from the United Kingdom and its waters. Basically, Labour says that we are committed to the maintenance of the British Army of the Rhine at its current strength, in keeping with our treaty obligations. We seek to maintain a surface fleet of approximately 50 frigates to maintain our NATO obligation for 70 per cent. of the naval forces of the Eastern Atlantic——

Mr. Best: It is the same with the Government.

Mr. McNamara: The problem is that it is not the same with the Government. They are not ordering the ships to do so.

We seek to maintain our tactical air force commitments in Germany, to replace Fearless and Intrepid for the proper sustenance and reinforcement of the northern flank during any build-up towards hostilities, and to collaborate with our European colleagues in the production of the European fighter aircraft. On the industrial front, we are keen to maintain our policies of European collaboration to ensure that, within the European pillar of NATO, there is a strong, viable arms industry because we believe that it is important that we have a strong industrial base in Europe and that we are allies of the United States, not her clients.

The difference is that, within the budget that the Government have proposed and the task that they give our forces, they cannot fulfil all their commitments. We believe that by cancelling Trident we can maintain a strong, united NATO and the role of our conventional forces within it.

12.48 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): This has been a wide-ranging debate. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) on his good fortune in securing it. He talked about the miseducation of youth by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and, indeed, the policies of the Labour party. I shall pursue his line of argument, and not that of my hon. Friend the Member for Cornwall, North (Mr. Neale) with his devastating demolition of the policies of the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party, largely because it is difficult to know precisely what one is criticising.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, West (Mr. Spicer) asked me to respond briefly about the time scale needed for the introduction of new strategic nuclear weapons. I can confirm that the decision to introduce Trident, which was taken in the early 1980s, is designed to bring it into effect in the mid 1990s. That is a time scale of more than 10 years. The conclusion is that, if the Liberal party is interested in power in 10 or 15 years, it had better start making decisions now.

I should like to take up the speech of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). I treated his speech seriously, just as I treat the Labour party's policy. I should like to raise six aspects of the Labour party's policy and illustrate as briefly as I can the fallacies in its arguments. First, the Labour party argues that the United Kingdom contributes only an insignificant —that is the Labour party's word—percentage of the West's missiles. The argument is that the United Kingdom makes little real contribution to the defence that is enshrined in NATO policy. That is not true. It is true that the United Kingdom's weapons are only a small proportion of those of the forces of the United States and of the Soviet Union, but, as the House knows, one Polaris or one Trident boat can pack a very powerful punch. Furthermore, the Government's possession of the independent nuclear deterrent adds a complication to the plans of any aggressor which it would be foolish to disregard.

Secondly, the Labour party argues that the United States will not mind having its nuclear forces withdrawn from the United Kingdom. The Labour party has said that the United States can maintain its intelligence-gathering installations in the United Kingdom and that even its submarines may call at British ports. That argument is untrue as well. The United States has some 300,000 service men in western Europe. The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North, among others, hopes that western Europe will follow the example of a Labour Government — if we ever reach that unfortunate position — and disarm, so my remarks are addressed in the European context.

[Mr. Roger Freeman]

I do not think, as my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, West said, that we can take the Americans for granted. I urge the House to take a cautious attitude to what the American Congress and American people would think and do if their nuclear weapons were removed not only from these shores but from western Europe. They would ask, what is to deter an attack on their conventional forces? The withdrawal of their nuclear weapons would undermine NATO's central doctrine of flexible response. Conventional forces cannot be substituted for nuclear forces. If the Americans are forced to withdraw nuclear weapons from western Europe, the core strategy of NATO fails.

The Labour party's third argument is that the United Kingdom will still support NATO and will contribute conventional, but not nuclear, forces and that damage will not be done to NATO. I argue that that is not true. The United Kingdom has traditionally been an important part of NATO. Unilateral nuclear disarmament would shake NATO to the core. It would damage the flexible response strategy and the unity of the Alliance, because it would close out one of the key options that NATO must have in its doctrine of flexible response. To deter any act of aggression, NATO must have the full panopoly of weapons — from conventional forces, through theatre nuclear forces, through strategic forces. As my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Terlezki) said in a typically trenchant contribution, not one Government of a major country in western Europe supports the Labour party's policy.

The fourth argument advanced by the Labour party is that substituting conventional forces for nuclear weapons would be just as effective a contribution to NATO. I remind the House that Trident, which a Labour Government would cancel, accounts for about 6 per cent. of our equipment budget on average during the procurement period. I think that that was in the mind of my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Best) when he sought to intervene in the speech of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North. I contend that the Labour party's argument is not correct. On our calculations, cancellation of Polaris and Trident would add between one and two armoured divisions. Facing 50,000 Warsaw pact tanks west of the Urals would be not 17,000 NATO tanks as at present, but 17,300. I invite the Labour spokesman to challenge that figure. In other words, the extra conventional forces that the Labour party would add would make no difference to the conventional balance.

Mr. Best: It is significant that no Labour Front-Bench spokesman has told the House what additional conventional weapons are envisaged. We have heard only broad generalities. Does it not follow, as day follows night, that if a Labour Government undertook the unilateral nuclear disarmament of this country our service men in Europe would suffer the full brunt of any Warsaw pact attack because ours would be the only country standing against established NATO policy?

Mr. Freeman: I entirely endorse what my hon. Friend has said. It is interesting to note that in the recent Labour party political broadcast on television there was no specific reference to the additional conventional forces that would be introduced following the cancellation of Trident.

The fifth argument is that Labour policy would make this country safer from nuclear attack and fallout. *[Interruption.]* The leader of the Labour party clearly said that at the Labour party conference, but I do not believe that it is true. In a nuclear exchange there will be no safe place in Europe and damaging NATO and the concept of flexible response would lay us open to blackmail by any aggressor. Even in the case of limited use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor, geography and strategic importance would make the United Kingdom an obvious target. Indeed, Labour party policy could make this country a more dangerous place in that it would be more tempting for an aggressor to use nuclear weapons against us because we could not respond.

Mr. Wallace: The Minister has said and all Government publications on the matter state that spending on Trident would be 6 per cent. of the procurement budget on average over the procurement period. Can the Minister tell us what proportion of the procurement budget it will be in 1989-90?

Mr. Freeman: The only correct measure is over the entire procurement period, for the simple reason that I gave earlier in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, West—that one must look over a period of 10 to 15 years in replacing strategic weapons systems.

The Labour party's final argument is that unilateral disarmament by this country would help the cause of world peace. In my view, that is also untrue. There is no evidence that past gestures have been reciprocated. I cite as an example the United States decision for the past 17 years not to produce chemical weapons in the face of aggressive Soviet stockpiling of such weapons. I believe that the reverse is true and that the effect would be to destabilise world security. I believe that disarmament can be more effective through multinational pressures than through unilateral gestures.

The Labour party has an understandable revulsion for nuclear warfare. I understand its deeply held feelings, but they have clouded its clear and rational judgment about nuclear deterrence. During the past few months, the Labour party has concentrated entirely on nuclear warfare, and failed to realise that nuclear deterrence is the best safeguard against nuclear warfare.

Housing Policy

I am

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): I am sure that the House is aware that housing is in a state of crisis, affecting thousands of people in all parts of the United Kingdom. I shall address myself to the problems of homelessness and the housing stock throughout the United Kingdom.

The evidence of the past seven and a half years proves that the Tories in government have been pretty shocking housekeepers. That is perhaps remarkable as the Government are led by a woman who now and again pretends that she is just a housewife. There has been substantial neglect.

Twenty years ago, to within a couple of weeks, the television play "Cathy Come Home" brought home to the British public the seriousness of the problem of homelessness and the fact that there was a major housing crisis. Successive Governments stand pretty comprehensively indicted as, 20 years later, the problem is significantly worse. It is now a case of Cathy's children, who want to come home, getting little or no help from the Government.

Bed and breakfast regulations force young people to keep moving or sleep rough. Homelessness has risen to record levels—well over 100,000. The number of people in England and Wales accepted as homeless under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977—one of the most useful pieces of legislation, which was introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross)—has risen from 53,000 in 1978 to 94,000 in 1985. In Scotland, the comparable figures are 15,245 and 25,536. That is a shocking problem, and it is only the tip of the iceberg.

The number of hidden homeless is much greater. I refer, for example, to young couples who live in cramped conditions with relatives and friends. Every hon. Member probably meets such young people virtually every week. They rightly want a home of their own, and preferably before they start a family, but they are put in an invidious position. They have to start a family to secure enough points to give them the priority that they need, and even then they see others leapfrog over them because their needs are assessed, probably quite rightly, as more urgent.

Any responsible Government should address themselves to that problem. Far from doing that, however, the Government have pursued policies that have made the problem worse. The Government simply do not care and are prepared to write off that section of the community.

While homelessness has grown, the quality of the housing stock has deteriorated. According to the Department of the Environment's criteria, it has deteriorated to the point at which the Department faces a bill of £20 billion-plus to put it right. It is disgraceful that, as we get towards the end of the 20th century, millions of homes are still affected by chronic dampness, condensation, poor insulation and costly heating bills. We endure record numbers of old people dying from hypothermia each winter.

Those of us who have contact with our neighbours in northern Europe will find that they do not understand why we have such a serious problem. They do not have to address themselves to that to anything like the same extent. The Scandinavians in particular and other northern European neighbours must wonder whether we have discovered that we live in a cold, damp group of islands. We certainly do not build or maintain houses as if we have. What makes matters worse is that we are not taking sufficient remedial action fast enough. In other words, the problem is growing worse every day and we are not even holding ground.

Against that background, home improvement grants have been cut and home repairs subjected to VAT; the consequence of both is that many people are financially embarrassed and unable to maintain their homes. At the same time, in the public sector, local authority funding has been cut, so that local authorities cannot carry out the necessary repairs and improvements or deal with what can be described only as the obscenity of 680,000 empty properties which could and should be homes for the homeless. Yet we are not addressing ourselves to that serious problem.

We have the worst insulated and least energy efficient homes in Europe, yet within a couple of weeks we shall approach the end of Energy Efficiency Year. In that year the Government have cut the allocation of funding for loft insulation by more than 30 per cent. when they should have increased the grant and extended it to cover wall insulation, thermostats and so on.

Good work that is being done by the Manpower Services Commission's backing of insulation projects is coming under question, especially in rural areas where, by definition, the unit costs are higher and the need is often greater. I visited a project in my constituency only a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): Didn't we all.

Mr. Bruce: As my hon. Friend rightly says, many of us did.

I visited the relatively remote parish of Glass where an 84-year-old lady was having her house insulated by the MSC Gordon rural insulation project. That project could well have finished today because of the withdrawal of funding. I have not been able to establish whether there has been an extension. The argument is that, because more time is spent travelling and houses are dotted about in country areas, it is inefficient and that it would be better to whip through a housing scheme in a city. That is not the way the countryside is, and the Government should take account of reality. In rural areas the need is often greater. Old people live in remote cottages, may be snowed up and will not necessarily have regular contact. There the risks of hypothermia are correspondingly greater.

The Government may retort that one of the great merits of their policies has been to increase the number of home owners. As I have said, many people cannot for a variety of reasons become home owners and the Government are ignoring them. There are also casualties among people who have taken the Government's advice and either bought their council house or a private house. They find that the cost of maintaining their house on top of high interest mortgages in circumstances where the Government have cut repair and insulation grants and imposed VAT has placed them in financial difficulties. The House may remark on some of the statistics that help to prove that.

The number of mortgages in arrears has risen from 8,420 throughout the United Kingdom in 1979 to 60,390 in 1985. The number of houses taken into possession by building societies has increased from 2,530 in 1979 to

[Mr. Bruce]

16,590 in 1985. All the signs are that this problem is on an upward curve. Home ownership has not been a dream for everybody. For some people it has turned into a nightmare to which the Government have contributed.

We have witnessed the Government's latest foray into this area with their cuts in social security payments towards the cost of mortgage interest for the first three months out of work. That will clearly add to the problems. it will make many people believe that it simply does not pay to be thrifty under the Tory Government because people will be penalised for being thrifty.

The cut in social security payments towards the cost of mortgage interest will create special problems in areas such as my constituency where, because of the fall in oil prices, many people are being made redundant who have very heavy commitments on their mortgages and in many cases, because they have bought recently, they simply do not have the savings to enable them to absorb that kind of problem. We hear stories of people walking into the building society offices and throwing their keys at the manager and of others applying for council houses because they are about to be made homeless.

The alliance is right to call for urgent action now. We have a stated programme of what we want to do in government, but the problem is more urgent than that and we must still impress on the Government the seriousness of the crisis to which they have contributed and the need for specific and urgent action.

To start with, the Government must restore capital spending to cope with the problems that I have identified. An initial boost of at least £2 billion is likely to be necessary throughout the United Kingdom to get that programme rolling. I believe that 90 per cent. home improvement grants should be restored. After all, an election is coming and that is the time when the Government usually introduce such schemes. The sooner they announce such a scheme the better, and that rate should apply to the whole of the United Kingdom. However, this time it could usefully be targeted to assist first-time buyers and people on low incomes to give the maximum support where it is most needed.

Insulation grants should be increased, not cut. The grant should be covered to extend not just to loft insulation but to wall insulation and the provision of thermostats. It would be helpful if the Government would consider extending tax relief to energy improvements in homes, whether that is alternative energy or greater energy efficiency. There is no incentive there at all at present.

The Government have prevented local authorities in England and Wales from using all the money that they have received from the sale of council houses. That is a figure of £6 billion that local authorities would dearly like to use now to deal with problems in their areas and to meet local needs. The Government should be prepared to allow local authorities access to that money now. I suspect—although I cannot prove this—that we are in a worse position in Scotland, where that money is not banked. The Government theoretically allowed local authorities to use all the money, but they have successively cut the housing support grant, so in reality we may have kissed goodbye to the money altogether.

A housing condition survey revealed that £19 billion is necessary to restore the housing stock in England and Wales. The Government ducked that exercise in Scotland, no doubt because they are frightened of what it might show. Given the general higher proportion of public authority housing in Scotland and the rundown condition of some of the older property, it is certain that Scotland will require, pro rata, a larger injection of capital.

The problem that I identified at the beginning of my remarks obviously relates to problems of dealing with the shortage of rented accommodation. That problem should be approached in a flexible manner. Local authorities have a role to play in providing amenity housing, although the Government now seem to have choked off that supply. There can be a mixture of housing associations and public and private funding, including partnership schemes for redeveloping urban areas. Those ideas have been tried and tested and we believe that they should be extended.

I want to make a constituency plea within that context. The priority status given by the Scottish Special Housing Association to oil-related workers in the north of Scotland should be removed immediately. It is absurd in the present climate that those houses are reserved for oil workers when unemployment is increasing in that sector. They could be made available to health workers, teachers and other public service staff who are not able to move into the area but are badly needed. There is no justification for maintaining that priority status.

I believe that the Government should show a little more radical thought about how they broaden the basis of home ownership. We, like them, support the principle of home ownership, but we would always argue that it is not for everybody. There are circumstances in which people, for very good reasons, need to rent. It may be because they cannot afford to buy or because—my constituency is bearing this out—one of the disadvantages of home ownership is that it discourages mobility when there is change in value. Many of us hear of people frightened to move out of London, sometimes to a better job, for fear that they will not be able to get back on to the housing ladder in London. Perhaps the Government should attend to the widening differential between the cost of housing in London and the rest of the country. The discrepancies are absurd.

I wonder when the market will start to show any intelligence. I have received through my door recently, as I suspect have other hon. Members, brochures and letters advertising two-bedroom flats in dockland for £240,000 to £360,000. I do not know about you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but if I ever had £240,000 I could think of a lot better ways to spend it than on a two-bedroom flat in dockland, but perhaps I have a better understanding of the market than the lunacy that seems to characterise the way in which the City operates to create such absurd values. I understand that the value of the Prime Minister's house in Dulwich has increased by three times the average value of a family house anywhere outside London. That is an obscene distortion that should be tackled, and if the Government had any real commitment to solving the problem they would tackle it.

The Minister should respond to the problem of the disposal of houses belonging to British Coal in the coalfield communities where considerable injustices are taking place and an irresponsible process is going on. People are finding that the houses in which they have lived for 30 or 40 years have been sold over their heads, sometimes to a totally unknown buyer, and very often resold. They are then faced with buyers who will rackrent their houses and not maintain them. That is unacceptable.

I know that the Government may say that the tenants are given the opportunity to buy at a 50 per cent. discount, but that is only at short notice and many of them cannot raise the money that fast. They should be given some security to stay in those homes and retain the right to buy, either by having them transferred to the local authority, for which the local authorities would need cash, or by having them retained by British Coal. It seems that the local authority is the most appropriate body to take them over.

I believe that I have covered a reasonable range of issues affecting housing in this country. I believe that it affects people in every part of the country, that it gives rise to anger and, in many cases, fear of not having a roof over their heads. There is bitterness that the philosophy of the present Government seems to be concerned only with those who can afford comfortably to sustain the buying of their own homes, and even those people are finding that that is not as easy as they thought.

The rented public sector market has been neglected, the less well maintained older private sector is not being given adequate support and we continue to live in the most poorly housed country in Europe where the problems of homelessness, dampness and condensation are getting worse as are the problems of decaying housing stock. The Minister should be able to tell us, not just for Scotland but for the whole of the United Kingdom, what the Government propose to do about a problem that is a disgrace.

1.19 am

Mr. Terry Fields (Liverpool, Broadgreen): Anybody with an ounce of common decency would accept that decent housing is a basic human right to which everybody is entitled, particularly in a so-called civilised society. The Government's alleged commitment to the sanctity of family life has been proved to be hypocritical. They have created conditions that deny basic human rights to many people in this country. Since 1979 they have perpetuated and increased the problems for both the young and the old. Many of them are isolated in high-rise flats that were built in the 1960s and the 1970s.

Young couples in areas of high unemployment—as in Liverpool — have no chance of getting out of council houses and buying property. Local authorities have been forced by the Government to sell off property, much of it the best housing stock, thus reducing the number of council houses that are available for those who cannot afford to buy their own homes. As if that were not bad enough, local authorities cannot even spend the money that they earn from the sale of council houses to provide housing in their areas for those who need it.

New council house starts slumped from 140,700 in 1975 to 69,400 in 1979. Many of the system built and high-rise blocks of the 1960s and 1970s whose building was encouraged by subsidies to developers under both Tory and Labour Governments have turned into modern slums, and their tenants are dissatisfied. Before the Labour party came to power in Liverpool in 1983, there was absolute misrule and chaos over council housing in the Liberal-Tory administration. During the last four years of that administration not one council house was built, and when Labour formed the administration it discovered that there were 22,000 people on the housing waiting list.

There have been three effects. According to the April 1986 returns — as spelt out in this Chamber by the Secretary of State on 18 November — Liverpool city council, with a housing stock of 64,836, had 7,704 houses vacant, 5,637 houses awaiting demolition and 4,283 houses that had been vacant for over a year awaiting repair. In that same stock of 64,836 houses there were 14,547 difficult-to-let houses in the Liverpool area.

In a housing authority with private sector responsibilities and a stock of 97,860 houses, the Secretary of State told the House in a written answer that 10,656 of them were unfit for human habitation, that 3,865 lacked basic amenities and that 35,640 needed to be renovated. That has not happened just since 1983 when Labour took power in Liverpool. However, it has been accused of being responsible for the decline in the housing stock and for the decline in the amount of accommodation that is available. However, had it not been for Liverpool city council, conditions for tens of thousands of people in Liverpool would be very much worse than they are today.

Since this Government came to power in 1979, Liverpool's housing investment programme has been cut by £150 million. If grants had continued at the 1979 level, Liverpool would have had an additional £150 million to spend in an area of gross deprivation. Housing subsidy has been reduced by £70 million. The effect on the private sector has led to restrictions on improvements and repairs. The housing action areas have also been hit by financial cuts. Grants to those in need have also been cut. The sole responsibility for this since 1979 rests with the Tory Government. Liverpool's responsibility for cuts since 1983 when the Labour party came to power, in no way matches the Government's crimes against the people of Liverpool.

Additionally, we must say quite clearly that the rate support grant has affected housing. Since 1979, Liverpool has lost £185 million in rate support grant. If that had not been stolen, we could have provided more employment to resolve the housing problem and finance housing services in the public and private sectors of Liverpool over and above what we must do now. So those things must be linked to the housing crisis in places like Liverpool.

We must also consider the background of people in the house hunting market, because between 1979 and 1986 more than 75,000 jobs have been lost in Liverpool. The manufacturing sector has lost 45,000 jobs. Unemployment is 26 to 27 per cent., and 53 per cent. of the population has been unemployed for more than one year. On some of the estates in Liverpool there is 94 per cent. youth unemployment and, at the same time, about 20,000 people are on the housing waiting list. They cannot buy houses because many families are unemployed. They cannot let houses in some areas of Liverpool, because houses are not being built. But we must give credit to Liverpool city council for the tremendous pamphlet it put out, free of charge, called "Success against the odds" which itemises what Labour has done on Liverpool city council since it came to power in 1983.

Liverpool city council has set up and identified 17 priority areas and embarked upon an imaginative scheme of urban regeneration. The scheme's proposals affect 40,000 people in Liverpool and address the problems over an area of 400 hectares of densely populated land. Since 1983, 350 council houses and/or bungalows have been built or are in the process of being built by "top downing" —a technical expression which means that three-storey houses have either the top storey or the two top storeys taken off to create either bungalows or two-storey houses. A total of 810 walk up flats have been used in this way. a further 4,080 houses and flats have been or are in the

[Mr. Terry Fields]

process of being improved under the urban regeneration strategy. Since 1983, more than 6,000 unsatisfactory properties have been or are in the process of being demolished, including the infamous "Piggeries" which is an absolute condemnation of past generations who allowed such housing conditions to prevail.

Also since 1983, 3,800 much needed council houses and bungalows have been or are in the process of being built for people in the Liverpool area. Despite the lies and the distortions which some people put out about Liverpool's Labour city council, it has a commitment to and is involved in the private sector as well. The private sector renewal strategy has the following key elements: an area approach, by the declaration of housing action areas and general improvement areas where capital and revenue resources will be concentrated, an emphasis upon improvements by the owners themselves, whether owner-occupiers or landlords with the support of improvement grants, a partnership with the housing corporation and the local housing associations to ensure co-ordinated use of resources and a recognition that environmental conditions in the areas as well as improvement to the properties must be tackled.

The progress Labour has made since coming to power in 1983 has meant that in 1982-83 the number of private dwellings improved was 1,721. In 1983-84 it was 1,802; in 1984-85, 1,944; and in 1985-86, 1,369. The council has declared its intention to designate a further 25 housing action areas. These are being declared during 1986 and will be administered by the decentralised area improvement teams which are responsible for progressing the private sector renewal programme. Additionally, owner-occupiers who are waiting to improve their homes can get help from the council's agency service. The service can make all the arrangements for improving owner-occupied houses, including surveys, plans, finding a contractor and supervising the work. So that Labour has a commitment to the private and the public sector.

In 1986 the technical study undertaken to see the by-product of the building of houses and the urban regeneration strategy in Liverpool showed clearly the tremendous prospect that we have for creating jobs in an area of high unemployment. In Liverpool alone, as a direct consequence of the programme undertaken by the Labour-controlled city council, 16,489 jobs were generated in the private sector which had a tremendous effect on the building industry and on those building workers thrown out because of the policies of the Tory Government. Due regard has been paid to the city council by firms such as Wimpey, McTay, Cubitts, Cruden, Fawley and a number of other private sector developers.

The Government jumped at the chance to create a property-owning boom and a bonanza for the banks and building societies, competing with each other to lend money because of the policy not to build council houses. As a result of a further decline in all house building, house prices in the private sector began to rise sharply. Comfortably well-off house owners in the south-east in particular suddenly found themselves with handsome chunks of real estate—assets which they could then use to borrow more money, helping to boost the explosion in credit and fuelling the property boom. But the rising prices brought difficulties for first-time buyers and the burden of high mortgage payments have led to an increasing number of defaults, particularly among young people.

The increase in home ownership has led to growing and now stark inequalities in housing. Well-off home owners benefit from huge sums given out in mortgage interest tax relief. A single person on £30,000 a year receives an average of £1,700 in mortgage tax relief and may be able to claim other tax allowances, whereas someone on £4,000 would receive only an average of £280 in mortgage tax relief. Even the Tory wets have acknowledged the inequalities in housing in that respect. The cost of mortgage tax relief to the Government has now soared to £4·5 billion while council house investment has slumped to £2·5 billion. In 1979 the subsidy to council tenants was £1·23 for every £1 of mortgage tax relief. By 1983 the situation had more than reversed with the subsidy for council tenants being 53p for every £1 of mortgage tax relief.

In addition, we must look at the consequences of the Tory Government's policies economically and to housing finance. In December 1979 in Britain alone 2,530 properties were taken possession of by building societies and by 1986 that figure has escalated dramatically to 20,020. In 1979 8,420 mortgages were over six months in arrears and by June 1986 the figure had jumped to 66,930.

On top of all that, people who through no fault of their own find themselves in difficulties will find themselves in greater difficulties as a result of the policy introduced last week by the Government on supplementary benefit relating to mortgage interest. That will mean that 90,000 families will be pushed deeper into debt, leading to eviction and, no doubt, as my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) said last week, marital breakdown.

We also find that the family consisting of a husband, wife and two children with a £16,000 mortgage will have to find an additional £17 a week out of supplementary benefit of £70 a week—in effect, a quarter of the weekly income—as a direct result of the Government's policies.

This is a horror story for working class low-paid workers, and young people in particular, looking for a decent house and a decent future for themselves and their families. The alliance might have some illusions in pleading to the better nature of the Minister and the Tory Government to reverse their policies on council houses and their attitudes to Britain's building industry, but I have no such illusions and nor does the Labour party. Liverpool, and its people in particular, look forward to the next general election when a Labour Government will be elected to deal with the serious problems affecting us in Britain in building houses for people in need.

We in the Labour party must pay due regard to past errors. People in Broadgreen must realise that now they are not part of the 17 priority areas in the city, or of the urban regeneration strategy. The only hope for people in Broadgreen for house improvements, house building programmes and urban regeneration and for all the other things that Liverpool city council has done in other areas is a Labour council in the city working hand in hand with a Labour Government. That can resolve the problems.

Labour's policy must be directed towards breaking the power of big business in order to provide the resources for housing and other needs. Labour must campaign to win support for a genuine Socialist programme of housing and home ownership. The nationalisation of the banks and the

insurance companies would be relevant and beneficial, even to middle-class voters, if it meant the provision of cheap credit at stable rates or state assisted mortgages.

Housing is a serious problem. Anyone walking around London late at night can see the homeless, who can also be seen in our major cities. The policies of the Government are a disaster and only a Labour Government committed to a decent, planned house building programme can resolve the problems and meet the needs of the homeless, the people in despair in 1986 in a so-called civilised society.

1.36 am

Mr. Michael Meadowcroft (Leeds, West): I do not propose to follow the hon. Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) in his private paranoia. He speaks about the need for a Labour Government and a Labour council to deal with the problems he mentions, but fails to remind the House that it was under a Labour Government that all the evils of high-rise flats and the problems of industrial building were created.

Mr. Terry Fields: If the hon. Gentleman had listened to my speech he would have heard me speak about that.

Mr. Meadowcroft: The hon. Gentleman believes that if he repeats inaccuracies often enough, even he might begin to believe them. If he understood the principle of housing revenue for local authorities he would know that the provision of houses in Liverpool was far better accomplished through housing associations and co-operatives than by direct building by the council. The hon. Gentleman sees house building as worthwhile only if it is done by the state. I reject that.

The hon. Gentleman also spoke about what Liverpool city council might wish to do and might be doing now. All the things about which he spoke may in themselves be excellent, but none of us have any problems about sorting out the expenditure side of our budgets. The problems arise when we try to find the income to pay for that expenditure. The fact that we are doing good by spending is never an excuse if we cannot afford to spend that money. One is doing good by spending has been the plaintive cry of the bankrupt down the ages. How on earth can we cope with the reality of a declining economy by widespread distribution? In Liverpool and in Britain as a whole there is no way one can escape from the reality of finance.

I have nothing against the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Ancram) who is on the Government Front Bench, but I find it strange that in a debate about housing policy generally there is no Minister here from the Department of the Environment. Whatever complaints I have had about DoE Ministers in the past, one thing I have never levelled against them is an unwillingness to debate housing issues. It is surprising and reprehensible that not one Minister from that Department is present in the Chamber.

I have one other point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I hope you will pass to Mr. Speaker. We continually hear Conservative Back Benchers moaning that they are unable to speak in debates about housing policy. Mr. Speaker should be reminded that not one Conservative Back Bencher is in the Chamber to debate housing policy. That is scandalous.

I accept that there is a natural cycle to housing and that a problem arises if one section of housing is removed from that cycle. In my county of Yorkshire, people are canny about sorting out their affairs. Young people are always told that the first thing to do is to make sure they have a roof over their heads, and that other priorities come after that. There is a general cycle which starts when a young couple are wed. If they are able to, they buy a small back-to-back two-bedroom house which can still be purchased in Leeds for around about £10,000. A family will be able to buy a through terrace house with four bedrooms, which would cost a little more. Then, if a man is doing well at his job and he has some money to spare for a mortgage he can buy a two or three-bedroom semi. Then, when the children have gone, the parents move back to the smaller house and look after themselves and cope without recourse to state financing. The problem is that if the first rung of that ladder is taken away—the small terraced house—the family cannot get on to the next tier. The escalator that carries those who are fortunate enough to get on it upwards and onwards fails to work when that first rung is taken out. That is what happened in so many of our cities. That first rung of the small terraced house has been taken away by demolition.

In that sense housing is a self-inflicted problem. The single homeless are particularly hit by the Government's policy, as are young couples looking for a first home and unable to afford to buy. A total of 250,000 households are registered on council waiting lists. Some 39,000 public sector homes were built in 1985 as compared to 163,000 with 1976. I want to concentrate on a particular local problem in Leeds which I believe to be a microcosm of the whole problem of defective housing that assails so many of our cities.

My constituents who live on the Raynville estate in west Leeds face a very bleak Christmas. They are trapped in unfit accommodation. Whether they rent or own their homes, they can neither get them repaired satisfactorily nor can they move elsewhere. Many of these dwellings have mould growing on the doors, they have cracks in the walls, and wallpaper that simply falls off because of the excessive damp. Even the windows fall out of their frames. These are what are called Reema houses and they figure on the Government's Housing Defects Act list. But despite the recognition that the houses are defective, there is apparently no solution in prospect. The houses are perhaps worth around £17,000 on the market today, but the estimated cost of repairs well over £20,000. How ludicrous it is that to repair the houses costs more than their value. There is, therefore, hardly likely to be a great rush to repair them and to put them into a habitable state.

But if the council were to decide to cut its losses and to demolish all the dwellings, it would be impossible to rehouse the residents in west Leeds within a reasonable time. Some 800 people are left on the estate but there are only approximately 400 properties available for re-letting in a full year. There are other equally pressing demands on housing in the area. As yet there are no approved schemes for rectifying housing defects, although I gather the two schemes are under appraisal.

Nevertheless, there is every indication that any possible solution will cost more than the £20,000, which is the Government's latest figure for this type of property. The Housing Defects Act is right in spirit but it is desperately inadequate in practical resources. The local Liberal councillors and the city council have not washed their hands of the problem, and have set out to get a private builder who is interested in developing the site. Indeed, the Reema maisonettes were a particular problem and became

[Mr. Meadowcroft]

literally un-lettable despite the massive housing waiting list in that area. These blocks were demolished with a view to Wimpeys developing the whole site.

The original plan was to refurbish the property but this was changed two years ago in favour of complete redevelopment. To achieve this an urban development grant was applied for but has not as yet been agreed. My understanding was that the urban development grant procedure was specifically designed to speed up the process of negotiation between developers and the local council. Clearly, this has not happened in this case. I hope that the Minister understands that I believe there is a clear duty on the Government to explain why it has not happened. Does the Minister realise that the Housing Defects Act plays an unfortunate role in relation to the Government's right to buy legislation? Leeds city council is forced to sell what it knows to be defective properties to people whom it knows cannot cope with the huge repair costs. The council inevitably has to buy back the houses because the Government's Housing Defects Act does not cover the maintenance cost for people in this position. I hope the Government will understand the need to deal with this anomaly sympathetically.

We are not talking about old dwellings. The ones in this case date only from the 1960s, but they are riddled with serious construction defects. For instance, the metal bars that are driven through the four corners of the houses are corroding and are carbonating into the concrete. The city council is fond of calling the structural cracks "thermal movement", but they show no signs of closing. It is no wonder that residents are worried. Inevitably, while people are still living in those houses, there are excessive housing costs. An official from the city council's works department admitted openly at a public meeting that Reema houses are especially badly insulated.

As I said in a debate on 24 July this year, the tenants in the multi-storey flats were told not to use their balconies. The balconies are now said to be safe, but tenants are still advised not to use them. As one tenant said, "If the balcony will not stand my eight and a half stones, should we not be moved out immediately?" It is ridiculous to tell people not to use their balconies but also to tell them that the flats are safe. Good, decent Yorkshire folk, tenants as much as owner-occupiers, are desperate for help, yet no help is forthcoming.

The residents have been forthright and resourceful in their campaigning. They have gathered information and lobbied effectively, but the final decisions are out of their hands. My local colleague, Councillor Selby, has battled on in support of our constituents, but there is a growing thought abroad that the Labour council in Leeds is cynically punishing people on the Raynville estate for consistently voting Liberal. It is hard to prove such motivation, but it would be easy to demonstrate its inaccuracy — by allocating resources sufficient to renovate where possible and to demolish the properties where not.

I beg the Minister to realise the desperate position of those families. The site is a mess, with the remains of the maisonette blocks still visible and an expanse of vacant land crying out for sensitive redevelopment. I ask the Minister to tell the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction of the need to receive a delegation of the residents of the Raynville estate at an early date. The solution will inevitably lie in a joint operation with building societies, private builders and the city council working together. I am doing my best to make that happen, as are the residents. I wonder whether the Minister is.

1.47 am

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): I apologise to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) for having missed the first two or three minutes of his speech, but I was detained on urgent business in my constituency all day and have just driven 250 miles non-stop to try to speak in this debate, which is important. I regret that much of what I shall say in my short speech has been said before, but since I have been in the House the Government have done nothing to deal with the serious problems of housing. During the past three and a half years, housing has become worse than it was in 1983. Something must be done to tackle the problem.

My constituency is slightly different from many others in that it has a surplus of public and private sector housing. I must accept that there is only one reason for the surplus of housing—employment is not available in Burnley and people are leaving the town to seek it elsewhere. Recently published figures show that the population has declined by about 5,000 during the past five years, which accounts for the empty houses.

However, there is a waiting list for sheltered accommodation for the elderly in Burnley. Wherever I go, I discover that councils are unable to meet the full demand for such housing because the problem is growing and not enough resources are available. Whether the problem is solved by converting existing stock or by constructing purpose-built housing, the money must come from the housing investment programme. If the Government will not make available sufficient resources, councils will be unable to meet the demand for housing to which elderly people are entitled and which is a priority.

I urge the Government to consider introducing a more generous subsidy for improvement-for-sale schemes that are carried out by local authorities. Burnley has made representations on this score on several occasions but it has been unsuccessful in its attempts to persuade the Government to change their policy. The subsidy that is given to housing associations is more generous than that provided to local authorities, which is not acceptable.

In Burnley the cost of improving an old terraced house is more than the sum that the house will sell for, and with the existing subsidy there is a loss for the council. The price of property has been low traditionally in the Burnley area, and with surplus housing in both the public and private sectors the price must remain low. With the absence of demand, high prices cannot be obtained. If the council cannot afford to improve a terrace house, for example, and tries to sell it, because the Government's policy does not permit it to do so the house may well become derelict, causing the entire terrace subsequently to become derelict. The loss of one house in the Burnley area might be acceptable because of the housing surplus, but the loss of an entire terrace is not, especially where improvement grants have been provided for individual houses in the terrace. We all know that improvement grants are provided so that the life of a property can be extended, and if a house becomes derelict and the end result is dereliction throughout the terrace and demolition, public money that has been expended in the form of improvement grants will

have been wasted. Perhaps there should be variations in policy and grant in different areas to meet different circumstances.

Burnley hopes that the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction will visit the area, or alternatively receive a delegation, to discuss grants for improvements in the private sector. The policy which was introduced in October 1983 has become less satisfactory as time has passed. Applications have had to be frozen and since April 1984 Burnley, like many other councils, has been unable to accept applications for improvement and repair grants. It is able to deal only with mandatory grants. Assuming that no more applications are made, Burnley needs about £13 million to deal with the backlog. Burnley is not unique in that respect, and that is not acceptable. If the Government do not come forward with more money now, the cost to them could well be greater later, especially if there has to be slum clearance, demolition and rebuilding, which would be nonsensical.

Like many other councils, Burnley is unable to modernise its pre-war housing stock at anywhere near a quick enough rate. The turn of the century will be reached before Burnley's pre-war houses are all modernised, and that is not acceptable. The Government must come forward with more generous provision when the housing investment allocations are announced, and Government time should be found in this place to enable the allocations to be debated.

The hon. Member for Gordon referred to capital receipts. I strongly support the view that, as an immediate step, the Government should increase the amount of capital receipts. I do not say that all of the capital should be used, but it certainly should be increased from the present level of 20 per cent. to at least 50 per cent. That will give local authorities a little more leeway with which to deal with their problems.

Housing is one of the most crucial issues that face the country. We have not seen an improvement in our housing stock. We have not even seen the maintenance of the status quo. We have seen the deterioration of housing throughout the country, whether it be in the public or private sector.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Pike: The Minister shakes his head. It is a fact that we have seen a deterioration. It is a result of the Government's policy. Resources must be made available to tackle the problem before it is too late. I hope that the Government will think again on these important issues.

1.57am

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): I do not know what the Secretary of State knows about the housing problems of Leeds, Liverpool and Burnley. I might be stretching a joke if I mention the housing situation in Cornwall. The debate is clearly about UK Housing. My hon. Friend the Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) was asked over the phone what subject he wished to raise. The Secretary of State specifically was told that it was UK housing. I must now address the Secretary of State on problems that affect Cornwall, when the Minister represents a seat in Scotland. I do not complain about that, but when the hon. Gentleman's responsibility is specifically and only Scotland, it verges on the ridiculous. For all that, people read *Hansard*, and one must live in faith and hope, even if one's experience does not always justify it.

The problem that my area faces is certainly different from those outlined by a number of hon. Members. It is interestingly different. In a way, it demonstrates one of the problems that inevitably face any Government who wish to evolve a sensible housing policy. We tend to talk too much about the national housing situation, as though every constituency is similar. That is manifestly not so. Certainly, my area has no excess housing capacity. It is beyond the imagination of local councillors and local housing executives to believe that there could be unoccupied council houses anywhere in the country, such is the pressure that exists within my community. When one examines the background of the matter, it is not surprising.

I do not know the precise figures, but I suspect that in Cornwall, less than 10 per cent. of the housing stock is owned by the local authority. It has never been much more than 15 per cent. Many houses have been sold. I have no complaint about that. The desirability of home ownership — at least in my part of the country — is not a controversial issue. All effective political parties in the community support it. For all that, just 10 per cent. of local housng is owned by the local authority. That percentage is too low to deal with the problem.

Statistically, Cornwall has the lowest average wage of any part of Great Britain. That fact is not new. It has been so this year, last year, last decade and the decade before that. Quite clearly, in the long run, a community's ability to house itself, is a reflection of its earning capacity. If the average wage in Cornwall is the lowest in the United Kingdom, a minority within our community must have incomes that are dramatically below the national average, to put it mildly. That section of our community has no choice but to look to the local authority for re-housing.

In my area, very few people are housed unless they specifically qualify under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977. If somebody lives at home with his parents and children and cannot arrange for his parents to throw him out—when I say, "Throw him out," the parents actually have to take their own children to court to throw them out of the house—his prospects of being housed are remote, if not much more than zero. If someone gets married, lives at home and does not have any children, his only hope is the pathetic one of simply waiting for his parents, by death or incapacity, to vacate the property and thus hand it over.

That is the situation. The only solution is to build some council houses. Quite a lot of money has been generated by the sale of council houses. We have few houses in any case. Therefore, we need some state investment in housing. I have had much correspondence recently with the Secretary of State for the Environment, asking him why Cornwall is left out of the 80 areas defined as stress areas in Britain. I am not claiming that we are one of the worst. It is possible that we are not. But I fail to believe that 80 areas in Britain are worse off than my county with regard to obtaining a house. I have written to the Minister. I asked for the facts and figures to back up that policy assertion. I have not yet received a reply. I fear that it may be difficult to put together an answer to the observations made. I fear that the Government will not do anything about it, but the problem is there. It is mounting, and

[Mr. David Penhaligon]

many ordinary Cornish folk find themselves leading a life that is little more than misery because of the housing problem.

There are some things that the Government could do if only one could get them to consider them. Not the least of the problems in my county is the disappearance of the rented sector. I suspect that it has disappeared from my area for a slightly different reason from that in many other areas. The reason is simply this. There is an alternative use for rented accommodation in my area that is extremely profitable. It has been made far more profitable by the Government. That is the letting of property by the week, fortnight or month dring the summer, known in Cornwall as summer lets. Through tax changes that the Government made in the past two or three Finance Bills, the Government have created the following incredible situation. If one owns a house and lets it on a permanent basis, and procures an income by that, one pays tax on that income. No one complains about that. If one lets that property casually by the week, fortnight or month and procures an income, one pays tax on that. No one complains about that. But the tax that one would pay on letting the property permanently is more than on letting it casually. That is unbelievable. There is no justice in it and no justification for it. My constituents who have properties to let are not fools. One can be hardly surprised if they choose the option that not only gives them vacant possession every year but procures the highest income after tax, because, after all, that is why most people go in for business, and that is the way to achieve success.

That process of letting properties by the week, fortnight or month should be considered as a business. I do not believe that it is an immoral business, but I believe it to be a business. It should be treated as a business with regard to rates, planning consent and so on. If that was done, we could at least bring that endless problem under control.

Let us not underestimate the size of the problem. In some parishes, 40 per cent. of the properties are let in that manner. Once some 40 per cent. of property in a parish is let in that way, the community has been destroyed. The chapel is used no longer because there is nobody there on Sundays during the winter months. The doctor finds that he has little business. The shops closed. The whole community becomes like a disorganised Butlin's holiday camp. There is little of the community spirit and village life that led it through so many decades and, indeed, centuries.

That problem needs attention. There is no way that any Government will ever restore any form of private rented sector in my community unless someone is willing to face up to the admitted peculiarities of the problem. I ask the Minister to pass those comments on to the English Secretary of State and to seek from him his observations.

I repeat the raw bones of the argument. Less than 10 per cent. of housing in Cornwall is local authority housing. We have the lowest average wages in Britain. It is manifestly obvious that people must look to the local authority because other houses just do not exist. The councils manage as best they can by the most vicious interpretation of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 that I suspect is made in this country. Many people therefore suffer great stress. The outlet of private letting which exists in some areas is virtually taken away in my community because properties are let by the week, fortnight or month during the summer season for the owner's profit. The desperate situation for the minority who are affected deserves some Government attention and action.

We are not so municipalised in my area that we would argue that the council could solve the problems if it owned 80 per cent. of houses as opposed to the 65 per cent. it perhaps owns. In the short term, the only action that the Government are likely to take is to put Cornwall back on the map in respect of funds for housing associations. I look forward to receiving a letter from the Secretary of State explaining why the problem which I have outlined means that Cornwall is not included in one of the 80 stress areas, which seems to be the criterion determining whether an area receives any money.

2.5 am

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): I must confess to being in difficulty with this debate. Like the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, when I saw that the debate was in the name of the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce), I, too, assumed—obviously, wrongly—that it was on Scottish housing. Unfortunately, I do not have a bunch of advisers desperately passing me notes to reply to hon. Members' points. I hope that hon. Members will accept my apologies for not being able to reply in detail to their points, because I do not confess to having any great knowledge of English housing.

It is clear hon. Members' speeches, especially those of my hon. Friends the Members for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) and for Burnley (Mr. Pike), that they face many of the problems that we face in Scotland. In Scotland, 49 per cent. of housing is council housing, so the problems faced by councils are great. I take the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Broadgreen, who, in his graphic description of Liverpool, related the housing crisis much more broadly. Unemployment and social deprivation create many housing problems, which are then made worse by unemployment and social deprivation.

I agree with the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) on one point. The hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Terlezki) referred to the fact that earlier only two Labour Members were present for the debate on defence policy and NATO. It is remarkable that there are no Conservative Back Benchers present to talk about housing. More people have been made redundant in the construction industry since 1979 than would be made unemployed as a result of even the wildest claims by Conservative Members about Labour's defence policy. Of course, to most of our constituents, the problems of dampness, high rents, of repairs not being done and of inadequate sheltered housing are of much greater importance than Conservative attacks on our defence policy.

I wish to limit my remarks to some of the Government's recent actions in Scottish housing policy. A recent Scottish Office press release was headed,

"Big Cash Increases for Housing Announced".

The Government were proudly announcing their increases in capital allocation, yet when the true figures came out, they showed that the total cash for housing next year will increase by only 2 per cent.—well below the inflation rate. The Minister shakes his head at that. He may care to look at his own figures.

The Government have also cut the rate fund contribution limit from £69·8 million in 1986-87 to £43·7 million in 1987-88, compared with their own figure of

£112·4 million in 1983-84. Housing support grant next year will be £46·5 million compared with £50·7 million this time last year, although there is to be a variation order to cut this year's figure to £44·5 million. As a result, tenants of only 25 out of the 54 housing authorities in Scotland will receive any subsidy on their rents and two thirds of the total housing stock in Scotland will receive no grant at all in the coming year. Those restrictions mean that only 12 per cent. of council house costs will come from the public purse and 88 per cent. will come from the tenants in rents and other charges. In 1979-80 rents covered only 47 per cent. of council house costs while Government grant accounted for 53 per cent.

At the same time, almost inevitably, rents have increased. If the Government have their way the average rent increase next year will be £1·32 and some council tenants will face increases of more than £3. Even the average increase is more than 10 per cent. or more than three times the present rate of inflation, and since 1979 average rents in Scotland will have increased by 191 per cent. or double the rate inflation. How any Government can justify loading those costs on to tenants, I do not know.

Meanwhile, the Government have done nothing to reduce the subsidy paid even to the wealthiest home owners through mortgage tax relief. We are not in favour of abolishing mortgage tax relief completely at the present time, but we believe that it should be for standard rate taxpayers only and not for the wealthiest people in our society. It is certainly grossly unfair for the Government to increase subsidies to the better off members of the community while constantly cutting those available to council house tenants, many of whom are among the poorest people in our society.

Mr. Penhaligon: The hon. Gentleman says that it is Labour party policy to abandon mortgage tax relief for those paying tax above standard rate. I think that he has made a mistake. Is not Labour policy to limit the relief to the standard rate? I am always willing to help.

Mr. Maxton: And I am always willing to accept help from wherever it comes.

On top of all that, the Government are now seeking to shift the burden of local taxation from the wealthy home owner to the council house tenant through the change from rates to a poll tax. Home owners in my constituency whose houses are valued at £70,000 or £80,000 and who obtain tax relief on the maximum figure of £30,000 are currently obtaining a subsidy of more than £1,000 per year in tax relief. They pay some £1,250 to £1,300 a year in rates. A married couple — a standard household in Scotland — would pay about £550 a year in poll tax. With tax relief, they will be subsidised to the tune of £460 a year and will not contribute to local services. Council house tenants, however, who receive no subsidy or tax relief pay £370 in rates now and will pay the same £550 in poll tax. Nobody in his right mind can consider that fair or just.

I have given only a bare outline. The Government claim that they have done much for housing in Scotland, and yet there are 63,000 houses below the tolerable standard. In Glasgow alone, 21,000 private sector houses are below the tolerable standard. Some 22,000 council houses may also be below the tolerable standard. Some 350,000 houses need full or partial mondernisation, 107,000 council houses need rewiring and 308,000 council houses suffer from some form of dampness. Scotland requires about 251,000 houses for single people, but we have only 129,000.

We have greater overcrowding in Scotland than in any other part of the United Kingdom. There are 155,000 people on local authority waiting lists. We have a major housing crisis which the Government have done nothing to solve. They have tried to make propaganda out of the increase in this year's capital allocation, but the fact remains that, since the Government came to power in 1979, Government housing expenditure on Scotland has been halved. We require a Government who are committed to solving the housing crisis and who are prepared to use houses as one of the ways in which to get people back to work. The sooner that happens, the better it will be for the country.

2.17 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): I intended to start in a humble fashion and to apologise to English Members for not being able to answer their detailed questions. Having listened to what they said, however, I must say that I was somewhat surprised that the party that claims that it is decentralist and the party of devolution has not appreciated that we have a separate housing policy in Scotland. There is no Minister who is responsible for housing in Scotland and in England, other than the Prime Minister, and I am sure that Opposition Members would not have expected her to be here tonight.

Despite the fact that the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) told me that he would be ranging wide, I assumed that he would speak basically on behalf of his constituents and that his interest would therefore be largely Scottish. I assure the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft), who I know feels strongly about the matter that he raised — I have heard him on that topic at a rather greater distance before — the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike), who also has raised these matters before, and the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) that I shall pass on their comments to my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction. I am sure that he will note what they have said.

Tonight we have heard several Liberal speeches and, indeed, it was a Liberal-inspired debate, but, as usual, we have heard little about Liberal policy. We heard many bland assertions from the hon. Member for Gordon, but we heard no details or answers. We were not told where the money would come from or how much the policies would cost. We were given no inkling of the hon. Gentleman's policy on the right to buy. At least I know what the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) feels about that. Despite his party's fudging of the issue, he is clearly against it. On many previous occasions the hon. Member for Gordon has made it clear that, while he accepts the principle, he is against the practice. I hoped that tonight we would hear some explanation of what I understand to be the alliance policy which is that it would like increased local discretion over exemptions and discounts. I wanted to hear what the alliance believes is the correct level of discount, what exceptions should be made and to what extent there should be local discretion. Unfortunately, tonight I was again disappointed.

[Mr. Michael Ancram]

Equally, I hoped to hear the alliance say something about mortgage interest tax relief, which is of interest to many of my constituents.

Mr. Penhaligon *rose*——

Mr. Ancram: If I set the question, perhaps the hon. Gentleman will then answer it.

I recollect that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), who is the Liberal housing spokesman, pointed out:

"The Liberal party voted against increasing from £25,000 to £30,000 the limit at which mortgage tax relief is available. Under the housing and tax credit system which we would use to replace the tax and benefits systems, that tax relief would go—[*Official Report*, 11 December 1985; Vol. 88, c. 954-5.]

Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will say whether or not that is Liberal policy.

Mr. Penhaligon: The Minister knows that our policy on this is exactly the same as the Labour party policy. We shall restrict tax relief to the standard rate. How he can defend giving someone on £40,000 a year twice as much tax help with his mortgage as someone on £14,000 a year, I do not know. That is the record he must defend. If he would like to outline that to us in the remaining eight minutes—clearly he is not going to reply to any of the points raised—at least the House will gain something of interest.

Mr. Ancram: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for informing the House that the remarks of the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey, who I understood to be a Liberal environment spokesman, were not correct.

First, I shall deal with the question of rents which was raised by the hon. Member for Cathcart. He knows full well, and his English colleagues may be interested to learn, that Scottish council house rents are three quarters of the level of English and Welsh council house rents, despite the fact that the average manual worker's wage is basically on a par. The hon. Gentleman knows that in Scotland we have a tradition of low rents created by subsidies which matched low wages. Since then Scottish wages have caught up with those south of the border, yet the Labour party expect, not subsidies to those who need them, but indiscriminate subsidies through housing support grant and rate fund contributions to be given to all council tenants.

The hon. Gentleman suggests that the Government have been forcing up rents in Scotland. I wonder whether he noticed my answer to a question from the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) on 3 December who asked what the average level of local authority rents and fair rents registered for unfurnished lettings in Scotland was compared with the rate of inflation. The figures shows that between 1979 and 1985 local authority rents in Scotland rose by 134 per cent. Registered rents, which have nothing to do with the Government and are set by rent registration officers, rose by 174 per cent. That shows that in Scotland rents have been at an unnaturally low level and now they are beginning to move towards the level at which they should be.

The basic attack made against the Government by the hon. Members for Gordon and for Cathcart, on a Scottish basis, was directed at resources. I found it difficult to listen to the hon. Member for Liverpool Broadgreen (Mr. Fields), who suggested that this Government have slashed investment in housing. Since we came to office, we have —and I can give only the Scottish figures for this— increased annual capital investment in Scotland's housing stock by £383 million in cash terms and by 5 per cent. in real terms——

Mr. Terry Fields: What good is that to us in Liverpool?

Mr. Ancram: The hon. Gentleman laughs. May I remind him that when the Labour party was in office— and this matters to the people in Scotland — annual investment in real terms on the same basis fell by 37 per cent. I find it difficult to accept suggestions from the hon. Gentleman that we have cut investment in Scottish housing and that his party has a better record.

The hon. Member for Gordon accused the Government of what he described as bad housekeeping. I should like to explain to him some of the housekeeping in terms of looking after Scotland's housing that has been carried on by the Government. Since 1979, 140,000 new houses have been built. The number is presently running at a rate of 18,000 a year. That is a total increase in the stock of 3·5 per cent. at a time when the Scottish population was falling. The number of sheltered dwellings — a matter that was raised by the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) admittedly in an English context but it is equally important in Scotland — under this Government has trebled to more than 21,500 and the number of amenity dwellings has more than trebled to more than 8,500.

Mr. Maxton *rose*——

Mr. Ancram: I shall not give way as I have not much time left.

The hon. Member for Gordon made a number of other assertions about the public sector. Capital allocations to Scottish local authorities have increased by almost 60 per cent., or £135 million, over the past three years. More local authority dwellings were improved last year—45,000— than in any of the previous 10 years. More than 210,000 local authority dwellings—about a quarter of the stock —have been included in modernisation schemes costing about £1 billion since the Government came to office.

The hon. Member for Gordon and others also referred to the private sector. In Scotland, 86,000 tenants have been able to buy their own homes under the Government. The number of applications at present is more buoyant than it has been for a number of years. The proportion of families owning their own homes has risen from 35 per cent. to more than 41 per cent. Under this Government, more than 10 times the resources have been made available for improvement and repair grants, about which the hon. Member for Gordon criticised the Government, than during 1974-79 when the Labour party was in office. When the Labour party was in office, £55 million was made available in that area against £550 million under this Government. In the two years from 1982 to 1984, the maximum rate for repair grant was boosted from 50 per cent. to 90 per cent. and the transformation of the private stock in cities such as Glasgow is visible for all to see.

As a result, the number of below tolerable standard houses in Scotland was more than halved to 57,000 last March.

This year, when the hon. Member for Cathcart proclaimed that there would be reductions again in housing investment in Scotland, we have managed in the

public sector allocations of £40 million—that is 12 per cent. more than last year and well above the rate of inflation. On the private side—the non-HRA—we have increased provision by £28·5 million, which is 24 per cent. more than last year.

The hon. Member for Gordon rightly mentioned the housing associations. The Housing Corporation has been funded this year for next year at its highest ever level of £123·4 million pounds and that has been welcomed by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations.

It is clear that the attack that has been made on the Government's housing policy in Scotland is not well based. Our record is good, and the people of Scotland will judge it to be so.

Crime Prevention

2.29 am

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): I am pleased to have the opportunity to raise this important subject in the wake of relentlessly rising crime and after seven years of failed Government promises on law and order. In 1979, the Tory Government were elected mainly on a law and order ticket. We heard talk about short, sharp sentences. Again in 1983, law and order was a main issue in the Tory manifesto, yet today, seven years later, many thousands in Britain endure the fear of crime — the knock on the door they are frightened to answer, the journey in the dark they are afraid to undertake and streets where they are afraid to let their children play. That is the position today, after seven years of rule by the self-professed law and order party.

To dramatise that more effectively, if the debate takes its full one and a half hours, during that time 24 people will have been victims of violent crime, 114 people will have suffered criminal damage, 180 people will have been burgled, 384 people will have suffered a theft and 744 people will have been victims of some kind of crime. That is the extent to which crime has risen during the past seven years.

Over the years there has been a tendency to trivialise the description of crime and, as a result, some people do not take it so seriously. Mugging, for example, is purely and simply robbery with violence. When I went to school, someone who was mugged was conned. That is a completely different meaning. Old-age pensioners are beaten up for a few coppers. Break-ins to rob gas meters, especially the pre-paid meters that people on low incomes invariably request from the gas board, are prevalent in the area that I represent. As the gas meters are placed near the front door, they are easy targets. If anyone was to stop somebody from smashing into the gas meters, he would be beaten up, as many are.

I heard a case on Saturday in my surgery. Somebody told me that their gas meter had twice been broken into. With it getting near Christmas, they were concerned that the meter was getting full so they contacted the gas board and asked them to have the meter emptied. The gas inspector came along and emptied the meter. Because there was less than £150 in the meter they were charged £13 by the Gas Board when in fact they were looking after the gas board's money. That is what is happening to people on low incomes who have to have pre-paid meters because of their financial position.

When I talk to the people at my surgeries and go around old people's accommodation and talk to old people's organisations they always tell me that they want to see more policemen on the beat, on the estates and in the shopping centre. They tell me that they want to see the same number of uniforms on the estates and shopping centre as they invariably see on the picket lines on the television news. When I was a youngster in Jarrow, I can recall watching the policemen leaving the police station and marching to the various beats and staying there. They were always present and people felt much safer. When I was leader of the council in Jarrow we had a policy of always building six or eight police houses on every council estate so that some police were living in the community with the people on the council estates. Now, because the police are financially better off and buying their own houses, the special police houses are being sold off, so we

[Mr. Don Dixon]

do not have the police presence on the estates. How on earth can a relationship between the police and the local community be developed if the police no longer live among the people whom they are supposed to protect?

It would be simple to say that the sole cause of crime is unemployment, but to do so would be to cast a slur on every unemployed person. However, unemployment leads to monotony and frustration because of low incomes. That leads to solvent sniffing by many young people and in some cases to drug taking and violent crime. South Tyneside is an area of exceptionally high unemployment; it has the highest level of unemployment in mainland Britain. Solvent sniffing there is prevalent, as is drug taking.

The South Tyneside council has tried to combat solvent abuse and drug taking. The director of social services, Colin Smart, has worked hard to tackle this ever-increasing problem, but the council requires additional Government support. The social services department's resources are used to provide part III accommodation, home helps, assistance to the mentally handicapped and all the other services that it renders to the community. It does not have additional resources with which to combat the drug abuse that is prevalent in the area.

The local authority also requires additional finance to provide more lighting on estates, but the amount of money that it has to spend is restricted. South Tyneside's rate support grant is now approximately £9 million less than the amount it enjoyed when this Government were elected. Consequently, many of our streets are inadequately lighted.

South Tyneside has just begun a central communications scheme. Eventually it will cover every old age pensioner who lives in the south Tyneside area. When it is fully operational every old age pensioner will be covered by a warden system. If pensioners are taken ill during the day or the night a warden will go to see them, if they contact the central communications system, or it will arrange for a doctor to call.

I am told that the system could also provide all old age pensioners with a burglar alarm. The Government could help the council to provide such a system; its resources are insufficient, without Government help. If all old-age pensioners in south Tyneside were able to go to bed at night knowing that if they were taken ill a doctor would call if they contacted the central communications system, or that if there were an intruder they could use their burglar alarm, it would be a great relief to them.

There are great financial pressures on the Government regarding the police services, but I draw to the Minister's attention another matter that would help to prevent crime. Because of the soaring crime rate, private security firms are in great demand. They are one of the fastest growing industries in this country today. Many hundreds of small firms are being set up, and they ought to provide decent training and working conditions for their employees.

I declare an interest as a Member sponsored by the General, Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union. The GMBATU is very much involved in the industry and it has tried to obtain decent training and working conditions for employees. Most of the firms are in the guard and patrol sector. Given the ease with which firms can be set up, standards vary considerably. As virtually no restrictions are placed on the firms that enter the industry, the cut-throat competition from cowboy firms is having a severe impact.

Yet again, as in most walks of life, it is the workers who are affected. Earnings in the security industry are particularly low. Official figures from the Department of the Employment's new earnings survey show that many employees rely upon overtime to boost earnings. The average working week for all workers in this country is 42 hours, yet in the security industry it is 49 hours. Even though they work long hours, during the day and night, many firms expect their employees to rely solely on basic pay. This policy by some companies leads to a high turnover in labour, but because of the lengthy dole queues there is always someone to take their place.

The hours in the security industry are tortuous. It is not uncommon for a guard to put in 60 hours a week—indeed, some work much longer hours, because of the poor wage rates and the dependence on overtime. Of the 18 major companies in the security industry, more than one third do not pay any overtime premium. The overtime work in these firms is well beyond what in other industries would warrant premium payments.

Among firms that pay overtime premiums, time and a half is the highest. Extra premiums are not paid even for Sunday work. Although shift work is universal, only a minority of firms pay shift allowance. Of the top 18 companies, ten do not pay any shift allowance. Some pay only a paltry allowance, and one pays only 15p an hour. Yet in most industries where night shift is worked, anything up to time and a third is paid.

I am sure that some hon. Members are under the illusion that the security industry provides a well-trained service. This may be true for some firms, but sadly, in many, training is deficient and they rely totally on drill and discipline. Training is important as it helps to promote a professional image as well as bringing the benefits of good practice. Only half the major firms in this country provide formal training. Of the others, the length of training is variable, ranging from as little as five hours to up to four days. In some of the cowboy firms it is not unusual for a new man to be placed on a night site and left unsupervised for long periods.

Crime prevention is a partnership between central Government, local government, the police force and the community. People have the right to demand to live safely in their homes and communities. It is no good the Government telling the people of this country that they will safeguard the people of the Falkland Islands, 8,000 miles away, when they cannot even safeguard our citizens within a radius of five miles of where we are tonight debating crime in Britain.

We need a well-resourced programme to prevent crime and reduce the fear of it in our communities. We need crime prevention grants for home owners and tenants to create safer homes, better street lighting, and a more reliable public transport service. Through deregulation, people will receive a poorer public transport system, which will put more of them at risk when they try to get from or to their homes. The police should be brought nearer to the communities.

I have already given the Minister instances where the Government could help my local authority with additional resources to combat solvent and drug abuse. Additional resources would allow the local authority to put more street lighting on the estates, and to extend the central

communications system so that every pensioner in the borough of South Tyneside could have a burglar alarm system as well as warden coverage in case they were ill.

We need most of all — most people tell me this wherever I go—more policemen on the beat. We do not want policemen sitting in police cars at the side of highways. People want to see policemen patrolling the streets on the estates and in the shopping centres where many crimes are committed. If the Government can give resources to the areas which have these problems, I have no doubt that many people will rest safer in their beds at night, be safer on their estates and have safer living conditions.

2.44 am

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): My hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) is right to point out the Government's appalling record on crime. They were, as he rightly says, elected in 1979 on a "get tough" policy. If I had told people at that time that within seven short years we would have the fastest rising crime rate ever in certain key areas of crime, particularly theft, burglary and robbery; that we would have more people in prison than any country in western Europe; that we would have more young people locked up than any other comparable country; and that we would have police in riot gear with riots in our inner cities, in country areas in relation to industrial disputes and in our prisons, people would have said that I was exaggerating. Sadly, that has come true.

The debate is about Government measures to combat crime. I could easily take up more than an hour and a half describing precisely how the Government have made a bad situation worse and created the conditions which increase crime. The Government are more culpable than any other Government I have known, either Tory or Labour. I shall give a few examples that fit in, very appropriately, with the comments made by my hon. Friend a few moments ago.

I have said before that one of the things that the Government have done which will feed the crime rate considerably is to introduce a board and lodging allowance, particularly for young people. In effect, that pushes more and more young people into homelessness and drug and alcohol abuse. All three of those key areas have a link with crime. If that measure alone were to be withdrawn and changed it would at least slow down the rise in crime in certain areas.

My hon. Friend referred to the link between unemployment and crime. It is right that there is no statistical link between crime and unemployment, although there is a clear link between unemployment and imprisonment. But there is clearly a link and it is important to understand the way in which that link works. It means that if a person is just about coping with the demands of society, and the pressure is then increased, social, psychological or economic, that person is more likely to be tipped over the brink into other problems. Those other problems can cover a range of areas, physical and mental ill-health included, but they may also include crime.

Although there is no direct statistical link, there is now growing evidence that there is a link between youth unemployment, particularly long-term youth unemployment, and crime. Certainly I would expect a link between long-term youth unemployment and outbreaks of disorder. In some of the areas where we have had outbreaks of disorder, such as Broadwater Farm, there are high levels of youth unemployment. I believe that I am right in saying that in Broadwater Farm it was close to 40 per cent. In some areas in my constituency it is around 25 per cent.

Such levels of unemployment will clearly be a problem for the police, who will feel that there are difficulties with groups of young people hanging around the street corners during the day and night. That also, as my hon. Friend has pointed out, creates a level of fear among the rest of the population, particularly elderly people who are sometimes unsure and frightened about how to cope with groups of youngsters being rowdy or noisy during the day or at night.

But the housing issue is critical to all that. A few moments ago when I came in at the tail end of the previous debate, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland was saying that the Government had spent more on housing renovation and repair. What he did not say, of course, is that at the same time that Government spending has increased there have been massive cuts for local authorities so that they are not only no longer able to build but are also unable to do the renovation and repair.

One might ask what the link is with crime there. There is a clear and important link. First, there are people in inappropriate housing. I can think of cases in my constituency which much be multiplied around the country. On the Edward Woods estate there are high rise blocks housing families with young children. The children either have to play indoors all day with the parent or parents, with the consequent rise in family tensions, or, frequently and more commonly, they play outside unsupervised. In such circumstances it is not unusual for them to drift into vandalism, graffiti and crime. The area begins to run down, and as the local authority cuts bite even deeper, it deteriorates and not only does the fear of crime increase, but crime increases as well.

In that same estate, the Edward Woods estate in my constituency, I can point to examples such as those that my hon. Friend was thinking about in his area. In blocks of flats, entryphones and things like that have been put on the doors and even entry cards have been given to residents. Those things have proved quite useless, because in a matter of weeks, and sometimes in a shorter period, those entry systems have been broken, the whole of the inside ground floor vandalised, and the walls covered in graffiti. The only way to deal with things like that is to have a 24-hour porterage, but that cannot be done in the face of the cuts that the Government have imposed on housing.

I know that the Minister will be unable to tell us that the Government will allow local authorities to spend the money that they have taken in from the sale of houses. If he cannot tell the House that, at least he should tell his hon. Friend in the Department of the Environment that, if the Government would let local authorities spend that money, at least some of it could be used to provide services in high crime areas to reverse the trend that the Government have set in train.

In recent years crime would have presented any Government with a problem. That crime is not the result of moral degeneracy or because the British are more wicked or dishonest or violent than the people of other nations, but simply because of the movement of population, as people moved out of the cities and back into the country, reversing a trend that was going on for a couple of hundred years. In our inner cities that has

[Mr. Clive Soley]

produced people who, at one level, are rich and can afford the housing there, the so-called yuppies—the upwardly mobile professionals who can afford to buy flats or houses and then move on after about five or 10 years in the city, leaving behind a group of people trapped in the housing, not just in the inner cities, which are the most obvious examples, but in other run-down areas as well. Those people become trapped and the problems accumulate.

When one talks to employers in inner cities one finds that it is not rates that drive them out. We know that from Government and university studies, from common sense and from talking to people. The issue that drives out the employers is that they cannot get skilled labour. As a result, the inner city trap goes from bad to worse and as that happens the areas become run down and vandalised and the fear and the reality of crime become worse.

There is only one solution and it is long-term. It was applied by previous Governments, including some previous Conservative Governments, but this Government are guilty to an incredible degree of pushing up crime until it is almost out of control. The situation is desperate and the Government have used the police to cope with the social and economic consequences of their other policies. The only way to reverse this trend is to have a well-resourced crime prevention and victim support policy, and economic policies designed to improve the run-down areas, such as the inner cities. If we do that, many of the problems that my hon. Friend so rightly drew to the attention of the House could begin to be reversed and we might get back to the sort of policing and the sort of society that we had before the Government took office, at which time the problem was serious but not as desperate as it is now.

2.58 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): The one party that is quite unfit to criticise the Government's policy on law and order is the Labour party, because its record on these matters is atrocious. The policies and the nature of the Labour party have done more than anything else to lay the foundations for disorder and crime in Britain.

Let us consider the reasons for this. First, there is the policy of individual members of the Labour party. Far too many of them are profoundly hostile to the police and take every kind of opportunity to express that hostility. I am excluding, and do not make this charge against the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). It is not true of him, but it is true of Bernie Grant, Mr. Knight, Mr. Hatton and local authorities dominated by the Labour party throughout this country—not all of them, but many of them. They are hostile to and critical of the police and undermine their activities. If one asks Metropolitan police officers why it is that we experience a wastage of police officers in London, one of the frequently expressed reasons is that they suffer from lack of morale. When one presses them on the lack of morale, they say it is because of the way they are treated and spoken to by Labour authorities and those whom the hon. Member represents.

Mr. Dixon *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: I will not give way for the moment.

Let us go back to the middle or late 1970s. What happened then, when the Labour party was in Government? I will tell hon. Members. The police were ill-paid and deserting in droves. We had never seen the Metropolitan police at a lower stage of morale. We now have the absurd spectacle of those who presided over such an event parading themselves as the party of law and order. Then consider their attitude to legislation. Quite frequently, indeed usually, the Labour party opposes those pieces of legislation that might enhance the ability of the police to respond to the problems we have heard desribed. Take the example of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, an important Act.

Mr. Dixon *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: I will not give way for the moment.

Mr. Dixon *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: No, I will not give way.

Mr. Dixon: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When I opened this debate I spoke primarily about the problem in the area I represent. There are no Bernie Grants or the people that the Minister has been referring to in the area I represent. There are no local authorities or people on them who attack the police, as the Minister suggests. I ask the Minister to start replying to the debate that I initiated and talk about the problems I have outlined that obtain in the area that I represent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): This is an intervention and not a point of order for the Chair.

Mr. Hogg: I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman does not like taking the medicine. The hon. Gentleman will have to take it. He can either take it or leave the Chamber, I do not mind which. I shall tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a few facts of life about the Labour party and hon. Members had better bear it in silence or leave the Chamber. They can make a fuss if they like but they will have to put up with it.

It is interesting to note how frequently the Labour party undermined those pieces of legislation that enhance the powers of the police to deal with crime. We were dealing with the Prevention of Terrorism Act before the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) rose to his feet in an embarrassed state. It is remarkable that here, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which is generally regarded as an important piece of statute law designed to prevent terrorism, should be repeatedly opposed by the Labour party. It is a disgraceful spectacle. Or consider the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which went through 59 sittings in Committee. The Labour party spent much time in unconstructive debate designed to undermine the powers of the police which they need so very much. Then we had the little matter of example. Go back to Grunwick, or go now to Wapping, or go to the miners' strike. These were all deplorable spectacles of violence and abuse. Who supported them? Who was on the picket lines? Who, by their actions, assisted those who rioted and abused the police? Members of the Labour party. There they were, on the picket lines, rioting and abusing the police and sometimes, indeed, being arrested. Are we to believe that they were in some way friends of the police? It is preposterous.

Let us consider a much more fundamental matter. What is the Labour party's attitude to society? For far too long, the Labour party has preached the message of entitlement and has forgotten the message of obligation. It believes that people owe no obligation to their

neighbours or to society. For 20 years or more, Labour Members have sought to undermine the moral basis of society, and then they complain when the result is crime and lawlessness. The truth, unpleasant though it may be for the Labour party, is that consistently and persistently —certainly for as long as I have been actively engaged in politics — the Labour party has created the circumstances that have given rise to the present problems. They are the paramount cause. Labour Members do not like it; they protest. I am not surprised that they do not like it, but they will have to learn a few lessons.

The hon. Member for Jarrow wanted me to come to his speech. I shall do so, although I must say that it was not a helpful contribution. I listened to it carefully—perhaps I was kinder than I should have been. It did not address itself to any of the major issues. Much more to the point, it did not endeavour to give any solutions to the problems.

Mr. Dixon: It did.

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman says that it did. We shall both read the record tomorrow and we shall see who is right.

The first thing that we must understand is that the increase in crime is international and prolonged. It is international in the sense that we are experiencing the problems that are being experienced in almost every developed country, although much less in kind than, for example, in the United States. The trend has existed since the 1950s. The crime rate increased by between 5 per cent. and 7 per cent. in the 1980s, which was very similar to the increase in the 1950s. Between 1974 and 1979, violent crime increased by 49 per cent. Between 1979 and 1985, it increased by 28 per cent. I do not make a point of this, but I merely emphasise that the present position is consistent with what we have seen for many years past. To suggest that it is attributable to the Conservative Government is preposterous.

The hon. Member for Jarrow talked about fear and risk. Although there is fear, the risk is very slight. The hon. Gentleman would do much better to reassure his constituents and to take some time to explain to them that the Government have introduced a broadly based coherent policy — the first such policy since the war. Although the Labour party may not wish me to do so, I shall develop the five main elements of our policies. First, we are taking positive action on crime prevention, for which the hon. Member called, although he did not cite examples of what we should do. Secondly, we are increasing the resources of the police. I shall mention that at length, because the hon. Gentleman is very interested in it. Thirdly, we are strengthening the powers of the police and the courts while maintaining the safeguards for individuals. My experience of the Labour party is that it has always been anxious to resist any attempts to extend the powers of the police and the courts. Fourthly, we are seeking to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all parts of the criminal justice system, an objective which the Labour party spends a great deal of time seeking to frustrate. Fifthly, we are seeking to provide a more effective support system and reassurance for victims of crime.

The first element is police manpower and police finance——

Mr. Soley: Is that the first one?

Mr. Hogg: I shall take the elements in the order which I think appropriate, and the hon. Gentleman will have to bear with me. I shall start with the police. Since 1979, we have increased the manpower that is available to the police service, inclusive of civilians, by about 15,000 men. Since 1979, spending in real terms has increased by about 38 per cent.

Mr. Soley: That makes no difference.

Mr. Hogg: That is another aspect of Labour party policy. It seems that it does not want us to increase police numbers and spending on the police. I am glad to know that. I say to the hon. Gentleman that increasing police manpower and spending on the police make a difference, and that the Government are proud to have a record of increasing spending on the police and increasing the numbers of police officers. I am sorry that we do not have the support of the Opposition Front Bench.

Mr. Soley: Why is it that the police accept my view that increasing spending on the police makes little odds? They say that throwing police officers at the problem will not solve it and that they need other measures to be taken. Five points are being put to the House, four of which are entirely irrelevant to the prevention of crime, which is what my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) was talking about, while one is an empty gesture. The Minister is really saying that people should be told not to worry about crime, even though they are worried, because the Government cannot do anything about it, are not prepared to do anything about it and want to blame crime on the Opposition. It is a unique experience for a Government to blame their policies on the Opposition.

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman has made an interesting intervention. He is saying to the House that he does not believe that increased police resources make any difference. If he takes that view, I presume that it will become part of Labour party policy, if it is not already, to cut the number of police. If the hon. Gentleman thinks that increased police resources make no difference, I assume that he would adopt such a policy. If that is not the position, he is talking even more nonsense than he customarily does.

We have had an interesting revelation this evening, and that is the reluctance on the part of the Labour party to embark on the policy of increasing police resources. The Conservative party does not take the same approach. The Government are embarking on a consistent and persistent policy of expanding police numbers and the resourcees didicated to the police service. I hope that we would have the support of the Labour party, but that seems not to be forthcoming.

Secondly, we are determined that we should be in a position to fund the increases to which I have referred. I heard no recognition from the Opposition Benches of the Conservative Government's fine record of funding the police service. I have talked about the real increases which have been achieved. Let us consider the policy changes which have been made. As the hon. Member for Hammersmith knows, we have increased the specific police grant. Thus, central Government contribute yet more to the cost of funding the police service. When we consider the method of funding the police service through the rate support grant, the hon. Gentleman will recognise that we have made adjustments of the greatest importance,

[Mr. Hogg]

For example, grant-related expenditure assessments are now related to establishments. I hope that we have the hon. Gentleman's support for that great development.

Mr. Soley *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Hogg: We do not have the hon. Gentleman's support. I am sorry about that, but that is another example of the Labour party not being willing to accept and support constructive measures that will take us forward. At the same time, as the hon. Gentleman knows, there will be incorporated in the settlement a realistic assessment of police pay. Again, that is a valuable step forward. The hon. Gentleman will know of the concept of the unallocated margin and that police spending is exempt from it. In all these respects the Conservative Government are showing positively that they place great emphasis on practical ways of funding increases in police resources and not merely in the conceptual idea of expanding the police service. I am sorry that, in these matters we do not have the support of the Labour party.

Mr. Soley: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hogg: I have given way to the hon. Gentleman at least once. I am sorry, but he will have to wait just a little longer. We have concentrated very substantially on the enforcement and reinforcement of the resources dedicated to the police. At the same time, the Government recognise —I accept that the hon. Member for Jarrow also made this point—that crime prevention is of great importance.

Mr. Soley: I wish to ask the Minister a simple question to elucidate his argument. Twenty years ago, there was one police officer to every 603 citizens. Today, there is one police officer to every 390 citizens. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the crime rate has gone up dramatically. The police tell me that that statistic is largely irrelevant to the prevention of crime and might, in some ways, actually lead to an increase. What will the Minister do? Will he further increase the population of police officers? At what stage will the hon. Gentleman stop? When one in two citizens are police officers? Is that his answer? If it is not, will he kindly address the question that was put to him about crime prevention, about which he said virtually nothing?

Mr. Hogg: I was about to refer to crime prevention, but I was interrupted. The hon. Gentleman has fouled his nest once, and he shows a remarkable desire to foul it again. It is quite plain from what he said earlier, and even plainer from his intervention, that he is unwilling to see the police service increased either in terms of numbers or resources. That is an astonishing performance for a Front Bench spokesman. *[Interruption.]* He says that he did not say it, but his argument is that it does not make any difference. If that is what he believes, I assume that he will act on it. If not, he is in a bizarre position. However, that does not surprise me.

As the hon. Member for Jarrow rightly said, crime prevention is an important part of our policy. I am grateful to him for his limited support. It is an important part of our policy for a number of reasons. Much crime is opportunistic. About 25 per cent. of burglaries, for example, do not involve forced entry. About 20 per cent. of cars, for example, are not locked. Therefore, there is a great liability on the part of the citizen simply by exercising a little more care. The Government have adopted a high profile in the area of crime prevention. We are making crime prevention a very important aspect of our policy.

Mr. Soley: What are the Government doing?

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman intervenes again. I do not in the least mind his intervening. He simply makes the point that we are the first Government to adopt a coherent crime prevention policy. That is not a policy that the party of which he is such a prominent member ever espoused when it was in office.

Let us now consider the main aspects of our crime prevention policy. As the hon. Gentleman will know, there is the Standing Conference on Crime Prevention. The standing conference is a vehicle by which we set up standing committees and working parties to report on specific aspects of crime. As the hon. Gentleman would have noticed, last month we received the five working party reports on residential burglary, commercial robbery, shop theft and violence associated with licensed premises, and car security. These matters involve important recommendations, many of which are to be acted upon. We also commissioned three more working parties for next year to examine juvenile crime, child abuse and molestation, publicity, and young people and alcohol.

At the same time, we are working on new British standards on car locks and alarms, which arose from the Downing street seminars. The National Housebuilding Council has produced a guidance note to assist builders to produce more secure homes. Through the mechanism of the standing conference and the working parties, we are seeking to extract ideas and lessons to apply to crime prevention.

However, crime prevention is essentially a local activity if it is to be successful. I agree with the hon. Member for Jarrow that, if crime prevention is to be successful, it must be a partnership. It cannot be in a vacuum. It involves a partnership between the formal institutions of society— the police, and the local authorities — and individual citizens. There is no way that one can combat crime by using simply one part of that relationship. All of it must be involved if it is to be successful.

Again, the Conservative Government have achieved a considerable success. To start with, we have the neighbourhood watch schemes. As the hon. Member for Hammersmith will know, they commenced in 1982 with two schemes. There are now some 17,500. In the past 12 months, they have doubled in number. They are a positive way of tackling crime at the grass roots. People come up with projects, the relationship between the police and the community is improved, and the schemes are simply good for the environments where they are sited. They are an important aspect in crime prevention policy, as are the crime prevention panels, which are increasing in number and in importance as part of our deliberate approach.

The crime prevention panels are the catalyst that can stir and direct local action. They are organisations upon which we place great importance. The hon. Member for Hammersmith will know that we set up five project areas in England and Wales where schemes are being adopted and tried out for the combating of crime. We are seeking to learn from the projects and circulate that information to other neighbourhood watch schemes and crime prevention panels.

In essence, what we are seeking to do is unite the local community, and the local and formal institutions of

society, in a common war against crime. I should like to mention other aspects of our crime prevention policy, for example, publicity. I was pleased to be able to announce last month a virtual doubling in our budget allocated to publicity. Opposition Members will know about the Magpies campaign. Publicity is an effective way of raising alertness to and awareness of the issue of crime. It gives guidance and makes people more conscious of what can be done.

We also have the involvement of the community programme. The hon. Member for Hammersmith will know that about 6,000 places have been approved under the community prgramme, some of target hardening, to use the jargon. The hon. Member for Jarrow raised this point. We are improving lighting, layout and environment in estates——

Mr. Soley: The Government are not doing that.

Mr. Hogg: I was about to emphasise that we were doing that. For example, the urban programme is a vehicle by which we are using substantial sums of money for security on the estates. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Hammersmith may not like those facts. I understand that they make him uncomfortable. None the less, they are facts that he would do well to observe.

Some £6.3 million was allocated under the urban programme in support of a wide range of programmes to prevent crime during the current year. For example, the urban housing renewal programme is also a vehicle to channel money in ways that are designed to reduce crime and improve security.

I could go on in a similar way. Let us see where we stand. Of course, crime is a problem. It is a problem of international dimensions, and it is of long standing. Recorded offences have been going up for a long time. The Government attach high importance to the matter. We have increased and are increasing the numbers and resources of the police service. I am sorry to learn that we do not enjoy the Labour party's support. At the same time, we have enhanced the powers of the courts and of the police. I am sorry to have to say that, in these respects, our policies have always been attacked by the Labour party. We have pursued a crime prevention policy which is coherent and funded in a way that no other Government at any other time have done. I am sorry that we did not even get grudging approval for that. In matters of crime prevention and in fighting the criminal, the Government have no apology to make.

I return to the point with which I began: the Labour party has a great deal for which to answer when we discuss the problm of lawlessness. Hon. Members from parties that stand on picket lines, riot, and abuse the police and encourage those who use violence, or at least do not condemn it, are in no position to talk in this place about lawlessness, when they are, at least in part, responsible for it.

Great Lines, Gillingham

3.20 am

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): I am delighted at this unholy hour in the morning to bring to the House a matter which I have tried three times previously to raise. I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss with my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment — the Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope) — a subject on which I had extensive correspondence with his predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young). This matter has fomented a storm in my constituency and has raised again an antipathy to the Government which has not been seen since the proposal by Sir John Nott in the 1981 defence review to close Chatham dockyard and royal naval base — a closure which precipitated high unemployment.

The matter which I raise concerns many of the people in my constituency—the proposed sale by the Property Services Agency, on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, of that piece of land known as the Great Lines, which lies between Chatham, Brompton and Gillingham. The Property Services Agency proposes to offer for sale on the open market some 38 acres of open space which is redundant to the Ministry of Defence and has been for many years. This land represents a valuable "green lung" to the people who live in the most densely developed part of my constituency. The streets adjacent to the Great Lines are made up largely of terrace houses, built during Victorian and Edwardian times and occupied largely by the people who worked in the dockyard or in the engineering businesses along the banks of the Medway. This part of my constituency closely resembles the densely packed, back-to-back houses and streets of many a northern city. The Great Lines have been the local park for all those people for many years and now the PSA proposes to sell the land in a way that gives little hope that it will remain available to them for recreation.

The Great Lines, moreover, are an historic open space, having been the lines of fire for the forts which guarded the dockyard, one of which has been magnificently restored by a trust aided by community programme workers. Although not covered with the ancient monuments that the historic dockyard a few hundred yards away has, the lines form an integral part of the 450-year history of these great garrison and naval-based towns. The Great Lines are very visible, forming the sky line above Chatham which is in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Medway (Dame P. Fenner), whom I am delighted to see here, although I must apologise for keeping her from her bed. I am pleased also to see my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe). At the left-hand end of that skyline on the escarpment looking up over Chatham town hall is the evocative sight of the great naval war memorial to those sailors of the Nore Command who gave their lives in this nation's service.

I have had a lengthy correspondence with my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton aimed at persuading him to offer the Great Lines to Gillingham borough council at open space value so that the council can preserve them as a public open space for the use of my constituents in this crowded corner of the Medway towns.

[Mr. James Couchman]

I have been much encouraged in my quest by many individuals and by every conceivable conservation group. Many hundreds of people have signed petitions—sadly, not in a form that might be acceptable to this House, but none the less sincere in the desire not to see development on the Great Lines. Above all, my efforts have been spurred by members of Gillingham borough council, which is the very model of a careful, thrifty council. This year it has constructed a budget which, with the assistance of a kindly rate support grant settlement, has enabled the borough council to levy a district council rate of 0p in the pound. Gillingham has never built up the kind of balances that would enable it to compete with property developers who might seek to buy the Great Lines on a hope value basis. The only realistic price that the council could pay would be open space value.

On 10 April this year, at my behest, the then junior defence Minister responsible for disinvesting the Great Lines, my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee), visited the area and saw the situation on the ground. He expressed a good deal of sympathy with the concern of local people, although his duties clearly prevented him from abandoning the Ministry of Defence aspiration to obtain the best possible price.

I do not wish to be churlish to my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton, the then Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, but our lengthy dialogue on the subject of the Great Lines did not give me the feeling that he really appreciated the great concern that the proposals caused locally. He repeatedly offered the somewhat disingenuous advice that future development of the Great Lines lay in the hands of the council. That would no doubt be true, were it not certain that any developer buying the Great Lines on a hope basis would appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment against any council refusal of permission to develop.

Who can say what would be the outcome of such an appeal? Local interested parties are, not unnaturally, somewhat cynical about the fact that the Department not only adjudicates such appeals but is the Government's own estate agent, charged with obtaining the best price for the sale of Government land.

Moreover, there have already been development incursions on the Great Lines. The Ministry of Defence built an estate of married quarters and Kent county council purchased two sizeable chunks of land on which a large secondary school and a smaller primary school have been constructed. Local people fear that those incursions might be interpreted as precedents in a future planning appeal before a Department of the Environment inspector.

In recent months I have tried to be an enabler or catalyst between the Department of the Environment and the local council and local interested parties to seek a compromise solution. Discussions took place at officer level between representatives of the Property Services Agency and Gillingham council to see whether a planning application for a modest amount of residential development designed to be least damaging to the environmental character of the Great Lines could be framed in a way acceptable to the council, with the residual open space passing to council ownership.

It was felt that the loss of five or perhaps seven acres of open space would not be too grievous and would allow the PSA to realise a substantial sum from the sale of the development land. I found that kind of compromise attractive and the discussions took place notwithstanding the continuing hostility of many councillors, residents and conservation groups who preferred that not a blade of grass should be touched.

In the event, the PSA submitted a planning application for no less than 14 acres, taking little or no account of environmental sensitivity and without having achieved or, I believe, even sought informal agreement from the council. That greedy, predatory application has wrecked the carefully constructed spirit of compromise. The council is now minded once again to resist all development on the Great Lines and to look with an extremely jaundiced eye at any future planning application from the PSA for any of the other redundant Ministry of Defence land in Gillingham. I must make it entirely clear to my hon. Friend the Minister that I sympathise completely with the council. A sensible compromise could have been constructed but for the burgeoning commercial aspirations of the PSA.

I should like to return to a part of my correspondence with my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton concerning the responsibility for determining whether the development should be allowed. I shall read from some letters that he has sent me. His letter of 12 February 1986 says:

"It is PSA's clear responsibility to ensure that market value is obtained when disposing of surplus Government land and, to ensure this, the planning position must be investigated before sale. PSA's Estate Surveyor is therefore appointing marketing agents who will advise on the potential of the Great Lines area or any part of it.

The limitation of development on this site or its preservation as open space are matters for resolution by the proper planning process which, as David Trefgarne pointed out, exists precisely to safeguard the public interest. Whilst I can understand the concern of the Gillingham Borough Council, their wishes do not in my view constitute an overriding reason to justify a departure from the Government's policy which is to offer surplus property on the open market. The Council will, of course, be able to bid for the property when it is offered."

That letter was supported by Lord Trefgarne, who wrote:

"While I can understand the points which you and Mr. Jones"—

the chief executive of Gillingham then—

"make about reserving the area as an open space both for amenity and heritage reasons, I do not think that it would be right for me to interfere in the normal disposal arrangements which are a matter for Sir George Young at the PSA. Moreover, there is a proper legal framework for deciding on development proposals, and I am sure that, if any planning application were to be submitted for development of the area, the most appropriate way for it to be considered is through the due planning processes, which, as you will appreciate, have been instituted specifically to guard against development which is against the public interest."

That is an interesting thought.

On 24 June, my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton wrote again:

"As I pointed out in my recent letter of 12 February, development control is a matter for the planning process and, as local planning authority, Gillingham Borough Council have the key role."

That is further confirmation. On 22 July, my hon. Friend wrote:

"the PSA sought advice from the Agents to assist it in the marketing of Great Lines and it would therefore be inappropriate to publish any report."

That is a reference to the report that the advisers had drawn up. The letter continued:

"As I have repeatedly stressed, any proposal for development which PSA may put forward will lead to a planning application to the local planning authority. The normal planning processes and public participation will then follow. I am anxious, as I am sure you are, not to undermine the role of the Gillingham Borough Council in the control of development in the locality."

In a letter to County Councillor Ferrin, who had written to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in his role as chairman of the Conservative party, my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton wrote:

"I am sorry that I cannot be of more assistance, but planning control is a matter for the local planning authority and I must avoid interfering with that responsibility."

In answer, on 23 July 1986, to my asking my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to make a statement on the proposed sale, my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton wrote once again:

"The PSA Estate Surveyor is in discussion with Borough Council officials regarding the development potential of part of the property, and it is intended to submit an outline planning application, which, if granted, will benefit the disposal whilst at the same time ensure the protection of local conservation interests."

It seems to me that my hon. Friend's emphasis on the pre-eminent role of the local authority in determining a planning application means that if Gillingham borough council decides to resist all planning applications for development of the Great Lines, my hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will presumably uphold the council's right to do that and refuse any appeals against the council's decision. That is most important and I should be grateful for my hon. Friend's assurance on that point.

I also seek my hon. Friend's assurance that any prospectus for the sale of the land will contain a clear, bold caveat that development of any part or all of the Great Lines will determined by Gillingham borough council and that such development must therefore be considered to be most unlikely.

With luck, such a caveat would make the sale of the Great Lines to a developer, bidding on hope value, more remote, and therefore make it more feasible for the council to purchase the Great Lines at open space value. There is a great fear locally that a "hopeful" developer might purchase the land, fence it and allow it to go derelict in the expectation that the council would ultimately have to allow development in order to eradicate what, by then, would be an eyesore.

The Great Lines are much loved by my constituents as an open space. They will be bitterly resentful of the Government if they seek to sell the whole of this priceless and irreplaceable green lung for the development of more housing in an area which already has inner-city densities of development. Gillingham borough council area has an average population of 21 people to the hectare, which is almost twice as much as Thanet, the next most populous district in Kent.

No one would seriously suggest developing houses in Hyde park, on Hampstead Heath, in Richmond park or on Blackheath in London. No one would be allowed to build on the Stray at Harrogate or on the Town Moor in Newcastle-on-Tyne. My hon. Friend's own city of Southampton is well provided with public parks—East and West parks, Palmerston park, Houndwell park Hoglands park, Riverside park and Town Hill park, not to mention Rownhams, Lordswood and Southampton common. What would be the reaction of the citizens of Southampton if one of those green open spaces was suggested for development?

For the people of Gillingham, Chatham and Brompton, the Great Lines are all of those urban green lungs rolled into about 40 acres. Because the Army and the Royal Navy owned so much land in the Medway towns, the local authorities had no chance to acquire suitable land for parks and gardens. The disposal by the Ministry of Defence of the Great Lines offers a once-and-for-all opportunity for Gillingham council to raise the area of public open space in its ownership, but it can do so only if the land is sold at open space values, not residential land values.

There are many acres of redundant land in the ownership of the Ministry of Defence in the Medway towns, much of which is inferior to the Great Lines and thus much more developable. What should happen is that representatives of the PSA should sit down with senior members and officers of Gillingham borough council, Rochester city council and Kent county council to discuss the whole of the Ministry of Defence's land holding and all the likely disinvestments. I am certain that the local authorities would take a completely realistic view of planning applications on much of the land likely to be declared redundant, particularly if the integrity of the Great Lines is preserved by conveying the land to Gillingham borough council.

I conclude by urging my hon. Friend to call in this matter for his personal consideration and I should further like to invite him to visit the Great Lines and see the situation for himself. Much hope in the Medway towns attaches to our brief debate and I hope that my hon. Friend will not shatter that faith in the basis of fair dealing by Government. The aspirations of folk in the Medway towns have received some nasty knocks over the past five or six years and the development of housing on what they see as their local recreational park could well be one blow too many. The time has come for rebuilding their confidence. I am grateful for this opportunity to put their case.

3.39 am

Dame Peggy Fenner (Medway): I have come to the Chamber this morning with my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) to express solidarity with a colleague, my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman). As with so many other factors in the Medway towns, the larger proportion of the affected area is within the borough council and constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham — rather like the Chatham dockyard, which was always called Chatham after my constituency, but which really had nine tenths of its acreage in the curtilage of my hon. Friend's constituency.

We have a border interest in the Great Lines. Within the area of the Rochester upon Medway city council and my constituency lies some 25 per cent. of the total area of the Great Lines. The area upon which the development has been proposed does not fall in that area. However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham has so graphically described, the nature of the wonderful area of land is such that whatever is done on any part of the land will have a visual impact upon my constituents.

We have a tremendous tradition in the Medway towns of love, tolerance and great support for the services. Over

[Dame Peggy Fenner]

the years we have made many sacrifices in areas of land required by the services, to which my hon. Friend referred, that are scattered all over the Medway towns. I approve of and appreciate that it is proper for the state when it no longer requires such land to ensure that it divests itself of the land. I have had correspondence with the Department and I explained that when the state no longer requires land which has been freely given, used and accepted as land for the use of the services, the state has a responsibility to pay some heed to the voice of the people living in the locality over the way in which the future of that land is decided.

My hon. Friend has told my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State that Gillingham borough council is a very good Conservative council. I want to state that it is joined by a council that, over the 11 years of its government, has not raised the borough rate once. We are considering two councils that are very mindful of the public purse and well understand the need of the PSA to receive some recompense for the land.

However, I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will realise that the area is now regarded as a great green line in a fairly densely populated area of the Medway towns. I hope that he will come and see the site for himself and reconsider the compromise put forward by Gillingham borough council in whose curtilage the site lies. I hope that he will appreciate that we three Members with constituency interests—my hon. Friends the Members for Gillingham and Mid-Kent and myself—are here at this unusual hour of the morning because we have a solidarity in representing what we know to be the views of the constituents in our three constituencies.

3.43 am

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): My hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham has made a case that requires little elaboration from this neighbour. I do not have a part of the Great Lines in my constituency, but I have inherited from my hon. Friend the Member for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) the majority of the town of Chatham. The people of Chatham feel very strongly that the Great Lines is a part of the heritage of the area. I am here because, along with my hon. Friends the Members for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman) and for Medway, I feel totally committed to the defence of this patch.

The Medway towns have been the home of a wide range of substantial defence commitments for many centuries and they have been proud to play a leading part in the defence of this country, especially against threats from a Europe which, in the past, was rather more hostile than it is usually seen to be now. That is fair enough. However, one of the consequences of being so heavily dependent upon defence for a larger part of one's manpower, industry and landholding is that one pays a heavy price. When things are going badly for the country everybody wants to know about the area. They pour resources in, ask the dockyard to build and refit ships and provide large quantities of work. The moment the danger has passed, historically, Britain has always rewarded the armed services and the people who depend upon them with an extraordinary ingratitude. The consequence is that the Medway towns have always been one of the least prosperous parts of the south-east and, often, one of the least prosperous parts of the United Kingdom because their economy has gone up and down according to the fortunes of war.

Because we have had to pay a heavy price in economic terms, it does not seem unreasonable to say to the Government that when they no longer require some of the massive landholdings that they possess they should genuinely give back to the local community some of the benefit they have enjoyed from them. I believe that to be essential.

The dominant circular governing the return of land to the people who own it—in this case I have no doubt that the original owners are lost in antiquity—is circular 18/84 which contains the statement:

"Development by the Crown does not require planning permission. But Government Departments will consult local planning authorities before proceeding with development (including material changes of use) which would otherwise require planning permission."

If that is the rule that governs the behaviour of Departments while they own the land, it is perfectly clear that when they decide to divest themselves of a piece of land they should be every bit as scrupulous about taking into account the feelings and opinions of the local planning authority. That is really what we are talking about.

I believe it to be improper—I have had arguments with the Department before about small packets of PSA land within my own constituency—for the Government to have frozen, by their use of large tracts of land for defence purposes, the opportunities that the local planning authorities have had to develop the area as a whole. When it suits the Government to get rid of the land, they unload it in a way that, in effect, makes it difficult for the local planners to have any direct control over the outcome, because, as my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham pointed out, if the matter is taken to an appeal the Secretary of State for the Environment is the appeal authority, having been responsible for offloading the land in the first place. That is a danger in principle of which I have considerable suspicion. It needs to be looked at again.

I am a great believer in frugal housekeeping by Government. It is entirely proper that the Government should administer their resources competently and that they should try to obtain the best return for the country that they can. However, this area of Kent is taking a large overspill population and accommodating it, and it deserves special consideration by the Government.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham is absolutely right to say that, because this area is grappling with enormous difficulties caused by the Government's abandonment of the dockyard, there should be an examination of all the Ministry of Defence's land holdings by the two district councils and the county council, as well as of the land holdings which eventually will come to the Property Services Agency, rather than that there should be a piecemeal disposal of land on terms which would cut out the local planning authorities and prevent them from reaching the kind of decision that they would have reached had the land not been frozen for centuries.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will say that he welcomes this proposition and that he will allow the local authorities rather than my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to dispose of the planning consents on the Great Lines.

3.51 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman) on his success in securing a debate on a matter that is very dear to the hearts of his constituents. I congratulate him also upon having been able to summon such eloquent support from my hon. Friends the Members for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) and for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe). This is a sensitive planning issue, and I come to it relatively new. My hon. Friend was a little unfair about my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young). I have seen nothing that suggests that he was in any way unsympathetic.

Great Lines is an area of some 48·5 acres of undeveloped land in Gillingham. I hope that I shall be forgiven, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I confine my remarks to those 48·5 acres rather than to the more extensive area to which my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent referred. My hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham referred to it as an historic area. Indeed, its connection with Departments of State goes back more than 250 years. It was part of a much larger area, bought originally to form part of the protective bastions of Chatham dockyard.

With the formation and development of the Corps of Royal Engineers at Chatham, the Great Lines became part of its training area and was used until recently by the Royal School of Military Engineering at nearby Brompton barracks. When it became surplus to the Ministry of Defence requirements it was passed for disposal to the Property Services Agency.

Great Lines remains a predominent local landmark overlooking Chatham and it is dominated by the Chatham naval memorial. I should make it clear that the memorial is not included in the disposal plans. It is protected by a 999 year ground lease that is held by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The land is not designated as a public open space, but the public have rights of access across footpaths and over the years have been accustomed to use it as amenity land—for walking dogs, grazing horses, and so on. In April 1985 the Ministry of Defence decided to transfer this land to the Property Services Agency for disposal. Having done so, it is the PSA's responsibility to obtain the best price possible. That is normally done by putting the land on to the open market, with the benefit of any planning permission that can be obtained.

The background against which my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton had to consider this matter was set out in a letter from Lord Trefgarne on 31 December 1985 to my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham. Lord Trefgarne said in the letter that he could understand the points that had been made, but the Property Services Agency had been instructed to dispose of the area known as the Great Lines. He continued:

"In the normal way, we would expect PSA to secure the highest achievable price for the land on the open market, and I understand that they are now considering with planning consultants how best to market the area.

While I can understand the points which have been made about reserving the area as an open space for amenity and heritage reasons, I do not think it would be right for me to interfere in the normal disposal arrangements which are a matter for Sir George Young at the PSA. Moreover, there is a proper legal framework for deciding on development proposals, and I am sure that, if any planning application were to be submitted for development of the area, the most appropriate way for it to be considered is through the due planning processes, which, as you will appreciate, have been instituted specifically to guard against development which is against the public interest."

We are proceeding through those due planning processes at present. It is an indication of the careful way in which the PSA has proceeded that, despite having had the land handed over to it in April 1985, the first planning application was made only in October of this year. The PSA's estate surveyors looked at the site and considered that part of the area had development potential. Therefore they invited private planning consultants to look at it again and to advise on the marketing of the land. Those consultants have confirmed that 15 acres of the site has development potential.

Mr. Rowe: We are clear about the procedures which are to be followed, but I hope that my hon. Friend will agree that there are serious difficulties in circumstances where the whole of the planning and development of our area has been decided without being able to take into account any of the land that was required for defence purposes. Now it is up to the PSA and the Ministry of Defence to choose, at whatever moment they wish, to divest themselves of this land which has effectively been frozen over a very long time. The only person to whom the local residents can appeal, if they disapprove of any part of this piecemeal disposition of a huge landholding, is the Secretary of State who is responsible for the very agency trying to raise the largest price for the land. Will the Minister be kind enough to respond to that point?

Mr. Chope: I was going to respond to that point later, but perhaps I shall deal with it now. It is unfair to suggest that because I, as a Minister in the Department of the Environment responsible for the PSA, also belong to the same Department where the Secretary of State has overall responsibility for the PSA and planning appeals, the Secretary of State cannot carry out these roles in accordance with his proper statutory duties. It is because my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State might be faced with having to determine a planning appeal in relation to this land that he is not involved in this discussion about the role of the PSA. He is at pains to separate his role as the Secretary of State responsible for planning appeals from his role as overlord of the PSA. It is easy to suggest that somehow we will be judges in our own cause on this matter if it gets to an appeal, but I can assure my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent that that is not so and that the due proprieties will be observed in the event of the matter going to appeal. I suggest to my hon. Friend that, before we get anywhere near thinking about the question of appeals, the matter should be considered by the local planning authority. Indeed, as I understand it, that is what is happening at the moment. I am a little worried by some of the suggestions tonight that Gillingham borough council, the planning authority, has already made up its mind about that.

The private planning consultants were invited to advise on the matter and they have advised that there is a development potential on some 15 acres of the site.

Mr. Couchman: It is no slur on their integrity at all, but the planning consultants who were engaged to undertake the appraisal of planning potential are also substantial estate agents who have been responsible for selling off a great deal of land on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. That was, perhaps, an unfortunate choice. The report has

[Mr. Couchman]

not been published and it is not available to me or to Gillingham borough council and the appraisal was obviously based on the consultants' considerable commercial knowledge within the area of development potential. I am a bit worried that someone from without the area was not brought in to do that planning consultation.

Mr. Chope: If the Property Services Agency invites planning consultants to assist it, it is more helpful for the agency to invite planning consultants who have a knowledge of the area. If one invites estate agents from some remote part of the country to advise upon land values and development potential in a particular part of Kent, they can be in no better position than the PSA. I would defend the decision to go to local planning consultants and I am sorry that my hon. Friend has criticisms of them.

I am not hiding behind the consultants' recommendations. They are only a factor to be taken into account. What they conclude — my hon. Friend has confirmed this during his remarks — is that there is some development potential on at least part of the site. My hon. Friend has referred to an area of 6 to 7 acres; the planning consultants are referring to about 15 acres. The site as a whole is some 48·5 acres. There may not be as much difference between the parties on that as the debate might have suggested.

Following the obtaining of the consultants' report, detailed discussions took place with the borough council. I am concerned that some of the comments made earlier might suggest that the PSA was riding roughshod over the local planning authority in this matter and was not consulting it.

Let me refer to a letter sent by the chief executive and town clerk of Gillingham to the district estate surveyor of the PSA on 25 June. He said:

"The Borough Council have asked me to get in touch with you to open formal discussions on the future of the Great Lines and proposals for disposal, so that I can formally give you the Council's views in supplementation of the informal discussions we have already had. Since I am under instructions to report back to the next meeting of the Leisure Services Committee on 15 July, I would be grateful if a meeting could be arranged before then."

Meetings did take place. A letter dated 27 June, some two days later, said:

"I am writing to confirm the arrangements made by telephone . . . for you to come to this office . . . on Monday, 14th July, to discuss the Great Lines. I am grateful to you for coming over immediately on your return from leave, as it will enable me to report verbally to the meeting of my Committee the following day."

From an early stage the PSA and its district surveyor, after seeing the report from the consultants, entered into discussions with the officers of the Gillingham borough council. A meeting took place on 23 July between the chief executive and the town clerk, Mr. Glyn Jones, and senior officials of the agency. As a result, the consultants were instructed to agree a planning application with the officers of the Gillingham borough council.

My hon. Friends will know that when a potential developer applies for planning permission or thinks about applying for planning permission, a lot of informal discussions take place. Such discussions took place in this instance and a planning application was duly submitted on 27 October. A further meeting took place on 3 December between a senior PSA official and the new chief executive and elected members of the council. That meeting was attended by the leaders of the three parties, the chairman of the leisure services committee, the chairman of the planning control committee, and the vice-chairman of the development committee. It was agreed at that meeting that a co-ordinated approach to the development options could be devised, and officials on both sides have been working on a revision to the planning application.

I am worried that my hon. Friends seem to be under the impression that the matter was already resolved one way, namely, that the planning application would be refused. As recently as that meeting on 3 December the Property Services Agency was invited to go away and consider a revised planning application. I understand that that application will be placed before the council at a meeting in February.

Because of what my hon. Friends have said, I am aware of the strong local feeling about the need to preserve the Great Lines. The current discussions about the planning proposals recognise that anxiety. If the current proposals were to be implemented, it would mean that development on the visually prominent area of some 30 acres would be restricted virtually for ever—certainly for the forseeable future. This would leave the area around the war memorial quite undisturbed.

The Ministry of Defence and the Property Services Agency have a commendable record for paying regard to their responsibilities for conserving Britain's heritage. As my hon. Friends have said, the preservation of Chatham's historic dockyard is an obvious example of that.

My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Defence and for the Environment have jointly set up a trust which has the important function of maintaining the extremely important historic buildings with a view to attracting visitors and potential users. Another example, perhaps less well known, is the preservation work at Fort Amherst. In 1983 the Ministry of Defence sold this part of the original Chatham dockyard for ifications to the Fort Amherst Lines Trust for preservation of the existing multi-level complex of moats, batteries, a redoubt, a bastion and, in particular, a remarkable interlinking tunnel system.

The present proposals must be seen against that background. Property Services Agency officials have been discussing proposals for the revised planning application and those proposals are designed to protect local conservation interests while at the same time producing the maximum financial benefit from the sale of the land. In this way I hope that a compromise can be reached. It could be reached at borough council level and that would satisfy the desire of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton by enabling the local planning authority to decide this matter in the light of the interests of local people.

My hon. Friends cannot reasonably expect any person applying for planning permission to fetter his discretion to make an appeal in the event of that application being refused. That matter would have to be considered in the event of such a refusal. I am still hopeful that at the council meeting in February when the revised planning application is put forward a compromise agreement will be achieved.

If there is not any agreement and all the applications made by the Property Services Agency for development on any of this land are refused, notwithstanding that my hon.

Friend said that some of it has development potential, the Property Services Agency will either have to appeal or consider selling the land on the open market without the benefit of any planning permission whatsoever.

Mr. Couchman: Can I repeat my invitation to my hon. Friend? This is a very important matter, as there are many hundreds of acres of Ministry of Defence land within the towns. I know that my hon. Friend has confined his remarks to the Great Lines, and that indeed was the subject of the debate, but the other land is related and linked and does impinge upon this application. Can I repeat my invitation to my hon. Friend, at his convenience, to come down to the Medway towns and see some of the Ministry of Defence land—because this will be an ongoing matter, with the Property Services Agency seeking to sell more and more land? It must be done in a cohesive, not a disjointed fashion.

Mr. Chope: Especially at this time of the year I am not in the habit of turning down invitations. I would be very happy to discuss with my hon. Friend the possible implementation of such a visit. Whether that could be arranged before the meeting of the council in February, I could not say. I have visited the area. There is no doubt that, as the Minister responsible for the Property Services Agency, I would benefit from seeing it at closer range and looking at some of the other potential planning issues which may arise.

Islands Councils (Scotland)

4.11 am

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): The Montgomery report deals with the islands of the Orkneys and Shetlands, represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace), and the Western Isles, which I represent. The report was commissioned by the former Secretary of State for Scotland, was laid on the shelf and has not previously been debated in the House. I accept that the report is hardly a burning issue with other hon. Members, even Scottish Members, but it can be read by all Members with some regard for grass roots democracy.

My hon. Friend the Member for Orkney and Shetland has made valiant efforts to secure a debate on the report but has been defeated by the luck of the draw or, as happened a fortnight last Friday, by the first debate taking up the full time. So he will share my satisfaction that, even at this hour, we can make our views known on the Montgomery report.

The creation of the islands councils as all-purpose authorities has been a great success, even more marked in the Western Isles, which until the reorganisation of local government in the 1970s had been, unlike Orkney and Shetland — which enjoyed county council status since 1929—an adjunct of Ross and Cromarty and Inverness county councils. As a county councillor who had to travel to Dingwall on the Scottish mainland for meetings, and subsequently as a Member of Parliament who had to deal with both Dingwall and Inverness on local government affairs pertaining to my constituency, independence for the Western Isles was certainly a welcome development for me as well as a satisfaction as an islander in making our own decisions in local government.

The Secretary of State for Scotland at the time of the reorganisation did not allow the Western Isles island council to start in business with clear books. It inherited burdens unknown to other authorities and, despite the manifest improvements, the financial strains have severely curbed developments in the outer isles. One appalling burden was caused by the shameful neglect of Inverness county council to give a fair deal to the islands when they were under its jurisdiction. Had that council done its duty by the islands, the problems for the new council would have been substantially reduced.

The Montgomery report was one of the most useful submissions made on Scotland. I have been involved with one or two similar submissions in local government and in Parliament, and several of them have related to my constituency, but this is one of the best reports that I have seen. Even this long period after the report was issued, I again congratulate Sir David Montgomery and his colleagues on doing the job thoroughly and on producing recommendations that combine fairness, practicality and good sense.

I fully support the recommendation,

"that there should be no reduction in the powers of the islands councils and that the opportunity should be taken wherever possible to consolidate, develop and extend these powers."

I also support the recommendation that the Secretary of State should recognise,

"the direct interest of the islands councils in the welfare of the fishing industry in their areas, and they should be included in any local managment arrangements."

Recent events make that course even more desirable.

[Mr. Donald Stewart]

The record and local experience of the councils are sufficient guarantee that the vital needs of their fishermen and fishing communities would be administered in fairness for their economy and the conservation of stocks of fish. On cultural development, I welcome the backing of the report for adequate financial support to be made available to the Western Isles islands council to ensure that its efforts to promote the Gaelic language may continue.

I take issue with my council on the question of health boards. It wished to take over the responsibility, which the report rejected. Although there is substance in the council's contention that the Secretary of State controls the health board's priorities, it seems to me better to have a health authority fighting its corner on a special remit than to deal with health matters among the conflicting demands on council priorities and the financial restraints placed on them by central Government.

I am glad that the report recommended that the present system of attendance allowances should be replaced by a form of salary or a fixed annual sum. I took that view at the inception of the reorganisation legislation. It is clear that the time and travel involved restricts the numbers who can offer themselves as councillors, and that cannot be democratic.

It should be acknowledged that, since the report, the Scottish Office has taken action on some of the issues raised, such as teachers, houses and support for the Gaelic language—the latter, however, on a Scottish rather than an islands council basis. I support the submission of Western Isles islands council to the committee that there should be consultation about the purposes and contents of new legislation. So often schemes tailored for urban populations do not make sense in an island community. Accordingly, I support the committee's recommendation that there may be circumstances in which Acts of Parliament should include a provision to allow the Secretary of State to vary their application to the island areas.

On the frequency of elections, I disagree with the committee. More frequent elections would allow communities to register their views on the performance of councillors in a more accountable way. At present, in my island council, all 30-odd councillors come out at the same time. It would be unlikely that all would be defeated, although they could be on some issues, such as the closing of the schools, which arose two or three years ago. People from the different communities were up in arms against the local councillors. We might have had the strange position whereby the bulk of the councillors would have been removed and entirely new people, green to local government, would have replaced them. I think it desirable that the old system should apply, which meant that the old borough councils' section of the councillors stood for election from time to time.

The report wisely states:

"We would not want our conclusions to be regarded as final, nor should they necessarily apply for more than a relatively short period."

That is a statesmanlike observation that recognises the speed of change, even on the islands. The worthwhile labours of the Montgomery committee should be seen and duly rewarded by a plan for the Scottish Office to develop and extend the powers of the councils, which have amply demonstrated their ability to act responsibly with forward-looking initiatives for the people of the islands of Scotland.

4.20 am

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): I congratulate the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) on his good fortune in securing the debate, albeit at a somewhat early hour of the morning. His fortune is certainly better than my own, having twice drawn second place in the ballot for private Members' motions on a Friday only to find the first motion being debated until 2.30 pm.

It is to be welcomed that we can debate the Montgomery committee's report even at this late stage. As the right hon. Gentleman has said, much hard work went into producing it. It is the result of a good examination of the issues facing local government in the islands and it contains a number of worthwhile recommendations. I take up one of the conclusions to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, which is that the creation of the islands councils as all-purpose authorities has been a success. That is widely accepted on the islands and throughout Scotland. It is somewhat difficult to believe that the Royal Commission, under the chairmanship of Lord Wheatley, proposed that Orkney and Shetland should be the second or district tier of a highlands and islands region. In retrospect, that was an appalling and insensitive proposal. It is to the credit of the Administration of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) that they listened to the views of those who sought an all-purpose authority for each of the island groups. That alteration to the Wheatley recommendation has been proven valid by its operation.

Under a two-tier system it is clear that the islands would have felt remote, as the right hon. Member for Western Isles will recall from his experience as a county councillor on the old Ross and Cromarty county council. Oil development took place in my constituency in the 1970s and if planning had been a regional function, direction from Inverness would not have resulted in the degree of control or sensitivity that was necessary at such a time.

Having declared the island councils a success, the Montgomery committee observed that the opportunity should be taken wherever possible to consolidate, develop and extend their powers. There was a feeling after the Montgomery committee had reported that possibly it had missed an opportunity to do just that. Those who sit on such committees are aware of the track record of similar reports—it is true that they often tend to gather dust on a Government Department shelf—and it may be that by putting forward some modest and practical proposals the members of the committee were hoping that some of them stood a chance of being implemented. If that were the position, I venture to suggest that their optimism was slightly misplaced.

The Government's response was negative on the whole and inadequate, but I have no doubt that the Minister will inform the House that the Government accepted 37 of the 49 recommendations and had implemented two of them by the time that they came to publish their response. The alteration to the law relating to the sale of teachers' houses was forced upon the Government by those in another place, and was subsequently accepted. Most of the recommendations that were accepted were negative ones that reaffirmed the status quo, or otherwise were couched

in general terms that did not require much initiative to develop other than simply to agree to them. The Government appeared to reject the more substantial recommendations. Like all local authorities, islands councils have experienced the increasing level of centralisation that has take place in recent years. It has diminished the scope for local initiative. Local decision making is important. Decisions are better if they are taken with sensitivity to local needs and considerations. Very often, they are better if they are one's own decisions. There is a concern that many local circumstances, particularly in the islands, are unique and cannot always adequately be provided for or, sometimes, foreseen when the House passes legislation that perhaps, is directed principally to problems arising in a more urban context.

There is also a fear that many problems and circumstances of islands communities are not fully appreciated by central Government. The sale of local education authority housing was a case in point. In the Green Paper entitled "Paying for Local Government", the Government acknowledged that the islands councils of Orkney and Shetland required special consideration. When the Bill was published there was no clear sign of that special consideration. It has been explained that, as long as indexation of the non-domestic rate takes place, that will be taken care of. As the Government move towards their clear intention of introducing a uniform business rate, more detailed special arrangements will be required.

I understand that last week a meeting took place between councillors and officials of Shetland islands council and Scottish Office officials. Discussions are also to take place with representatives from the other islands councils. These direct talks between islands councils and the Scottish office are welcome. One of the Committee's recommendations was that the Scottish Office should consider whether there might be grounds for asking for a separate islands council view.

In his response, the former Secretary of State, the right hon. Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger), thought that the Convention of Scottish Authorities was the best channel for such communication. He said:

"The procedures for consultation will be reviewed with the Committee's recommendation in mind."

There have been recent examples of that. Perhaps the Minister will say more about how that has developed, since the Secretary of State has demonstrated a willingness to review the procedure.

The Committee's fourth recommendation related to circumstances in which legislation might be varied in its application to the islands. The right hon. Member for Western Isles referred to that matter. That recommendation was generally accepted. I would much rather the Committee had gone further and agreed to one of the proposals that had been put—that there should be an islands desk or unit within the Scottish Office, at least at first on an experimental basis. One may ask why island areas should be treated any differently. For a start they are unique in that they have single-tier local authorities. The very fact that they are islands makes their circumstances different. For example, on the application of milk quotas, in my own constituency, in Shetland and in Orkney the problems varied between the two sets of islands. But because of the very fact that they were islands problems existed in relation to the application of the legislation which did not pertain in other parts of Scotland.

As the Minister is probably well aware from his visit to my constituency earlier this year, transport links to, from and within the islands are special to the islands communities. There are special circumstances relating to the islands. A desk or unit at the Scottish Office could usefully safeguard the interests of the islands and keep a watching brief on matters that affect the islands. It could build an expertise on islands issues. That would help towards better, and, sometimes quicker, decisions.

The committee dealt with the finances of the local authorities in detail. First, it recommended that capital expenditure consents should be in a single block allocation. That was rejected in the Secretary of State's response, but I am pleased to say that there has been a change of heart in the Scottish Office and that that recommendation has now been agreed to. When it was put to the Minister at a COSLA meeting, he responded that there had not been any demand for change. The report in my local newspaper suggested that he was corrected quickly on that point by the convenor of Orkney islands council, who referred to the committee's recommendation, and the evidence presented to it. It is welcome that control will be lifted as from April next. It gives greater freedom for local authorities to determine local priorities, albeit on restricted budgets.

The second financial issue relates to section 83 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, which gives each local authority the power to spend up to the product of a 2p rate on purposes in the general interest of their area. A problem arises for the islands authorities. In mainland Scotland there is a two-tier system of local government, so the product for spending on the general interest of the areas comes from region and district, and is therefore twice as much as can be raised in a single-tier authority.

The committee recommended that there should be a change—that it should be double the amount in the islands authorities—but the Secretary of State deferred the decision until the report of the Widdicombe committee. That committee recommends that there should be a change in the basis of raising money and that there should be a population-based ceiling, although it admits that it would lower significantly the ceiling for expenditure for the Scottish islands councils. However, it goes so far as to say that there should be a double rate for single-tier authorities.

If the Government intend to legislate on the basis of the Widdicombe committee, having received representations made to them, I would ask that the position of the islands councils be kept in mind. I ask the Minister to say what the effect of the abolition of domestic rates will be on the provision, pending any legislation on the basis of Widdicombe.

The third financial issue relates to the standing consent that Shetland islands council sought for capital expenditure out of its oil reserve fund. That was rejected in the Government's response. The former Secretary of State said that there were

"fundamental objections in terms of our wider objectives for public expenditure."

The right hon. Gentleman said that, if he had allowed that standing consent, he would have had to hold back the equivalent sum in the normal capital consents. That is taking the Government's public expenditure control just a step too far. It is implausible that the Chancellor could manage to fine-tune the economy so much that the £7

[Mr. James Wallace]

million at the most that Shetland islands council could get in any one year from the reserve fund could have a major effect on the nation's economy.

The money is wanted for proposed industrial development and investment, building up alternative sources of employment, developing the infrastructure and providing services, particularly in the remoter parts of the Shetland islands area. It would be used to try to make sure that the islands were put on a secure basis for the day when the oil income diminishes. The amount involved may be relatively small in national terms, but it is significant for developments in Shetland. It is paternalistic for the Scottish Office to say that the Shetland islands council must go cap in hand for consent to spend the money that it has managed to accrue in its oil reserve fund.

The right hon. Member for Western Isles referred to the important issue of fisheries management. The islands are close to major fishing grounds. There is an important industry in the catching sector and in related onshore work in all three groups of islands. The fishing industry is vital to those three local economies. Rightly, the local authorities take a clear interest in it, as the Montgomery committee acknowledged. The committee accepted the arguments for greater regional management of fisheries and said that there should be opportunities for the local fleet to fish in local waters and ensure that fishing did not endanger stocks. The committee recommended that the local authority should play a role in local management arrangements. Regrettably, the Government rejected that recommendation.

Even since the Montgomery committee took evidence, there have been incidents in which local authorities, which have a considerable involvement in this issue, have not been properly consulted and involved in major decisions affecting fisheries—for example, the licensing of vessels engaged in catching certain pressure stocks and, more importantly in the past two years, the implementation of the Government's inshore fishing legislation. Clear proposals by the Orkney and Shetland councils, backed by fishing associations in the two sets of islands, were not given proper attention before the orders were laid before the House. I believe that that lack of consultation aggravated the councils as much as the fact that the proposals were not implemented. I hope that the Government will recognise the great need for the local authorities in Orkney and Shetland to be much more involved in a more regional structure of management of fisheries.

The local authorities do not have sole control over the protective services—the police and fire services—in their areas, but joint boards exist. The arrangements are not entirely satisfactory, because of the domination by the Highland region. I think that the Under-Secretary of State — the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Ancram)—will recall the early months of 1985 when we were batting on the same side and it appeared that the Highland regional council was trying to solve its budgetry problems by passing on cuts to the police committee. The effects were being felt in my constituency, with the threatened closure of police stations. That issue was eventually resolved, but there clearly has been continued dissatisfaction with the way in which the joint boards are financed. The amounts paid bear no relationship to the services provided.

Although I do not underestimate the difficulties involved in reforming the system, I agree with the committee's recommendation that apportionment of the cost of the police and fire services based on actual cost should be discussed by the boards, the local authorities and the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State did not shut the door on that possibility in his response. I hope that the Under-Secretary of State will have an open mind on this subject and announce any discussions that he has had to find better financial arrangements for the protective services.

It has been recommended that council employees should not be allowed to stand for election to local authority councils. That recommendation caused considerable disappointment. A single-tier authority means that there is no opportunity for council employees—for example, teachers — to take an elected part in local government, unlike teachers employed by the regional authority, who can stand for election to district authority positions.

Paragraph 6.34 of the Widdicombe report said:

"A more general ban on twin-tracking would deprive 3 million people of the right to be a councillor. This would not only reduce their rights as individual citizens, but would reduce the representativeness of council membership."

I hope that the Scottish Office in particular, in responding to the Widdicombe report, will bear in mind the particular problems caused by single-tier authorities on the islands and will consider whether there is any way in which those people who are effectively debarred from taking an elected post can seek election to such office.

In the past seven years the Government have increasingly centralised power through their actions on local government finance and in the past fortnight even in education. That is very much against the trend that we wish to see in the islands, where we believe that local democracy should be enhanced by greater powers. The Montgomery committee said:

"the opportunity should be taken wherever possible to consolidate, develop and extend the powers."

The Government gave general approval to the report and specific approval to that recommendation, but unfortunately their actions have not always matched up to their words. We look forward to much more willingness on the part of the Government to promote greater and healthier local democracy in the islands areas of Scotland.

4.40 am

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): I certainly endorse the final comments of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace). The trend towards centralisation must be specially alarming to those who represent the remoter island areas of Scotland.

It is customary on these occasions to begin by congratulating the hon. Member who has raised the subject on his good fortune in obtaining the opportunity to do so. With the clock showing 4.40 am, I am not sure that the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) will regard it as particularly good fortune, but I congratulate him on his persistence, which has made it possible to debate this subject on this occasion. The right hon. Gentleman is held in great affection in all parts of the House, but the very fact that at this stage of his career he finds it necessary to raise the affairs of his constituency at this time of the morning in a Consolidated Fund debate graphically illustrates the rather forlorn position of a Scottish National party Member. Not even the charm and

talent of the of the right hon. Gentleman can overcome the built-in handicap of being a member of Scotland's equivalent of the Flat Earth Society. With the best will in the world, it is very difficult to take the SNP seriously. The right hon. Gentleman has held the Western Isles seat on loan from the Labour party for a number of years. When he begins his well-earned and, I hope, long and happy retirement next year I look forward to working with Calum MacDonald, the future Labour Member, who will have a very direct influence over the policies of the next Labour Government towards the island areas of Scotland.

As has been pointed out, the Montgomery report is not the most radical or exciting document to see the light of day in recent years. As it contains no fewer than 27 recommendations for "no change", it is perhaps not surprising that the Government have accepted 37 of the 49 recommendations. Although it is not the most thrilling document, it addresses a number of fundamental problems, particularly the fact that in a single-tier local authority a large section of the population of the area is debarred from standing for election to that authority. That seems to restrict the scope of democracy in the area and something ought to be done about it.

In recent years I have visited all three islands areas and I fully recognise the very special circumstances and problems that they face. I went to the Orkney and Shetland islands initially as a member of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs when we were investigating rural transport and ferries. More recently, I had the opportunity to visit the Western Isles and to meet representatives of the various islands councils. It is self-evident that the islands areas are different from the mainland areas in very many ways. They have a strong case for special arrangements. Some exist, but there may be a case for extending them.

During my recent visits to the islands areas I have found that talk has concentrated on a range of subjects which would be of relatively little interest to people in mainland areas, which illustrates the point that the circumstances are different. People have been talking about the Crown Estates Commissioners' policies on rents for moorings and fish farm sites. We would not expect people in other parts of Scotland or England to express much interest in that.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland talked of local fishing management, and there are also the questions of land, the European integrated development programme and the vexed question of financing ferries and the road equivalent tariff which is complicated enough for a mainlander, without hearing people in the Shetlands saying one thing about it and people in the Western Isles saying something rather different.

It is well known that the Labour party has a strong commitment to helping and developing all of Scotland's rural areas, and to recognising the special circumstances of the islands. It was a Labour Government who set up the Highlands and Islands Development Board, and we recognise that there may be a case for developing the principle of it, possibly by extending the scope of islands councils in respect of economic development. I believe that that merits consideration.

We shall publish next month a document on agriculture policy. I hope that it will make it clear that we see ways in which to assist and protect agriculture in all parts of Scotland.

Mr. Wallace: Can the hon. Gentleman foreshadow what will be in that document? Will it propose the rating of agricultural land? If so, will he explain to many of my farming constituents, who are finding it difficult to make ends meet, how that will benefit them and the rural community?

Mr. Home Robertson: The hon. Gentleman must not encourage me to betray confidences and break embargos. As for bringing agriculture into the rating system, I am astonished that hon. Members who represent island areas should, of all people, defend the barley barons of my constituency and East Anglia from contributing to the cost of local services. It palpably would not make sense to levy a rate on the agricultural element of a crofter's business, and I hope that that is well understood by all concerned.

Our policies are in marked contrast to those of the Government. The free market theory of life makes little sense in England, but it is patently absurd in Scotland's island areas. A business in Barra or Unst cannot possible compete on an equal footing in an artificial free market with mainland-based enterprises. The policies of privatisation have been at best irrelevant and possibly downright harmful to the interests of the islands.

I shall skate over the rather sordid story of the privatisation of MacBrayne Haulage and consider British Gas. As for the advertisements featuring a rather implausible Hebridean Sid——

Mr. Donald Stewart: What has this to do with Montgomery?

Mr. Home Robertson: —how many Sids are there in the islands areas? How many constituents of the right hon. Member for Western Isles are gas consumers and can take advantage of the preferential share issue? I wonder whether the commercial approach of privatised industries is likely to make it more difficult to extend the services of such industries into remoter areas.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland referred to the poll tax. It is abundantly clear that it cannot distinguish between those who have and those who do not have access to local services. How can that be appropriate, particularly to local government in the islands areas?

The Montgomery report is certainly a useful document and it reflects the diversity of ideas about the future of the islands. We are convinced that all areas of Scotland, including the islands, would benefit from a more accountable, accessible, autonomous administration based in Edinburgh, along the lines of our proposal for a Scottish assembly. The islands have the good fortune of a single tier local government system — a pattern which could well be developed in other parts of Scotland. We would do well to study that.

I have resisted the temptation to go into great detail on the report, but I have listened with care to what was said about the specific recommendations in the report. In conclusion, we recognise the special problems of the islands areas. As remote parts of a remote nation within the union they clearly merit special attention. They will benefit from a Labour Government who will not have the inhibitions of the present Government about interfering in the economy to develop remote areas, and from the constitutional changes that we are planning to improve the responsiveness of all levels of government in Scotland.

4.52 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Ancram): With the leave of the House, I shall respond to the debate.

I congratulate the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) on securing the opportunity to raise matters which are clearly of great importance to his constituents. I was amazed by the speech of the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) and can only think that he fell into the Minch on his way to the Western Isles and found himself out of his depth, because his speech bore no relation to the genuine problems raised by the right hon. Gentleman. It was a sort of party political broadcast and I suspect that when it is read in the Western Isles the wretched gentleman whose name he mentioned as the Labour candidate will find that his chances have gone for ever.

Obviously, there are some matters on which I can wholeheartedly agree with the right hon. Gentleman and others on which we shall have to agree to disagree. I agree entirely with the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) that the creation of the islands councils has been a success. That is certainly the Government's view, as was made clear by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State in his response to the Montgomery committee's report in July 1985. Indeed, my right hon. and learned Friend was equally positive towards the committee's recommendation that the opportunity should be taken to consolidate, develop and build on that success.

I shall deal in greater detail with some of the steps that the Government have taken to implement certain specific recommendations. I can accept that the Montgomery committee also did a useful job in pointing up areas of contact between central and local government where changes could be beneficial to local government generally, not just in the islands. The Government have responded positively by accepting a number of the recommendations. The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland cannot use that fact in support of his argument that the Government's response to the report has been "negative". If, of the 37 recommendations accepted, only a modest number are distinctive to the islands, that means that the balance of those accepted have been beneficial to local government generally. That is a plus rather than a minus, and illustrates the Government's positive attitude towards local government and central government relations.

I know that the hon. Gentleman claimed to be disappointed by the Government's response to the report. Obviously, people do not get everything that they want, but that natural reaction should not be allowed to obscure the fact that worthwhile recommendations were made and accepted, and that changes have resulted. It was alleged that most of the committee's recommendations were in favour of the status quo, and that those were the only recommendations accepted. In fact, only 11 of 49 recommendations expressed the committee's view that some changes which had been proposed should not be made. In all 37 recommendations were accepted.

The first five recommendations were about constitutional issues. In view of the proposals that it received in evidence for what amounted to constitutional change, the committee decided to proceed by examining the relationship between the islands and the rest of the country. Having done that, it was not disposed to favour any change that might weaken existing ties. It concluded that future developments should be built on the present structure of local government.

The Government entirely agreed with that conclusion. In accepting the recommendations, however, my right hon. Friend also accepted the need for a review of consultation procedures and the need to ensure that statutory provisions are applicable in the islands in a way that accords with their special circumstances. We have taken action to ensure that every official in the Scottish Office is fully aware of these needs when developing proposals to put to Ministers or undertaking consultation on our behalf that may affect the islands. Direct contact with council officials has tended to increase because of new procedures within the Scottish Office to ensure that the islands are fully taken into consideration. Consultations are taking place at the moment on the longer-term proposals for local government finance reform. That again is very much within the spirit of what has been suggested.

A number of financial recommendations were raised by the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland. The first of these relates to capital consent, where the recommendation was that it should be given to the islands councils in the form of a single block allocation. At the time that the original response was given, there was only a limited use of the existing 10 per cent. flexibility and that was what was meant by demand. However, following further consultations with COSLA, it was decided that we should accept the recommendation not only for the islands but for all councils excluding the housing blocks for district councils.

Several recommendations were raised and question marks placed against them. Recommendation 11 deals with section 83 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The point is that the single-tier islands councils may each spend up to the product of a 2p rate under this provision, whereas on the mainland both district and regional councils may do so. The Government have not rejected this recommendation. Since discretionary spending powers were being reviewed by the Widdicombe committee, it seemed sensible to wait until it had reported before contemplating any change. The committee has now reported, and, in considering its recommendations, we shall bear in mind the earlier one made by the Montgomery committee. In the meantime, revaluation—perhaps coincidentally — has more than doubled the amount of expenditure that councils may incur under section 83. For the present, I suspect that the councils are able, if they so wish, to achieve what they were seeking in the first place.

Recommendation 12 was raised, and has been the subject of some misunderstanding. The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland said that there could not be such a degree of fine tuning and that an expenditure of £7 million could affect public expenditure. We work within a cash limit on the amount of capital expenditure that all Scottish local authorities may incur. Capital expenditure by local authorities is a significant proportion of public expenditure in Scotland. Within that cash limit, and working within that limit, a transfer would have had to be made had the recommendation been allowed. In all the circumstances, it was felt that that was not the right way to proceed. Part of the misunderstanding was that there were those on the islands who felt that they were not being allowed to use the revenues that they had received from oil. In practice, had the money not been present, the local

authorities would have had to borrow, so a direct benefit has been achieved by the islands in the use of those resources.

Mr. Wallace: Although I appreciate that the policy of the Government, whether one agrees with it or not, is one of cash limits and the control of public expenditure, surely part of the argument put forward is that public expenditure has to be raised and the Government usually argue that it has to be raised from the taxpayer. However, in this case, the money is already there. It has accrued from the oil companies. It is not as if there has to be additional taxation.

Mr. Ancram: I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman's grasp of general economies is not perhaps as strong as it should be. There is a great difference between the public sector borrowing requirement, which is what the Government have to raise other than through taxes; money that the Government self-spend, and public expenditure control, which is the totality of spending in public by the nation. It is the second that has major macro-economic effects and upon which any Government have to keep a firm control unless they are to find that certain unpleasant macro-economic results occur.

The question of fishing was raised by the right hon. Member for Western Isles. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State willingly acknowledged the interest that the islands councils have in the welfare of the fishing industry in their areas. Given the complex national and international considerations that apply to the management of the industry, it was our view that it was not realistic to think that substantial powers could be devolved to local authorities. It is understood that the islands have an interest in fishing and obviously that is recognised by my right hon. and learned Friend.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland mentioned the question of transport and internal ferry services. As the hon. Gentleman knows, I visited Orkney this summer to see what the problem was. The recommendation made by the Montgomery committee was that the Orkney islands council should take over responsibility for internal ferry services in its area. Significant progress has been made in that matter, with agreement reached on the timing of the handover and the financial arrangements to reflect the transfer of responsibility. There are still a number of matters connected with the handover that are under discussion and I would hope that they would be resolved in the reasonably near future.

Mr. Wallace: Is the Minister in a position to say when a decision will be announced with regard to the type of vessel that might be used for the north isles shipping in Orkney?

Mr. Ancram: I can say only that I hope that we shall be in a position to announce that reasonably soon. Obviously there were major considerations involved and the hon. Gentleman knows that on my visit I looked closely at the situation, not just in consultation with islands councils, but out on the sea, seeing some of the problems that exist in terms of inter-island transport.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland also raised the matter of recommendations 31 and 32 that relate to the Gaelic language. They could not be wholly accepted as they stood. However, regulations that became effective on 1 April 1986 have allowed specific grants to be made for Gaelic language education. Grants for the current financial year have been paid and applications for next year are being considered. I think that that represents a major step towards the objectives of those recommendations.

There is less progress to report on recommendation 35, which was about the apportionment of the costs of police and fire services. It is the Secretary of State's view, in not rejecting the recommendation, that it is not really for the Government to impose the arrangements for the apportionment of costs in the absence of evidence that a different system could be made to work at a reasonable cost without reducing efficiency or in a way that would significantly alter the present apportionment of costs. I know that that has been a matter of discussion between the various councils and we are awaiting proposals. However, it is a matter that must be resolved by the councils themselves and not by imposition from the Government.

The right hon. Member for Western Isles raised the matter of recommendation 46, which was that the present system of attendance allowances for councillors should be replaced by a form of salary. I have two things to say about that. The first is that it remains our view that, on the balance of the arguments, there is insufficient justification for treating the islands as a special case. The second, perhaps more relevantly, is that this question is to be reviewed in relation to all local authorities in the light of the Widdicombe committee's recommendations.

Whatever the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland and the right hon. Member for Western Isles may say, the truth is that all the proposals that were advanced on behalf of the island communities were thoroughly and impartially examined by the Montgomery committee. Indeed, the right hon. Gentleman welcomed that committee's work. Its conclusions were realistic and sensible. Although the Government were unable to accept all of them, it would be misleading to suggest that the special interests of the islanders have in any way been disregarded. On the contrary, they have been carefully considered and the Government will continue to take account of their interests.

Enterprise Agencies

5.5 am

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): This debate provides me with an opportunity to speak about a very important subject albeit during the early hours of the morning. When I met my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Employment at the end of last week I told him that I had some very good news for him, and I meant it. However, I should have told him that I had appalling news for him, because I have been instrumental in dragging him out of bed on Tuesday morning at about 3.45.

The debate provides me with an opportunity to say a few words about the Government's record in the small firms sector. During the last few years the Government's commitment to the small firms sector has been unprecedented. Six years of socialism led to over-regulation, over-taxation and a general overburdening of the small firms sector. It was completely demoralised. When they first came to power, the Government's aim was to reverse that decline in morale and, above all, to create a structure that would enable small businesses to be established and encourage existing small businesses.

There has been a plethora of measures, the most important of which are the loan guarantee scheme, the enterprise allowance scheme and the business expansion scheme. Never before has the climate been so favourable for the setting up of small firms. That is borne out by the evidence. There is now a record number of self-employed people, and a record number of people want to start up small firms.

There has always been a need for the right advice on start-ups and for "hands on" advice. Above all, existing small and medium-sized enterprises that might have run into difficulties need the right advice. Where did people go? They went to local accountants, solicitors or banks, but often they were overawed. They could go to the small firms service, but in most cases it was too remote, even though the local small firms counsellors were men of high calibre. A local focal point was needed to which people could turn for friendly advice and help. There was also a need for winners to be backed. That was one of the problems that had to be tackled during the first Parliament of this Government.

That point is summed up well in this week's edition of *The Economist*. It refers to the numerous measures that have been taken by this Government, and then says:

"These strategies aim to create a range of opportunities which small businesses may draw on, and an environment in which they can prosper and expand. Such aid is unselective: it does little to pick promising firms for special help".

From the beginning a local focal point was needed. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State recognised that need in his constituency, because he played a major role in setting up his local enterprise agency—one of the first to be established.

When my hon. Friend was appointed to his present position in 1983, his first priority was to expand the local enterprise agency network throughout the country. He pinned a great deal of hope for the overall small firms strategy on the local enterprise agency movement. That has undoubtedly been a considerable success and I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Minister for that. Will he tell us the up-to-date figure of enterprise agencies, the number of jobs that they have created and the cost per job? Of course, the Government, again to their credit, have now significantly increased their commitment to enterprise agencies. Will my hon. Friend also say something about the success rate of small firms under local enterprise agencies as opposed to those that start up in a non-local enterprise agency environment?

That is the national scene, but the scene in my constituency is important because it is a microcosm of what has happened nationally as we have recently had set up a successful local enterprise agency. When I became the Member of Parliament for Norfolk, North-West three or four years ago, it had a diversified industrial base, but, because of four large plant closures and the general reduction in agricultural labour unemployment was above the regional average. Now unemployment is mercifully on its way down. It is down to just under 12 per cent., and there is every possibility that it will continue to go down because real jobs are being created.

It is interesting that during the past five years every time unemployment has either marked time or once or twice gone up slightly, my political opponents have gone on to the offensive. They have attacked me, and I can understand why. When the last set of very good figures came out, which showed an underlying decline in long-term unemployment in my constituency, the Labour party, to its credit, shared my cautious optimism, but the alliance showed itself in its true colours.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): Where are they?

Mr. Bellingham: Although I said that I was cautiously optimistic, alliance Members attacked me. They have shown what they are about, because to them a fall in unemployment is thoroughly bad news. They have shown that they care only about scoring political points. No alliance Members are here tonight, because they do not care about local enterprise agencies or small businesses.

I saw that there was considerable scope on the small firms front, because Norfolk people have always been self-sufficient, independent and gregarious. There was already a strong small firms base, but we needed to ensure a greater success rate and also that the right advice was available. I decided that I had two big priorities. First, I had to do everything I could to assist the small firms sector and, secondly, to do what I could to back the borough council's campaign to improve communications.

Communications fit into the general economic pattern of what has been going on locally. We in Norfolk are fortunate enough to have a railway link to London, a strong industrial base, a growth in population, in tourism and in the small firms sector, and we are not very far from Cambridge where there has been a phenomenal increase in high tech companies. We believe that if we had a fast, modern and efficient railway link to London, many more people would use it and it would boost the economic prospects of west Norfolk. British Rail is electrifying the line from London to Cambridge. It would be an obvious extension of that programme to electrify it from Cambridge to King's Lynn. It is a chicken and egg position, because British Rail says that the link must be considered in terms of economic viability. It is doing a feasibility study at present. It has said that it is not too happy about the number of passengers using the line at present, but if British Rail provided us with a fast, efficient and modern service, people would use it. There is evidence from examples elsewhere in the country that if a service is improved it will attract business people, tourists and others.

The other important aspect of our communications campaign is the trunk roads. King's Lynn has always been a communications centre where three major roads converge—the A10, the A17, and, above all, the A47, which is our main link with the west and the midlands and the motorway and dual carriageway national network. King's Lynn is also the gateway to east Anglia, which is really the gateway to Europe. That is shown by the recent figures from the port of King's Lynn which is now in the hands of Associated British Ports. Since it was privatised, along with numerous other ports, its attitude has changed enormously. It is now one of the most go-ahead small ports in the country and is already breaking new tonnage records.

A combination of that and our diversified industrial base, and the growth in tourism, means that there is tremendous pressure on the trunk road network. I and the borough council have told the Department that new bypasses should be dual carriageway if at all possible. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Transport who has responsibility for roads and traffic came to west Norfolk the other day and said that he would consider each project on its merits. The good news is that since April the Department of Transport has changed its criteria for assessing whether a trunk road should be a dual carriageway or not. The traffic flows which decide whether a road will be a dual carriageway have been reduced. That is good news for all busy trunk roads, particularly the A47 and A17, the main arteries that feed northern east Anglia and west Norfolk in particular.

It is interesting that in the 1970 White Paper on roads, the A17 and A47 were scheduled to become dual carriageways. A few years later the Government of the day went cap in hand to the International Monetary Fund and major cuts were made in programmes across the board. One of the biggest victims of those cuts was the national trunk road programme. At that stage the A47 and A17 lost their chance to become dual carriageways in the immediate future.

This Government, on the other hand, have increased expenditure on national roads every year that they have been in office. During the past three years there has been an increase in real terms. When the Minister visited us, he said that £82 million is being or is programmed to be spent on roads into and in west Norfolk. That is exceptionally good news. The Minister agreed with us that he must look at every scheme on its merits, and we urged him to consider dual carriageways carefully for those particular schemes. If we can obtain a trunk road network with a significant number of dual carriageways it will greatly improve our economic prospects and at the same time boost the small firms sector.

When I first became a Member of Parliament, I saw tremendous potential for improving and boosting the small firms base. I also realised that there was a danger, because if one did not try hard to improve communications, a lot of the effort on the small firms front could be in vain. There was a definite need for a local focal point.

My hon. Friend the Minister came to my constituency not once or twice but three times in his first year and a half in office. He made it clear that he felt strongly that there was a definite need for a local enterprise agency. His first visit coincided with Sir Charles Villiers coming to address the local chamber of trade and commerce. As a result of his first meeting and Sir Charles Villiers' meeting, the chamber of trade and commerce, greatly to its credit, picked up the ball, started running with it and set up a steering committee under the chairmanship of a well-known local business man, Martin Crannis, and at that stage John Storrs was president of the local chamber of trade and commerce. They seized the initiative, and a great deal of hard work and effort went into the preparatory stages of setting up the local enterprise agency. An enormous amount of work is required. One of the heartening aspects of this local enterprise agency, the West Norfolk Local Enterprise Agency Trust, was that the borough council of King's Lynn and west Norfolk decided to become involved. It was always supportive. Some people may say that it is a mistake to get the local authority too involved in the setting up of an enterprise agency. That may well be the case in some areas, but in this instance the borough council was supportive from the word go.

When one has a pro-small business, pro-enterprise council with people running it who are also pro-small business, one finds that that local authority can provide the extra impetus that is often essential to get an enterprise agency off the ground. That is exactly what happened in west Norfolk, because in the final run-up to the launch, the borough council took an even more active role and appointed the chairman of its land and estates committee, Councillor Jeremy Bagge, to chair the steering committee, and he was the chairman designate of the enterprise agency. In all of this he was fully supported by the chief executive of the borough council, Mr. John McGhee.

Four highly ambitious aims were set out: to find 50 sponsors who would each put up £500 at the rate of £250 per year for two years; to acquire a set of offices in the centre of town; to find a secondee from a top firm; and to get a VIP to come and open the enterprise agency early this year. We succeeded beyond our wildest dreams in all those aims. Not only did we find 50 sponsors, of which I am proud to be one, but people were queueing up to become sponsors. We found an excellent set of offices in the middle of town and got a secondee from the NatWest bank, Geoff Sturgeon. Although the Minister kindly offered to open the enterprise agency, I have to tell him that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales got there first.

There was always the danger that we would not live up to these high expectations, but we have had total success in achieving our initial aims and in getting the agency off the ground. People were waiting to see whether it would live up to all the expectations, and, just one year on, over 500 people have come for consultations. One third of those people were unemployed. So far 50 have started up new businesses. We have estimated that, as a result of this new local enterprise agency, over 100 new jobs have been created.

It is easy to say that when a plant closes 300 to 400 people will be thrown on to the dole, but many of those jobs would not have been created if it were not for this local enterprise agency. The firms that have been created will get hands-on advice, and because of that they will have a far better chance of survival than would otherwise be the case. Perhaps the Minister will comment on that when he is winding up.

After only one year, the West Norfolk Local Enterprise Agency Trust is seen as the local focal point for help and advice for small businesses. It is seen by those who want to start a business or who seek advice as the place to which to go. We must maintain the present effort because there

[Mr. Bellingham]

will be an ever-increasing need for more hands-on advice for businesses that have started up as a result of help from this local enterprise agency.

There will also be a need for Geoff Sturgeon and his team to come back to some of the original clients to ask how their business plans have materialised and what new ideas they have. That is because one of the roles of a local enterprise agency is to tell people in fairly harsh terms that their business plans do not strike the right balance and that they should go away and do more work on them. Perhaps they need to be told to find another partner. I hope that Geoff Sturgeon and his team will contact some of their original clients and ask how their ideas and plans are progressing.

I should like our local enterprise agency and perhaps every such agency to play a greater role in helping existing small firms. There are many small firms employing, perhaps, between two and 30 people, and from time to time such firms run into difficulties, but their owners are too proud or too busy to look for assistance to people other than their solicitors or bank managers. People in those firms now know about the existence of this enterprise agency and I hope that they will come and visit it from time to time and, if need be, seek advice.

One of the main projects for next year is the setting up of the managed workshop scheme. This may sound fairly ambitious, but one of the main items discussed when people come for consultation is premises. Councillor Jeremy Bagge, the chairman of the West Norfolk Local Enterprise Agency Trust, feels very strongly that, if he could have under his control a managed workshop complex, he would be able to put some of the better and most promising clients straight into that complex and they would be linked up very closely with the enterprise agency. Perhaps the Minister could comment again on the concept of these managed workshop complexes and how they operate elsewhere in the country.

We are thinking also in the longer term of setting up a locally based business expansion scheme fund. At the same time links with the small firms service, with the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, and with other bodies, especially the Norfolk college of art and technology, and the local further educational college, are most important. They are being extended and looked at all the time and hopefully improved. This enterprise agency has been a great success. It is a microcosm of what has happened elsewhere in the country. The whole enterprise agency movement is one of the Government's great success stories. It may be that we have not said enough about it or sung it from the roof tops as we should have done. We now have a national network. The links of these enterprise agencies are growing all the time, cultivating improved and close relationships with local authorities, the small firms service and with other bodies, particularly in the towns and bigger cities where there are urban development commissions.

There has been a significant expansion also in the enterprise allowance scheme. That is another reason why I think the enterprise agencies will have an enhanced role. I saw in *The Times* yesterday that Ministers are planning a 25 per cent. increase in the enterprise allowance scheme and are to boost it by another 75,000 places. If so, that is very good news indeed. Many of the applicants on the enterprise allowance scheme will need the right kind of advice. Now, because of the national network of enterprise agencies, they will know exactly where to go to. Certainly in west Norfolk, anyone contemplating setting up on that scheme will be directed by the jobcentre to the local enterprise agency. There will be a natural link-up between them. It has been a tremendous success story. During the past six or seven years a significant number of new jobs have been created as a result of local enterprise agencies, and they have played a crucial role in combating unemployment.

5.29 am

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) for raising the role of local enterprise agencies, albeit so early in the morning. It is important, even at this time of the day, to discuss a matter that is close to all our hearts. The Opposition are in favour of enterprise, but I ask the House to bear with me while I examine the background of enterprise under a Conservative Government before I talk more specifically about how successful the Government have been in stimulating local enterprise and enterprise agencies. We are all in favour of enterprise, but the Government have been more in favour of it as a public relations smokescreen or as an advertising agency's buzz word than as a genuine enthusiasm for the qualities that created the wealth of the country during the past few centuries.

Enterprise in Britain, under the Conservatives, has become associated not with genuine hard work, with the entrepreneur, or with manufacturing industry, but with the smart-alec deal in the City of London, with asset-stripping, with needless wasteful takeovers, and with the growth of American enterprise over British enterprise. It has not been associated with the genuine process of wealth creation, where British workers and management come together with the aim of meeting the twin challenges of the market—providing the goods that people want at the prices that they can pay, around the world and at home, and changing technology. Britain must meet those two challenges and create wealth. The Government have answered neither challenge.

Under this Government, we have seen the collapse of British enterprise, not just small enterprise but large and medium-sized enterprise. We have seen a record number of bankruptcies. For the first time, we have imported more manufactured goods than we have exported—not just in one year, but year after year, we are importing more from abroad than we export. That is a course for national suicide in a manufacturing and wealth-creating nation. Such problems did not arise under any Government since the industrial revolution, but they have under this Government. While the Government's macro-economic policies have laid waste the economy, they have introduced a stream of palliatives and placebos to gull the public into believing that they are nevertheless committed to enterprise.

The backdrop of the operation of Government policy, certainly under the present Administration and the present Secretary of State for Employment, is gimmick after gimmick and small initiative after small initiative. Not all of them are bad. There is nothing wrong with local enterprise agencies. There is nothing wrong with a range of programmes that try to get small business going again after the devastation has been wreaked upon them. But there is every difference between a genuine commitment to

enterprise, to job creation, to cutting the waste of unemployment and a series of schemes with little money, spread very thin, around the country when we have 4 million people unemployed. Manufacturing industry has collapsed in many constituencies.

The facts of the matter are that the Government's response has been absolutely pitiful. It was completely inadequate to help the desperate needs, the collapse in manufacturing industry, job losses and rising unemployment. Listening to the hon. Member for Norfolk, North-West one would not believe that we had nearly 4 million unemployed—4·5 million, if the Government had not fiddled the figures time after time. In some parts of the nation it is common to find 25 per cent. or more male unemployment. That is unacceptable, but it is the background that provides the reality, which overshadows the pathetic range of responses from the Government.

It is difficult to ascertain the contribution that the local enterprise agencies have made. The hon. Member has introduced this debate and later on Tuesday he will be asking a question of the Paymaster General to ascertain how many enterprises have been set up under any of the Government's policies. I shall be interested to hear the Paymaster General's response. The *Official Report* shows that, time after time, when the Secretary of State or the Paymaster General are asked how many jobs local enterprise has created, they say that they cannot really say. They do not really know how many local enterprise agencies there are. The list of agencies in the Library shows that many organisations are duplicated. The greatest number that I have seen reported is 326.

Mr. Bellingham: Surely one of the reasons why it is difficult to obtain immediate statistics is that there is a significant increase in the number of small firms that are being set up. Some firms do fail, but there is a record net increase in small business and firms that are setting themselves up in business. That fact cannot be disputed.

Mr. Sheerman: I know that the hon. Gentleman is a great expert on business. He is a barrister at law and a member of Lloyd's. He is associated with property and, I believe, horses. I am talking about manufacturing industry and genuine service industry that provide jobs, which I believe are important from wherever they come. I represent an industrial constituency that has had its fair share of the devastation brought about by the Government's unemployment policies.

The facts speak for themselves. Since 1979, when the Government came to power, we have seen a decline in industrial output of 25 per cent. and a decline in Britain's ability to create wealth. When there is mass unemployment and a range of schemes that encourage the unemployed to become self-employed, we see a growth in the number of small businesses and self-employed. That is a fact of life, but I challenge whether that sort of growth and response is anywhere near adequate to meet the devastation that we see under the Government's policies.

The Government provide booklet after booklet and scheme after scheme, but little hard cash is made available. I ask the Minister how many local enterprise agencies are in the network and how much cash is provided to them beyond the pathetic £2·5 million grant scheme which was announced earlier this year? How effective has the loan guarantee scheme been in helping local enterprise? I expect that the Minister will point to examples, and perhaps even to my constituency. I do not need him to tell me that in the Huddersfield area there is the Kirkless Venture Trust. That is more to the credit of the local chamber of commerce and Keith Welton, the director of that enterprise, than to the Government's policies.

Local enterprise needs to be local and it needs to be based on a genuine participation between the Govennment, local government and local enterprise. As we have seen the Government's attempts to stimulate local enterprise agencies, so we have seen the Government cynically attempting to destroy the foundations of local democracy. We must balance what has been added to enterprise and enterprise agencies by giving a little—as I said, £2·5 million was announced earlier this year in the form of a grant scheme—as opposed to the destruction that has been wrought by a Government who have sought to destroy local government and the local enterprise that it supports.

With the Government's legislation that abolished the metropolitan counties, we saw the destruction of a range of initiatives and programmes that were successfully creating small business, small enterprise and co-operatives. They were doing a job that increasingly was becoming something of which to be proud. The Minister will know that local government enterprise initiatives have been more successful than central Government enterprise initiatives. They have provided jobs more cheaply and more effectively—for three reasons.

First, they put in more commitment. Secondly, they know more about their local patch. Thirdly, they base their local operation—surprising as it may be to the Government—on a genuine participation between the public and private sectors. Wherever we see a local government that has a radical policy towards combating unemployment by setting up enterprise through agencies and stimulating enterprise at every level, we see success, and at a low price.

Central Government weakens the basis of operation of local government. Time and again we see rate capping, for example through the abolition of the metropolitan counties, and every kind of strategy that the Government can devise. Decent, genuine local enterprise agencies run by local authorities have been hampered and destroyed. Some of the boldest and most imaginative schemes have come out of local government. Why was the hon. Gentleman a Minister when those initiatives were stifled? Local enterprise and small business are of vital importance. Opposition Members say, "Do not let us get it out of perspective." The macro-economic picture is a dismal one. Whatever the Government may come up with in terms of numerous small policies with small money, it is small beer in terms of the challenge that the country faces.

After the next election, the incoming Labour Government will ensure that there is genuine partnership between the public and private sectors and between national democracy and local democracies. A Labour Government will ensure that the right macro-economic climate exists for all businesses—large, medium and small—to grow and to employ people.

The hour is late, so I shall not detain the House any longer. I hope that the Minister will answer some of the questions that the country asks about genuine job creation and genuine enterprise stimulation.

5.44 am

Mr. Colin Shepherd (Hereford): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) on introducing this important and interesting subject of enterprise agencies, and, furthermore, on the eloquence with which he did so and explained the beneficent effects on north-west Norfolk.

I was disappointed but not surprised by the thoroughly curmudgeonly attitude of the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) to the debate. I have seldom heard a more negative contribution. It was thoroughly, destructively, negative. At one stage I thought that he had gone on to auto-pilot. The phrases ground out one after the other. They trickled out in a magnificent stew. They were tried and tested old friends——

Mr. Michael Cocks (Bristol, South): There is no one in the Press Gallery. Get on with it.

Mr. Shepherd: If the right hon. Gentleman would like it, there is breakfast outside, and he can come back in a few minutes.

The hon. Member for Huddersfield is a member of a party whose Government ended up, come 1979, presiding over the most highly institutionalised, rigid and unimaginative industry that this country has seen. I am from small industry; a small business. That is my background. That is the base from which I like to look at things.

In 1979, we had massively hidden overemployment. All sorts of companies were carrying labour that they eventually recognised they could not afford. They had to make the necessary investment, which they had been discouraged from doing by previous policies, and it led inevitably to a shake-out of employment. That is the point at which I began to become worried.

In 1982 I said to all the leading employers in my constituency over the telephone, "Let's face it. With your investment programmes, your main interest is losing people because you can't afford to have the people and the investment." All the companies concurred with that view. I said, "You can do something about that. If you put people out because of the investment that you have been encouraged to carry out, you can help towards setting up an enterprise agency to encourage the formation of new business." I am pleased to say that a substantial number of them said yes.

Therefore, back in December 1982, we had the first of a series of meetings, accompanied by various bank managers, the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas and representatives from the two local authorities involved. Members of industry came together under my initial chairmanship and discussed the setting up of an enterprise agency. As a consequence, we got an enterprise agency steering committee, and in 1983 my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary came to open the agency.

That is three years ago. I do not know to what extent my hon. Friend has been able to keep tabs on progress. The enterprise agency has been responsible for helping into existence—I think that that is the right way round to put it—90 new businesses, which is a conservative and cautious estimate. They are now up and flying. It is not just a matter of how many have gone out of the door, put down their money and started trading. These are the ones that the director of the enterprise agency considers are viable—I hate that word, and the next word—ongoing, businesses. They are working according to their business plan and doing a good job.

Furthermore, another 200 businesses would not be in business now if it were not for the counselling advice from the enterprise agency. That is a magnificent contribution towards employment, the employment so sneeringly dismissed by the hon. Member for Huddersfield——

Mr. Sheerman: No.

Mr. Shepherd: I feel that it was sneeringly dismissed. He says that it does not matter and that it is irrelevant. To Herefordshire, it is relevant, it matters. Many others have not got into trouble because their shaky business proposals have been examined and analysed. They have been told that a certain course of action will lead to disaster. Many people who may not be in business now have cause to be thankful to the enterprise agency because they have avoided financial disaster. Consequently, there is a lower rate of business failures. That is good news. I pay tribute to the manner is which the director has put together a tight organisation and to his staff. As my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West said, some people who are overawed by the big faceless agencies can talk over their business problems with the enterprise agency.

Alas, nothing comes without its problems. It is a pity that the biggest problem of such an exciting activity is the need to overcome the suspicion of existing businesses that, if they help, they will somehow cut their own throats by spawning competition. This is a sad, human point, but it is important. It is true that there is an element of justification in it. Our enterprise agency has found that about one in 40 businesses are capable of being considered as competitive with other businesses. It is a reasonable chance for a business to take—a one in 40 chance that it will not spawn competition.

Most businesses like to think of themselves as lean, efficient and effective, so what have they to fear from competition? Only if they are slack does the market give rise to the slot for competition. If businesses are tight and lean, there will not be that market opportunity. They might not, therefore, need to worry too much but they must look to their laurels.

Surely the crunch is that every business needs suppliers as well as customers. Each new business brings with it new opportunities for supply by existing businesses, even if it is only to the extent of greater spending power by consumers in the locale—for the bigger companies—or a lower rate of unemployment, and therefore greater activity in the economy. I must confess to being disappointed at the attitude of some well-established companies and businesses—large and small—which take a negative view. I sometimes feel that it is a case of "Pull up the trapdoor, Jack, I am all right." That is a pity. More and wider economic activity must be in the long-term interests of everyone. Enterprise agencies are good value for money, the more so when the money comes predominantly from the private sector. I tremble in my boots at the concept of this enforced partnership between the public and the private sectors. The organic partnership is that which originated in the private sector and which is participated in by the public sector, but never dominated by it, because that is when the dead hand of Socialism takes over.

Mr. Sheerman: Who is on auto-pilot now?

Mr. Shepherd: I thought that hon. Members might like to hear what auto-pilot was about. An enterprise agency should be a facilitating agency, the emphasis being on the word "agency". An agent is one who does something for another.

I have some worries. I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West on one point, as I palpably do with the hon. Member for Huddersfield. Enterprise agencies should be in the business not of procuring or managing workshop space or offering training courses but of pointing people towards workshop space and the training to their requirements. If one follows the other course, the enterprise agency becomes a self-perpetuating monster—an enterprise built for its own sake. An enterprise agency's real value is that it keeps close to the grass roots of industry, and does not lose its persepective as it starts, in effect, to build up a business of its own. Some inner city agencies have almost become businesses in their own right, except that invoices are never raised, with nerve-racking false economies and inefficiencies creeping in, not to mention the even more worrying siren calls for more money that we have heard again today. The purpose of an enterprise agency is to be a facilitator, not a creator in its own right.

Mr. Sheerman: The need is not just for more money, because the scale of the problem is so great, but for more commitment as well if enterprise agencies are to work. At present there are only 166 secondees from industry. Does the hon. Gentleman really think that that is sufficient to put British enterprise back on the rails?

Mr. Shepherd: I take the point to some extent, but everything does not lie with secondees. We were fortunate enough to start with a secondee, but we found our own director whom we now fund and pay. That director is remarkably good and I have no doubt that when the time comes we shall be able to find another. So everything need not hang on secondees, although a super job has been done in promoting them. Other people can be found.

The purpose of enterprise agencies is not to build empires but to help other people. Rivers are made out of raindrops, so let us not worry about the number of enterprise agencies. Let us just have a few more and start building a few rivers. In the task of helping, enterprise agencies need to be the creatures of the business community, not institutions provided by it. As I have said, they need comparatively small amounts of money. That does not mean that matching finance from the Government is not warmly welcomed, but the need is not so much for more cash as for a wider base of business interest and understanding to bring in the 50 quids and 100 quids in subscription support and provide the healthly base of operations that is so important.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will consider this carefully, as it is a matter of the way in which he deploys resources. The need is to generate far greater enthusiasm in the business community. To that end, perhaps he will consider the production of another booklet along the lines of "Action for Jobs" setting out both sides of the task of an enterprise agency in terms of basic principles. I hope that he will also promote the use of public service television slots. I do not see why commercial television companies should not be approached on a national or regional basis, as they could help a great deal, rather as Central Television does with its job-finder service in the west midlands. Those slots could be used to make it clear that the friendly local enterprise agency is a good place to go for help if one is feeling nervous or one's business seems shaky. As my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West said, that would help in the process of communications and understanding. It would get the message across that the enterprise agency is able and willing to help, in absolute confidence, existing businesses as well as new start-ups.

There is an immense range of activities, but enterprise agencies do not have massive resources for self-promotion. It is the concept which is so desirable and which should be promoted. That is where my hon. Friend the Minister could be very helpful at remarkably low cost—and to good effect in terms of developing employment.

6 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) for instigating this debate. The House will be grateful to him for playing such a significant part in forming an enterprise agency in his constituency, which he was kind enough to say that I had been associated with in the early stages. I expected to be invited to open it, but when I heard that my hon. Friend had invited the Prince of Wales I quickly stepped back. I know my place.

I was amazed when my hon. Friend told me in the Library that he had invited no less a person than the Prince of Wales, who accepted shortly afterwards. That was in the early stages of the Prince of Wales' involvement with local enterprise agencies. Since then, he has become president of Business in the Community—the sponsoring umbrella organisation that is responsible for spawning and encouraging enterprise agencies. He has played a distinguished role in that capacity. A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of hearing the Prince of Wales speak at Pebble Mill on small firms. I was impressed by his speech and knowledge of enterprise agencies.

Perhaps it was fortunate, in view of the speech of the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman), that my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West started by saying that the Labour Government did not seem to express any interest in the small firms scene. When the Conservatives came to power in 1979, we faced an uphill struggle trying to inject into the economy the enterprise and entrepreneurship, which everyone recognises in the economy now.

There was such a decline in the number of self-employed people under the Labour Government that it has taken us longer than it might to put matters right, to steer towards an enterprising economy, to stimulate small firms and to encourage more self-employment. My hon. Friend was right to draw attention to the three significant schemes which have assisted the small firms sector more than anything else—the enterprise allowance scheme, the business expansion scheme and the loan guarantee scheme.

As a result of this Government's concentration on the small firms sector, we now have the highest level of self-employment for 60 years and the highest net increase in small businesses in recorded history. Before local enterprise agencies came along, people went to their local authorities, which the hon. Member for Huddersfield is so

[Mr. David Trippier]

fond of referring to, or the small firms service. That service was often regarded as remote, however, because it was based at regional level.

Local authorities were often regarded as too bureaucratic. It did not matter one jot which party they were controlled by. I have manifestly failed to convince the hon. Member for Huddersfield on that score. People in business regard government, whether national or local, as the unacceptable face of bureaucracy.

Mr. Sheerman: No.

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Gentleman is quick to draw attention to the professions of those who speak in debates on small firms and enterprise and professes to know much about them. The hon. Gentleman must learn that people engaged in business would rather talk to other industrialists and professional advisers than to politicians like us, my officials, civil servants or even local government officers. That has been recognised, not only by my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West but my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd), who has played a significant part in starting his local enterprise agency. Indeed, I had the privilege to open it officially. I pay warm tribute to him. He played the same role as I played in my constituency when I was pleased to pull together leading industrialists who recognise the importance of this exercise in self-help—the community pulling itself up by the boot straps. The success is there for all to see.

By referring to the small firms service as I have I am not saying that it has not an important role to play. The trick is to improve the interface between the small firms service and local enterprise agencies, so that they both have a role with the specialist in the small firms service being made available to directors of LEAs. My hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West has a secondee from the National Westminster bank. That is how we started in Rossendale. Indeed, the same bank was good enough to second a director to two of us.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hereford pointed out that that is not necessarily the way people wish to continue. The beauty of LEAs is that it is up to the boards to decide what they want. No two will be the same, because no two communities are the same. The board may decide on continuity and to have the director perhaps full-time under contract for a long period, and even a deputy director. That practice is certainly growing and is well and good.

I will not get involved in the discussion and, perhaps, slight disagreement between my two hon. Friends on the management of small workshops, because I have seen it work effectively where LEAs have decided to do it, where local authorities have gone to the LEA and asked it to do that, and where the private sector has built the managed work shops and the LEAs have provided the essential hand-holding service for sheltered work shops. That is fine. One should in no way rubbish that.

I may have to convince my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford, who has a considerable number of LEAs, that the Government have decided that the LEAs will be so much of a one-stop shop—more than we ever dreamt when we tried to set up LEAs in our constituency—that they are seen as the best providers of management training. Certainly, they have the signposting role. I would rather it were in their hands, as I am sure my hon. Friend would, than in the hands of different bodies which may seem too bureaucratic.

The hon. Member for Huddersfield stands shoulder to shoulder with me in recognising the importance of a partnership between the public and private sectors. The difference between the hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friends and I is that he wants the public sector to be in the lead, whereas we want the private sector to be in the lead. We believe that the private sector does the job a darn sight better, is closer to the "coal face", and understands the needs of small businesses. That political difference is not merely a crack; it is a yawning chasm which I see growing ever wider as time passes.

My hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West asked me how many LEAs there are at present, to which the answer is 354. None of us ever dreamt that the figure would reach that. I am grateful to him for the nice things he said about me when I set the target of 300 when I came to this office in June 1983. Many of us have surprised ourselves, including Business in the Community. It is truly remarkable. The failure rate of those firms that have been assisted by enterprise agencies dropped to 1:12 over a period of three years contrasted with a failure rate of 1:3 over the same period for normal, conventional businesses not receiving assistance.

The cost per job has been estimated by Business in the Community, and I emphasise that, because it is extremely difficult on occasion for the Government to do that. In certain assisted areas and because of certain grants that may have been used by small firms, it is difficult for the Government to assess the cost per job. However, Business in the Community has calulated the figure at about £600 to £700 per job. That contrasts with the £700 cost per job under the loan guarantee scheme. That is interesting, although it is probably coincidental. The Government's loan guarantee scheme, at £700 per job, is the cheapest and most cost-effective scheme in the Department of Employment. It contrasts favourably with the enterprise allowance scheme that we regard as the jewel in our crown.

I listened carefully to the comments made by my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford in connection with transport and communications problems. Despite the fact that my hon. Friend has recently received an official visit from my hon. Friend the junior Minister in the Department of Transport, I would be happy to alert that Department again to his vociferous arguments. My hon. Friend has always been a very able advocate on behalf of his constituents in relation to small firms and improved communications and I will make his point at the Department.

I was interested to hear my hon. Friend's comments about Mr. Geoff Sturgeon, the director. I must tell the House—and my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford would support me in this—that it is vitally important to get the right director. The board of governors or, as it is called in some cases, the board of directors, are very important. Without them and the sponsorship, there is no enterprise agency. We accept that, and I am grateful for the opportunity of being able to pay a warm tribute to these people in different communities helping enterprise agencies throughout the country.

The key person is the director, some of whom are called managing directors, and others chief executives. He has the day-to-day contact with the important people whom we are all seeking to encourage. I recall that I was greatly

influenced by the first director of an enterprise agency, Mr. Bill Humphrey in St. Helens, whom I have always regarded as the patron saint of enterprise agencies. It was one of my greatest privileges, as the Minister responsible for small firms, to introduce Mr. Humphrey to the 300th enterprise agency director in west Lancashire. Mr. Humphrey could hardly believe it himself. He has set such a superb example that has been followed by many different people and that is an amazing tribute. We owe him a debt of gratitude that can be never repaid.

My hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West referred to the wider role for the agency in general terms. I have referred to that with regard to the managed work shops. If the board of governors of the agency in the area thinks that that is appropriate and that it can handle it, then it should go for it. My hon. Friend said that he thought that it was ambitious, and it is after being in existence for only just over 12 months. However, that is the kind of challenge to which most enterprise agencies are now rising and I am sure that they are up to it.

I was especially glad that my hon. Friend referred to the new initiative of the locally based business expansion scheme. That is so important. We need to encourage the investment from localities under the business expansion scheme into funds where money in the amounts of about £50,000 is going to the smaller firms rather than the huge amounts of money perhaps being invested through the City of London in excess of £100,000 and being confined to the immediate London area. The regional aspect of the funds is extremely attractive and is something that we must encourage.

I shall consider the idea of a booklet suggested by my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford. It has great merit. We are perhaps bringing out too many booklets for the hon. Member for Huddersfield. They are coming out at an amazing rate. The most important booklet is "Action for Jobs", which the hon. Member for Huddersfield displayed in the House this morning. I am grateful to him for doing that.

I was fascinated to hear the contribution of the hon. Member for Huddersfield. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford that his comments were incredibly negative. I was fascinated by the fact that he ended his speech by saying that it was early in the morning and ended by saying that it was late at night. I was not certain whether he knew where he was or what time it was. However, I was grateful to him for saying that some of the initiatives of myself and my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State were to be welcomed. That is pretty fair. Perhaps we might have to ignore the hon. Member for Huddersfield in this. I might be biased towards the view of my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford when I consider what I thought was a constructive suggestion to produce such a booklet.

The idea of using television wherever possible to push local enterprise agencies to make clear at community level that the hand-holding service is available is a first-class idea. I encourage television in the independent sector to take advantage of that facility.

Finally, I take the opportunity of thanking the companies — there are so many of them now — which have been kind enough to support local enterprise agencies, not all of them large although the bulk of them supporting BIC are large. I also pay a warm tribute to hon. Members who have played a significant part in helping the local enterprise agency movement to become such a success.

Office of Fair Trading

6.16 am

Mr. Michael Cocks (Bristol, South): If I get as fulsome a reply from the Minister as the hon. Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham), I shall be extremely pleased.

I wish to draw the House's attention to the role and responsibilities of the operation of the Office of Fair Trading in relation to what are commonly known as loan sharks. They often take advantage of people who do not understand what is going on and make Shylock in the "Merchant of Venice" look like Santa Claus. Those people, who exploit others, not only charge high interest rates with an annual percentage rate sometimes over 1,000 per cent. but encourage people to roll up loans and take out further loans in order to try to meet their repayments. They are guilty of inaccurate book-keeping of the loan terms—I say inaccurate, not inadvertent—and of not keeping proper account to the borrower of repayments.

There are extremely dubious collection tactics, rought threatening approaches, threats, not only physical violence, but non-existent court orders, and breaches of the code about calling at people's homes. There is also the appropriation of benefit books in order to take the proceeds when accompanying the claimant to the local post office.

When this matter was first raised locally recently, I was approached by a number of people in the press and broadcasting about the allegations, but they are nothing new. In a July 1983 press release Sir Gordon Borrie, the Director General of Fair Trading, drew attention to moneylenders who charge excessive rates of interest, take family allowance or supplementary benefit books as security and resort to aggressive methods. Sir Gordon Borrie said:

"I deplore the activities of these 'loan sharks' who prey on the very people who can least afford to fall into their clutches."

Then he referred to the cycle of debt into which they fall and gave some examples.

In reporting the director-general's statement, *The Times* announced that war had been declared on the loan sharks. I fear that it was a phoney war. It was similar to what happened between September 1939 and the spring of 1940. I do not wish to be party political, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I shall not introduce, as an aside, the fact that had it not been for the good sense of the Scandinavian countries, at one time the Conservative Government of the day would have gone to war not only with Germany but with the Soviet Union. This war was so phoney that in 1985 the annual report of the Director General of Fair Trading contained the following paragraph:

"Cases involving moneylenders continue to arise. Abuses included: getting customers to sign uncompleted agreements; 're-loaning' without making borrowers fully aware of their additional obligations; failing to provide copies of agreements; improperly taking social security and child benefit books; and failing to make the rate of interest or the annual percentage rate of charge clear."

That has continued, and the widespread misery that it causes surfaced recently in Bristol.

A local councillor, to whom I shall refer again, drew my attention to the problem. I pay tribute to the *Bristol Evening Post*, the local evening newspaper, which ran a series of articles on the problem. Reporting on 20 November, David Baxter said that I intended to ask questions in the House, that I should like detailed information from borrowers who are in the clutches of these sharks and that I should treat all information in confidence. The article stated that I had said that this would be difficult for the borrowers concerned but that they would be doing a great public service by giving me the evidence that I needed to highlight the issue.

Another outstanding article appeared in the *Bristol Evening Post*. That newspaper has been assiduous in pursuing the matter, but the response to the appeal for information was not good. That is a point to which I shall return later.

The councillor who first drew my attention to this problem has provided a very interesting piece of evidence. Councillor Vernon Hicks, who represents the Filwood ward in Bristol, where I live, is most assiduous; he knows the area very well and he has come across this problem. However, he says that it is extremely difficult to obtain evidence. He is particularly concerned about attempts to persuade council house tenants to take out finance to purchase their homes. I tabled several questions to various Departments, to which I received fairly bland replies. I shall weary the House with a few of them. I asked the Secretary of State for the Environment

"if he will request local authorities to take steps to prevent private loan companies from operating on their housing estates to pressurise tenants into taking out loans with them to exercise their right to buy their houses; and if he will make a statement."

The Under-Secretary of State for the Environment replied:

"No: council tenants must be free to take their own decisions about borrowing, but they should, of course, think carefully whether they can afford to buy".

That was a lemon, if I may put it that way.

I asked the Paymaster General

"if he will take steps to seek to protect recipients of unemployment benefit from the activities of private loan companies."

The Under-Secretary of State for Employment replied:

"I have received no complaints on this subject."

The Secretary of State for Wales gave a fairly bland reply when I asked him if he would do anything about asking local authorities in the Principality to prevent private loan companies from operating on its housing estates. He replied:

"No. Council tenants with the right to buy their homes must be allowed to take their own decisions".—[*Official Report*, 27 October 1986; Vol. 103, c. *68-71*.]

That bears a remarkable identity to the question that I have just read out. So it goes on. There was no movement from the Government on those questions.

Last Sunday I called in to see Councillor Hicks, because he has been the subject of much abuse in an anonymous campaign which is being waged against him. I do not say that lightly, because the police are extremely worried about this case. Nevertheless, he has continued to do his best for the inhabitants in his ward. He has produced a leaflet which is very useful because it is the first real piece of evidence that I have. I have furnished the Minister with a copy, because it is important. The leaflet—a notice to all council house tenants—says:

"Have you ever considered owning the house you live in? If you have, and have not purchased it there is obviously a very good reason . . . lack of information, not knowing how to go about it, or simply thinking you cannot afford it. You can afford it with no cash outlay whatsoever and no obligation. Interested? For further information telephone".

A telephone number in Bristol is given and there is a tear-off slip. The interesting thing about the leaflet, which I am sure the Minister will have already noticed, is that the upper part is in set-up type and is printed off, whereas the lower part has been done on a typewriter and is stencilled in. I do not think that that is the right word these days. That is a hangover from my days as a writer in the Navy many years ago. It is obviously done as a general leaflet, and then local details are added. Someone is operating on a much larger scale than in just one area. I ask the Minister to take that leaflet seriously because it was given to Councillor Hicks by a lady who lives probably about 100 yards away from my house in a road which consists of mainly council properties. She gave it to him at one of his advice centres. The lady said that it had come through her door. There had been a follow-up call by a man who asked her whether she was interested in the leaflet's proposals. She said no, but she then received a further call and was getting very anxious because she was elderly, lived alone and did not wish to be pestered over this matter.

Only this evening I received a phone call from a trading protection officer in Leicester telling me that the same thing was going on on council estates in Leicester and that people who had bought their houses were being pressured into taking out a second mortgage for various purposes. People who had bought the tenancy of the council house in which they had lived for a very long time suddenly ran into debt problems. They had a very heavy discount on the house, which of course is their right now. There are even cases of dispossession. So the sharks are getting a very cheap house and the people who were in it are adding to the council's housing problem. That is a serious problem of which we are seeing only the tip of the iceberg.

The people who are particularly preyed on by such sharks are the poorest in terms of the generally accepted standards of banks, finance houses and so on — low income groups, the unemployed, the elderly, pensioners and people who are unaware of their rights.

A report by the Policy Studies Institute issued in December 1983 on the 1980 reform of supplementary benefit found that in a sample which it took, 68 per cent. of claimants had to find money over and above their benefit, and of those in debt some 18 per cent. owed money for loans, and of that 18 per cent. three out of 10 had borrowed money from commercial lenders.

People who live at or near the poverty line have sudden and immediate needs for cash for items such as fuel, rent, food and emergencies which may arise. There is a nationwide debt problem because we are now substantially into the consumer credit era. In his 1986 report Sir Gordon Borrie referred to borrowing and the credit society. He dealt with why that situation has arisen and called for something to be done about the startling volume of consumer credit — £22 billion, leaving aside credit for house purchase. The size of the real debt rose 50 per cent. between 1981 and 1985. The average debt per household, excluding mortgage debt, exceeded £1,000 for the first time in 1984.

I shall not weary the House with too much detail, but Sir Gordon Borrie went on to call for more debt counselling, and that is a point that I hope to pursue later. It is extremely easy to obtain credit and, unfortunately, the people who fall into the hands of the sharks are not well versed in their rights. A particularly sad thing, which should be considered by the electricity boards, is that their high-pressure salesmanship — I do not know whether that is a sexist word these days, but I am too old to change my ways — for appliances and their offer to put the repayments on the bill sometimes leads families to the point at which they cannot meet their electricity bill because of the payments for appliances, not the amount of current used. Therefore, such people find their supply cut off in the extreme, and that is a most unsatisfactory situation when, if it were simply a matter of current used, they might well be able to meet the bill.

In trying to find out about the extent of the problem I put down a further set of questions and was referred to the Office of Fair Trading, quite reasonably, by the Government. I asked how many money-lending licence applications had been issued and received in the current year, and other such questions. Some of the replies were interesting. Since 1974 some 70,000 licences have been issued.

The definition of who is a fit person under the Consumer Credit Act 1984 is perhaps a bit sloppy. There does not seem to be any real follow-up or investigation except in the case of specific complaints. What astonished me was this part of a reply from the Office of Fair Trading, a copy of which was sent to the Minister. It says:

"Category A licences (permitting the holder to lend money for the purposes of consumer credit) are held by a wide variety of companies including banks, finance houses, pawnbrokers and retailers, as well as moneylenders. The way in which records are kept here does not make it possible to distinguish between these types of business".

It is astonishing that the Office of Fair Trading cannot distinguish between licences given to banks, finance houses, moneylenders and pawnbrokers. One wonders what state of organisation there is in the department. The letter goes on:

"nor is it possible to break down licensees as between different geographical areas."

It goes on to say how many licences were issued from 1 January to 21 November 1986. The numbers supplied are not relevant to what I am saying. However, of 4,265 applications received, 3,949 licences were issued. I went on to ask about numbers suspended during the current year and how many were in the Bristol district council area. There were 70,000 extant category A licences, and of those six were revoked in the whole of the United Kingdom. In Bristol one was revoked. One licence was suspended in the whole of the United Kingdom and three applications were refused. In both of those categories there were no cases in Bristol.

I asked how many licences were issued under the Consumer Credit Act 1984, and I was told:

"The number of Category A licences issued so far is over 70,000, but according to the Office's 'guesstimate', up to one third of all licences are no longer in use."

In other words, it is not even known whether 23,000 licences are still validly in use. that is not satisfactory. In a written question I asked the Minister

"if he will review the law controlling the activities of private loan companies; and if he will make a statement."

The Minister is courteous enough to be here this morning. In reply to that question, he said:

"The Consumer Credit Act 1974 provides both important safeguards for consumers who enter into credit agreements, and a system of licensing of loan companies, credit grantors, and credit brokers administered by the Director General of Fair Trading. Other laws provide additional protection in this area, particularly against harassment of debtors. I believe that existing legislation provides a comprehensive framework of protection for consumers but if the hon. Member is aware of undesirable practices not covered by

[Mr. Michael Cocks]

existing legal controls I should be willing to consider whether further action is desirable."—[*Official Report*, 27 October 1986; Vol. 103, c. 59.]

I appreciate his offer in the latter part of that answer, but I am trying to draw to the attention of the House the fact that undesirable practices are going on—practices that are supposed to be outlawed by existing legislation. It is in the implementation of that legislation that we come to the nub of the problem.

The person who approached me did so on the behalf of the Institute of Trading Standards and Administration. Mr. Babbs, from Leicester, rang me and said that one of the problems was that in July 1986 the Office of Fair Trading asked for an extension of the licence expiry time to 15 years. I shall not elaborate on this point, because my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) was intimately concerned in the passing of this legislation and I am sure that he would like to say something about it.

People in society who are least able to defend themselves, who are most susceptible to smooth talk and have most difficulty in reading small print, if even the small print exists, need more protection than is available. I suggest that a far more thorough clean-up is needed of the issuing of licences and, even more so, the follow-up of licences. A better debt counselling service is needed. The Minister will be aware that some towns are beginning to employ debt counsellors. There was even a meeting of the Money Advice Association in Sheffield in July 1986 which made that point. There is already one in Birmingham and a young lady in Bristol is doing very valuable work, but the service needs to be extended.

Sir Gordon Borrie's suggestion of a far greater education campaign should be taken up. Alternative sources should be considered for people on low incomes who need to borrow money to get over a period of temporary embarrassment and who have no proper security to offer such as would be demanded by a building society or a large bank. I ask the Government to consider this matter seriously. I believe in a mixed economy, but I also believe that there is a responsibility on us to try to provide some sort of safety net for people who are likely to fall into this difficulty. It is a nightmare that can bedevil a family for years, as the Minister will know from some of the examples provided by the Director General of Fair Trading. I ask the Minister to consider the plight of those people who fall into the clutches of these sharks.

Whilst I would not expect a solution tonight, the Minister may take heed of what I have said and come back with some proposals for trying to tighten up the mesh so that much better protection can be afforded to those members of our society who are least able to cope.

6.42 am

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): I am grateful, as I think the House will be, to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks) for raising this debate. It was thought by hon. Members on both sides of the House that action had been taken to eliminate this problem in the early 1970s. I was in one of those interesting situations where, having shadowed the Consumer Credit Bill while in Opposition, it then fell at election, and I had an opportunity to take it on again in Government and modify it in certain respects and then take it through. In that sense, at that stage in the 1970s there was a genuine consensus that the emergence of loan sharks had created enormous political and public concern, so much so that it was an incredibly complex Bill having 120 clauses, 23 schedules, and a language of its own. A special language training course was needed before going on the Committee stage of the Bill. Nevertheless, that was an indication of the complexity of a system that we were trying to deal with.

I suppose that it was inevitable that the Act would gradually be eroded by those who have an interest in getting round the provisions that were there to protect the consumer. As my right hon. Friend said, we live in a consumer society that is fuelled by the credit economy. The two go hand in hand. The growth of the Western consumer economy owes more to credit than to almost any other stimulus. I do not suggest that the use of credit is undesirable, but I believe that we need proper controls over the way in which credit is offered and marketed.

The sad fact is that what might have taken a long time —the erosion of some of the provisions of the Act—has been stimulated by the tragic circumstances of far too many people in recent years as their jobs have disappeared. I must say—I do not mean this in a political sense, although it will be seen in that way — that it is astonishing that, when the loan shark problem is emerging, the DHSS has decided to stop the special grants which, as we all know from constituency cases, have been necessary to many families. That has ensured that many people will be driven back, or many more people will be driven, into the hands of the loan sharks.

My right hon. Friend has done us a great service by researching the background so deeply. It is astonishing that the quality of information available to the Office of Fair Trading is so unrefined. I spoke to Sir Gordon Borrie about this issue several years ago. Despite modern computer and information techniques, we are told, as we have been by my right hon. Friend, that the Office of Fair Trading is incapable of sub-categorising sources of consumer credit. If my right hon. Friend is misleading the House, he is basing it on answers that he received. If it is true, it is astonishing and disturbing. Similarly, the same is true of the geographic breakdown. It would be useful to have available those pieces of information. With modern methods, it would not be especially expensive to have the information available if the basic system has been made available to the Office of Fair Trading.

Of course, one must make the point that the Office of Fair Trading is starved of staff and that it has been subject to cuts which have meant that the licensing system had to be delayed and also, as my right hon. Friend has said, the licences have had to be extended to reduce the work load.

It is similarly disturbing that one third of licences are currently not in use. It must be a function of the same manpower starvation at the Office of Fair Trading that it cannot give us an accurate figure and, furthermore, that there is no follow-up to try to revoke the licences that have lapsed in practice. In the long run, that would improve the quality of control. Secondly, it is fatuous to have as many as one third of 70,000 licences non-operational but still potentially live. The information is disturbing and it should be more than disturbing to Ministers, because it is three years since the director-general issued the press notice to which my right hon. Friend referred.

Under the Fair Trading Act, the Office of Fair Trading was given a special role in terms of collating information rather then dealing with it in individual cases. The

individual cases must be dealth with at local level. The role of the Office of Fair Trading is that of the collator of information at the national level, recommending changes to the Government. There seems, however, to have been little initiative, and we are dealing with some of the most rapacious of whose who lurk at the edge of criminality. We are talking of whose who are breaking the law. They are not conforming to consumer credit legislation and they are able to get away with that because as they are feeding the needs of the most needy groups in our society they are parasitically leeching on those who have least motivation to shop the guilty parties. That is because they know that they may need to go back to them for further loans. These people get into incredibly complex messes with the rolling up of loans and evidence is hard to come by, as I accept readily.

It is three years, however, since Sir Gordon Borrie issued his warning, when he announced that action was needed and would be taken. I have great regard for Sir Gordon, whom I consider to be a sincere and genuine man who wants to do a good job at the Office of Fair Trading, and in general has done so. It must be said that it has a wide-ranging remit, but it seems incredible that with all the enforcement facilities that are at our disposal—they are inevitably over-stretched — we have not been able to come forward with more firm evidence against the practitioners.

My right hon. Friend was kind enough to pass me a copy of the advertisement which circulated in Bristol. It would be way outside anything acceptable under consumer credit legislation. The mere proposition of no cash outlay whatsoever is a singularly dubious advertisement to be offering in the context of the law as it stands. I have little doubt that if the enforcement authorities follow up the advertisement they will find a rather intricate mesh rather than a clear identification of the person who is responsible for the advertisement. I shall be intrigued to know what happens if the authorities try to pursue that person right along the line, or those who were responsible. It would be interesting to know what has been done to follow it up. Thanks to the local newspaper at Bristol and the publicity that it, my right hon. Friend and his councillor colleague have been able to give, the police seem to be trying to take action. However, as was indicated in the response from Leicester, that which is happening in Bristol is not an unusual phenomenon. I think that we must recognise that that which is happening in Bristol is happening also in every community throughout the country.

There need be no party conflict here or difference. None of us wants to see people milched and destroyed in the way that the loan sharks destroy their victims. An indication of the difficulties is that even a newspaper offering the advantages of anonymity and wanting only to collect information has not even had information from a telephone tip-off.

Mr. Michael Cocks: Even as late as last Saturday the *Bristol Evening Post* made a further appeal and mentioned that a debate would take place in the House. It asked for individuals to come forward anonymously, but that appeal has not produced anything, because those involved are too afraid to break silence.

Mr. Williams: Another worrying but interesting spin-off is that fear is backed by dependence. The councillor, far from being praised for his activities, has found himself being threatened. Those who are trapped on 1,000 per cent. interest know that they may desperately need immediate cash in future and that the source may no longer be open to them.

Most of these people do not have telephones—we are talking about the most needy in the community—and the arrival in the letterbox of the electricity and gas bills can cause a moment of panic. We all know how unhappy we can be when we receive these bills. One has only to imagine what it is like if one lies at the edge of penury and these enormous bills drop through the letterbox, particularly after cold winters, when many people accumulate bills the scale of which they do not appreciate at the time.

We must ask the Government, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South has done, what they intend to do about the matter. Opposition Members will give all possible support to positive action. Three years on, and three years after the warning from OFT, it is fair to say that the Government should have some response at this time. It is good to hear that local authorities are to set up debt counsellors, and so on. That is highly desirable. One is forced—this comment is slightly political—to observe that the Conservative party abolished the consumer advice centres. The Labour Government established a network of them. They were abolished before the hon. and learned Gentleman's involvement in this field. The right hon. Member for Gloucester (Mrs. Oppenheim) was the arch-villain in their abolition. The Government tried to starve the citizens advice bureaux of cash. There was a major war between the national CABs and the Government, before the Government eventually capitulated.

Far from showing a sense of urgency in trying to do something to alleviate the problem, the Government have exacerbated it. Their policies and their starvation of the control system, OFT, and of the enforcement system have led to a greater social need for this sort of immediate loan facility. As I am sure that enforcement officers have told the training standards officers and my right hon. Friend, they also have been under incredible pressure in the past few years.

The people of Bristol, like the people in many parts of the country, will want from the Government not just a recognition that a problem exists but some sign that they are aware of the scale, severity and urgency of the problem, and that they will bring forward proposals to try to eliminate from our society the scourge of loan sharks.

6.58 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard): With the leave of the House, I shall reply to the debate. I join the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) in congratulating the right hon. Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks) on securing this debate. The subject raised by the right hon. Member for Bristol, South is an important one. I share his concern and the concern that has been expressed by the right hon. Member for Swansea, West, from the Opposition Front Bench about the plight of those who fall victim to loan sharks. I entirely endorse his condemnation of the practices that he described. Obviously, many of these practices go well beyond the bounds of legitimate commercial activity and, franky, are criminal.

Successive Governments have recognised the scope for abuse of consumers in the area of moneylending and the

[Mr. Michael Howard]

need to adopt special measures to protect some of the most vulnerable members of society in this area. The Moneylenders Act 1900 represented the first attempt to deal with this problem. It provided for the registration of moneylenders and empowered the courts to reopen harsh and unconscionable moneylending transactions. The Moneylenders Act 1927 went further and substituted a system of annual licensing for registration and imposed severe restrictions on methods by which a moneylender could seek business.

These provisions, a licensing system for moneylenders and control over extortionate credit bargains, are among the main elements in the system of control provided by the Consumer Credit Act 1974, with which the right hon. Member for Swansea, West was so closely associated, which replaced the Moneylenders Acts and, of course, went far beyond them in introducing, for the first time, a comprehensive framework of law governing consumer credit lending as a whole. A number of provisions of the Consumer Credit Act are relevant to moneylending, and I believe that, together with other provisions of the criminal law, they provide the necessary powers to deal with the abuses that have been catalogued by the right hon. Member.

The linchpin of the Consumer Credit Act system of control is the licensing system operated by the Director General of Fair Trading. All moneylenders, except those dealing in very small sums, are required to be licensed. In deciding whether to grant a licence, the director general has to have regard to an applicant's fitness and will take into account all relevant circumstances, including past convictions for fraud, dishonesty or violence, contravention of the provisions of the Consumer Credit Act, or related enactments, racial or sexual discrimination or deceitful or oppressive business practices. If an application appears to raise problems under any of those headings, the director general may refuse to grant an application for a licence. Similarly, where a licence has been granted, if the director general becomes aware of conduct by a licensee which he considers casts doubts on his fitness he may, after investigation, revoke the licence. Some 800 licences have been refused or revoked since the licensing system came into operation. I appreciate that that may not sound a great number when set against the total number of around 200,000 consumer credit licences, but, of course, the main value of the licensing system is as a deterrent. The threat of licensing action undoubtedly helps to maintain standards in the industry and the existence of a licensing procedure is likely to deter some unfit individuals from seeking to enter the consumer credit business at all.

It has been suggested by the right hon. Member for Bristol, South that some of the traders whose activities he is concerned about are operating without a licence. Trading while unlicensed is a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment. Agreements entered into by an unlicensed trader are also, in general, unenforceable.

In addition to its licensing provisions, the Consumer Credit Act provides other important protection for the customers of moneylenders and other creditors. Like the old Moneylenders Acts, the Consumer Credit Act contains controls over extortionate credit. If a court finds a credit bargain extortionate, it may reopen the agreement so as to do justice between the parties. In deciding whether a credit agreement is extortionate, the court will consider whether it requires the debtor to make payments that are grossly exorbitant or otherwise grossly contravenes ordinary principles of fair dealing. Of course, everything depends on the facts of the individual case, but I have little doubt that some of the cases to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred could be regarded as extortionate.

The extortionate credit provisions of the Act protect the consumer who has already entered into a credit agreement, but the Act also provides important protection for those entering into credit agreements. Under the Act and its regulations, written agreement must be in a prescribed form, embodying all the terms and conditions in a clear and easily legible form, together with a notice of the rights and duties of both debtor and creditor. The agreement must also contain a prominent warning to the borrower not to sign unless he wishes to be bound by its terms. In addition, both credit agreements and advertisements for credit must contain prescribed information, including the true cost of the credit on offer.

Finally, the Consumer Credit Act contains strict controls over doorstep selling of credit. It is recognised that the consumer may be particularly vulnerable when subject to high-pressure selling techniques in his or her own home. It is an offence under the Act to canvass debtor-creditor agreements or, in everyday language, cash loans, off trade premises. Traders may solicit the entry of an individual into such an agreement only when a written request has been made on a previous occasion. In those cases the consumer also has the benefit of a cooling-off period during which he or she may change his or her mind and cancel the credit agreement without penalty.

In addition to those specific provisions of the Consumer Credit Act, there are many other provisions of the criminal law, which may be relevant in the circumstances described by the right hon. Gentleman, particularly where physical violence or the threat of such violence is involved. Under the Administration of Justice Act 1970, certain forms of harassment of debtors by creditors are unlawful. They would include demands for payment that are calculated to subject the debtor to alarm or distress.

I am sorry to have catalogued the provisions of the Consumer Credit Act at such length, but it is important to demonstrate that there are, indeed, extensive legal controls governing moneylending, and in particular the licensing system administered by the Office of Fair Trading. The right hon. Gentleman has voiced his suspicion that many of the traders to whom he has referred are, in fact, unlicensed. Unlicensed lending is, as I have said, a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment, and I can only urge the right hon. Gentleman to pass on any information relating to trading without a licence to the local trading standards department, which will be prepared to take action when there is sufficient evidence to do so. When moneylenders are under licence, the Office of Fair Trading will be ready to take action if there is evidence that they are indulging in improper or illegitimate business practices.

I do not underestimate the difficulties, to which the right hon. Members for Bistol, South and for Swansea, West referred, in obtaining the information from the people who suffer from these practices so that cirumstances can be drawn to the attention of the trading standards officers or the Office of Fair Trading in appropriate cases. Clearly, it is not easy. Clearly, many of the people who suffer are very reluctant to come forward,

but, with the best will in the world, it is notable that neither right hon. Gentleman came forward with specific proposals on how that problem might be tackled. It is perhaps a sign of the imperfect world in which we live that no system, however admirable, can in practice solve all the problems with which it is intended to deal, if people do not come forward with the information that would enable those who are entrusted with responsibility for enforcing these matters to take appropriate action.

Mr. Michael Cocks: The hon. and learned Gentleman is urging us to draw to the Director General's attention the activities of unlicensed lenders in our areas. But the letter of 5 December 1986 from his Department, of which he has a copy and from which I quoted a passage about not distinguishing between banks, finance houses and so on, continues:

"The way in which records are kept here does not make it possible . . . to break down licences as between different geeographical areas."

How are we even to start deciding which of these people lending money in, say, Bristol, Swansea or Kingswood are licensed if the Director General cannot even tell what is the geographical spread?

Mr. Howard: With respect, the fact that information is not available on a break-down basis between different categories of lenders and between different geographical areas does not mean that it is impossible to determine whether a particular individual or concern is licensed. It is possible to determine that and that is the basis upon which proper enforcement acton can be taken. I agree that it would be desirable — although for rather different reasons — to have information about the categories of licencees as to which business category, geographical area, and so on they come within. That information will become available when the computerisation programme, which is under way in the Office of Fair Trading, is complete. It will have advantages. It is possible at the moment to identify whether a particular individual or firm which is engaged in the practice of money lending is licensed under the Act. If he is not licensed, the trading standards officers are empowered to take action.

Mr. Williams: I am grateful to the hon. and learned Gentleman for reminding me in some detail of how good a piece of legislation I put through the House in 1974. My recollection is not as favourable. Because the Act and the powers are there, three other matters are raised — the control system, the enforcement system and the evidence. We have all recognised the difficulty in obtaining evidence, but does not the hon. and learned Gentleman recognise that the starving of the control and the enforcement system has meant that the machinery does not have the time and opportunity to devote to the collection of that evidence that might otherwise be available?

Mr. Howard: No. That would be a justifiable criticism if there were in existence a number of examples where people had come forward with complaints and evidence that had not been properly investigated and properly used as the basis for enforcement proceedings. The difficulty about which the right hon. Member for Bristol, South was eloquent and accurate, is that even when a newspaper gives an offer of anonymity to people who are the victims of these practices, they do not come forward. I regret that every bit as much as the right hon. Gentleman, but until people can be persuaded to come forward no system of law can be administered. If we are to move forward in this area, people will have to be encouraged to make their complaints and bring forward the evidence so that the excellent system of law for which the right hon. Member for Swansea, West bears so much responsibility and can take so much credit can be put into action.

The mere existence of legal controls does not guarantee protection for the consumer. The law has to be enforced. I know that local trading standards departments and, where appropriate, the Office of Fair Trading will be very willing to take action against the kind of abuses described by the right hon. Member for Bristol, South, but they can do so only when there is hard evidence. Such evidence is not always easy to come by and we have exchanged remarks across the House about the difficulty of obtaining that evidence. All that I can do—I am happy to do so from the Dispatch Box—is to encourage people to come forward with the information that will enable action to be taken.

I have no doubt that this debate will be widely reported in the Bristol area. I hope that the reports will encourage those for whom the right hon. Member for Bristol, South is rightly so concerned to bring forward the evidence. I assure the House that any evidence brought forward will be acted upon by the responsible authorities with all due urgency.

Prison Service

7.11 am

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley (Surrey, South-West): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise a subject of fundamental concern to us all and one that has been of long-standing interest to me. As Members of Parliament who may resent the demands of sitting through the night uncertainly awaiting a debate but who are at least confident in the knowledge that we shall be breaking for Christmas, it is all too easy to overlook the predicament of those whose situation is very different. Those who staff our prisons work through the night as a matter of routine and must be prepared to sacrifice a Christmas break with the family. We all owe a debt of gratitude to those who man vital services over holiday periods so that the rest of us can live in safety and freedom. One thinks of the police, nurses and doctors, and all the others who continue to work throughout the year.

The public's appreciation of those who staff our prisons does not stop there. Many people are aware of the worrying increase in violent crime, of the number of ruthless terrorists in our gaols and of the additional problems resulting from drugs. It is not an easy job, and conditions are far from perfect, with 40 per cent. of prisoners sharing single cells and fewer than half having direct access to a toilet. The present levels of overcrowding are profoundly unsatisfactory. We have nearly 7,000 more people in prison than the total available capacity authorised by the Government. Assaults on staff are reported to have doubled in 18 months and in some prisons violent incidents occur almost daily. Hostage-taking is a background fear, and I well recall wives of prison officers on the Isle of Wight talking of their nervousness whenever their husbands were delayed at work.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of inmates, rising to almost 50,000 last year—a 7 per cent. increase over the previous year. We send more citizens to prison each year than any other western European country —about one in 250—and it is estimated that there may be a further increase of 25 per cent. by 1994. The Government have embarked on a series of fundamental reforming measures to reduce the crime rate, of which the latest Criminal Justice Bill is a further vital part and the sixth major piece of legislation in six years.

For many years, we have bemoaned the number of prisoners on remand, which is frequently a grave injustice to the individuals involved, quite apart from the burden placed on the prison service, and one hopes that the time limit now imposed for bringing cases to court will bear results. Women are especially and inexplicably vulnerable to imprisonment on remand. In a recent parliamentary answer, my hon. Friend the Minister informed me that, whereas 26 per cent. of female prisoners in prison department establishments were untried or unsentenced on 30 September, the corresponding proportion of male prisoners was only 22·5 per cent. Reconviction rates for women are considerably more favourable than those for men.

We must make further progress on alternatives to custody. The public and, above all, the judiciary's confidence in alternatives will, I hope, lead to a real change in sentencing practice. There can be no justification for filling our prisons with petty criminals or fine defaulters at vast expense and in the knowledge that their time in gaol is more likely to confirm their criminal career than anything else.

Nearly two thirds of 25-year-old burglars in Britain who have been convicted are sent to prison, but only one third of their victims think that that is appropriate. It costs the state nearly twice as much to imprison a man as to employ him on the average wage, and half of all prisoners are reconvicted within two years of release. There is no doubt that it takes time for the judiciary to have confidence in alternatives to custody. It is only too easy to see a custodial sentence as safe. I well remember sitting with someone who said that, in the public interest, a person must go to a detention centre. I eventually managed to challenge him and say that I was not convinced about what he meant by the public interest. We knew that sending a petty criminal to a detention centre was extremely expensive and resulted in a 70 or 80 per cent. chance of the young man being reconvicted within the next two years.

There has been a significant increase in probation and community service orders, community service orders having risen from about 13,000 to nearly 34,000 between 1979 and 1984. It is now available to all offenders over 16. Other measures to strengthen supervision orders on juveniles involve the intermediate treatment programmes, which are welcome, with intentions to expand detention centres.

There has been a dramatic prison building programme since 1979. However much we extend alernatives to custody, the public expect and deserve to be protected from the serious offender. The party that now urges the Government to increase public expenditure handed over a paltry programme with scant regard to long-term responsibilities. Under Labour, expenditure on prison building and redevelopment decreased by 20 per cent. Under the present Government, it has risen by 173 per cent. Over the seven years of the Conservative Government, expenditure has amounted to £322 million, there being 80 new prisons in the building programme. It is estimated that they will produce more than 8,000 places by the early 1990s, in addition to a further 5,500 places produced as a result of the 25 major capital schemes in existing establishments.

Major investment will also result in about 10,000 existing places having integral sanitation and improvements in staff facilities. A record level of resources is now being devoted to the prison system. For 1986-87, there has been an 8 per cent. increase in expenditure over the previous year—the figure now approaches £700 million. Since 1979, the budget has risen by 85 per cent, which represents an increase of one third in real terms.

The increase in resources has resulted not only in the building programme. The largest component in the prisons budget is staffing. Prisons are labour-intensive institutions and more than 75 per cent. of expenditure goes on staff. Since 1979, the average number of prisoners has risen by 12 per cent. It is not always appreciated that the number of prison officers has increased during the same period by 18 per cent., which raises the staff-prisoner ratio. Last year, 1,000 prison officers were recruited, bringing the total to about 19,000. Those figures are part of a longer trend. The number of prison officers has increased more than six times since 1947 and the prisoner population has increased by substantially less. Whereas the staff-prisoner ratio was about 1:1·7 in 1947, it is now less than 1:2·5. In

addition, there has been a major use of specialist civilian and management staff which means that the figures are even more generous. Whereas only 55 per cent. of the prison budget was the result of staff costs in 1961, today the figure is nearer 76 per cent.

The apparent decline in productivity was mentioned by the May committee. The Home Office justified the numbers by referring to the need for increased security and improvements in the prison regime and in conditions of service of staff. Behind the figures, however, lies a much more worrying situation with an increase in the number of hours worked and insufficient in-service training.

The fundamental concern must be that overtime constitutes an inappropriate part of the working week. It constitutes an average of 30 per cent. of prison officers' earnings. As it is voluntary, some officers work in excess of 20 to 30 hours overtime a week. In a stressful, demanding job, that is an inappropriate commitment to the work. Whereas in 1979-80 the cost of overtime was £34·3 million, it rose 130 per cent. in cash terms by 1985-86 to £81·6 million. Apart from the financial cost of that increase, in management and work terms it cannot be the best way to run a service in the long run.

It is not my intention to rehearse the precipitating factors that led to the industrial action and major disturbances earlier this year. All involved were shocked by the severe repercussions that resulted. It is hardly to be marvelled that prisons, which are enclosed communities, are highly susceptible to stress. The unrest was precipitated when out-of-cell activities and visits were restricted, arising from the overtime ban. It has been estimated that the total damage resulting from the rioting and arson amounted to £4·5 million with 841 gaol places destroyed.

My intention is to focus attention on the fresh start programme introduced by the Home Office this year. Talks with the unions started yesterday. It constitutes a major package of proposals, covering working arrangements for prison officers and management and pay systems in the prison service of England and Wales.

Under the programme existing staff would be permitted to continue to work long hours for up to £15,000 a year, but on a standardised 49-hour week rather than flexible overtime. At present prison officers earn an average of £15,000 for a 56-hour week, but sometimes they may earn up to £25,000 a year for a 70-hour week.

One can appreciate how such figures have become appealing. Certainly compared with the salaries of others in the public sector — although comparisons are frequently invidious — such as nurses, doctors or teachers, who must have higher entry requirements, they seem generous.

Under the fresh start proposals new recruits will be expected to accept the alternative of a basic 39-hour week for just over £10,000. The major task for a fresh start is to ensure that the prison service is brought under proper managerial control. To resist change cannot now be in the long-term interests of the service.

There has been growing public awareness and outrage about the restrictive practices, rigid attendance system and excessive overtime arrangements of the service. It is not only the implications of those matters for the service, but the needs of prisoners who can too easily be overlooked under such a system.

The proposals include changed working arrangements, new flexible shift systems, a new approach to complementing, a unified career structure and a switch to a professional salaried status. The creation of a more open promotion system with a greater attempt to integrate the uniformed officers who undertake the day-to-day running of the prisons and the governors is welcome. A single line of command and promotion should result in improved and more effective management.

I support the steps towards unification of the service, believing that the previous system is outdated. It will be important, however, to ensure that graduates continue to join the service and that the "fast stream" arrangements are sufficiently attractive. It is vital that the management structures are enhanced so that there can be greater accountability, more devolution and control of budgets and a coherent chain of command to the governor.

The service has already been working with management accountants to develop greater cost control in prisons, but there is still a long way to go. The onus is now very much on the Prison Officers Association to engage in negotiations and constructive discussions about the need for change. That amounts to a cultural as much as an organisational change. In the past, the association has too often demonstrated a defensivness and a lack of openness about its work in response to challenge or criticism.

The trade unions exist to represent their members, but it must be highlighted that four fifths of the prison population are prisoners rather than officers. Despite the dramatic increase in staffing, many prisoners still have little or nothing to do all day. Too many have limited access to work, education or association and spend many hours locked in their cells. The figures are hard to establish, but there are signs that in many areas the position has deteriorated.

A major factor in the suggested decline in opportunities for prisoners is reported to be the unavailability of prison officers to escort prisoners to and from work and in some cases to supervise workshops alongside instructors.

Prison education has suffered similarly. Too easily it comes towards the bottom of the hierachy of priorities when officers are allocated for duties. As a result, many classes for which there is budgetary provision cannot take place. Many prisoners complain of restrictions on visiting and interference with the frequency of clothing changes. A review of staffing practices and a re-evaluation of priorities could substantially improve the position, especially for prisoners who are not security risks.

I hope that we shall move from a review of man management in the prison service to the long overdue establishment of a general code of practice and standards in prisons. For many years there have been calls for a code of standards and we need a way in which priorities can be allocated and success can be judged. We must provide a measure of how well we are doing according to our goals.

Part of any useful code of practice would refer to physical requirements and also to the desired goals in terms of the quality of the inmates' experience. For example, it is all very well specifying the number of baths or showers, but we should also specify how often they should be used. Similarly, changes of clothing, visiting arrangements and time out of cell all need to be highlighted. Essentially, to judge the performance, we must have agreed yardsticks not just in terms of man management but in terms of goals for the inmates.

There is growing public awareness and debate about the need for reform. There is also concurrently a groundswell of opinion arguing that wherever the state has a monopoly of provision the result is an inefficient, high-cost service

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

orientated towards the needs of the producers rather the needs of the consumers. Clearly, in the prisons, the development of performance indicators is more complex than in many other areas of provision. The goal of imprisonment has always been a debate upon a multi-faceted issue involving containment — isolating the offender from the community; rehabilitation—imprisoning the inmate for the purpose of treatment of inappropriate behaviour or training new skills; deterrence — the ability of prison sentences to deter either the offender or potential offenders; and retribution—using a prison sentence as an expression of the public's refusal to tolerate criminal behaviour.

Finding effective measures presents particular challenges. There is a need to evaluate work in the service in the light of its objectives, no matter how hard they are to identify.

In the light of the vast sums of money spent on the prison service and the difficulty of achieving the form of cost savings and enhanced efficiency emerging in other sectors of the economy more forcefully exposed to financial and market considerations, there is mounting pressure to follow the American example and move towards privatising prisons or at least contracting out some services or prisoners. That is no longer a controversial idea raised only by those with a powerful even all-consuming ideological commitment to market forces. It has been raised by a broader band of supporters concerned as much about difficulty of establishing change and improved conditions for our prisoners in the gaols as obtaining value for money or efficiency. Clearly any such move requires great political diplomacy and many lessons can be learned from the French example.

The Economist argued last week that it is time to start privatising some British prisons. Its headline encapsulated many people's reservations:

"Prudes about profit keep prisoners in filth."

We should not react in too defensive a fashion. Private prisons and prisons for profit have a long history in the penal system of Great Britain. Prisons were expected to be self-supporting and to obtain their revenue from fees exacted from the prisoners in medieval times. Gaol keepers, who were usually appointed by the sheriffs, took the job, not out of a sense of duty but to make a profit. The prisoners were expected to pay an admission fee on entering gaol and a release fee. The fees were adjusted according to the prisoner's social rank and ranged from £10 for an archbishop, duke or duchess to 13s. 4d. for a yeoman and nothing for a poor man. The discharge fee ranged from 35s. down to 7s. 4d. for a yeoman or a poor man. In addition, prisoners were expected to pay for all daily necessities such as bedding, fuel, food and even at times, water.

As prisons were essentially business enterprises, the office of the keeper was transferable or inheritable like any other property. The wardenship of the Fleet prison was leased at £40 a year in 1490. Even the system of transportation of prisoners to the American colonies and the system of confinement on the hulks was a matter of contract management.

We all await the report of the Select Committee on Home Affairs on its recent visit to America and look forward to hearing the results of the new Minister of State's visit. In America, where there is a prison population 10 times the size of ours, many steps have been taken to use the private sector. A number of prisons have been handed over, locks, bars and cells, to specialist companies of which the Corrections Corporation of America is one of the largest. That arose at a time when the American authorities were worried about overcrowding, poor conditions and escalating costs. Some are involved purely for profit, others as a social responsibility gesture or out of philanthropic motivation.

Clearly there would be many steps involved, including the establishment of a national code for minimum standards but there is, I believe, widespread interest in the idea of increasingly contracting out services or some groups of prisoners.

There can be no question of society relinquishing control altogether. Effective monitoring would be essential and, indeed, some have argued that it might easily result in more effective control than the management has been able to establish in recent years in the public sector. It is arguably the case that the state will always have to maintain responsibility for top security prisoners.

In the area in which I have most experience, juvenile crime, there have been many remarkable pioneering projects from the independent sector which are cost-effective and socially useful. Those, in my experience, have been undertaken by non-profit making organisations but there is no doubt that the enthusiasm, commitment and willingness to experiment with new working practices and ideas would, in my view, sadly be almost impossible to achieve in the state sector.

The Junction project at Waterloo was an early and remarkable scheme acting as an alternative to custody for young serious delinquents, financed by Save the Children Fund. The Church of England Children's Society's tracking project in Coventry is another example.

In my constituency the Alternative Probation project, once again a non-profit organisation, provides a remarkable service to those on the brink of a long-term criminal career. We have other examples in the area of probation hostels and elsewhere.

This is an appropriate time for the debate. The long-awaited talks between the unions and management on the Fresh Start proposals open today, in parliamentary terms —yesterday in real terms. Those proposals should result in a more effective, better-managed service with better use of the available manpower so that those employed in this vital and often dangerous work receive a fair return for their efforts.

I appreciate the opportunity provided by the debate to draw attention to this too easily overlooked group of people. We have 47,790 inmates in our gaols in some 122 penal establishments staffed by 19,000 uniformed officers. Too often, that group of people when out of sight is also out of mind.

7.34 am

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): With the leave of the House, I wish to make three brief points about this important issue. I welcome the interest of the hon. Lady the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) in this subject and some of the ideas to which she has referred, but it is a fundamental mistake to believe that, because there has been a 12 per cent. increase in the prison population, the number of prisons and prison officers should also be increased. The hon. Lady acknowledged that the number of prisoners must be reduced. This

Government have failed to address the crime prevention issue. Only when they do so will something be done about the number of prisoners in our gaols.

I welcome the ideas that underlie Fresh Start. I have argued for many years that the prison officers must be professionals. The Labour party's policy is to move rapidly towards a six-month training period for all prison officers, with the aim of eventually introducing a two-year training period. That kind of training period is needed if prison officers are to do a professional job. That is why I have doubts about the scheme.

My first doubt relates to training. Unless the Government recognise the need for good, long-term training, prison officers will not become professionals. At a meeting a few days ago in Lord Caithness's office with a number of his civil servants I was told that they accept that the training issue must be addressed.

Secondly, I am not sure that the Government will be able to introduce the scheme if they do not increase the amount of money that is needed to implement it. I understood that it would be a nil cost scheme. If that is so, I suspect that the negotiations will founder.

My third, and by far my most important, point is that I do not believe that fresh start will work unless the Government are able dramatically to reduce the number of prisoners. The Home Office must decide whether it wants to use the powers in the Criminal Justice Act 1982 relating to executive release. The Home Office has never said when it intends to use those powers, or why it would use them. The suggestion has been made that they would be used only during an industrial dispute, but we know that the Home Office has thought of using them because of the overcrowding in our prisons.

I have already said that I should prefer a conditional release scheme, because it is fairer and makes much more sense to the public. It could apply to non-violent offenders who do not pose a risk to the public. The Government put the 1982 Act on the statute book and have provided themselves with the power to use executive release. If they combined it with increased training, together with additional resources to finance the scheme, it could work. If the Government made a real contribution to change in the prison service, they would have our support.

7.38 am

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): The great joy one always feels, Mr. Speaker, at the opportunity to address the House at 7.38 am is greatly enhanced by your presence in the Chair, looking far more bright-eyed and bushy-tailed than is entirely appropriate at such an hour.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) for making his points briefly and cogently. I know that he will forgive me if I do not go down all the interesting highways along which he would take me.

My hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) gave a virtuoso performance. It was an extremely well-informed speech. She showed a mastery of the relevant statistics which highlighted her undoubted concern about aspects of the prison service. At the same time she commended the Government for their very real efforts in trying to come to terms with the historic neglect of our prison estate.

I particularly welcome the commendation which my hon. Friend made in clear and detailed terms. I congratulate her on her understanding of the issues involved in the fresh start proposals. Such was the authority of my hon. Friend's contribution and the extent to which I agreed with it that I am in the happy position of not having to respond at any great length.

I join my hon. Friend in commending the fresh start programme, which is intended to provide the foundation and framework for the prison service of the future. It is a major package of proposals for change in the working arrangements for prison officers and revised managment and pay systems for the prison service throughout England and Wales.

As my hon. Friend said, the package has its genesis in mounting concern about the problems which have beset the service for so many years — internal division and dispute, overtime dependence, inflexible organisational structures and working systems and impoverished regimes.

My hon. Friend set out the catalogue of problems and difficulties that face the service and it is a key element in everyone working together to try to deal with those that they should be widely understood. Indeed, I know that some of the solutions of the hon. Member for Hammersmith would not appeal to us, but I think that he, too, would agree with much of what she said about the difficulties and would also accept in a fair-minded way that those problems have their roots in a soil far deeper than when the Government came to power in 1979.

The formidable catalogue of problems requires no further elucidation from me, but it would be helpful if I said a little more about the fresh start programme. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Hammersmith for responding positively to the programme. His ideas about the training element will be taken seriously. He might like to dilate on those in great detail so that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State who is responsible for these matters might have an opportunity to take them on board. This is not a partisan issue. Rather it is one of which we all want to try to take advantage. The more people who appreciate the need for the fresh start, the better we shall be able to devise a prison service where resources are applied in the most efficient manner.

As my hon. Friend said, the three main areas that the fresh start programme covers are working arrangements, management structure and pay and conditions of service. They are the first integrated attempt to tackle the difficulties. The proposals for work organisation envisage the introduction of group working. That means that in future staff will work in teams grouped round the needs of the work. Shift systems will be designed flexibly within a set of common principles to match the work needs. New complementing systems are being designed to ensure that individual prisons and the service as a whole are properly manned, taking account of the needs of security and staff safety. So far as possible, the new arrangements will seek to insulate internal prison regimes from the demands of the external, particularly the court commitment.

We published a consultative document this week on the court commitment and whether it is a proper use of prison officers' time and, indeed, court time, that remands should take place on quite as regular a basis as they do at the moment, when no substantial progress is possible with the case. I understand that that is a controversial issue, on which I shall be given the opportunity to dilate on the radio a little later. We are not committed to change, but we do think that the case for change is a formidable one

[Mr. David Mellor]

and we are asking for comments upon it. It would bring great benefit to the prison service if such a change were to be implemented.

The group working proposals are intended to improve collaboration and flexibility in the exercise of responsibility. These in turn should improve the way in which the work is done and the satisfaction gained by staff from doing it well. The keynote in our approach to improved management structures is unification. Revised structures, unification of the governor and prison officers grade, along with the reduction in the number of those grades from 10 to eight, will help to end divisiveness and clarify who is responsible for what and to whom.

It is our intention to review the management structure of individual prisons at the same time as the group working concept is introduced. In that way, roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability will be clarified and, in turn, clarity of structure will help to ensure effective communication up and down the management chain and between groups across the structure.

We propose new salary pay arrangements to give prison officers a simple, fair and guaranteed pay system. The intention behind this proposal is for prison officers to be paid a monthly salary and for all the allowances currently being paid separately, except London weighting, to be taken into account in fixing an enhanced basic pay.

Prison officers will work a conditioned 39-hour-week and, in addition, they can contract to work 10 extra hours, making 49 in all, for an extra allowance. This contrasts with the present position where officers work a 40-hour conditioned week and average 16 hours overtime per week per officer. With the amalgamation of the grade structures, new entrant prison officers will in future have the same pension arrangements as governor grades, but existing officers will keep their present entitlement and there will be transitional arrangements generally designed to protect the interests of those in the grades to be amalgamated.

A tremendous amount of thought and care has gone into drawing up the package of proposals that I and my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West have described. On the one hand, of course, we must ensure that the service is offered a fair and balanced deal, but on the other hand we must make some radical changes if the professionalism of the service is to be developed and the quality of prison life improved. Inevitably, of course, such changes will always bring in train some problems and we do not underestimate the stresses and strains of getting from where we are now to the better and more positive service which we envisage for the future. The effort that will be needed to implement the new proposals will be well worth while. The benefits in them for all are as follows. For staff there is the prospect of reduced hours, both conditioned and average, along with predictable attendance patterns. On the pay front there is increased basic pay and guaranteed earnings for a guaranteed number of hours. With group working, staff should see improved job continuity and job satisfaction. For management the arrangements will provide a better match between resources and work needs. The systems will be more responsive to changing pressures, demands and needs and we should see greater efficiency, improved accountability and more effective control. For inmates, whose interests were of course well set out by my hon. Friend and echoed by the hon. Member for Hammersmith, the package provides an opportunity to improve regimes by laying down a sound organisational basis from which to work towards the enhanced delivery of regime programmes. Finally, we must not forget the public, which stands to benefit by getting much better value for money and an even more professional prison service.

On 21 November we put detailed offers to the Prison Officers Association and other prison service trade unions. They cover the proposals which I have briefly enumerated today, and include a fair offer on pay which should give a prison officer who chooses to work 10 additional hours a guaranteed pay of £15,000 per annum. That is the top rate. Discussions with the unions are now under way and we are looking for a speedy and agreed outcome. If these proposals can be agreed, they hold out the prospect of a better life for prison officers and prisoners. Without them, we have grave doubts whether it would be possible to pay for the improvements in prisoner care and staff job satisfaction that we all agree the service so desperately needs.

Central America

7.48 am

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): As part of the Consolidated Fund debate I wish to discuss the question of British relations with and policy on central America. That matter has been raised many times in the House. I wish, first, to outline what I believe to be the very serious nature of the conflict within the central American region and then to go into some exploratory questions with the Minster about British policy in the region.

Much publicity has been given over the past few years to what is happening in central America. Most of it surrounds the revolution in Nicaragua and its many achievements, and also the war in El Salvador. Perhaps less publicity than should have been given has been given to the appalling human rights position in Guatemala over the years and the fundamental instability of the political position of much of that region. More recently the news about the secret sale by the United States of arms to Iran and the suspected laundering of the money through banks in Switzerland and Israel back to central America has been given a great deal of publicity. It is interesting to note that the Contadora leaders claim that the money that Lieut-Col. Oliver North was supposed to be secretly and illegally laundering and supplying to them in central America never reached them.

The House should concentrate on the fundamental nature of the dispute in central America. It is not a basically poor area, nor is it infertile. It has fertile soil and it is rich in a variety of raw materials, yet within the area live the poorest people in the world. Anyone who has seen the subsistence level at which many of the Camasinos in Honduras are forced to live will begin to realise that that is true.

When the region achieved its independence from Spain many decades ago in the last century, the raw materials were taken over either by the landowners or by foreign-owned multinational companies. For that reason, there is a warped process of economic development and all the countries in the region subside further and further into debt, military dictatorship, and multi-national domination of their economies.

In the case of Nicaragua, the Sandinista movement, which is based on the life of Sandino, a hero of the country in the 1920s and 1930s, fought a long struggle against the dictatorship of General Samosa and finally achieved power in 1979. Since that time Nicaragua has seen tremendous achievements, but it has made them against the background of the most terrifying odds and international repression. Disputes there have an international connection and British policy towards the region was ostensibly one of support for the Contadora peace process. However, British policy is little more than following the bidding of the United States at every turn.

Perhaps I could quote from a written answer given by the Minister for Overseas Development on 4 December. When I asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweath Affairs

"how much aid has gone to (i) Nicaragua, (ii) Honduras and (iii) El Salvador in *(a)* 1984, *(b)* 1985, *(c)* 1986 and *(d)* 1987, projected,"

I was told:

"The latest available figures for gross British bilateral aid on a calendar year basis are as follows:

	1984 £	*1985* £
(i) Nicaragua	9,000	116,000
(ii) Honduras	3,446,000	3,653,000
(iii) El Salvador	205,000	103,000"

—[*Official Report*, 4 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. *721*.]

It must be said that none of those figures is large, but, if one studies the figures for 1979 and before, one sees that there has been a considerable reduction in aid to Nicaragua to the point where there is now virtually none. At the same time, there has been a considerable increase in aid to El Salvador and to Honduras. That is an indication of the direction in which the Government's foreign policy thinking is going.

Within the region, the Governments have come together through the so-called Contadora process and continually sought and negotiated a peaceful settlement of the conflict in central America. Our Government, together with EEC Governments, claim to support this process, but the voting record of our Government at the United Nations seems to show that at best they managed to abstain and at worst they seemed to manage to vote largely with the United States in a minority with a small number of countries. EEC loans offered to the region and EEC discussions in the region seem to be continually hampered by the attitude and activities of the British and West German Governments who are more interested in following the policy of the United States on the region than a policy that would lead to real peace and self-determination for the people in central America.

In Nicaragua other British connections have to be raised, but they have to be raised in the context of what is happening there. Nicaragua is a poor country that is striving to pull itself out of a morass of debt and underdevelopment and having to borrow large sums of money on the international market in order to aid itself.

Since 1979 Nicaragua has had very little in the way of overseas aid from any Western countries. It has had some assistance from Cuba and the Soviet Union, but little from elsewhere. Because it has had so little aid, the development programmes of the Government have been severely hampered. Nevertheless, the campaign against illiteracy in Nicaragua achieved a UNESCO prize as being a model for the rest of the world, and the development of the health service is quite remarkable. It is a moving experience to see doctors, nurses and auxiliaries doing their best in very bad conditions in hospitals in Nicaragua to bring a health service to people who have never known a health service before. Likewise, the education service, the various training schemes and the growth in employment in the country as a whole.

What is appalling is that in Managua and other places one sees the victims of the war—the people displaced because of the Contras attacks in the northern and southern regions of the country. What is also appalling is the suffering in those regions and the way that the Contras, armed and financed by the United States, and United States-backed organisations, continually pick specifically on the products of the revolution, destroying health centres, killing nurses and doctors as they go about their business in that region.

It is an evil, and I wish the rest of the world to know about it. The Contras are the remnants—that is the only way to describe them—of the private guard of General Somoza up until 1979. They are an evil force that

[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]

is financed with very expensive and sophisticated weaponry to go about their death and destruction. Here is a book, published by the Washington office on Latin America, entitled, "Nicaragua: *The Human Tragedy of the War*." This catalogues just three months of the war between April and June this year. I will quote virtually at random. Here is one particular case:

"*Kidnapping; Attempted Murder of Civilian*

June 21, 1986. Near Nacazcol, Jinotega. Around 8:00 p.m., Eucebio Herrera Blandon, 28, was taken from his house by about 19 contras, who originally identified themselves as Sandinista Army troops (17). Eucebio recognized two of them: Alejandro Palacios, who had been a member of Somoza's National Guard, and Raul Blandon, 19, who himself had been kidnapped the previous year (18). Raul begged "El Terror," the leader, to let his cousin Eucebio go and was threatened with death (19).

Along with Eucebio, the contras kidnapped his two uncles, Cesario Rizo Blandon, 64, whom they murdered, and Fermin Blandon, whom they released. Eucebio believes that they released Fermin because he was not involved in any cooperative, while the attempt to murder him (Eucebio) was made because he was the president of a cooperative (20).

Eucebio spend one night tied; the following evening, the attempt to murder him was made:

> They told me to lie down on the ground, and a man whose name is Chevo stabbed me with a knife. He stabbed me 12 times: 3 times in the heart, the rest in the chest and neck.
>
> They did this to me at 6:30. They left me for dead, covered with branches. (21)

But Eucebio survived, although he required surgery on his heart and had to spend seventeen days in the hospital (22)."

That is a horrifying story of what happened in one small village in Jinotega. The book chronicles the details of what happened to other people throughout the country, especially in areas where the Contras have been particularly active. The links that the Contras have are worldwide and go very deep.

Two weeks ago a conference was held by the Contras in the Barbican conference centre in London. That conference was hosted by prominent members of the Federation of Conservative Students—one of whom is employed by this House. That organisation is nothing more than a bunch of mercenaries who are trying to destroy a Government who put themselves up for election only two years ago and won those elections quite substantially. In every sense of the word it is a democratically elected Government which has diplomatic relations with most countries in the world, including Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States and most European countries.

The links that the Contras have, and their freedom to organise elsewhere, come not because of the justice of their cause or because of any skills or organisation, but solely from the money that they have been given by the United States and others. The June 1985 issue of *Searchlight* chronicles the links between European Nazis and the Contra movement. It states:

"Nazis in Britain and France are at the centre of a secret operation recruiting mercenaries to fight alongside right-wing 'contras' trying to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The involvement of American mercenaries with the CIA-backed 'contras' has been known for some time, and the newly uncovered role of British and other European 'dogs of war' is also being co-ordinated through right-wing circles in the United States. The presence of Britons in the 'contra' camps along Nicaragua's borders first came to light in late April when two were arrested by police in Costa Rica. Since then investigations have revealed that their recruitment is being organised through European chapters of the World Anti Communism League, using known Nazis as recruiting agents."

It goes on to explain the links between European Nazis and the Contras as they go about their business.

It is correct to ask the British Government exactly what their policy is towards the Contras in Nicaragua. The Government have diplomatic relations with the Government of Nicaragua. We support the Contadora process—at least, that is what the Government say—yet at the same time the Contras are allowed to organise freely and openly in Britain, with a conference being held in London, supported by members of the Conservative party. It is organising in a way that has been condemned as illegal by the International Court of Justice. Nicaragua sought a judgment against the United States for the violation of its national territory and the undeclared war that is going on against Nicaragua. Because of that court decision, one would have thought that the United States should stand condemned in the eyes of the world. Tragically, the British Government have still redused to condemn the United States for its continued violation of the independence and freedom of Nicaragua. It is perfectly reasonable to ask exactly where the British Government stand on this matter.

There are other ramifications. The use of Honduras and Costa Rica as a springboard to attack the Government of Nicaragua is well known, but it must be fully understood. What is happening in the region is more than just a war against Nicaragua for the United States. It has a regional strategy to it. Honduras, the poorest country in the region, has been heavily under the influence of the presence of American troops year after year. Each year, the United States organises larger and better exercises in Honduras. Each time, they leave more and more equipment behind, and each time more airfields are built. Each time, more radar equipment is left behind. Honduras is being used as an aircraft carrier, and from Honduras planes fly in and out of Nicaragua, trying to drop supplies to the Contras there, to be used against the Government and people of Nicaragua. It is perfectly reasonable to ask what the British Government's policy is.

What is also interesting is that the bases in Honduras are also being used to fly in and out of El Salvador, where the civil war has been continuing for some years. An article in *The Independent* of Saturday 13 December by Chris Norton, who is a respected correspondent who lives in San Salvador, states:

"President Duarte still officially refuses to acknowledge the Contra supply flights which operated out of San Salvador's Ilopango airport"

—a military airport just outside San Salvador. It appears that those flights, including the one that was shot down in Nicaragua, were carried out without the knowledge of the president of El Salvador; the knowledge was kept from him by the military and the American embassy because they thought that it was not necessary for him to know it.

Events in Nicaragua and in El Salvador are linked by the United States' determination to destroy the Government of Nicaragua and to impose on El Salvador a Government in the mould that they would wish. At the moment they are headed by Presiden Duarte, but one wonders how long he will last before the United States embassy finds someone more to its liking in the region.

El Salvador has some geographical similarities with Nicaragua. It has many poor people. Those who work in the coffee industry are paid appalling wages. It has

landless peasants who travel around the country looking for work. As a result of the civil war, a fifth of the population are either internal or external refugees. That was before the tragic earthquake in the autumn.

The tragedy of El Salvador is compounded by the economic strategy of the Duarte Government, which is to spend all American aid on the military and cut spending on social matters such as social security, health, housing and hospitals. The contradictions of that strategy have led to the horrors of the war, with the Vietnam-style methods that are used in the mountainous areas of El Salvador, and the most appalling poverty in the urban areas. Above all, it has led to the activities of the death squads and the murdering of so many innocent people in El Salvador itself. It is estimated that more than 50,000 have been killed by the illegal acts of bandits over the past five years. The violation of human rights is not quite on the scale that prevailed in 1981 and 1982 but it is still extremely serious.

It is incumbent on the British Government to consider their policy towards the region. Nicaragua is condemned, in the words of the Foreign Office briefing, for being a Marxist dictatorship, but it has held free elections and there is freedom of expression and of religious assembly and worship. There have been great achievements, despite all the difficulties. An election was held in El Salvador, which many considered to be fraudulent, yet it had the blessing of the British Government. Indeed, the British Government continue to bless the Government of El Salvador. To prove how much they bless that Government, they have undertaken the military training of one officer of the El Salvadorean army. One 19-year-old officer is undergoing language training, after which he is apparently to attend a military college in Britain.

I ask in all conscience whether the British Government can claim to be neutral in the region? Can they claim to be supporting the Contadora process for negotiated peace in Nicaragua while at the same time supporting United States policy in every avenue of the world and offering military help and advice to the Government of El Salvador? The training of one officer might be seen as a small beginning, but it is a serious departure when we involve ourselves in the training of an army with such an appalling human rights record, which rates it among the worst armies throughout Latin America. Additionally, we seem to be keen on giving aid to the country.

The memories of those who have fought for human rights in El Salvador, trade union organisation and dignity, are being stamped upon by the United States, now with the approval of the British Government. I have the Congress papers of Fenastras, one of the major trade union federations of El Salvador. On the front cover is a moving picture of Maria Elsy Marquez, the secretary of the candy and pasta workers, who disappeared in 1981. She is one of the thousands who have been murdered in El Salvador for standing up for working-class interests, for human rights and fundamental decency. She, together with Archbishop Oscar Rameiros and so many others, has stood up for a civilised form of government in El Salvador, yet it seems that the British Government are more interested in providing military aid than in bringing real peace to the region.

When peace talks have taken place—they have been called by the FMLN and one set of talks has taken place—they have broken down continually. I do not believe that there can be any peace in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala or any other countries in the region without, first, the end of United States aggression against the progressive movement throughout the region. Nor can there be peace without social justice. The basis of the region's problem lies in the poverty of the poorest, who live in the Campucino areas and in the shanty towns around the capital cities of the region. The British Government could play a role in this region, but they choose not to do so.

I should like to emphasise the point that I made earlier about the losses that people have suffered in El Salvador. I have visited the country three times in the past three years. Each time, I have been moved by the way in which the people cope, in the midst of all that suffering and all these losses. I hardly met a working-class or peasant family who had not lost somebody to the death squads or to the army, or who had just disappeared. Yet they still go on. they are still determined to achieve something better for their country and their lives.

I have a list of people who have disappeared or have illegally been killed over the past two years. It is a fat document. It is produced by the Committee of Mothers of the Disappeared, the camadres, the CODEFAM and the church group on human rights in El Salvador. They are admirable organisations that deserve our support and help.

The final matter to which I wish to refer before I address one or two general points to the Minister relates to our policy on Belize and Guatemala. Belize achieved its independence in the normal way in which it was achieved in many countries in the Caribbean, and a mutual defence agreement was made with Britain. There is a British base in Belize that apparently costs about £33 million a year to run. What is going on in that base is unclear. On 8 December 1986, I asked the Secretary of State for Defence

"what non-United Kingdom forces have had use of British facilities in Belize over the past three years".

The answer was:

"British facilities are used by the Belize defence force. So far as other foreign forces are concerned, records are available only for the last two years. In September 1986, both the BDF and British Forces Belize hosted a troop from the Bermuda Regiment during a two-week joint exercise. In February 1986, a sports team of US service men from Panama visited the BDF and BFB. United States observers were invited to witness joint BDF/BFB exercises in January 1985, January 1986 and July 1986."—[*Official Report*, 8 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. *88*.]

There is a base in Belize. It is certainly looked at enviously by CONDEMDEC countries within that region, which have an enormous training facility of their own—Honduras—and, no doubt would like to have the use of that base area and training grounds in Belize. Was the American sports team visiting? What was it doing there? Is it normal for American sports teams to fly to what is supposed to be an obscure base in Belize, or is it something that shows a much closer relationship between British military activity in the region and the United States than we have hitherto believed?

Relations between Belize and Guatemala have been enormously difficult. I understand that negotiations are continuing between the new Governments in both countries. Guatemala has not entirely renounced its claim on Belize, yet the British Government have renewed diplomatic relations with Guatemala and are supporting the civilian Government of Guatemala. Will the Minister tell us what the current state of relations is between the

[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]

British Government and Guatemala, what is the attitude towards that base in Belize and whether any other countries have the use of it.

The area of central America is one of enormous poverty. The crucial point about it is that, to get out of that poverty, it requires assistance, aid and trade. It does not require the constant harassment and the presence of thousands and thousands of American troops and American money that will destroy any process to bring social justice to that region. The British Government have had ample opportunities in the past not to go around the world as the poodle of President Reagan and agree with everything that he does, but to stand up for human rights and the self-determination rights of the people within that region.

I hope that the British Government will recognise that the sordid, nasty tale of the sale of arms to Iran, the attempted laundering of money back to the Contras in central America, the illegal war that has been going on in Nicaragua, and President Reagan's obsession with destroying the Nicaraguan revolution is dangerous to the rest of the world.

We should recognise the legitimate wishes, aspirations and determinations of people throughout that region. I hope that in future the British Government will take a role independent of the United States and genuinely seek to improve our aid to Nicaragua, and to the poorest people in one of the poorer regions of the world. I hope that they will recognise that all the delegations—from the Church, trade unions, political parties and others — that have gone to the region have come back with fundamentally the same message: that the United States is trying to destroy the progressive and social movement in the region. The British Government are seen by the poorest people throughout the region as very much a part of the process of the United States' destruction of their rights.

I eagerly await the Minister's response. I sincerely hope that he will condemn the United States' aggression against Nicaragua and support the decision of the International Court of Justice, which has also condemned that. He should recognise that Nicaragua has a perfect right to take Honduras and Costa Rica also to the world court for violation of its national borders. There should be a change of direction of the British Government's policy so that we resume aid to Nicaragua in a real sense. We look to a future that does not allow millions of people to be confined to a life of misery, poverty and starvation in refugee camps in the region.

8.16 am

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on getting this debate, and on his patience in waiting until this hour to make his speech. I congratulate him also on his comments, with which I completely concur. I am only sorry that I missed the first few minutes of his speech, due to logistic reasons that I am sure the Minister will understand.

I shall refer first to the Caribbean part of central America, which I am sure that the Minister will be able to deal with. Labour Members have contributed recently towards a bipartisan policy on several areas. That is why I am doubly disappointed at the Government's double-dealing, particularly recently on central America. The Minister should know what I am talking about. With regard to the Turks and Caicos, will the Minister bring the House up to date on the progress of that constitutional commission? Both sides of the House wish that dependent territory to get back to an elected legislature as soon as possible. We understand the problems that there have been, but I hope that Sir Roy Marshall's constitutional commission will make progress. When does the Minister expect to report to the House on that? Therefore, when can we expect the return to an elected Government in the Turks and Caicos?

I shall refer to only one other country in the Caribbean before coming to central America, the main subject of the debate — I refer to Grenada. I do not condone in any way any crimes that have been committed by those who have been found guilty, particularly Phyllis and Bernard Coard, but I hope that the Government will make representations to Grenada to the effect that leniency should be shown in relation to the death penalty. The Opposition would find it intolerable if, in a Commonwealth country, when a great deal of concern has been expressed about the judicial process, the people who have been found guilty in the first part of the judicial process were to be executed.

That brings me to central America and the main thrust of my hon. Friend's speech. He mentioned Belize. I had the opportunity recently to visit the base there. That is another area in which the policy of the House is bi-partisan. We support the base there. I gave an assurance to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Belize that when the Labour party wins power at the next election in the United Kingdom, we shall continue that base as long as it is required by the Government there.

Of course, we hope that there will be an agreement between Belize and Guatemala that will allow us to phase out our presence and allow the Belize defence force to take over any remaining responsibility. I am impressed by the way in which the Belize defence force is developing and by the assistance that the British forces are giving to it.

The British forces assisted during four crises — in Jamaica, Mexico and El Salvador, dealing with natural disasters, and in Colombia. As for sending helicopters to Colombia, not only was the truth contrary to reports on BBC television, but those reports were scurrilously repeated by the chairman of the Conservative party after they had been corrected by the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office. The chairman of the Conservative party went on to repeat what was known to be a lie. The helicopters were allowed by the Nicaraguan forces not only to land in Managua but to refuel. Refuelling occurred not without some difficulty.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry to stop the hon. Member. I hope that I did not hear him say that he accused the chairman of the Conservative party of lying. The hon. Member should rephrase his point. He must not accuse an hon. Member of repeating a lie.

Mr. Foulkes: It is important to spell out that the BBC report on television said that the Government of Nicaragua had refused to allow British helicopters to land on their way to the disaster in Colombia. That was not the case. The Nicaraguan Government not only had allowed the helicopters to land but had refuelled them. Both the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence corrected that in written statements in the House. Nevertheless, about a

couple of weeks later, the chairman of the Conservative party, a Member of this House, repeated what was clearly an incorrect statement on the BBC. That shows his irresponsibility. Labour Members are aware of that, but not everyone outside the House might be.

Mr. Corbyn: We should televise Parliament.

Mr. Foulkes: My hon. Friend is right. Then we could see the truth.

Mr. Corbyn: Is my hon. Friend aware that, during the earthquake crisis in El Salvador, Nicaragua sent an aeroplane load of medical aid and equipment to assist in the recovery?

Mr. Foulkes: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for reminding me of that. I hope that the British Government will encourage the Government of Guatemala, now that we have established consular relations, to start detailed discussions with the Government of Belize about the dispute between the two countries so that it can be resolved. President Cerezo has said a number of times that he wants these discussions to take place. As I found out recently, the Foreign Minister in Guatemala is a little reluctant to get down to detailed discussion and negotiation. I hope that our Government will do what they can to encourage those discussions. The sooner that normal understanding exists between Belize and Guatemala, the better, not just for that area but in general.

I shall deal briefly with the two main countries, to give the Minister an opportunity to speak. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North, I had the opportunity to visit El Salvador and to talk to people on all sides of the argument. I spoke to a number of Ministers, including the Defence Minister. That is why I want to make a point, which my hon. Friend made, about the training of one soldier from the El Salvadorean army in the United Kingdom. The Minister may shrug his shoulders, but people feel strongly about this matter. When I was in El Salvador, it was clear from the Defence Minister's attitude that the Government of El Salvador see this as recognition that everything is OK in that country. As I know from the reports which I have read of the position in El Salvador, although, as my hon. Friend generously said, there have been some improvements in that country, there is still repression and persecution. While that continues we should not be giving the kind of recognition represented by training that officer. To suggest, as the Government have, that that one officer will go back and change the whole nature and ethos of the armed forces there is utterly ridiculous when one sees the kind of forces that they are and the things that they have done. It is tokenism and it is taken in the wrong way in El Salvador.

I also call upon the Government to be active in supporting the dialogue which, as my hon. Friend rightly said, the Government of El Salvador have broken off on a number of occasions. Unless we can get a positive, meaningful dialogue going between Government and rebels in El Salvador, there will never be progress towards peace in that country. I hope that the Minister will indicate his support for that today.

The most important country, not just in itself but for its significance outside its boundaries, is Nicaragua. I am not uncritical of aspects of the policy of the Government of Nicaragua. No member of the Opposition is. We are not uncritical of many aspects of British Government policy either, as I regularly make clear. Nor are we uncritical of United States Government policy. I must say, however, that when I make representations to the Government of Nicaragua on behalf of the Opposition I find a greater willingness to take account of those representations and to do something about them than I find with the British Government or the United States Government.

The Government of Nicaragua were elected in free and fair elections, as the hon. Member for Leicestershire, North-West (Mr. Ashby), who was an observer there, will confirm. They have made great progress with literacy and health, but they are also achieving one of the most difficult things for any country to achieve. The transition from a revolutionary situation in which they overthrew a dictator who was supported by the United States to a pluralist democracy within a few years is no easy task. Conservative Members here and, above all, the White House, the National Security Commission and the State Department in the United States should recognise that. It is intolerable that during that successful transition the Nicaraguans have been subjected to continual aggression from the United States—psychological aggression in which, as the leaked documents showed, the British Government collaborated — economic aggression and, above all, military aggression. One recalls the mining of ports and the bombing of the Corinto supply depot and one is aware of the support given to the Contras.

The most recent revelations about the American Government make it imperative that the British Government dissociate themselves from all that the Americans are doing. To their total discredit, the British Government have not yet done that. The International Court of Justice has made a ruling. The Foreign Office accepts that court as the highest court in the world, as we do. We should be telling the Americans to accept its rulings. In the face of that ruling, however, the United States Government have not merely continued to support the Contras, they have increased their support for the Contras, making them the biggest contributor in the world to state-sponsored terrorism. If they claim to condemn state-sponsored terrorism, they should condemn this instance of it.

The revelations about the Iran-Nicaragua connection with money being channelled through Switzerland to the Contras is the most despicable example of the underhand way in which American Administration have been operating in relation to this issue. For the Government to continue to say that they support Contadora while continuing this kind of action is hypocrisy. It is merely paying lip service to Contadora.

Representatives of the Federation of Conservative Students have gone to Costa Rica to fight with the Contras. We saw the article, "Conservative with a Kalashnikov" in *The Guardian* and asked Ministers to condemn that student. They refused to do so. I asked the chairman of the Conservative party to condemn it. He also refused. We can understand that he would find that difficult, but I should have thought that the Minister would condemn it.

Two weeks ago—I feel extremely bitter about this—there was a conference in the United Kingdom at which Arturo Cruz, a leader of the Contras and an advocate of terrorism, spoke. It was attended by many Conservative students and, in spite of an assurance from the Minister,

[Mr. Foulkes]

a representative of the Foreign Office attended. I am told that it was a mistake. It is not my experience that Foreign Office representatives go to such meetings by mistake.

On 24 November, a diplomat from the mission in San Jose attended a meeting there. We know that Arturo Cruz and other leaders at that United Nicaraguan Opposition conference were planning, with the support of the Americans, and especially Elliot Abrahams, the establishment of an alternative Government in Nicaragua. I know that because I have spoken to people who have testified to that effect.

British Government representatives were present at meetings when plans to undermine an elected Government with which we have diplomatic relations were laid. That is intolerable. These terrorists are killing women and children and other civilians, as we see from the report in "America's Watch" from the Washington Office on Latin America. Dreadful torture, maiming and murder is taking place. It is now paid for by the American taxpayer and supported, unless it is denounced today, by the Government. Unless the Minister condemns it unequivocally today, he will confirm that the Government are party to it. We say that such terrorism must stop and we shall continue to criticise it. We ask the Government to join us in that criticism.

8.32 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I join the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) in congratulating the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on his success in the ballot and on being successful at a reasonable time in the morning, although the debate started a little too early for the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley.

The debate has understandably tended to concentrate on Nicaragua and central America, but I should like to comment first on other matters. I welcome strongly what the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley said about the British garrison in Belize. I assure the hon. Member for Islington, North, who raised the potentially sinister aspects of sporting contacts between the United States military team and the United Kingdom base, that he should not read into that more than there is. He also asserted that we have established diplomatic relations with Guatemala. That is not so. We have merely established consular relations. Discussions about further progress continue.

The hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley asked for an update on the Turks and Caicos Islands. I appreciate the bipartisan approach that has developed. The commission continues to sit. We hope to have its report early in the new year, but we cannot predict whether elections will flow from it automatically because we do not know what it contains, but I shall keep the hon. Gentleman informed.

With regard to Grenada, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman appreciates that it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the result of the trial, especially as there could be an appeal.

Both hon. Gentlemen raised the subject of the voting record in the United Nations on Nicaragua. We were one of 46 countries which abstained on the General Assembly resolution, so the impression they gave that we were in a minority of one does not stand up.

I find it frustrating that we spend a great deal of time in the House talking about central America, in particular Nicaragua. Obviously, despite all our efforts, we have not been able to dispel the misconceptions about the Government's policies. The woodworm seems to be fully integrated in the minds of Opposition Members.

I reaffirm that the Government are convinced that a political resolution remains essential for the restoration of peace and stability in central America. We do not consider that the problems of the region can be resolved by force and we have consistently urged restraint on all sides. That is why the Government, together with their European partners, have expressed full support for the efforts of the Contadora group to promote a resolution of the problem there through regional multilateral negotiation. We want to see, and have supported practically, a comprehensive, verifiable, simultaneously implemented agreement on the basis of the Contadora objectives agreed by all five central American countries in September 1983. Although no such agreement has yet been signed, we shall continue to support the efforts to sign it and to demonstrate practically that support with our European partners.

As hon. Gentlemen know, the basic plank of our policy is support for the Contadora process. The 21 objectives drawn up and agreed by all the Contadora and central American states have gained widespread international support and hon. Gentlemen are familiar with those objectives. We work closely with our European partners in our effort to support that process and we demonstrate practically our support for a move towards a peaceful resolution of conflicts in the area. That was evidenced at the Luxembourg meeting and by our commitment of assistance to the region.

Mr. Foulkes *rose*——

Mr. Eggar: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I shall continue, because other hon. Members wish to participate.

Mr. Foulkes: I want the Minister to make it explicit that the Government's support for Contadora and a peaceful solution means that he condemns the aggression by the Contras which is completely inconsistent with Contadora.

Mr. Eggar: We have consistently said that we support a political resolution of the problems of central America, and the hon. Gentleman is well aware of that.

As the hon. Member for Islington, North said, the countries of central America do not fall into the category of the poorest in United Nations terms. Therefore, they are not necessarily the first recipients on a worldwide basis of development aid. Our aid is intended as an active support for the efforts of the Contadora group.

We also try to assist with the humanitarian problems of the region. We have responded positively to appeals for humanitarian relief work in the region. Last financial year we contributed over £600,000 to appeals by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for work in the region. So far this year we have contributed an additional £250,000. In March we made available £100,000 to the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development in El Salvador.

We have also contributed more than £500,000 in emergency relief in the aftermath of the earthquake in El Salvador.

Hon. Gentlemen have made remarks about the level of our aid to Nicaragua. One cannot overlook the fact that Nicaragua received over 50 per cent. of European Community aid to central America between 1980 and 1984 and that Britain's contribution and percentage of the EC aid budget was slightly over 20 per cent. There has been a considerable commitment of resources indirectly to Nicaragua.

The hon. Member for Islington, North added to the general misinformed criticism of our offer to train a Salvadorean military cadet. We do not consider that exposing a young Salvadorean army cadet to the professional standards and methods of the British Army can be interpreted as condoning human rights abuses. Indeed, we very much hope that he will take back to El Salvador an idea of the values that govern the activities of our armed forces. All four Contadora group countries currently trying to negotiate a comprehensive settlement to the problems of central America, as well as some of our European partners, extend military training facilities to the Salvadoreans. The offer of military training to one young cadet must be seen in the wider context of our aid programme to El Salvador.

I was surprised at the Opposition's criticisms of our assistance to El Salvador. The total assistance is limited and designed to acknowledge and encourage the substantial progress that President Duarte's Government have made particularly on human rights. That progress has been recognised by most international observers, and I detected a grudging recognition of it by Opposition Members. I note with interest the fact that the Opposition rarely decide to criticise the more serious abuse of human rights in Afghanistan or Kampuchea. The motive of their criticism of El Salvador is not clear.

I want now to consider the remarks made about the Contra conferences in London on 6 and 7 December and that in San José on 24 November. I want to reaffirm and reiterate that there was no question of any official Government support for those conferences. A junior member of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office attended the conference at the Barbican but did so on her own initiative. I explained in writing to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley that when I answered his question I was not aware that the official concerned had attended the conference. Had I known, I would not have given the hon. Gentleman the answer that I provided.

Opposition Members would be wrong to read more into the matter than the simple facts permit. Neither the holding of the conference nor the attendance of an official detracts in any way from the Government's commitment to a political rather than a military solution of the problems of central America.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Eggar: As Opposition Members are aware, it is fundamental to a democratic society that individuals and groups be allowed to lobby freely on behalf of their political and other aims provided that their activities remain within the law. I am surprised that Opposition Members are so committed to the restriction of free speech when the message behind that free speech happens to be something with which they do not agree.

The hon. Member for Islington, North described the Contras' representative as a member of the Somoza private guard. However, Dr. Arturo Cruz, the Contra leader who spoke at the conference, is first and foremost a politician. He stood against Ortega in the 1984 presidential elections in Nicaragua. The hon. Gentleman should get that into perspective.

The meeting of the Contra leaders in San José was clearly intended as a political meeting, otherwise the Costa Rican Government would not have permitted it to take place in their capital. In fact, to emphasise their commitment to neutrality, the Costa Rican Government refused a visa to a Contra leader as he was considered to be a military rather than a political figure. The member of the British embassy who attended the conference did so as an observer as part of his normal duties of obtaining information and reporting to us on developments in the area. Before Opposition Members raise too much fuss about that, I stress that there were present observers from many other western countries and also Latin American parliamentarians including some from three member countries of the Contadora group.

Allegations that the meeting of the Contras in San José, which was attended by our diplomat, was secret are entirely without foundation. Of course, Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials at home and abroad have a duty to keep Ministers fully informed of developments in the areas of their responsibility. Therefore, they need to keep in contact with a wide variety of groups. Such contact does not necessarily imply any form of recognition or support. Labour Members should not read more into the facts than is present on the surface.

I should like to end on a positive note. I referred earlier to the difficulties currently encountered by the Contadora process. I also referred to our intention to continue supporting the efforts of the Contadora group to resolve the problems of central America. In February next year, the third meeting of the San José dialogue will take place. The Foreign Ministers of the European Community, the central American states and the Contadora group states will meet in Guatemala City to fulfil the commitment undertaken at Luxembourg. We and our European partners see that meeting as a reaffirmation of our support for peace, democracy and economic development in the region. We see it as a positive contribution in an area of significant tensions. I am sure that the meeting, at least, will be supported by Opposition Front Bench Members.

Aircraft (Falling Objects)

8.45 am

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): Richmond and Barnes is a lovely part of south-west London, as almost everybody would agree. One of the things that has ruined the area for some of the residents, as I have mentioned every year and in my maiden speech, is aircraft noise. In fact, since becoming a resident of Barnes I have been woken up more often than not in the early morning by aircraft noise.

Unfortunately, there is another side effect of the aircraft industry. Three weeks ago, in the middle of the constituency in Mortlake, there was an extremely bad accident. A British Telecom employee had a narrow escape when a large chunk of ice, apparently the size of a football, crashed through the roof of a bicycle shed just outside the Mortlake telephone exchange. Some people may find that sort of incident comical, especially since the evidence disappears quickly. However, only a few minutes before the accident one of the employees, Mr. Thomas Ash, had been standing exactly under the place where the ice crashed through. It draws our attention to the fact that on many occasions over the past few years items have fallen from aircraft and, naturally, the places that suffer most are directly under flight paths.

Since 1980 the Heathrow airport consultative committee has been corresponding with the Department of Transport, and before that the Department of Trade and Industry, trying to pursue its request for the Government to introduce a scheme to insure members of the public against death or injury and damage to property caused by objects falling from aircraft. All of those requests have been rejected.

The Heathrow airport consultative committee has the support of the six other consultative committees and many independent United Kingdom consultative committees such as Bristol, East Midlands, Manchester, Southampton and Cardiff. Three hon. Members, my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson), my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston (Mr. Ground) and my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby), have written, as I have, to the Minister to ask for a scheme of compensation or insurance.

It may be that the Government consider, as they have in the past, that such a scheme is not justified. That decision would be based on the claim that the number of reported occurrences of objects falling from aircraft are very small, that legal liability rests with the operator of the aircraft that causes the damage or the injury and, in the few instances where the aircraft is untraceable, financial compensation can be obtained from the normal household and personal accident insurance policies.

I have studied carefully the incidents of over the past seven years. Indeed, when the Minister wrote to me recently he stated that there had been 90 incidents of items falling from aircraft in the past few years. If one studies the information carefully one can see how dangerous such things are. In 1983-84 there were 16 ice falls from aircraft. What are the problems? Seven of the 10 aircraft were foreign registered. Although in some of those cases the aircraft was contacted, in other cases the aircraft that had had an ice fall could not be seen. An international aircraft that is flying high over this country may have an ice fall, but that aircraft will not be seen.

In 1983-84 the luggage door separated from an aircraft over Richmond and, unknown to the crew, it crashed to the ground. In the same year an aircraft caused a 12 inch by 18 inch hole in a roof. In another incident ice fell on a house, narrowly missing a child. The Civil Aviation Authority's statistics demonstrated that items very often fall to the ground in Richmond, narrowly missing individuals.

A frequent argument is that householders are protected by their house insurance policies. But that is not always so. Some insurance companies do not provide insurance of that kind. A lady who lives locally suffered £600 worth of damage to her property but was unable to claim compensation. Corrrosive substances from aircraft also fall on to people's property. In Richmond, corrosive substances fell on to a house and on to the pavement and caused burns that lasted for 10 days after the incident.

Apart from the 1983-84 statistics, there have been extremely bad years for accidents. The Gatwick airport consultative committee mentioned that between 1 July 1982 and 30 June 1983 there were 44 reported incidents, three of which related directly to Gatwick. A lump of ice that fell from an incoming aircraft missed a bungalow by only 6 ft. The ice hit a tree and ripped off a branch. One wonders what harm that might have done to an individual.

My plea is supported by organisations that support the Heathrow airport consultative committee. Hillingdon borough council, Hounslow borough council, Spelthorne borough council, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire county councils, Slough corporation, the Association of British Travel Agents, the London Tourist Board, the International Air Transport Association, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the National Chamber of Trade, even the Trades Union Congress, the Consumers' Association and many other voluntary environmental and amenity groups agree with me. However, I am sure that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Transport will say that, instead of a national compensation scheme for these rare incidents, individuals should be encouraged to take out insurance. I do not agree.

The British Insurance Association states that in many cases it is not possible to identify the aircraft from which an object has fallen, even if it is clear that there is a direct claim against the operator of the aircraft. Nevertheless, the BIA says that it is up to individual householders to take out such insurance as they consider would cover the risk to their house, if various items were to fall on it. The BIA states that most policies cover the risk of damage by aircraft or other aerial devices. Therefore those who are inside a house at the time of a fall might be protected. Those who are travelling in cars at the time of a fall might also be protected. However, the BIA states that although comprehensive motor insurance policies would cover an accident caused by items falling from an aeroplane, those with third party or third party, fire and theft insurance cover would not be compensated if there were such an accident. In a letter that it wrote in 1985 the BIA said that:

"Personal accident and life assurance policies, like comprehensive motor insurance policies, would not specifically refer to aircraft but would cover such a claim, since they provide insurance in respect of accidental bodily injury and death respectively."

Either one has to be in a house or in a car, and comprehensively insured, or one has to have a personal accident policy to obtain a just result for what could be a severe injury. A child who is injured while in a playing field may not be able to make any claim on an insurance policy. An individual walking in the open might well not be covered.

The British Insurance Association states that the estimate, which is difficult to make, of those who carry personal accident insurance is unlikely to exceed 15 per cent. Therefore, 85 per cent. of people are uncovered when out in the open air.

I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to look at the matter urgently. It is inequitable that people who suffer death, injury or damage should have to undergo the trouble and expense of legal action to try to obtain compensation, often from a foreign airline or one that is unidentifiable. Ice particles cannot be used in evidence because they disappear.

If the cost of the cover is so small, the Government could easily administer a small fund from which compensation could be paid without creating awkward precedents. At the very least I ask the Government to urge insurance companies to carry the risk and to give prominent advertising to personal accident policies because the more people take them up, the lower the cost.

8.55 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Michael Spicer): My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) has done his constituents a great service by raising this matter. Like his, my speech will be rather truncated.

My hon. Friend is concerned as a result of an ice fall a few weeks ago at Mortlake. It has now been established that the ice was probably due to a lavatory leakage. The CAA is examining its radar tapes to see whether it can establish which aircraft might have been involved.

Under section 76 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 the owner of an aircraft has absolute and unlimited liability for loss or damage suffered by a person or property on the ground and caused by an aircraft or object falling from it.

I had meant to deal with the matter in some detail, but my hon. Friend will forgive me if I am unable to. I understand that he is particularly referring to ice falls. On the rare occasion when any part falls it usually can be identified. Indeed, the operators are only too pleased to sort the matter out because it is in their interests to do so. Ice falls present a greater problem for the reason that my hon. Friend mentioned. Because of the difficulties that several hon Members have mentioned from time to time —indeed, my hon. Friend has just mentioned them himself — airport consultative committees have argued for a Government compensation scheme. We have looked at that matter and have concluded that there is no overwhelming justification for setting up a compensation scheme.

Where an aircraft part is concerned, the aircraft can often be traced and its owner held liable in the way that I have mentioned for damage or injury caused. To set up a Government compensation scheme for falling objects would establish a major precedent. One could ask why should the Government not then set up schemes to compensate people for damage or injury caused by other types of activity—falling trees, slates from roofs, and so on.

Most normal household and personal accident insurance policies provide cover against damage to property or personal injury suffered because of objects falling from aircraft. That means that where the aircraft in question cannot be traced, anyone affected by a falling object should be able to make a claim under his insurance. It is precisely because of the ease with which such risks can be insured that the Government have consistently argued that there is no need for a Government compensation scheme. There can be no justification for creating what would have to be an elaborate scheme to investigate, assess and pay out a small number of claims each year when suitable resources and expertise are already available on the commercial market.

We do not think that it is the function of Government to substitute for the insurance companies. It is the job of Government to make certain that there are adequate arrangements for ensuring as far as possible that ice or parts of aircraft do not fall from aircraft.

In Britain that task falls to the Civil Aviation Authority. However, that having been said, the House will have listened with interest to what my hon. Friend said about the need to advertise what insurance is available and, if insurance companies are not providing such cover, to try, as far as possible, to encourage insurance companies to do so. It is our firm belief that most normal household policies have this cover. We shall certainly do anything that we can do to advertise the comments of my hon. Friend on this matter. I am sure that hon. Members will have listened to what he said about the need to insure. With that qualification, I take that point very much on board. The only answer I can give is that we cannot set up a compensation fund.

It being Nine o'clock am on Tuesday, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Low Pay (West Yorkshire)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

9 am

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): This morning, throughout west Yorkshire men and women have gone to low-paid jobs. Today, throughout west Yorkshire men and women will go into local jobcentres desperately searching for work. It is a matter of serious concern that a disturbing number of the jobs advertised in the 21 jobcentres in west Yorkshire are for jobs with rates of pay which are below the statutory legal minimum. It is clear that the Government are colluding with unscrupulous employers to break the law on minimum pay, for, although the Government have cut the number of wages inspectors they employ to enforce legal minimum pay, the Government employment service is advertising jobs at less than the statutory minimum. The victims are thousands of men and women working in shops, restaurants, hotels, pubs, cafés, hairdressing, textiles and clothing and at home.

We know about the problems of low pay, because west Yorkshire has the worst low pay record of all nine main urban regions in Britain. Wages council minimum rates for adult workers range from £70 for clothing workers to £80·50 for workers in non-food shops. Men and women earning £1·50 to £2 an hour know only too well that there are only eight shopping days to Christmas, because they are at their wits' end trying to provide for their families and are desperately worried about how they will pay their rates, gas bills, electricity bills, water bills, and all the other bills that come tumbling through the letter box at the beginning of every year.

I propose to quote extensively from a report entitled "Low Pay Centres" by Steve Winyard and Maggie Hunt of the west Yorkshire low pay unit which surveyed jobs advertised at rates as low as 80p an hour—for a part-time taxi controller in Huddersfield, and others below the legal minimum set by wages councils. The report says:

"At the time of the survey in August the national average wage for men was just over £210 and for women just under £140. Very few of the jobs advertised in the wages council sector offered the prospect of earnings anywhere near these levels. Most were paying wages of between £70 and £85 per week or £1·75-£2·21 per hour. There were one or two examples that went below £50 per week. However, before looking in detail at this sector, we should refer to the jobs in the 'miscellaneous services' category that are not covered by a minimum wage.

These were the very worst paid vacancies in August. At the very bottom of the pile was this vacancy advertised at the Huddersfield Jobcentre:

'Part-time Controller, Huddersfield Town Centre, 80p per hour, hours to be arranged, will involve evening and weekend work. Working on radio message control, directing taxis and taking information. Experienced person preferred. Must be conversant with the Huddersfield area . . .'

Many of the job advertisements for a 'nanny' were also offering rates of pay well below £1 per hour, even after an allowance is added for food and accommodation. The following advertisement from the Leeds Jobcentre was one of the worst paid

'Nanny (live in), Headingley, £25. Live in all found. Three children 7, 5 and 2. Experience preferred. Involved in home life 18+'

A large number of low paid job advertisements were for vacancies in the rapidly growing sector of 'private welfare'. Old people's homes, nursing homes and private hospitals were all advertising for domestic and care staff with wages in the region of £1·50-£1·70 per hour. These pay rates are significantly below those paid in the public sector. . . .

'Part-time Cook, Bradford 9, £1·70 per hour, Mon-Fri 9.00-12.00. To work in a residential home for the elderly. Will prepare lunches for approximately 20 people 18+ . . .'

Many of the Jobcentres had vacancies for general cleaning work and the most common rates of pay were between £1·50-£1·70 per hour. . . .

'Part-time cleaner, Brookfoot, £1·55 per hour, 6 pm-8 pm Mon-Fri. Required for general office cleaning i.e., vacuuming, dusting, emptying bins, cleaning toilets. Must be fit, active and reliable . . .'

Low Pay Unit studies in other parts of the country have shown that security guards are not only very low paid, but also face long and unsocial hours . . .

'Static Guards. Wakefield area. £1·50 per hour. 6.00 pm —6.00 am. Usually some day work including weekends. Will patrol premises/sites to check security. Previous experience, own transport and phone required. Should be able to provide 2 references.'

With hourly rates of pay in the region of £1·50, a security guard will have to work over 80 hours a week to earn above the Council of Europe's decency threshold for wages. Such hours are not uncommon in the industry however, as the Dewsbury job advertisement indicates. Five or six night shifts plus some day work is often expected by the cowboy employers in this industry . . .

Finally there were also some very low paid jobs being advertised in the 'leisure industries' . . .

'Arcade Operative. Brighouse. £1·63 per hour. Tues. Thurs. Fri. and Sat. 11-6. Mon. 11-3. Full-time person to assists in the running of an amusement arcade. Some cleaning duties,. . .'"

The report says about workers covered by wages councils:

"Wages Council Orders are extremely complex and the minimum rate can vary according to experience, type of work done, the nature of the firm's business and, even how many tables there are in a fish and chips shop! In a number of cases the details on the job card were not adequate to permit a precise calculation. However often the wages offered were so low that no matter what assumptions are made it is clear that a firm is illegally underpaying . . . Focusing firstly on bar staff, there were many advertisements in the Jobcentres offering hourly rates below the LNR wages council minimum (£1·91 per hour for workers aged 21 and over). £1·80 per hour was frequently mentioned for part-time staff . . .

'Bar/cellar person, Cottingley. £1·80. Split shifts 39 hours. Experienced bar person to work split duties. To do cellar work bottling up in the mornings and general bar duties. Must be smart and presentable. Will be required to cover for functions and weekend work."

That job is estimated to be underpaying at the rate of £4·40 per week.

The report says:

"The lowest rates of pay were being offered for vacancies in cafes and restaurants. The following advertisement for a cook in a cafe is 33p per hour below the minimum set by the UPR council for an 'assistant cook' (£2·03 per hour). Someone taking this job would be underpaid by nearly £9 for the three days worked."

There are also examples of vacancies for shop workers in which advertisements were for paying below the wages council minimum:

"Part-time shop assistant, Leeds 12, £1·84 per hour. 10-1, Monday to Friday. To work in a small supermarket serving meat, also preparing sandwiches and filling shelves. Experience strongly preferred. Must be mature and reliable."

There are also examples of jobs in clothing and textiles which were being advertised at below the council minimum. The report says:

"The clothing manufacturing wages council covers work in the manufacture and alteration of most types of clothing. At the time of the survey the minimum rate for a 39 hour week was £70, representing an hourly rate of £1·79, with pieceworkers guaranteed at least the same rate as timeworkers. A disturbingly high proportion of clothing

vacancies advertised in the jobcentres gave no details of wage rates; pay was 'negotiable', 'to be discussed' or 'piece rates'. Even so a considerable number of advertisements were found to be offering illegally low rates of pay".

The report continues:

"Well below the legal minimum was the following advertisement for homeworkers which appeared in the Otley Jobcentre: 'Machinists (outworkers). Home area. Piece rate of £1·40 per hour. Work as and when you like in your own time. Experienced through machinist required to make up children's garments for home'."

There were also examples of hairdressing jobs paying below the minimum. I quote:

"Part time stylist. Keighley. £1·71. Tuesday 1-5. Wednesday to Friday 9-5. Saturday 9-3. Fully qualified ladies hairdresser to do settings, cutting, perming, etc. Must be fully qualified and experienced."

I have referred to the difficulties of workers in getting clear information about the rates of pay for any job that they intend to undertake. It is important that the Government take positive action in this respect and several others that I shall mention.

All employers who wish to advertise jobs at jobcentres should provide a written declaration stating whether the vacancy that they wish to advertise is covered by a wages council and, if it is, that it meets all the requirements of the current wages order. Such a move could be introduced voluntarily and, if necessary, backed by legislation. There should be more trained jobcentre staff with easy access to the latest pay rates so that all vacancies are checked on a routine basis. The difficulty is that there have been cuts in staff at jobcentres and they do not have access to up-to-date sets of wages orders. Indeed, some years ago the Manpower Services Commission decided to withdraw copies of time rates of wages and hours of work from jobcentres, making it even more difficult for the staff to be able to check whether the vacancies meet the legal minimum pay rate requirements.

Full information about the wages councils system should be displayed in all jobcentres, including minimum rates. In Sheffield, each job card says whether the vacancy is covered by a wages council; if it is, it shows the minimum rates that apply to that job. If it can be done in Sheffield, I see no reason why it cannot be done in other jobcentres in west Yorkshire and indeed in other centres throughout the country.

There should be more outdoor wages inspectors properly supported by indoor staff in west Yorkshire where, as a result of cuts in the number of wages inspectors, firms can expect to be visited only once in every 14 years. That is a scandal, and there should be an immediate increase in the number of outdoor wages inspectors so that firms can be visited more regularly and action can be taken by the Government.

We are all aware of the fiddles that the Government have carried through since they were elected in 1979. They have fiddled the unemployment figures to get people off the register, and almost at any cost. There has recently been much controversy over the questionnaire that the Government introduced deliberately to push people off the unemployment register and to suspend them from benefit if they refused to accept work. I believe that the Government have an obligation, having introduced the questionnaire, to ensure that all workers who are desperately seeking work have clear information about job vacancies and the pay rates that apply to them.

The scourge of low pay in west Yorkshire inflicts stress and misery on thousands of men and women in full-time employment and their families. Low pay imposes a considerable burden on local community services in my county. Low pay hits the local economy of west Yorkshire. It depresses demand for goods and services because low-paid workers lack spending power. Firms in west Yorkshire face lack of demand and reduced business stability as a result of competition that is based on wage undercutting. Despite what Tory Ministers say, low pay does not lead to the creation of jobs or job security. Low pay causes major social and economic problems in west Yorkshire.

That is why, in a recent survey, an overwhelming majority of people in west Yorkshire came out in favour of a national minimum wage to combat low pay in all occupations. One of those who was questioned said:

"Something must be done to end low pay. It is absolutely slave labour for many workers today."

That is the view of many of my constituents and many other men and women throughout west Yorkshire. They are extremely concerned about the extent of poverty and the appallingly low pay that they are offered for the work which is available. When the Minister replies, I hope that he will say that he can take positive action in response to the reasonable and modest recommendations made by those who prepared the report to which I have referred. If he can do so, his assurances will be very welcome.

9.17 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): There is no argument but that some people's wages are low, and it would be desirable if they could be increased. The Government recognise that there is a low-pay problem in west Yorkshire, as there is in other parts of the country. We are concerned that an unfortunate minority are not able fully to share in the prosperity of our society. Where the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) and I differ is over how the problem can be solved.

The hon. Member talked about wages councils and gave me the impression—he may not have wanted to do this — that it was almost as if the Government had decided to do away with the councils and did not recognise their importance. The Government recognised that there was a need to retain wages councils for the protection of minimum rates of pay which obtain in industries that are covered by the wages council orders, with the exception of workers under 21 years of age. We thought it right and fair that we should give younger people the opportunity to put their foot on the first and important rung of the employment ladder.

I could have done with the hon. Member being a member of the Standing Committee that considered the Wages Bill. As he would imagine, I was involved with that Committee for a few months. I was waiting for an Opposition Member to refer to the fact that the wages council orders were extremely complicated. The hon. Gentleman was fair when he told the House that in some instances it was difficult—I think that I have transcribed his words correctly—to calculate the various rates and minimum rates because of the number of tables in a cafe. It was extremely difficult. The hon. Gentleman placed me in a difficult position because the report that has constantly been referred to in the debate is out of date, for the simple reason that the Wages Bill, which is now an Act

[Mr. David Trippier]

of Parliament, has streamlined wages councils orders and simplified all the different rates of pay. I think that the hon. Gentleman will welcome that.

The Government have said that there must be a minimum wage to ease the confusion not only among employers but employees — a point that the hon. Gentleman seemed to be prepared to concede. That is the major reason why we have cut the number of inspectors.

On the level of compliance within Yorkshire and Humberside, 90 per cent. of the workers employed in the wages councils industries are not underpaid. Twenty-five per cent. of establishments were found to be underpaying but in those cases only one or two workers were actually underpaid. It has always been the Government's argument that, because there was so much confusion about the wages councils orders because they were so complicated, one could be forgiven in many cases—not all, I concede —for thinking that the employers could get it wrong and the employees would not perhaps have the natural form of redress because they would not understand the complicated wages councils orders. We have put that right.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the advertising in jobcentres of wages covered by the wages councils orders that still exist, although in simplified form. It would be wrong and foolish for me to rubbish his proposal out of hand. Obviously, I had no idea of what he would say in the debate. It is true that some vacancies have been advertised at below the legal minimum rate. I still maintain, at the risk of hammering the nails out of sight, that it is mainly because of difficulties, not only for jobcentre staff but for employers, in interpreting the orders because they were so complicated.

I understand that in the hon. Gentleman's region the local director of the Manpower Services Commission is already discussing the matter with the Low Pay Unit. As a result of the debate, I shall take a personal interest in those discussions and make sure that the hon. Gentleman's recommendation is considered fully. I shall ask also for the result of the discussions to be brought to my attention.

If the Government are saying, on the one hand, that we are now simplifying the wages councils orders so that everyone can understand them, it seems a little difficult, I concede, for even staff of the MSC in local jobcentres not to be able to understand them now that we have taken this action. The hon. Gentleman did not say that it should be mandatory, but it may be that we should consider whether a person advertising a job in a Wages Council industry should be required to sign a piece of paper or something to show that he is complying with the order. I shall look at the matter. I do not make any promises. The hon. Gentleman put that point very firmly. That is the end of the good news.

Because of the differences between Her Majesty's Opposition and Her Majesty's Government, it is important that we make absolutely clear what the dividing line is. I am suspicious of any attempts to exaggerate the number of low-paid workers through using misleading or inappropriate definitions. I do not believe that there is any purpose in defining low pay in relative terms, such as two-thirds of average earnings. It is clearly wrong to inflate the estimate of the number of low-paid workers through including young people and part-time workers. Also, like should be compared with like. Basic pay rates should not be compared with the level of average earnings. But more importantly, if low pay is defined as a relative concept, no matter how we increase the standard of living of all our people, low pay will always be an issue.

An absolute level of pay is also inappropriate, especially if we try to link low pay with poverty. A low-paid worker may be part of a household with a large total income and so enjoying a high standard of living. Conversely, someone on a relatively high wage may, because of family circumstances, enjoy a relatively low standard of living. What Opposition Members should be doing, instead of producing misleading statistics on the number of low-paid workers, is thinking about constructive proposals to help the low paid. I shall try to deal specifically with the point raised by the hon. Gentleman about the minimum wage.

It is surely self-evident that the level of real pay in this country depends upon what we can produce and upon what we can sell. Real pay and increased standards of living for all our citizens can be improved only by improving our economic performance. There are no easy or simple solutions. It may not be palatable, but it is true to say that to increase wealth, and so increase absolute pay and, at the same time, improve job prospects, entails keeping inflation down and improving productivity and competitiveness. There are no short cuts—as Opposition Members appear to believe—to a permanent improvement in the position of the low paid. The improvement in the standard of living for those who are poorly paid depends crucially upon the general improvement in our economic performance.

That the standard of living of the low paid depends upon improved economic performance can be seen in the position of the low paid in west Yorkshire. We do not want to enter into the Wars of the Roses. Although I might believe that the hon. Gentleman was on the wrong side of the barbed wire dividing his county from mine, at least we stand shoulder to shoulder in not having to change money at Watford. We are concerned about the people in the north. As the hon. Gentleman would imagine, I am familiar with his part of the world. I visited it officially only a few weeks ago. That was my umpteenth visit in the past few years.

I am aware that in those areas in west Yorkshire, the jobs to which the hon. Gentleman refers are concentrated on the more traditional industries. Unfortunately, the employment structure of the area includes a proportionately large number of such industries, as is the case in my part of east Lancashire. Only when those industries become more profitable and their employees more skilled will they be able to pay higher wages without risking jobs. Any attempt to force those industries to pay higher wages through Government action—be it a minimum wage or anything else—will not help the thousands of low-paid workers who will consequently lose their jobs.

Since coming to office we have consistently followed policies to improve our economic performance. Those policies take a while to become effective and are now bearing fruit. Output has grown by 14 per cent. since 1980 and productivity by 17 per cent. in the past few years we have experienced a faster rate of output growth than any other EEC country. In the 1970s, under a Labour Government, our rate of output growth was among the lowest.

However, there can be no grounds for complacency, especially about our rate of increase of earnings and unit wage costs. Unfortunately, earnings in Britain are still

growing faster than in other major countries—7·5 per cent. in Britain but only 1·5 per cent. in the United States and in West Germany. Because of this, our unit wage costs are rising more rapidly and we are losing competitiveness.

Compare the increase in the take-home pay of low-paid workers since we came to office with the prospect of what is likely to happen if the Labour party should return to office. The proposals of Labour members — I am referring not just to the speech of the hon. Member for Bradford, West about the minimum wage but to his colleagues' speeches—will lead to an increase in public expenditure of £28 billion. How can that be financed? There is only one answer—by additional taxation. The Labour party's proposals are equivalent to an increase in the basic rate of tax to 53p in the pound, or an increase in VAT to 43 per cent.

Low-paid workers should look closely at these false promises and should remember that they will be paid for with their money. Labour Members promise to help the low-paid. But, to pay for their promises to other groups, the low-paid will suffer a fall in take-home pay and a lower standard of living. On top of this, Labour's policies will lead to higher inflation, which will also quickly erode the real living standards of the low-paid.

The policies of the Labour party will wipe out all the gains in take-home pay which the low-paid have made since we came to office. It is not possible to increase public expenditure and at the same time increase the take-home pay of the low-paid. I expect that the interests of the low-paid will once again be sacrificed to finance the political dogma of increased public expenditure——

The Question having been proposed after Ten o'clock on Monday evening, and the debate having continued for half an hour, Mr. SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at half-past Nine o'clock am on Tuesday.

House of Commons

Tuesday 16 December 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL
Lords amendments agreed to.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BILL *[Lords]*
Read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

RIVER HUMBER (BURCOM OUTFALL) BILL *[LORDS]*
Order for Third Reading read.
Queen's consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified—
Read the Third time and passed, with amendments.

Oral Answers to Questions

EMPLOYMENT

Restart Scheme

1. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Paymaster General why the Manpower Services Commission does not conduct follow-up exercises after six months to ascertain what progress has been made for those involved in the restart scheme.

The Paymaster General and Minister for Employment (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): My present priority is to devote all the resources allocated to the restart programme to the task of helping long-term unemployed people by providing them with a range of opportunities designed to get them back into employment.

By April next year we shall have interviewed the stock of people who have been unemployed for 12 months or more. We expect to begin a cohort survey designed to plot the progress of a number of long-term unemployed people in the year following their restart interview in spring 1987.

Mr. Wallace: The Paymaster General recently claimed that as a result of restart just under one in five people had come off the register of long-term unemployed people. Does he realise that some of us are somewhat sceptical about his claims of success, as in the equivalent period last year even more people came off that register? Why is the Minister unwilling to canvass 100 per cent., as happened in the follow-up to the youth training scheme? Is he afraid of the results of such canvassing?

Mr. Clarke: I did not make a claim in the terms that the hon. Gentleman has said. It is true that rather over one in five of those interviewed by the Manpower Services Commission, as part of the programme, ceased to claim benefit and left the unemployment count. However, I have always accepted that some of them would leave anyway. That is why we cannot, at this stage, estimate precisely how many of those whom we have sought to help do obtain jobs, training and so on. However, there is no doubt that the programme is having a beneficial effect. When we have accomplished the main job in hand, which is offering help to the long-term unemployed, we shall try a cohort survey so that we can answer some of the questions that people have raised.

Mr. Hayes: Will my right hon. and learned Friend condemn the utterly disgraceful, if rather predictable, behaviour of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), who on 4 December tried to mislead the British public over the restart programme by suggesting that Ministers said one thing when he knew full well that they had said another?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. I get used to the fact that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) tends to make up his criticisms as he goes along, but I become alarmed when he speaks on behalf of the Labour party and appears to make its policy, too, as he goes along.

Mr. Leighton: Is not a miasma of confusion caused by the three ways in which Ministers present the figures? First, they talk about a positive offer being made involving about 90 per cent. of the unemployed. However, that is meaningless as it does not necessarily lead to anything. Secondly, they sometimes talk about the number of claimants directly placed, when in reality fewer than 1 per cent. actually get jobs. Thirdly, Ministers talk about the number of those ceasing to claim benefit being about 18 per cent. However, as has been pointed out, in the past five quarters, about 18 per cent. have come off the register in the normal way. Does all that not show that restart is hardly having any real effect? Is not the lesson to be drawn that there is a shortage of jobs for those going through restart?

Mr. Clarke: We tend to give answers in each of those terms when the questions are put in those terms. It is not the Government, but those attempting to criticise and debunk the scheme, who muddle up the figures and try to reach the unjustifiable conclusion that the hon. Gentleman has reached. I thought that I saw him reported the other day as saying that he supports the restart programme. In that case, I trust that he will start giving it credit for the fact that it offers positive help to each and every one of those who have been out of work for more than 12 months.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that this scheme should be welcomed on both sides of the House because it offers real hope for the long-term unemployed, many of whom find jobs as a result of it? In addition, they have a point of contact after the scheme in the job club, which can continue to give them help. As the scheme develops, will my right hon. and learned Friend examine ways in which proper training development can be tacked on to the scheme for those who would benefit from extra training and get a job?

Mr. Clarke: I thank my hon. Friend. This is obviously an exciting innovation in helping the long-term unemployed, and it is having considerable success. It is a pity that the Opposition are so devoid of ideas that they

try only to debunk it. One of the things towards which we try to steer the long-term unemployed is a training opportunity, if that is what they require to get back into the job market. We are now moving on from restart, and the latest thing that we are trying out is the job training scheme, whereby we hope to be able to offer training places to every person under the age of 25 who is unemployed for more than six months in the areas where we are operating the scheme.

Mr. Prescott: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman——

Mr. Forth: Get it right this time.

Mr. Prescott: I am addressing a rabble.

Does the Paymaster General accept the reply given by the Under-Secretary on 6 November, saying that only 1 per cent. of the people interviewed had been placed in proper jobs? Does he also accept the protest from his Department's officers that the timetable that he has settled for the restart interviews makes it impossible to carry out effective counselling? Will he be honest with the House and admit that the restart programme is nothing more than another fiddle and a squalid attempt by the Government to frighten people legitimately entitled to benefit off the register?

Mr. Clarke: My hon. Friend and I keep pointing out that the figures given in the reply to those questions apply to those directly placed from the interviews into employment. They are not a measure, as the hon. Gentleman keeps trying to claim, of the number of people who go into work from restart. The hon. Gentleman is deliberately misusing the figure, and he ignores the repeated explanations of what it amounts to.

As to the protest by staff, I assume that he is backing up the protest of one of the trade unions, which was trying to argue that we should have more staff on the scheme. We have already employed 2,000 extra staff, and I have no doubt that the unions will try to claim that more are needed.

The hon. Gentleman makes allegations about fiddles, but it is absurd for the Opposition to attack as a fiddle every measure that gets the unemployed back to work. I have no doubt that he is behind the latest edition of Labour's newspaper, the *Labour Weekly*, which sets out its list of eight fiddles, which includes projects such as the enterprise allowance scheme, which puts people into self-employment. I make it clear once and for all that to put somebody into a job and into training is not a fiddle. It merely disappoints the Opposition, who are upset that unemployment is going down.

Work Test

2. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress made in the application of the new availability-for-work test.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The procedural changes that I announced to the House on 28 October are being introduced progressively. Around two thirds of unemployment benefit offices are now operating them. The aim is to have them operating in all offices by the end of January.

The procedures are designed to meet criticism from the Public Accounts Committee of shortcomings in testing the long-standing requirement that benefit should be paid only to unemployed claimants who are available for work.

Mr. Hamilton: Despite the Minister's protestations, does he not accept that there is now a widely held view that the sole purpose of this disreputable exercise is to cut the unemployment figures without tackling the problem? Does he accept that if the results of the pilot schemes were projected nationally 25,000 or so would be removed from the register each month, without a single new job resulting? Is not his message to the unemployed, "If we cannot get you a job, we shall stop counting you"?

Mr. Clarke: It is merely a new method of ensuring that benefit is paid only to people who are entitled to it. I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman that what he described is a widely held view. It is held by a few activists in the Labour movement and those associated with it.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that there is widespread support in my constituency for the new availability-for-work scheme? In Bracknell, we allegedly have more than 7 per cent. unemployment and 500 vacancies at the jobcentre.

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. If we did not ask questions of people who claim benefit, we should be handing out benefit simply on request. That seems suddenly to have become the policy of the Labour and Liberal parties, but I do not think that they have widespread public support for it.

Mr. James Lamond: Is it sensible to suggest to an unemployed family man in the north-west of England that he should move to the south-east to find a job, where he may discover that he requires a mortgage that is three times the size of the one that he has in the north-west, with the result that his wage will not cover the increased mortgage payments and he will be worse off by moving than by staying at home on the dole?

Mr. Clarke: That does not sound very sensible to me. As far as I am aware, nobody has had that suggested to them as part of the availability for work test. All we are applying is the usual rule that people have to be reasonably available for work that is likely to be available in the area in which they live.

Mr. Marlow: As, according to the Library, in two constituencies in booming London — Vauxhall and Bermondsey—30 per cent. of males are unemployed and drawing benefit, this seems to be massive evidence of fiddle, fraud and idleness. Will my right hon. and learned Friend ensure that the availability-for-work test is reinforced in those areas? Currently, the taxpayer is being deprived of £40 million in two constituencies alone.

Mr. Clarke: There has always been a test of availability, because there has always been an availability rule. We have introduced a form which seeks to ensure, as my hon. Friend and many others would wish, that benefit is paid only to those who qualify for it. In London there are many job vacancies and many opportunities to get back into the job market. We are introducing the restart scheme to steer back into work people who want it, but when we do that we find that we are criticised by the Opposition as well.

Mr. Evans: Will the Paymaster General now acknowledge that the major purpose of this cynical scheme it to reduce the unemployment figures prior to the next general election, without creating one extra job? Will he confirm that many of the questions in the questionnaire have been devised to trap or trick the unemployed into losing their benefit?

Mr. Clarke: I am weary of hearing the old trick-question line, because nobody has ever cited a trick question to me. I ask the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues to confirm that the Labour party's policy is to give out benefit to anybody who wants it without asking any questions and that, if people claim benefit for more than 12 months, we should do absolutely nothing to offer them help to get into employment.

Sir William Clark: Will my right hon. and learned Friend remind the House that anybody who enjoys unemployment benefit——

Mr. Evans: Enjoys it?

Sir William Clark: —is enjoying it at the expense of the taxpayer? Is it not completely unfair that taxpayers' money should be used when the person who receives it is not available for work?

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am sure that my hon. Friend and others agree that the average taxpayer is perfectly content to pay unemployment benefit to somebody who is out of work, looking for it and cannot find it. The average taxpayer would, however, be amazed to hear the Opposition demanding that we should hand out benefit to anybody and that somehow it is harassment to ask people to demonstrate that they are looking for work and are therefore entitled to benefit. As the Labour party passed the law that we are enforcing, it is high time that it made it clear that it proposes to repeal that law, so that anybody can have benefit when the Labour party gets back into power.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

3. **Dr. Marek** asked the Paymaster General what is the Government's best estimate of the displacement and substitution effect of the enterprise allowance scheme.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): It is difficult to obtain reliable information on the displacement and substitution effects of the enterprise allowance scheme. The limited evidence available suggests that displacement and substitution may possibly be about 50 per cent. Given the large degree of uncertainty, I am not satisfied with that figure and have asked the Manpower Services Commission to commission research into the methodology of measuring displacement.

Dr. Marek: When will the Minister realise that he cannot have a flourishing private enterprise scheme in a massively deflated economy? Does he agree, in line with recent studies, that the present enterprise allowance scheme lends support to the black economy? If so, what will he do about it?

Mr. Trippier: The scheme does not lend support to the black economy. The substantive question on the Order Paper refers to substitution and displacement, and the scheme will displace many people who are already in the black economy. I would have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that as much as I do. All the evidence shows that we have the highest number of self-employed that we have seen for the past 60 years, and that has been achieved principally under this Government.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Will my hon. Friend confirm that follow-up research suggests that three out of five of those on the enterprise allowance scheme are still in work three years later, bringing with them more jobs? Is he aware that many people in my constituency have benefited from this scheme and that they greatly appreciated it as a bridge from reliance on benefit to self-sufficiency in self-employed posts?

Mr. Trippier: The scheme is a particular success in my hon. Friend's constituency. It is important to stress that the figures show that for every 100 successful businesses under the scheme, 99 additional jobs have been created. The survey which has been conducted thus far will merely be a chapter in a long-running novel and will show that in future many more jobs will be created by people who have been set up under the scheme.

Jobstart

4. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Paymaster General how many long-term unemployed people are in receipt of the jobstart allowance.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): By 5 December, 2,074 people were in receipt of the jobstart allowance.

Mr. Boyes: Is the Minister not ashamed to be part of a Department which is creating a scheme to force people to take jobs at less than £80 a week? In other words, he is forcing them to work on poverty level wages. Although the average wage is £65, his Department has produced figures showing that a large number of people are earning less than £39. What does he expect those people to do after six months when their £20 supplement is ended? Does he expect them to carry on working for £39 and less? Is this not another device to reduce unemployment figures and another example of the Government's disgraceful, unacceptable attitude towards unemployed people?

Mr. Lee: Conservative Members and, increasingly, unemployed people are becoming fed up with the sneering, destructive comments of the Opposition about many of our constructive positive schemes, such as this one. It is constructive and positive and we sincerely hope that at the end of six months employees will stay on with their employers. The MSC hopes to conduct a survey in 1987 of those who participated in the national jobstart scheme.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim: Is my hon. Friend aware that any job-encouraging initiative which the Government take is sneered at by the Opposition as a fiddle? Will he remind Opposition Members that their party introduced the youth opportunity programme in 1977, which gave youths a wage of only £18 a week, including travel allowance? Will he also remind them that the Labour manifesto of 1979 said:

> "We have the Youth Opportunities Programme, which guarantees every school-leaver either a job or a training place or employment experience".

In addition—[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading."]—in 1976 the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), who was then Employment Secretary, took full-time students out of the unemployment register, saying that that would reduce the unemployment figures by a considerable amount.

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend is right. The Opposition increasingly talk with forked tongues.

Mr. Wainwright: In view of the minimal response to the jobstart allowance during the past five months, why does

the Minister not replace it with a cash incentive to employers to expand the number of staff by recruiting from the long-term unemployed?

Mr. Lee: We have a whole range of other schemes. I acknowledge that there has been a slow start to this scheme, but, as a result of the fairly recent television campaign, there has been a significant pick up.

Wages Councils

5. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Paymaster General what increase in employment he estimates to have followed from the recent reform of wages councils.

Mr. Trippier: Attempts to estimate the employment effects of these particular reforms are not likely to be fruitful. However, the streamlining of the system and the removal of statutory minima which prevent employers offering jobs to young people at realistic rates can only increase employment beyond what it would otherwise have been.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: In view of my hon. Friend's reply, will he calculate the opposite effect on employment of introducing a statutory minimum wage? While he is doing that, can he add to that the effects on employment of shutting down American bases, phasing out nuclear power stations and imposing mandatory sanctions against South Africa? Does he agree that if the Labour party came to office such policies would cost hundreds of thousands of jobs?

Mr. Trippier: My hon. Friend is absolutely correct. Quite apart from the disastrous effects that the Labour party's proposals would have on the levels of unemployment which my hon. Friend has catalogued, the substantial increase in taxation necessary to fund the Labour party's increase of £28 billion of public expenditure would dramatically exacerbate the position that my hon. Friend has described.

Engineering Skills

6. **Mr. Sheerman** asked the Paymaster General what measures he considers necessary to increase the volume and quality of training in engineering skills.

17. **Mr. George Howarth** asked the Paymaster General if he is satisfied with the volume of craft and technician training in the engineering industry.

Mr. Trippier: It is the responsibility of employers to identify their own engineering skill requirements and ensure an appropriate volume and quality of training at all levels, but the Government are providing substantial help through their £1·5 billion training programmes for young people and adults.

Mr. Sheerman: Does the Minister realise that a recent report from the Engineering Industry Training Board says that in the past eight years training has declined by 30 per cent. in the industry, and over the past 15 years by 50 per cent.? Is he aware that there is a crisis in engineering training at the entry and the adult training and retraining levels? That crisis will stop this country from moving again when the Labour party takes office. Is it not about time that he did something to prepare the ground for that?

Mr. Trippier: If the hon. Gentleman is trying to prepare the ground for the inopportune and unlikely event of a Labour Government being elected, he is not going about it in the right way. He cannot have it both ways. The engineering industry comes under the responsibility of a statutory training board, the like of which he wishes to replicate throughout the rest of industry and commerce. The views that are expressed by the Engineering Industry Training Board, which I very much welcome, must, under that statutory training system, be welcomed, otherwise the hon. Gentleman is claiming that the statutory training system which already imposes a levy does not work. There are many people inside and outside the House who believe that that is the truth.

Mr. Lawler: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the reasons for the training crisis in the engineering industry is the high wage rates that have been negotiated by trade unions for young people entering the industry by? Does he accept that the best way to increase the volume of training is for the engineering industry to adapt the traditional apprenticeship schemes and integrate them with YTS? Will my hon. Friend congratulate those far-sighted engineering companies which have already done that?

Mr. Trippier: I certainly congratulate those companies which have adopted that practice. My hon. Friend has made a valid point. Apprenticeship is not the only route to craft and technician jobs. YTS has already enabled a substantial amount of initial skills training to be carried out. The expanded two-year scheme will enable even more people to be trained in that way.

Mr. Ron Brown: Does the Minister agree that it is appalling that the CBI has claimed that there is a shortage of skilled workers when at the same time it is exploiting the YTS as cheap labour and completely failing to promote real apprenticeships? Is it not the country that is suffering overall?

Mr. Trippier: If the hon. Gentleman was correct it would mean that the 83 per cent. of people who have benefited under YTS, who have said that they are satisfied with the training that they have received under that programme, are completely wrong. First of all the hon. Gentleman insults those——

Mr. Brown: Forget the statistics. The Minister should come up to Scotland and meet the young people, and then he would know better.

Mr. Trippier: I did not interrupt the hon. Gentleman when he asked his question. I would be grateful if he would try to listen to my reply.

First, the allowance made is an allowance, and the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Lawler) is absolutely right. It is appropriate that a lower differential should be established so that those who are not fully skilled can try to attain a qualification that would try to put right the skill shortage that we know about.

Mr. Batiste: Would my hon. Friend be able to estimate how much more successful the training and other employment measures of the Government would be if the Government were not constantly faced with carping and politically motivated criticism from the Opposition, whose sole purpose is to undermine their success for electoral purposes?

Mr. Trippier: I agree with my hon. Friend. In the first place, every time an Opposition Member seeks to rubbish

the youth training scheme it is an insult to those young people who have enjoyed that form of training. I believe, as do my colleagues on the Front Bench, that every opportunity is taken by the Opposition to knock every scheme. That leads us to understand that they do not want the unemployment figures to come down prior to the general election, and that they are not sincere in wanting to reduce the unacceptable level of unemployment.

Community Programme

7. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Paymaster General why he has changed the community programme eligibility rules for 18 to 25-year-olds in the nine pilot areas chosen for the job training scheme.

Mr. Lee: The job training scheme pilots offer training and work experience, particularly for those aged under 25 who have been unemployed for six months or more. We therefore decided that in the pilot areas places on the community programme should be concentrated on those who have been out of work for 12 months or more.

Mr. Bennett: Will the Minister accept that what young adults want, like everyone else, is real jobs? However, at least the community programme has ensured that many of them can do something useful and in many cases they can get training while on the schemes. Does the Minister also agree that it is unfair of the Government to stop young people in the trial areas from continuing on the community programme unless they have been out of work for more than 12 months? Will he accept that the Government are again penalising those young people who desperately want jobs and forcing them to go on a training scheme, when many of them have been on the youth opportunities programme and youth training scheme and have had their fill of training? They want jobs from the Government.

Mr. Lee: The whole point of the job training scheme is to improve the quality of training of our young people, and I wish that Opposition Members, the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) in particular, would support us in that. The aim of the scheme, with regard to particular individuals, is to place emphasis on an agreed training plan, and particularly to concentrate on new technological skills and self-employment.

Mr. Thurnham: Does my hon. Friend share my amazement at the fact that the Opposition do not welcome the pilot schemes, which are designed positively to improve training for 18 to 25-year-olds, especially if that can leave more room for older people to take advantage of places on the community programme?

Mr. Lee: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments. We are trying all the time to improve the quality of our training schemes and training for our young people.

Ms. Clare Short: Has the Minister seen the MSC's recent report on the attitude of the long-term unemployed to the new job training scheme? Is he aware that it was, in the words of the report, "cynical and suspicious" and saw the reduction of the unemployment figures as the main benefit? It also described the scheme as "tantamount to slave labour." How can the Minister possibly justify paying participants their benefit only, removing them from the unemployment figures and then charging employers a fee for their labour? Is that not the most cynical and nasty of all the schemes that have been introduced, simply to reduce the unemployment figures in the run-up to the election?

Mr. Lee: I totally reject the hon. Lady's comments. We are trying to improve the quality of training all the time. I believe that the scheme is proving popular in the pilot areas, but we must await the results of the scheme before we can consider whether to extend it further.

Small Firms Service

8. **Mr. Richard Page** asked the Paymaster General how he plans to strengthen the links between the small firms service and local enterprise agencies.

Mr. Trippier: There is considerable and growing contact between the small firms service and local enterprise agencies. Small firms service counselling now takes place in over 30 local enterprise agency offices and all English LEAs now have details of SFS counsellors in their region. The LEAs make extensive use of SFS publications. SFS managers and LEA directors meet regularly. I am encouraging the development of these contacts.

Mr. Page: I thank my hon. Friend for that progressive reply. I know that he is aware of the excellent work that is carried out by the local enterprise agencies in advising businesses and creating new jobs. May I ask him to take it one stage further by linking up, through the small firms service, to the BOTB to give pro-active advice to small businesses on exporting, because it is on exporting that the future success of this country depends?

Mr. Trippier: I welcome my hon. Friend's suggestion. Apart from their hand-holding task, local enterprise agencies clearly adopt a pro-active stance within the communities in which they operate. They are in a strong position to advise people on exporting. As long as my hon. Friend's proposals fit in with what the BOTB would like, there should be no difficulty about implementing them. They could represent a good advance for the local enterprise agency movement.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: Does the Minister accept that there is a need for much greater co-ordination of the services provided to small businesses? Are not small businesses sometimes confused by all the advice that is given to them by local authorities, educational institutions, chambers of commerce, enterprise agencies, the Government and other sources? Will the Minister do something to try to achieve better co-ordination of these services?

Mr. Trippier: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would accept my view that local enterprise agencies should be the one-stop shop, providing not only the hand-holding service but the signposting service that is so necessary. They are in a very good position to have strong links with further education colleges, with the small firms service to which I have already referred, and with any available training organisation. I know that the hon. Gentleman supports the local enterprise agency movement, and I welcome his support. Both he and I must try to ensure that every person in the land knows that the local enterprise agency should be the one-stop shop and the first port of call.

Mr. Patrick Thompson: Is my hon. Friend aware that in Norwich the links between the small firms service and

the local enterprise agency have been working well? Obviously, however, it must be good to increase the links. I thank my hon. Friend for the support that he has recently given to the Norwich enterprise agency trust. Does he agree that we must use every possible means to encourage more young people to set up in business, thereby increasing employment?

Mr. Trippier: On my hon. Friend's latter point, I was privileged to visit officially the local enterprise agency in Norwich and I was most impressed by what I saw. My hon. Friend is absolutely right when he says that the connection between the local enterprise agency and the small firms service seems to work perfectly well in that part of the country.

Restart Scheme

10. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Paymaster General how many people have so far participated in restart courses; how long they last; and how many have got permanent jobs as a result.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: By 13 November, 46,415 people had been on the one-week restart course under the national restart programme. We have no means of knowing exactly how many participants subsequently obtain permanent employment.

Mr. Lewis: According to an answer in *Hansard* on 6 November, only 0·7 per cent. of those interviewed had been placed in jobs. Is this not an indictment of the Paymaster General's policy, particularly as proper jobs in the real world are needed into which people can be slotted, instead of the palliatives that he has presented to the House?

Mr. Clarke: If the hon. Gentleman had listened to the answer that I gave he would have been given part of the explanation as to why the figure upon which he relies is completely meaningless. Among the many people who have to be added to the 0·7 per cent. are those who obtain jobs after they have been on a restart course. They are not included in the figure that the hon. Gentleman cited. My hon. Friends and I have repeatedly said that it is pathetic that the Opposition should be reduced at Employment Question Time to nitpicking about all these schemes and trying to find opportunities to denigrate them instead of realising that they represent a positive programme of help for the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Butterfill: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that a number of people in my constituency have been on the restart scheme and that they have then obtained jobs? Even one of those who have not obtained jobs came to my constituency advice centre the other day and told me that, although he had not yet found a new job, he felt that he was now very much better qualified to get one. I am sure that that applies throughout the country.

Mr. Clarke: As my hon. Friend says, individuals are placed directly in a job or in training, or they become self-employed, with a subsidy under the enterprise allowance scheme, or they attend a restart course and then try to enter the labour market. One in five of all those who contact stop claiming benefit and cease to be unemployed. A good proportion of these people are returning to the labour market. It is absurd to go through the statistics in minute detail in an effort to knock down this extremely ambitious programme, which aims to give that kind of help.

Training Initiative

12. **Mr. Terry Davis** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress of the new training initiative.

Mr. Trippier: The new job training scheme pilots are now in operation in nine areas around the country. There has been an enthusiastic response from training providers, and unemployed people are coming forward in significant numbers.

Mr. Davis: But does the Minister agree that there is less adult training now than when the new initiative began? Is that what the Minister calls success?

Mr. Trippier: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman had prepared his supplementary question prior to hearing the substantive reply that I have just given, because I referred to a scheme that is being piloted in nine new areas. Substantial numbers of people are coming forward as a result of this new initiative and we are very pleased with it.

Mr. Dorrell: Will my hon. Friend speculate on the likely effect on companies' training efforts if the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) were ever successful in securing the endorsement of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) for a 1 per cent. training levy to raid company coffers and reduce companies' own resources to fund their training efforts?

Mr. Trippier: I query whether the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) would get the endorsement of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). Certainly it has been calculated by the Department of Employment, where I work, that the percentage levy that a future Labour Government would impose on industry and commerce would mean a substantial increase in the corporation tax rate, which would cripple them.

Ms. Richardson: Does the Minister accept that the proposed closure on Friday of this week of the women into manual skills course at Deptford skillcentre will be a disaster for women wanting to train in non-traditional skills? Is he aware that there is a lobby at this moment in the Central Lobby protesting about that? Will he give me an undertaking that if the meeting which has been arranged between the three funding boroughs and the Manpower Services Commission does not come up with a solution which allows the course to remain open he will personally intervene and show his commitment to training for women?

Mr. Trippier: I have already given my commitment to the training of women. I gave it to the hon. Lady at a meeting which she attended in my Department only last week. I was pleased to intervene on her behalf, asking the MSC to co-operate fully with the consultation exercise which is going on at the moment. I cannot give her the assurance that she seeks in the latter part of her question. The MSC in no way intended to reduce the training provision for women. It will simply be transferred.

Restart Scheme

13. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Paymaster General if he will indicate the rate of take-up of the restart scheme in the west midlands.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: By 13 November 60,520 people in the west midlands region had been interviewed under the restart programme.

Mr. Taylor: I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for that reply. Will he say a word to the House about the Social Affairs Council in Brussels last week, the agreement which he achieved on the United Kingdom employment initiative and how his European colleagues reacted to that?

Mr. Clarke: They reacted very well. I am glad to say that 12 member states agreed on a programme which included a commitment to help the long-term unemployed, which is what we are doing through the restart programme. There is great international interest in this original programme. It is one of the best new ideas for helping the long-term unemployed that any country has come up with for a long time. If there had been any Labour participant, in the Social Affairs Council last week, the Council would have been astonished to hear the entire thing described as merely a fiddle.

Mr. Sheerman: Does the Minister realise that with the collapse of industrial training in the west midlands, and the collapse of engineering training at every level by 30 per cent. since the Government took office, the people of the west midlands and elsewhere want a fresh start with a Labour Government, and not restart?

Mr. Clarke: Now that the economy is reviving so strongly and the amount of employment is increasing, restart is steering people back into opportunities in the west midlands and elsewhere. Instead of trying to find ways of describing the decline in the west midlands and referring to a few years back, the hon. Gentleman should take on board the fact that since August 1983 alone more than 20,000 new small businesses have been launched in the west midlands under the enterprise allowance scheme. That is only one part of the menu that we have on offer under our restart programme.

Self-employment

15. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Paymaster General what new initiatives he plans to remove obstacles to self-employment.

Mr. Trippier: We have taken a substantial number of measures to encourage self-employment, including those outlined in the White Paper "Building Businesses . . . not Barriers". We continue to keep the possibility of further improvements in this area under active review.

Mr. Atkinson: Is my hon. Friend aware of several difficulties which a number of self-employed people have been facing recently from the Inland Revenue because of the definition of self-employment which it has been imposing upon them, which has resulted in their having to return to employee status? Will he seek early discussions with his Treasury colleagues to produce a clearly defined criteria for self-employment so that everyone knows where he stands.

Mr. Trippier: The White Paper, "Building Businesses . . . not Barriers", dealt with the improved training of those who were employed at local offices of the Inland Revenue and the DHSS. It is important, as my hon. Friend is suggesting, that decisions on employment status are fully understood and consistently applied. At present we are looking at ways to clarify and simplify further the procedures for assessing employment status.

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Speaker: I remind both sides of the House that questions to the Prime Minister are in order only if they refer to her responsibilities.

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Adley** askd the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 16 December.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Adley: As defence criteria will undoubtedly be paramount in the decision that my right hon. Friend and her Cabinet colleagues have to take on the airborne early warning system, does she agree that neither she nor the House needs advice from the party that cancelled the TSR2? Nevertheless, bearing in mind that it took the Royal Navy eight years to order the Harrier after the United States Marine corps had done so, will my right hon. Friend please give an assurance that when the Cabinet has made its decision there will be a statement and a debate in the House so that those of us who still have nagging doubts may be convinced?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that defence requirements must be paramount in the decision and we must be certain that the system which is chosen will meet the country's defence requirements fully and within an acceptable time scale. There will be a statement to the House when the Government have reached their decision. The question of a debate is a matter to be settled through the normal channels.

Mr. Kinnock: It is obvious that on both sides of the House, and, indeed, on all sides of the argument, the strong demand is that our country gets as a vital part of our national defence an airborne — *[Laughter.]* Conservative Members might think that it is funny; the rest of the country certainly does not. We need an airborne early warning system that is totally dependable at a cost and in a time that is necessary for national priorities. However, will the Prime Minister accept that it is necessary to show that, in coming to a decision, full account is taken of the current quality of the British GEC system and of the national technological interest — an aspect which, understandably, the RAF officers making the assessment did not have to address directly. Therefore, before the Cabinet meets on Thursday, will the right hon. Lady set up a speedy and independent inquiry to establish — *[Interruption.]* — beyond all possible doubt the relative technological, financial, delivery, and, above all, defence merits of the GEC AEW and the Boeing AWAC systems?

The Prime Minister: I made it perfectly clear that defence requirements must be paramount in this decision. May I also make it clear that an independent inquiry is

neither necessary nor appropriate to enable the customer to decide how best to meet its vital need to have an effective airborne early warning system in operational service as soon as possible.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the right hon. Lady's refusal to have an inquiry based on the conviction that the GEC system is somehow so inferior as not to warrant further consideration? If it is, why was GEC given the status of a prime contractor as recently as March? Why was its system nominated just 12 weeks ago to go forward for the final adjudication? Why, in the process of assessment, was no early warning given of these alleged deficiencies, and why as recently as 5 December was the Secretary of State for Defence able to say that both systems work?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman appears to have come to his own conclusion. I make it quite clear that in coming to a decision defence requirements must be paramount. They will not be subordinated to any political expediency. We must be certain that the system which is chosen meets our defence requirements fully and within an acceptable time scale. Those will be the criteria. I repeat that an independent inquiry is neither necessary nor appropriate to enable the customer, the Ministry of Defence and the RAF, to decide how best to meet the RAF's vital need to have an effective system in operational service as soon as possible.

Mr. Kinnock: If those are all the criteria, as they rightly should be, with defence requirements heading them, what is the reservation about having an independent inquiry to demonstrate beyond peradventure the advantages of one system over the other?

The Prime Minister: The opinion of those who are responsible for the defence of our country is the best opinion and it should not be subordinated or submitted to independent assessors who do not carry that responsibility.

Mr. Prior: May I declare an all too-well-known interest? I say to my right hon. Friend that of course the defence of the country must come first in any decision that the Government reach.

An Hon. Member: But——

Mr. Prior: Not even a but.

The leaks that have come out of the Ministry of Defence are unfortunate, because they have given an impression that the GEC avionics system simply does not work, and could not be made to work within three years of the stipulated date. Does my right hon. Friend recognise that this is damaging for a company which has worked very hard from the time that it had complete control of the contract? In those circumstances, will my right hon. Friend and the Government consider allowing GEC, together with the Ministry of Defence, to look at the assessment to see what is wrong and whether the scientists can agree a way forward?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for saying that he recognises that the defence interest must be paramount. It would be difficult to let one company or another see certain information which might be commercially confidential. Both companies would have a complaint if we were to let the other see that information. May I make it quite clear that the MOD has great confidence in GEC, as is instanced by the amount of purchases that the Ministry of Defence makes from that company. Those purchases reached about £800 million last year.

Mr. Steel: Is the Prime Minister aware that the Head of Defence Procurement, Mr. Levene, yesterday told the Public Accounts Committee that the cost overruns on Nimrod were to a large extent caused by problems within the Ministry of Defence? In view of that, will the right hon. Lady assure the House that if the Cabinet decides on defence grounds to go for AWACS and to abandon the Nimrod project there will be a full explanation about what happened to the £900 million of taxpayers' money which has been spent since 1977? In the meantime, will she instruct her unattributable sources in Whitehall to cease their character assassination of GEC?

The Prime Minister: They have already done that by indicating the amount which the Ministry of Defence purchases annually from the General Electric Company, which it would not do unless it had confidence in GEC's ability to produce those things. When it comes to the early warning system, defence needs must be paramount. Those responsible for the defence of this country must be certain that they have a fully effective system that will work within the appropriate time scale. I think the right hon. Gentleman will agree that those best able to make that judgment are those who are responsible for the system. I hope he will agree that we should trust their integrity in coming to their judgment.

Mr. Heseltine: May I ask my right hon. Friend to remember that in what is an agonisingly difficult decision for the Government there is nothing that is new about the awareness of the difficulties of bringing the British version of the airborne early warning system to a satisfactory conclusion, but that in the last resort it is only the Ministry of Defence and the advisers within the Ministry that can take a decision of this sort? With the greatest respect to my right hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior), it would not be possible for an independent inquiry to impose a decision upon the Ministry of Defence.

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for confirming what I said earlier.

Q2. **Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 16 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Home Robertson: Because the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) has made mistakes in the past, it does not necessarily mean that he is wrong about Nimrod. Is the Prime Minister aware that there is widespread concern on both sides of the House about the need to protect Britain's high technology industry and the need to preserve Britain's independent defence capability within NATO? Why are we getting this thrawn refusal to have an independent inquiry into and assessment of this issue?

The Prime Minister: With respect, I do not think that the hon. Gentleman has added to the question I have already been asked, and I do not think that I can add anything to the answers that have already been given.

Q3. **Mr. Greg Knight** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 16 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Knight: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the latest report of the Audit Commission concludes that local authorities could save nearly £2 billion a year through greater efficiency? Yet following the publication of that report, Derbyshire county council is still wasting hundreds of thousands of pounds of ratepayers' money on such unnecessary items as television advertising and publishing a civic newspaper. It has now decided, at public expense, to send a number of Socialist councillors on a television interview training course. Is not this——

Mr. Speaker: Quickly.

Mr. Knight —a disgraceful abuse and yet another example of Labour's irresponsibility when in office? Is it not clear evidence that further Government action is necessary to stamp out this outrageous abuse?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is right. Since the Audit Commission commenced operations in 1983 it has identified about £2 billion worth of economies that would give ratepayers very much better value for money. I agree with my hon. Friend that there is a great deal of scope for these economies to be made, often in the very authorities which are demanding more money, although they do not know how best to spend the money that they have already.

Mr. Allen Adams: I note with interest the Prime Minister's concern about defence. Is she aware that Babcock Power yesterday announced 620 redundancies at its Renfrew plant? This is a factory that is steeped in manufacturing parts for Trident, which is an integral part of the defence of the realm, apart from developing ultrasonic equipment and heavy lifting gear. *[Interruption.]* What does the Prime Minister intend to do about this, and when does she intend to do it?

The Prime Minister: I am sorry that I could not hear the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question, except that I heard him say that there have been severe redundancies in a factory in his constituency. As he is aware, every possible effort will be made to help to create new jobs.

Q4. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 16 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Bottomley: Will my right hon. Friend reconfirm the Government's unequivocal support for nuclear deterrence, which plays a crucial role in the defence of the West, in the light of the Soviet Union's overwhelming superiority in conventional forces? Does she agree that to scrap the nuclear deterrent and divert resources to conventional forces would be a paltry gesture that would not bridge the gap but would merely leave Britain isolated and exposed?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Nuclear deterrence is a fundamental part of our defence strategy and a fundamental part of NATO's defence strategy. We shall continue to modernise our own independent nuclear deterrent with Trident. Money spent on nuclear weapons provides far more deterrence than the same amount spent on conventional forces.

Mr. Michael Morris: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Does it arise directly out of questions?

Mr. Morris: It does, Mr. Speaker. I attended the Public Accounts Committee yesterday, when the Head of Defence Procurement, Mr. Levene, made a statement in answer to questions about Nimrod. He did not say that the majority of costs on overrun were the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence. That is an incorrect statement of what he said in evidence.

Local Government Expenditure

3.31 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the calculation of expenditure for rate support grant purposes. Relevant and total expenditure are two key concepts that are basic to the local government finance system in England and Wales. Since 1981, relevant and total expenditure — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will hon. Members clear the Chamber quietly if they do not intend to remain?

Mr. Ridley: Since 1981, relevant and total expenditure have been calculated on the basis of the expenditure charged to a local authority's rate fund revenue account. That expenditure includes contributions from that account to, for instance, the housing revenue account and other special funds. Contributions from such funds and accounts to rate fund revenue account have been regarded as income-reducing relevant and total expenditure. That approach was adopted in 1981, in response to the views of local authority associations.

I have looked closely at the definitions of relevant and total expenditure because of some anomalies in the returns of expenditure received from a number of authorities. I was concerned that the accepted approach, despite the local authority associations' desire for it, did not seem to correspond to the statute, and I sought legal advice about this. *[Laughter.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ridley: That advice made it clear that the Department's treatment of expenditure was incorrect in law. *[Laughter.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a highly complicated issue. I ask the House to give the Secretary of State a fair hearing.

Mr. Ridley: Transfers between funds and accounts within the rate fund are not expenditure. Expenditure takes place only when an authority has liabilities in the outside world and meets them from the general rate fund. A second opinion confirmed the advice.

I must accept that advice. It means that past decisions that involved the concepts of total or relevant expenditure are put in doubt, and that it would be quite improper for me or my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales to ask the House to take further decisions on the present basis. Until this matter is put right, we therefore cannot make any further RSG reports, including the main report for 1987-88, or complete the rate limitation process.

To deal with this highly technical problem, the Government therefore will bring urgent legislation before Parliament which will validate for England and Wales all past decisions involving the use of relevant or total expenditure and allow decisions to be properly taken for the remainder the present rate support grant system, in line with the practice that has hitherto been adopted. Because the Bill is unlikly to receive the Royal Assent in time to allow for the normal timetable on rate limitation, I propose to include in it provisions to set rate and precept limits for designated authorities by formula. The Bill is designed to make no changes in policy, but as far as possible to apply existing policy within a tight timetable.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland administers the Scottish rate support grant under separate legislation, and the same problem does not arise. Some more minor difficulties in Scottish practice that have come to light will, however, also be remedied in the proposed legislation.

Authorities will be concerned, in the light of my statement, about the immediate position for 1987-88 and on outstanding supplementary reports. When the House returns in January I hope to announce my firm intentions for the 1987-88 settlement for England and the supplementary reports for 1986-87 and 1985-86. The Bill is designd to fulfil those intentions. I shall make the relevant reports immediately on Royal Assent to the validating Bill. Authorities will therefore be able to plan their budgets and rates for 1987-88 with confidence on the basis of my statement in January. Also in January, my right hon. Friends and I will inform designated authorities of the exact rate and precept limits that will be set for them in accordance with the provisions of the Bill.

My Department is today writing to all authorities and their associations to explain the position.

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): May I begin by thanking the Secretary of State for the courtesy of the early notice of what is, by any test, a very complex and very important issue. This is the fourth statement on rate support grant in five months, and does it not demonstrate the absolute shambles into which Tory Ministers have driven local government finance?

For how long has the Secretary of State known of this situation? When did he first receive the legal advice to which he referred? Does it, for example, explain his refusal to make a rate support grant statement, as he promised he would, as long ago as mid-November? Why was the right hon. Gentleman not frank with the House about the matter when he answered my private notice question on 3 December, just a few days ago? Will not this latest Department of the Environment fiasco cause massive uncertainty about local authority budgets and rates throughout England and Wales? Will it not cause massive diffficulties especially for the local authorities framed by the right hon. Gentleman by his manipulation of the Rates Act?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there have been five Acts of Parliament on the issue in the past six years, and that the latest of them received the Royal Assent only on 31 October this year? May I remind the right hon. Gentleman of what a ministerial colleague was claiming for that Bill, which was rushed through the House? He said that the House was

"about to pass a Bill which will clarify the law and make it what it was thought to be in a number of important . . . respects in relation to rate support grant settlements".— [*Official Report*, 21 July 1986; Vol. 102, c. 151.]

How could a Minister be saying that as recently as July in the House, yet the right hon. Gentleman comes to us now and has to confess the appalling state of affairs into which he and his right hon. Friends have led that crucial national policy?

I draw to the right hon. Gentleman's attention what his Department said in a circular to local authorities when the original legislation was introduced. According to a report, "the Department of the Environment made it clear that total expenditure"—

which is at issue today—

"for the calculation of block grant should include contributions from the rate fund to the housing revenue account and other trading accounts, and that it was only interest receipts on the rate fund revenue account which should be taken into account to adjust relevant expenditure to total expenditure."

What has changed since the Department made that statement?

Will the right hon. Gentleman say when he will publish the Bill, how many clauses it will contain and what he expects from the House in dealing with it? How much time will be allowed? Given the Government's abysmal and repeated failures to get their legislation right, and the resulting massive backlash to local government, does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that it will be the duty of the House rigorously to scrutinise this proposed legislation? To do anything else would be an abdication of responsibility on both sides of the House. Does not this fiasco confirm the political incompetence of a succession of Tory Secretaries of State for the Environment, who have legislated themselves into what is clearly a maze of stupid legal controls?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman had some fun with his adjectives, but let me ask him what scrutiny he gave to the 1980 — [HON. MEMBERS: "No. What did you do?"] It takes me to do not only my job but the Opposition's job in pointing out what Parliament failed to stop in 1980. The hon. Gentleman talks about the events of 1981 and the circular from my Department. But he will know that local authority associations, including all the Labour-dominated ones, wanted the definition which has now been found to be in question. Is the hon. Gentleman really saying that he — *[Interruption.]* I listened with respect and quiet to the hon. Gentleman, Mr. Speaker. I am surprised that the Opposition do not want to listen to the answers.

Hon. Members: Answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It does not help for hon. Members to shout, "Answer", across the Chamber. There is a very full day ahead of us.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman asked me some specific questions. The first intimation I had that the legal advice was as I have described it was towards the end of October, and this was confirmed in a second opinion. If I may, I should like, unusually, to quote the advice of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General that the first opinion was correct and that I should therefore correct the anomaly. As soon as proposals could be drafted and brought before the House, I made this announcement. The Bill will be published either tomorrow or the next day. I think that it will contain 17 clauses. I hope that the House will agree that, if it wants the Government to pay rate support grant in the next financial year, it would be expedient for the Bill to reach the statute book so that rate support grant can be paid in future.

Mr. Patrick Jenkin (Wanstead and Woodford): Is my right hon. Friend aware that he has the sympathy of many hon. Members, and not least of those who have held his high office before? Is not my right hon. Friend to be warmly commended for having come to the House at an early opportunity in order to make known the error discovered and his determination to put it right? Is this not another case of merely putting the law back to what everybody thought that it was for the past five or six years? Is it not also clear that any attempt to hold up the Bill will merely postpone the final RSG settlement for 1987-88?

Mr. Ridley: My right hon. Friend is exactly right and I am grateful to him. The Bill will simply seek to return to the legal position that everybody, including all local authorities, thought existed. It was the Government who spotted the error, so the credit should go to the Government for having identified a legal weakness and for having sought immediately and honourably to put it right, albeit at some inconvenience to the House. However, I hope that the House will not take too much trouble over the legislation, as no change of policy is involved. We are merely validating the past and putting right for the future the position that the whole House thought obtained.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): Was not the Secretary of State's statement that his illegal actions over the past seven years

"did not seem to correspond to the statute"

the most breathtaking understatement that the House has heard for a long time? Is he not today trying to make legal what was previously illegal, and admitting that the Government did not even understand their legislation when they introduced it seven years ago? Are the Government not now trying to pass the buck to the local authorities for the Government's own incompetence, ineptitude and inefficiency?

Mr. Ridley: I think that the hon. Gentleman is making more out of this than it is worth. However, if he does not want the Government to pass this legislation, he will have to face the consequence that local authorities will not get their rate support grant settlement or any grant. I think that local authorities will be on to Opposition Members very quickly, asking them to facilitate the Bill's early passage so that they know where they are and can obtain the grant that they expect.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): Is my rt. hon. Friend aware that his statement should be welcomed by anybody who wants local government expenditure to be kept under control? Will he answer two straight questions? First, what effect will his announcement have on the authorities' ability to fix their rates for next year? Secondly, what effect will it have on their entitlement to grant this year?

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend is right. There should be no difficulty for authorities in fixing their rates by the due date of 1 April, because I shall make the settlement soon after the House returns in January, and they can plan on the basis of the settlement as then announced. There is no reason for them to delay making their rates until the Bill receives its Royal Assent. My announcement will not affect grant for this year, which will be paid in accordance with last year's formula and RSG settlement, although I cannot make a supplementary report until the Bill has received Royal Assent.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that, quite apart from the display of recidivism that we have been presented with this afternoon, his announcement will provide considerable fuel to those across the political spectrum who believe that, if British local authorities were run as inefficiently and incompetently as the Department of the Environment has been during the past few years, the ratepayers would have far greater cause for concern than they might have because of any deficiency in local administration?

Mr. Ridley: That is a curious comment, because it was the local authority associations, many of which are run by the Labour party, that strongly made the case for this definition to be adopted. Now that it is being adopted, there seems to be some complaint from the hon. Gentleman. I agree with the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) that the deficiencies in the system that we are trying to operate are becoming more manifest, but curiously enough, when my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland introduced a Bill last week to reform the system in Scotland, every Opposition Member voted against it.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): If I understand the thrust of a complex and technical statement by my right hon. Friend, it is that I have spent £30 billion of taxpayers' money illegally. If this judgment is right, I promise him my unswerving and urgent support for the legislation.

Mr. Ridley: I thought for a moment that my right hon. Friend was going to offer to pay. I assure him that I would not suggest that for one moment. I do not suggest that we should apportion blame in this matter. There has been a distinction between what people thought the law was and what it is. We can easily put that right, and the House can then pass on to more important matters.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): Is the Secretary of State suggesting that the next time somebody appears in court before a magistrate his defence should be that he was not certain what the law was, because that seems to be the Secretary of State's defence? Is it not obvious to all that the Government could not organise a reception in a lord major's parlour, let alone run the detailed day-to-day services of local government in the way that they are trying to do? Is not the way around this difficulty for the Government to drop their policy of trying to control in detail local government services and expenditure? If the Secretary of State introduced a Bill along those lines, we would support it.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman is totally wrong. I am the only person who is quite certain what the law is. *[Laughter.]*

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): I sympathise with my right hon. Friend——

Mr. Allan Roberts: There is another one.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: —in being the latest fall guy following, for example, Mr. Fred Mulley, who, as a Labour Minister and the political head of a Department, relied on inefficient and inadequate legal advice within his own Department.

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Plead guilty but insane.

Mr. Ridley: However, I do not need sympathy. I have brought to the House a problem of which nobody else was aware, so my Department has the legal advice right when every local authority has it wrong.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Does not the Secretary of State recall that, when he was Secretary of State for Transport, he tried to charge Londoners extra millions of pounds, and the judge said that it was illegal, improper and administratively incompetent, in words to that effect? Does that now describe the position in which he has found himself? Will he take into account the needs of inner-city areas such as Newham in his means and needs formula?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman has quoted the judge's words wrongly. If he wants to quote the judge, he should quote accurately and properly. I make a distinction between the events to which he referred and the events about which we are talking. In that case there was a court case, where the judge interpreted the law differently. *[Laughter.]* In this instance, I have anticipated and sought to put the law right before the matter went to court.

Sir Hugh Rossi (Hornsey and Wood Green): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the practice which has now been found to be wrong in law — [HON. MEMBERS: "Illegal."] — has operated to the benefit of local authorities generally and that if the House does not put it right, local authorities will be in severe financial difficulty this year? Does that not argue that legislation for a general review and revision of the complicated finance system of local government should be introduced quickly?

Mr. Ridley: Yes, my hon. Friend is quite right. It will not be possible to pay rate support grant to local authorities in the next financial year, without the Bill becoming law. That would put them in severe financial difficulties. We have held our review into the future of the present system of local authority finance. The Scottish Bill will be followed by the English Bill, which will do away with the legislation that we are discussing and replace it with, a more sensible system.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Exactly what did the Secretary of State mean by "minor difficulties" in Scottish practice and what are the implications? Will there be a separate Scottish statement?

Mr. Ridley: In Scotland, transfers between the general rate fund and special funds have been counted as expenditure when the Secretary of State has determined grant penalties for overspending authorities. The Bill will therefore validate past decisions on grant penalties and, for the future, allow my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to continue to take account of such transfers when he is considering imposition of grant penalties and action to reduce an authority's rate. There will be two clauses dealing with Scotland.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Does my right hon. Friend agree that he is the least guilty in a long line of guilty Ministers who have produced one local government Bill after another, and that some of us spelt out the dangers? Does my right hon. Friend agree that, when we are told that what we all thought was right is wrong, he is really saying that what he thought was right many of us knew was wrong? We must ensure that justice, and not expediency, prevails, as has been the case year after year with Bill after Bill.

Mr. Ridley: Wise and profound as many of my hon. Friend's statements in that supplementary question were, I do not quite see the question for me.

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): How many times as a Minister in this or other Departments has the right hon. Gentleman been found to be in breach of the law?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman is trying to score an incredibly naive point. Every hon. Member is in breach of the law in this regard for not having drawn attention to the deficiencies in the system.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Is it really the case that, until my right hon. Friend made his statement this afternoon, not one Labour Member, not one Liberal Member, not one member of the Opposition Front Bench in another place and not even the glittering talents of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) could have understood that which my right hon. Friend now understands?

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I understood that it was wrong.

Mr. Gow: Ought not my right hon. Friend, who has a brain that is even finer than that of his four distinguished predecessors, to earn the congratulations of the House? Does he agree that, when he presents his Bill to the House, he will be restoring the law to that which Parliament intended, and which the Opposition, the Liberals and local authorities believed was the law? Is my right hon. Friend aware that he has earned the admiration of the House for his courage?

Mr. Ridley: I join my hon. Friend in bewailing the fact that, for all the barrack-room lawyers in the Opposition, not one spotted this problem and it was left to me, who am not even a lawyer, to explain it to the House.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Overwhelmed as I am by the Secretary of State's singular—aye, unique—awareness and understanding of current statutes, and bearing in mind the importance and complexity of the issue, why, when the Secretary of State was first made aware of it in mid-October, was no reference made to it in the Queen's Speech on 12 November?

Mr. Ridley: I can tell the hon. Gentleman that if one comes with a problem to the House it is right to offer some solution. A Bill will be published tomorrow or the day after which deals with the problem that I have put before the House. Opposition Members would have been right to criticise me if I had brought the problem without the faintest idea of a solution.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Instead of tinkering around with a system which my right hon. Friend knows to be obsolete, why does he not introduce immediately his community charge Bill and make these retrospective provisions effective in a clause of that Bill?

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend is so much more percipient. Would that I could introduce the new Bill. I cannot say that it would have the same level of preparation as the Bill that I have announced, although I greatly wish that it would. If we could deal expeditiously with the rest of the business before the House, I am sure that I could fit that Bill in before the end of the Session, if the House would pass it on the nod.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to bear in mind that we have a further statement and a heavy day ahead of us. I shall take two more questions from either side and then we must move on to the Welsh statement.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Is it not a fact that, in trying to make local government the whipping boys for the failure of Government policies, the Secretary of State has proved himself to be the failure?

Mr. Ridley: No, Sir. I simply seek to ask the House to validate the practice which local authorities want and which everybody thought was in place.

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): Has not the grave disparity between taxation and representation at local authority level forced the Government down the path of increasing complexity to protect ratepayers from the rapacious attention of local authorities? Is my right hon. Friend aware that he will have the widest support on this side of the House for his root and branch treatment of the problem by his introduction of the community charge in place of rates? Can he ensure that, in the legislation, he pays particular attention to the need to simplify legislation, so that people who are not ordinarily concerned with local authority finance can understand what is involved?

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend is exactly right. I wish I were introducing, not this Bill, but the one to which he refers, which would put a community charge in place and reform the whole system. But past rate support grant settlements are in question and the future rate support grant settlement for 1987-88; which must take place whatever happens because it is imminent, cannot be validated unless the Bill becomes law. It would be wrong to allow my hon. Friend's general strictures on the present system and the need to reform it in any sense to be involved in the need for this Bill.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): The right hon. Gentleman has found himself at odds with the law on more than one occasion in the past. He is not just a recidivist but an incompetent recidivist. Is it not a fact that, from the beginning, he knew that he had to introduce retrospective legislation? Similarly, it is not the first time that he has had to do that. Is it not a fact that there is a big difference between a mistake being found in local government, which is penalised and surcharged and, indeed, whose goods are put at risk, and a Minister being found to have acted incompetently and illegally, who merely uses parliamentary sovereignty to introduce new legislation? Is it not time that we equalled the odds? The best way of doing that is for the Minister to resign and take this shambles of a Government with him.

Mr. Ridlley: I cannot see what the hon. Gentleman means. I have done nothing incompetent or illegal. When I realised that to make a rate support grant settlement in January would be illegal, I came to the House to ask it to give me the validating powers so that I could take action to make the settlement. Nothing that I have done has transgressed the law.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): My right hon. Friend is obviously right to make a statement today and to introduce legislation. Nevertheless, does he accept from someone who, together with my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark), battled long and hard against block grants years ago, that this is but the latest instance whereby we have underlined the foolishness of giving so much support from the centre, through a series of measures created by the centre, to local government? Instead, we should rely on a system which gives greater accountability to local authorities.

Mr. Ridley: I cannot claim in aid the advantages of the reform of local authority finance that we are proposing in the Bill, which is about validating the past and ensuring

[Mr. Ridley]

that we continue for next year. I am delighted to hear my hon. Friend's conversion to the need for a change of system and I hope that when we get closer to home than Scotland on these matters, he will be with us in the Lobby.

Dr. Cunningham: If the right hon. Gentleman is, as he claims, the only person who is certain what the law is now, how will he, of all people, persuade his right hon. and hon. Friends to follow him into the Lobby to vote for it? Is it not the case that this insight results, not from some brilliance on his part, but from a legal challenge to the Government from the London borough of Greenwich, which the Government are desperate to have set aside in the courts? Is it not the case that all his claims of a brilliant reading of the legislation are false? Will he confirm that this has come to light because of a legal challenge to the Government?

Will the Secretary of State explain, more adequately than he has done so far, why he has been sitting on this information for six weeks? Why did he not bring it to the House when he spoke in the Queen's Speech debate, or announce it on 3 December when he had the opportunity? Will not this delay on his part mean further unnecessary uncertainty and delay both to the resolution of the problem and to the fixing of local authority finance for next year?

Mr. Ridley: No, Sir. It will not cause further delay or difficulties, because I shall make a settlement as soon as the House returns. Local authorities can then proceed to set their external limits, precept limits and rates in the proper timetable during the Bill's passage, but in the full knowledge of what the Government intend to put before the House. Therefore, that point is false.

A perfect hail of legal cases are brought by local authorities against the Government. There is no case before the courts that I know of based on the lacuna which I have exposed to the House today. Therefore, that is not appropriate.

It is right that the full legal position should be made clear in public, so that the courts know that the Government intend to put the law as it was thought to be. The hon. Gentleman had better wait to see how many of my hon. Friends follow me into the Lobby. I hope that I shall have the support of many of his hon. Friends who have the sense to want to see rate support grant paid.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that this is not because the hon. Members were, sadly, not called.

Mr. Janner: My point of order arises directly from the statement, Mr. Speaker. As the Secretary of State's statement concerns a most important rule of law and as on this occasion, as opposed to others, it appears that he consulted the Attorney-General, would it not be right for the Attorney-General to make a statement to the House on the criminal implications of the Government's regrettable behaviour?

Mr. Speaker: Who makes the statement is not a matter for me.

Mr. Home Robertson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) the Secretary of State let slip the Scottish aspects of the statement. It is one thing for the Secretary of State for the Environment to get himself into trouble for giving money to local authorities in England illegally yet, as I believe he suggested to my hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Scotland had been taking money away from local authorities in Scotland illegally. There is another name for that and I hope that the Scottish Law Officers are considering the matter. Would it be appropriate or possible to ensure that the Secretary of State for Scotland comes to the Chamber and makes an appropriate statement?

Mr. Speaker: Again, that is not a matter for me, but the hon. Gentleman's point will have been heard.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Does it arise directly out of this matter?

Mr. Skinner: Yes, yes — it is seriously a point of order. I was wondering whether, if the BBC, which produces the programme "Yes, Prime Minister", were to come along and ask you whether it could have a copy of the script of today's events you would feel that it was a little over the top. If you provided it, would you be prepared to stand up to any bullying that might come from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster trying to stop the BBC from screening those events?

Mr. Speaker: I am not certain that what has happened in the Chamber this afternoon would be happy as far as the electors are concerned — [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Order. I mean the noise.

Rate Support Grant (Wales)

4.12 pm

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Nicholas Edwards): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the Welsh rate support grant.

I will deal first with the implications for Wales of the statement which has just been made to the House by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. The definition of relevant and total expenditure adopted in rate support grant reports for Wales since 1981 with the agreement of local government in Wales is, for the reasons outlined by my right hon. Friend, now seen as not meeting statutory requirements and being incorrect in law. Until this is put right, I am unable to make further RSG reports. The urgent legislation being brought to the House will therefore validate for Wales as well as for England all past decisions involving the use of total or relevant expenditure and allow future decisions to be taken in line with previous practice.

I wish to do everything possible to minimise difficulties for local government so that it can proceed with budgeting and rating for the coming financial year. I am today giving to the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance and to all Welsh county and district councils full details of my intentions for the main report for 1987-88 and the supplementary report for 1986-87. A copy of my statement has been placed in the Library. The supplementary reports for 1984-85 and 1985-86 will be the subject of further consultation. My intentions take account of the views expressed to me by the Welsh local authority associations and individual councils during consultations. They are, of course, dependent upon the approval by the House of these reports, which will be laid upon enactment of the Local Government Finance Bill.

It is very important that councils should feel able to proceed with their planning over the coming months in the knowledge that my intentions are firm. They therefore have my assurance that it is the Government's intention not to take into account in the main report for 1987-88 and the supplementary report for 1986-87 any new data or representations received after 3 December; the Bill will provide for this. It can therefore be assumed for the purpose of calculating grant entitlements that the information I am making available today will be reflected in those reports. New or revised data will be taken into account in supplementary reports for the years concerned, as will be any additional resources for teachers' pay.

I turn now to the detail of my intentions for 1987-88. Provision for relevant expenditure will be £1,734 million or over 6 per cent. higher than budgeted spending in 1986-87, and current expenditure will be 4·8 per cent. higher or more than 1 per cent. above the expected rate of inflation. Aggregate Exchequer grant will be £1,157 million, unchanged from that announced in July; domestic rate relief remains unchanged at 18½p in the pound. Block grant will be £901·7 million.

The local authority associations have stressed the need for stability between years in the grant distribution mechanisms. With this in mind I intend to retain the same basic block grant mechanisms used in the present year with no expenditure target for individual councils, and to leave unchanged the slope of the grant-related poundage schedule. The total of authorities' GREs will be set in line with overall provision. The general consequence is that decisions to increase spending will result in a cash reduction in grant for most authorities, while decisions to reduce spending will produce considerable rating benefits.

Grant recycling was justified in 1986-87 as an interim measure during the first year of operation of the new mechanisms following the abolition of targets. This measure is no longer appropriate and I intend that the settlement for 1987-88 should give the further certainty of ensuring that each authority's grant entitlement will depend solely on its spending decisions and not be affected by decisions taken by other authorities. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and I have already said that we propose to introduce legislation in the near future to abolish recycling.

In the first supplementary report for the current year, 1986-87, I intend to recycle block grant in full. Changes to aggregate relevant expenditure following from increases in police pay, expenditure on midday supervision in schools and GCSE will increase block grant by £1·3 million and the total of specific grants will be increased to £174·7 million. The contribution of Welsh local authorities to the England and Wales further education pool will be £3·5 million. The total of local authorities' GREs for the year will be amended in line with provision, but authorities' block grant entitlements will not be affected.

The settlement that I intend to make for 1987-88 is a very good one for Wales. The increases in all the main components—relevant expenditure, current expenditure, aggregate Exchequer grant and block grant—are well above the forecast rate of inflation.

I am sure that there will be general agreement that central and local government should work together to ensure that spending and rating decisions for next year are not hindered by the delay in our being able to make RSG reports. Today's announcement of my intentions will enable Welsh local authorities to reach their decisions in an orderly way. There can be no doubt that in so doing they must have regard to the interests of ratepayers and taxpayers. I am confident that the Welsh local authority associations and all Welsh councils will recognise this and will respond constructively to the opportunity they now have to budget for very low rate rises indeed.

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): When did the right hon. Gentleman first know that the decisions concerning relevant and total expenditure were illegal? Has he known for six weeks? Will two supplementary reports consequently be queried? What sums of cash are involved? Is it not the case that there have been five Acts of Parliament of which the right hon. Gentleman—uniquely and exceptionally—has been a sponsor, and is it not also the case that he stands condemned of being a sponsor of legislation that creates chaos?

In relation to the statement made by the Secretary of State for the Environment, may I remind the Secretary of State that local authorities in Wales have used transfers between funds to achieve the best results for ratepayers? Does he understand that if local accounts are reopened it is possible that they will be liable to grant penalties? That would be unjust, because it will have been done in good faith. Will the right hon. Gentleman be absolutely clear in his response and grant indemnity to Welsh local authorities?

If the Government do not comprehend their own rules and legislation, what hope is there for the local authorities? They are innocent. I remind the right hon. Gentleman that

[Mr. Barry Jones]

time and again we urged him to ensure that Wales was exempted from the Government's authoritarian local government legislation. He ignored us every time that we made that point.

At the last minute, the Secretary of State for Wales resolved to come to the House with his statement. It was very prudent of him to ditch his plan to release the statement by the shabby device of a written answer. Is it not the case that the apparent increase over last year's settlement shows how unrealistic those figures were? Is he not aware that nothing extra is provided to meet the substantial backlog of needs that has built up in recent years as a result of his inadequate funding and the 125 per cent. increase in unemployment since he took office? Does the right hon. Gentleman know that specific grants are taking up an increasing share of the total grant figure and that major uncertainty continues to cloud the teachers' pay restructuring proposals?

The greatest bone of contention is the decision to end grant recycling. It is disgraceful for the Government to propose to legislate to empower the Welsh Office to withhold grant. Is it not a return to the worst aspects of the target and penalty system that the Secretary of State boasted recently he had abolished? Only the Treasury will benefit by this dubious sleight of hand.

Having talked today to the Welsh districts on their receipt of the RSG statement as the right hon. Gentleman made it, the average rate increase for district councils will be at least 10 per cent., flowing as it does from his statement today. Do not his own Department's figures show rate rises for half the 37 Welsh districts in excess of 10 per cent? I am informed there are likely to be increases individually of up to 20 per cent. That is the calculation of the Welsh districts.

The Government are claiming to be generous today, but, in fact, they are only putting right the shortcomings of last year's settlement. The 1 per cent. margin ahead of England which the right hon. Gentleman claims is illusory. In detail, Wales seems to have done less well, and in total that is quite clear. This statement is a confidence trick, and when Labour wins the election we will give Wales a fair deal.

Mr. Edwards: The hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) asked me when I knew. I knew shortly after the Secretary of State for the Environment knew. The hon. Gentleman talked about sums of cash being put at risk for local government and reopening past reports. There is no question of reopening the issues. The whole point is that the Bill will place local authorities in the position in which they would have been and in which they thought they were. It will validate the position as we have always operated it. As the hon. Gentleman said, we followed that path at the request of Welsh local government because it thought that it was to its benefit to make the transfers to which he referred. The accounts, therefore, are not being reopened. We are merely ensuring that local government can proceed in the way in which it wished to proceed.

The hon. Gentleman described me as authoritarian with local government, but the very fact that we sought to meet the wishes of Welsh local government in this respect disproves that allegation.

The hon. Gentleman referred to teachers' pay. The position on teachers' pay has been made clear. The Government have made known their intentions and the fact that the ratepayer and the taxpayer will contribute to the additional costs involved.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the relative scale of the settlement compared with England and whether it was a good settlement. The increase of relevant expenditure of 6·1 per cent., the increase of current expenditure of 4·8 per cent. and the increase in aggregate Exchequer grant of 8·4 per cent. are all way ahead of expected inflation. Indeed, the increases in relevant expenditure and current expenditure are higher than in England. In addition, there has been an increase of 14 per cent. in capital expenditure for Welsh local authorities, and those authorities have done exceptionally well out of that.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the balance between district authorities and counties. There has been a higher rate of increase in expenditure by counties in recent years than by districts, arising from such items as police and teachers' pay. The GREs that I am now announcing simply reflect that historic fact. As far as we can, we are producing firm estimates of what the actual position is, based on the actual expenditure of the Welsh counties and districts, and we hope that as a result of making those estimates we will have to make less substantial adjustments in future when we produce the supplementary reports.

The hon. Gentleman referred in an alarmist way to district rate increases. He talked about figures of 10 and 20 per cent. He was talking about poundage increases. In no case will the rate bill in districts increase by anything like that figure. Indeed, I see no reason, in the great majority of cases, why those increases should not be in single figures, even low single figures. The hon. Gentleman also knows that the rate bill that people pay comes through from counties and districts, and by far the largest element is the county part of it. In every authority except West Glamorgan—which used balances very substantially last year, had a lower than average settlement last year and is a high spender—I would expect rate increases to be very low. Indeed, there are counties where it should be possible to have a reduction in the rate bill, and that includes my county of Dyfed.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): My right hon. Friend and I have had our differences in the past. May I take this opportunity to salute him as a great Secretary of State and ask him whether he is aware of how much sadness and dismay his announcement yesterday that he is to retire at the next election has caused on both sides of the House? Is he aware that never more clearly than today has he demonstrated the skill and authority that he exerts in guiding us through the morass of local government finance, which has been revealed by the two ministerial statements today?

Is my right hon. Friend further aware that the relevation of the incredible complexity of that morass does not in itself suffice to quell the doubts of some Conservative Members who believe that the system of a community charge, which is to be introduced, although it will no doubt be simpler, may turn out in the end to be nearly as difficult to work as the present system?

Mr. Edwards: I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks. Indeed, a number of people have said similar kind things, to such an extent that I almost think I must repeat the process of saying that I will not stand at the next election. It is the only occasion that has

prompted a lot of nice things to be said to me in political terms for a long time. I must also say that, although it might have been, it was not the complexity of the rate support grant system that prompted my decision.

My hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) is a long-time critic of the present system. However, I must say that when the Government, after careful consideration, come forward with a major proposal for the reform of local government he cannot simply turn around and say that that will not work either, without producing an alternative. I believe that in the face of the difficulties of a complex system, which he has fairly criticised, the Government are absolutely right to come forward with a firm commitment to introduce legislation immediately after the election to introduce the new system and to follow the route rightly taken by our Scottish colleagues.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): Does the Secretary of State agree that it is extremely regrettable that for the past five years he and his colleagues in the Welsh Office have acted unlawfully? Does he also agree that it is disgraceful for restrospective legislation to be introduced now to try to get the Secretary of State out of that corner? Is it not as disgraceful as the retrospective legislation that has been proposed to help out Liverpool councillors? Will the Secretary of State tell the House what precedents there are, if any, for retrospective legislation of this sort? Further, will he tell the House what difference his intentions will make to the high level of unemployment in Wales?

Mr. Edwards: I am sorry that, as a lawyer, the hon. and learned Gentleman was unable to spot the difficulties himself and that it had to be the Government who brought them to his attention. I look forward very much to the hon. and learned Gentleman going to Welsh local authorities, and to those whom they serve, and telling them that he and his party will oppose this legislation. Welsh local government will be shocked and dismayed by such an attitude. We are seeking to validate what local government in Wales wanted, and what it still wants.

Mr. Barry Jones: That is not true.

Mr. Edwards: It is absolutely true. Then we shall be able to take the necessary decisions on rating and expenditure as quickly as possible. It is absolute nonsense for the hon. and learned Gentleman to threaten to delay this legislation. That could only do grave damage to local government in Wales.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on yet again obtaining such a favourable settlement for Wales. I said that last year, the year before that and also the year before that. No Secretary of State has done more for the Principality than has my right hon. Friend. That is recognised outside the House as well as inside it—on both sides, I believe.

Is my right hon. Friend able to give a further assurance to the House that the increase in teachers' pay will not be allowed completely to distort the 4·75 per cent. that he has allowed for pay and prices? Will he continue to emphasise, to Clwyd in particular, the need to tackle the problem of surplus school places? Tackling just 40 per cent. of the 16,000 surplus school places in Clwyd, as the director of education proposed, would release £750,000 for books and equipment.

Mr. Edwards: I entirely agree with what my hon. Friend has said about the need to remove surplus school places. He is absolutely right to emphasise that point. Without the consequences of the teachers' pay settlement, if it goes through on the basis that the Government have urged and the accompanying contributions that will have to be made by ratepayers, there would have been a fall in rates in Clwyd. If one makes a reasonable assumption about the contribution of local ratepayers to such a settlement, there is no need for rate increases in Clwyd, or they should be very small. That confirms that the settlement is a very good one for Welsh ratepayers.

Mr. Donald Coleman (Neath): The right hon. Gentleman and the Secretary of State for the Environment have revealed once again this Government's illegal behaviour. Has this not come about because the Government have pursued local government over penalties and targets? What confidence can Welsh local authorities have that the right hon. Gentleman got it right this time?

Mr. Edwards: The action that we took and which has caused these difficulties was not because we pursued local government. We responded to local government representations; they wished the Government to do this. Now that we have found that the law does not permit us to do it, we are seeking immediately to validate the matter so that we can meet the wishes of Welsh local government. I hope that in doing so we shall have the support of the House of Commons; otherwise Opposition Members will have to explain why they want to damage and destroy Welsh local government by making it impossible for Welsh local government to proceed in the way that it wishes so to do.

Mr. Gwilym Jones (Cardiff, North): Last night's news came as a great surprise, even as an unwelcome surprise. Wales is losing the best Secretary of State that it has ever had. Is my right hon. Friend able to reassure me that he will do all that he possibly can to ensure that the uncaring South Glamorgan county council will not again land my constituents with the highest rates increase in Wales?

Mr. Edwards: I am sure that all Welsh local authorities should aim to keep down their rates bills and to respond to the representations made to them by industry and domestic ratepayers. Although it is likely that the effect of the switch between district councils could lead to a relatively high increase in Cardiff rates, there is no reason why domestic rate bills in South Glamorgan should rise significantly in the period ahead.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): Can the Secretary of State claim any legal knowledge of the statement that was made by his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, who claimed that only he had legal knowledge of this issue? Does the right hon. Gentleman have legal knowledge that would enable him to answer on the legal aspect of this issue? The right hon. Gentleman said that Welsh local government had not suffered because of the cuts in rates and that the House should support future legislation. If we look at the Government's record during the last seven years, we realise that local authority councillors all over Wales will be clapping their hands with joy because he sneaked to Pembroke last night to announce his resignation. Although we wish the right hon.

[Mr. Ray Powell]

Gentleman well and hope that his health will improve, we should be demanding his resignation today rather than at the next general election.

Mr. Edwards: I do not know that to go down to meet one's executive is to sneak anywhere. I told the executive in my constituency what I intended to do, and I hope that in similar circumstances the hon. Gentleman will do the same. However, I doubt whether the executive of the hon. Gentleman's local Labour party bothers to meet.

The hon. Gentleman asked me whether I have legal knowledge. I claim no more specialist legal knowledge than I suspect the hon. Gentleman has. I take the legal advice that is available to the Government. The hon. Gentleman referred to the consequences for local government if the validation is not carried out. If the Bill is not passed, the consequence will be that local government will have no money; it will have no grants from central Government. We shall be unable to make grants to local government. I leave it to the hon. Gentleman to work out whether that will be good or bad for local government.

Mr. Stefan Terlezki (Cardiff, West): I echo what was said by my hon. Friends about my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who is to resign as a Member of Parliament at the next general election. The Opposition must surely acknowledge that my right hon. Friend is one of the best Secretaries of State for Wales that we have had. He will be missed by industrialists and local authorities and by all those whom he has served so well in the Principality. What advice is my right hon. Friend able to give to local authorities to enable them to spend more capital on house repairs?

Mr. Edwards: Of one thing I am absolutely certain. It is that my hon. Friend will be representing his Cardiff constituents in this House after the next general election and that he will be doing it as well and as vigorously as he has always done.

As for more expenditure on house repairs, this Government have made substantial allocations to Welsh local authorities for housing. I have spoken about the overall capital increase of 14 per cent. If Welsh local authorities continue to keep down current spending, which has been done far better in Wales than in England in recent years, we shall be able to continue to make additional capital available to them, because there is a relationship between keeping current expenditure down and having more money to spend on capital projects.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Apart from party political issues, I wish the Secretary of State a healthy retirement. In fact, I hope that his health improves. Why has the Secretary of State not made a specific allowance within the grant settlement for educational development? In South Wales in particular, a massive re-education and training programme has to be undertaken because of the complete restructuring of our economy. My hon. Friends and I cannot find any money within this settlement that has been set aside specifically for the educational development that we so desperately need.

Mr. Edwards: I am grateful to the hon Gentleman for his opening remarks. When I meet Welsh local authorities they always argue that there are too many specific grants and that they do not want to go further down that particular route. However, I note the hon. Gentleman's advocacy of a specific grant for education.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): Will the Secretary of State make absolutely clear his position on teachers' pay? Does he assume that there will be a Government-imposed solution of the teachers' pay dispute, of the kind proposed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science? If that is so, parents will be very concerned about the possible turmoil that it will cause. What part of this settlement will lead to smaller classes, in particular for core subjects leading to the general certificate of secondary education? We want to make that system work, but there is insufficient money at the moment to make it work.

Mr. Edwards: On the last point, the hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that we made additional sums of money available for the new examination system and, of course, local authorities have it within their power to vote further resources, not least by cutting down on surplus school places, as my hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan) has already said. I trust that the Government will not have to impose a settlement, because I hope that those engaged in negotiation and consultation will meet the requirements which the Government believe are essential if we are to have an education structure in this country that fully meets childrens' needs. That is what our priority should be.

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): Is the Secretary of State aware that local government will regard his statement as one of gross incompetence on the part of the Government, and that for the past seven years the local authorities in Wales have been fighting the depredations of the Secretary of State and the Government in trying to cut education, housing and social services? The Government's gross incompetence can be put right only if the legislation to be introduced by the Secretary of State frees local government to look after all the people in Wales. Does the Secretary of State understand that the legislation will be judged on that basis by the Opposition? It will be scrutinised with care to see what it does to let local government serve the people of Wales once again.

Mr. Edwards: The validity—or lack of it—of the hon. Gentleman's remarks is perhaps borne out by the facts. Education expenditure in Wales during the past five or six years has been virtually stable in real terms, although there has been a substantial reduction in pupil numbers, and expenditure on social services by local government in Wales has increased. The Bill that we propose to introduce will put local government back in the position that it thought it was in and will enable it to proceed with this rate support grant settlement. If such legislation is not passed promptly, there will be a delay in paying grant to local government, and that can only be damaging to it.

Airborne Early Warning System

4.42 pm

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the proposed purchase by the Government of an early warning system for the Royal Air Force."

The matter is specific — whether the Government should purchase a British system or a foreign system. The matter is important because the decision will have fundamental consequences for our national defences, for Britain's defence industries and, of course, for the British taxpayer. The matter is urgent because during the next few days the Cabinet may make decisions on this matter and because, although the Secretary of State for Defence has publicly expressed his confidence in the British system, officials in his Department are publicly and actively canvassing the case for the purchase of the system of the foreign contractor.

We believe that the matter is so important that, before any irrevocable decisions are taken, it should be debated immediately in the House.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the need for an independent inquiry into the purchase of a new early warning system for the Royal Air Force".

I listened with care to what the right hon. Gentleman said, as indeed I listened to the submission made yesterday by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) in slightly different terms. I regret that I have to give the same answer as I gave yesterday. I do not consider that the submission meets all the criteria under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House today.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I beg your guidance please? My experience is somewhat limited, so this is a genuine inquiry. The Christmas Adjournment debate took place yesterday, so we do not have that opportunity for a debate, and by the time we reconvene on 12 January—bearing in mind the ardent efforts of the Boeing sales force—the ink could be dry on any contract that may ensue from these negotiations. Therefore, what possible opportunity could I have to bring the full opinion of the House to bear on a subject of such great gravity and seriousness?

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman is patient, an opportunity may arise to discuss that matter.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will have heard the exchanges that took place during the Christmas Adjournment debate yesterday evening and my demand that the Leader of the House should rearrange the week's business so that it would be possible to debate this important matter before decisions are taken. You will also have heard the strong refusal of the Leader of the House to change the order of business. That being so, what opportunities are now left to debate the matter before the Cabinet presents the House with a fait accompli?

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The issue was debated last night. Has the right hon. Gentleman told you why he was not here to discuss it last night?

Hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the shadow Leader of the House to read my ruling carefully.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind what my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) said, it is imperative that the House should have an opportunity to discuss this matter before a Cabinet decision is taken. The Cabinet will meet on Thursday morning. If there is no emergency debate—we do not challenge your ruling about tomorrow — and since no business statement is being made today, clearly, by definition, there cannot be any debate on this issue before a decision is taken. Therefore, in what context are we to construe your judgment, Mr. Speaker, that an opportunity may rise? Clearly, no opportunity can arise in advance of a decision being taken.

Mr. Speaker: Business can be changed through the usual channels if that is a way of dealing with this matter. There have been cases of business statements being made other than at 3.30 pm.

Attorney-General (Member's Reference)

4.48 pm

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday, in column 793 of *Hansard* the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) cast an inadmissible reflection upon the honour of the Attorney-General. At the time I did not notice it, but having considered it carefully in *Hansard* this morning, I ask him, please, to withdraw it.

Mr. D.N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity and to the Attorney-General for being present in the House today. It is as I predicted yesterday morning: if the Attorney-General had replied for the Government in yesterday's debate, I know that the entire debate would have taken a different course. It is unfortunate that one has to deploy such an elaborate ruse to secure the attendance of the Attorney-General in the Chamber— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I will deal with it in my time. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman has such comments shouted at him he cannot possibly get on with his apology. Will he please get on with it?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: You asked me to withdraw, Mr. Speaker, yet the House knows that the Attorney-General had a duty to prosecute Chapman Pincher in 1981.

Mr. Robert Atkins (South Ribble): This is an abuse.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It was for the Attorney-General to decide whether Pincher was prosecuted under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act or section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920. He failed in his duty. He had a duty to prosecute Sir Dick White and Arthur Martin. Now, five and a half years later, he says that he is considering— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I gave the hon. Gentleman an opportunity to withdraw the comment about the Attorney-General not to carry on the debate which took place yesterday.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I am about to deal precisely with your request, Mr. Speaker.

It was the Attorney-General who failed to prosecute Rupert Allason and those who fed him classified material, and all the time he hides behind the skirts of the Prime Minister. [HON. MEMBERS: "Order!"]

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Gentleman now, please, withdraw his comment and, in fairness, not carry on the debate?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: You asked me, Mr. Speaker, to withdraw my accusation. Out of deference to the Chair, I unreservedly do so. The Attorney-General's honour must stand intact and I am required to accept that. As to his conduct, history will make its judgments, and such judgments may not be based on that which is published in the monthly bound volumes of the *Official Report*.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Robert Atkins (South Ribble): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon Gentleman has now made his withdrawal. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] He has. It does not help the House or its reputation to seek to continue points of order when an hon. Gentleman has done that.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East) *rose*——

Mr. Forth: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I am not taking a point of order on this matter.

Mr. Forth: I am asking for your guidance, Mr. Speaker, for future occasions. When a Member of the House asks leave to withdraw a statement that he has made, will it be in order on any future occasion for such an hon. Member to use the occasion of what he claims to be a withdrawal to repeat allegations or to make other statements which are equally bad?

Mr. Speaker: The answer to that is no.

Mr. Faulds: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, on an entirely different matter.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I clarify your ruling? There are two specific allegations in the column referred to, one following immediately after the other. The one allegation reads:

"I am told that the Attorney-General is desperate for the Woolsack."—[*Official Report*, 15 December 1986; Vol. 107, c.793.]

The second allegation relates to the 30 pieces of silver. I can understand the objection to the second section about the 30 pieces of silver.

Do we understand for the record that you, Sir, are ruling that it is in order for the allegation that the Attorney-General is desperate for the Woolsack to stand and that it is the piece in relation to the 30 pieces of silver that must be withdrawn?

Mr. Speaker: Since the hon. Gentleman wants clarification on that point, I am forced to say to him that it is the last sentence to which I take exception.

Later—

Mr. John Mark Taylor (Solihull): Further to the point of order made by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth). Are we to take it from the earlier statement made by the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) that we may regard what he said earlier this afternoon as a precedent for a withdrawal?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman should keep his ears open, please. I have already said no.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): Further to the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Solihull (Mr. Taylor). If I understood your decision correctly, Mr. Speaker, you were in fact saying that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has not made a withdrawal of what he said.

Mr. Speaker: I did not say that. I said that it would not be taken as a precedent in making a withdrawal of something that had been said, and the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) finally——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Unreservedly.

Mr. Speaker: —unreservedly, withdrew what had been said. It should not be taken as a precedent to carry on a debate. I hope that the House understands that.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Forgive me for not following your guidance entirely, but it seems to me that you are allowing the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours)——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have dealt with the matter *[Interruption.]* Order. I am not prepared to say any more about it. It is not a precedent that should be followed by any other hon. Member and I will not allow it. *[Interruption.]* Order. I did not know that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) would take as long as he did to make his withdrawal. When I saw him about this matter he told me that he would make a withdrawal, and he has done so. Let us leave it at that.

The Attorney-General (Sir Michael Havers): I should like to be in the position to thank the hon. Gentleman for his apology. You, Mr. Speaker, have ruled that this is not be be a precedent; in my view, that means that it was not a withdrawal, and I do not treat it as such. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

Mr. Speaker: In order to clarify this matter, would the hon. Member for Workington be kind enough to repeat his unreserved withdrawal so that the House is in no doubt about it?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I have made it very clear that I unreservedly withdraw.

Members' Telephone Calls

4.53 pm

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Another point of order altogether, Sir.

One of your prime concerns, Mr. Speaker, is to safeguard the rights and privileges of hon. Members. The matter that I wish to raise lies very much within your role as guardian of those rights.

I received yesterday a letter which has most disturbing implications. It was written by someone who was privy to the modernisation of the telephone network covering the Whitehall area. The key to that network was the CBX tandem which gave access to all telephone calls, internally and externally, and to some 70,000-plus telephone lines.

I have the letter here and I shall pass it to you, Mr. Speaker. You will, I believe, be already aware of the contents of a large part of that letter, as my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) quoted it, at my request, yesterday.

The writer makes specific technical statements about the means of intercepting telephone calls made by hon. Members. He states the location of the buildings which house this massive equipment and explains the precise positioning of a particular room.

The letter says:

"Over a period of time, mostly outside normal working hours, a room immediately to the left at the bottom of the steps"—

the writer has mentioned the building earlier—

"was installed with extensive and very sophisticated equipment."

Later in the same letter, the writer says:

"It soon became accepted by all the Post Office now (BT staff) and the contracting engineers that the only possible purpose for which this equipment could be used was intercepting telephone calls."

The writer claims that all the installations and equipment were mounted

"a few weeks after MPs received push-button telephones instead of dial telephones."

The writer appears to have no doubts about the purpose of that operation — the easy facility for eavesdropping on Member's calls both inside and outside the House.

I address this matter to you, Sir, in the eager expectation that you will require the matter to be investigated. If you argue that that responsibility lies in hands other than your own, I am sure that the House would urge you to advise them how the matter should be pursued because the implications are profoundly disturbing. Will you kindly, Sir, take this letter away with you and let the House have your views and advice tomorrow?

Mr. Speaker: I do not know whether I can promise to let the House have my views tomorrow, as I shall need to study the matter and go into it with care. I have not seen the letter, although I did see the allegations that were made by the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) in yesterday's *Hansard*. I shall look into the matter.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On this point, Mr. Speaker. In view of the serious allegations made by my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) today and by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) yesterday, would you consider this to be a matter of the utmost priority? One never knows, but if the

[Mr. David Winnick]

allegation is true and steps have been taken to intercept hon. Members' calls, the responsibility falls on all sides and, of course, on yourself, Sir, to try to ensure that the system is discontinued. Would you also accept that any investigation which takes place should be under your direct control, not under the Government's control, because we have no confidence that any such inquiry carried out on behalf of the Government would in any way be thorough or impartial?

Mr. Speaker: I am not responsible for the installation of telephones in the House. I have as much difficulty in using the new system as, I think, everybody else. I shall look into the matter and see whether I have any responsibility for it.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In column 863 of yesterday's *Hansard*, I returned to the subject of the letter, pointing out that you were in a great difficulty because neither you nor your colleagues on the Clerk's staff are detectives in any way. I also asked that the Leader of the House should use the facilities that are available to him to help the House to look into these matters.

Mr. Speaker: I say again that I do not think that the telephones are my responsibility.

Mr. Faulds: Further to that point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must be allowed to finish, please. I cannot say more than I have said to the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds). If he will let me have the letter I shall study it with the greatest care to see whether I have a responsibility and, if I have not, who has.

Mr. Faulds: Further to that point of order, Sir. I am most grateful. It is not simply a question of your responsibility, or whoever's responsibility it is for the putting in of these telephone interception bits of machinery. Surely this is a prima facie breach of privilege and, if the accusations are true, that is very much your responsibility.

Mr. Speaker: In that case, I suggest that the hon. Gentleman writes to me, treating the matter as a breach of privilege, in order that I can consider whether it might be a matter for the Privileges Committee to consider.

Mr. Faulds: Thank you, Sir.

BILLS PRESENTED

Companies

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, supported by Mr. Sydney Bidwell, Mr. Hugh Dykes, Mr. Robert Edwards, Sir Anthony Grant, Mr. Jeremy Hanley, Mr. Robert McCrindle, Mr. Tom Normanton, Sir David Price, Mr. Tim Smith, Mr. Richard Wainwright and Mr. Mark Wolfson, presented a Bill to amend the law relating to the election and responsibilities of directors of companies; to require the circulation of particulars of candidates to the members before any election of directors; to require certain companies to appoint non-executive directors; to make provision in regard to the appointment of audit committees and to the functions and responsibilities of auditors; and to make other changes in the law relating to companies: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 20 February and to be printed. [Bill 38].

Right to Interest

Mr. Richard Ottaway, supported by Mr. Patrick Nicholls, Mr. Andrew Rowe, Mr. Michael Grylls, Mr. Michael Fallon, Mr. Michael Forsyth, Mr. Michael Knowles and Mr. Alan Stewart, presented a Bill to establish a legally enforceable right to interest on late payment of debts: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 February and to be printed. [Bill 39].

Orders of the Day

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

5.3 pm

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell (South Down): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland confirm that it would be in order in the debate upon the motion for the Second Reading of this Bill to refer to the existing order which is the subject of the next item of business? When dealing with a Bill which amends the existing order, it is extremely difficult to draw a line between discussion of the existing status quo and the proposals in the Bill. It may well be that if the Chair were able to permit both matters to be covered in the debate, the House would be willing to come to a decision upon the second order immediately after having dealt with the motion for Second Reading.

Mr. Speaker: That would be a matter for the decision of the House.

Mr. King: I am grateful to the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell). It is my understanding that it would be convenient for the House to take together both the Bill and the continuance order. If the House so agrees I shall certainly address my remarks to both items.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it on this matter?

Mr. Cook: No, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: If it is on an earlier matter I cannot take it now, because we have moved on to the Northern Ireland order.

Mr. King: The Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill seeks to amend the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. The Bill is presented against the same background as that which existed at the time of the previous legislation. It is an attempt to achieve the fairest possible system of justice in a situation where, sadly, the presence of terrorism prevents the operation of the normal system of justice that we would all like to see. Today's bomb attack on the RUC station at Lisburn road in Belfast is a sombre reminder that the situation which made necessary the introduction of the emergency provisions in the first place continues. We face a continuing terrorist threat. There is no doubt that at the moment a serious campaign is being waged by the IRA to seek to intimidate and disrupt the lives of everybody in the Province.

The whole House will share with me a feeling of outrage, not just about this latest and pointless attack just before Christmas, and the damage that it has caused to so many people from both communities, but because it follows hard on the heels of the callous murder of a creamery worker in Killen and a dangerous and appalling mortar attack in Newry. For both those attacks the IRA had the obscenity to apologise because, although the attacks caused casualties, they were not the casualties that the IRA had intended. Nothing could more clearly underline the fact that the IRA is the enemy of all decent people in Northern Ireland and that it poses a threat to both communities. It is tragic that the RUC warning given yesterday about the risk of an attempted bombing campaign before Christmas should have been so clearly confirmed.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): The House will share my right hon. Friend's condemnation of these cowardly attacks. We all welcome what he said. Have these crimes been condemned in Dublin in the same forthright manner?

Mr. King: I can assure my hon. Friend that there have been the most categorical condemnations of these attacks and of all the activities of the IRA. It is important to remember the situation in Northern Ireland. An attack in Newry at this season of the year carries the real prospect, as there was when the three policemen were murdered, of injury to civilians. I was told that there were probably 30,000 people from the Republic shopping in Newry at the time of that attack. That is because it is advantageous for people from the Republic to shop in Northern Ireland. There has been unequivocal condemnation by the Irish Foreign Minister, by the Minister of Justice and by the Taoiseach.

While we feel a sense of outrage at these dastardly crimes, they demonstrate all the more clearly the debt that we owe to the security forces for the work that they have done in preventing more serious attacks. It will be fresh in the minds of all hon. Members that only this weekend the RUC prevented the transfer of a bomb on the way to Newry of approximately double the size of the one detonated today. The RUC apprehended certain gentlemen who, it is believed, were possibly involved in that event. Whether it is the discovery of a bomb factory in Andersonstown or in County Cavan, or the successful interception of the van with the explosives near Newry, these events underline recent successes. Mortars have also been discovered; the last two mortars were discovered by the Garda. Those successes underline our determination to take every effective measure to fight this campaign and defeat the IRA.

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. King: I shall give way when I have completed the point that I am making. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would wish to join other hon. Members in paying tribute to all those in the security forces—the RUC, the UDR and the regular Army—for the way in which they have stood firmly against terrorism and for their clear determination to do all that they can to protect the community during this IRA campaign.

Mr. Maginnis: I certainly join the right hon. Gentleman in paying tribute to the security forces, but suggest that it does little good when the Secretary of State stands at the Dispatch Box and describes those who are bringing a 1,600 pound bomb into Newry as gentleman. Would he not get his language right and refer to them as the terrorists that they are?

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): That is niggling.

Mr. King: I was showing a proper concern that people are innocent until they are proved guilty. I have no hesitation in saying that if they are the guilty men, there is no word in the English language too low to express my condemnation of them. They are people who are prepared to inflict the sort of agony and suffering that that cargo could have inflicted if it had reached its intended destination.

My tribute to the security forces is paid in the knowledge that they have had to stand in the front line against terrorism while having often to face intimidation. At the same time they have had to try to defeat the sectarian attacks which have disfigured parts of Northern Ireland in recent months.

Security policy is a key element in our overall strategy for the improvement of the condition of the Province, but political development and economic development must march hand in hand. We must look forward to the involvement in and acceptance of a constructive political role in the Province by both communities. If we are to have a cohesive strategy, we must see the creation in the Province of more employment and more opportunities for employment. We have had excellent news in the past day in two respects. The award of the Ministry of Defence contracts to Short Brothers will be widely applauded throughout the Province. Secondly, there are encouraging prospects for further orders overseas that will offer and secure further employment. There is other encouraging news.

We are aware, of course, of the economic background against which we are working. The problems surrounding shipbuilding, the tobacco industry and North sea oil have all threatened employment in the Province and are part of the difficulties that we face.

The successful creation of a security policy does not lie merely with the provision of more policemen and soldiers. I am mindful of the tribute that I have paid to the Royal Ulster Constabulary, which has grown in professionalism and skill over the years. It has become a substantially larger force. It is now better equipped, professional and highly trained, and is a credit to the Province. Over the years, and never more than in the past year, it has demonstrated its determination to police without fear or favour and impartially for both communities. In the battle that we fight against terrorism we are entitled to recognise the serious campaign that we face, to which I have drawn attention, but that must not be to ignore the RUC's achievements in forcing down the level of terrorism.

It is tragic that during this year there have been about 60 deaths from terrorist incidents, but we must remember that in 1975 there were 247. There were 503 incidents this year against 2,438 in 1975. From these figures we can measure the success that the security forces have had in reducing the level of terrorism, which is still obviously at an unacceptable level.

Along with our support for the work of the security forces must be a strategic security approach, and my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) has referred to the need for co-operation with the Republic. Recognising the amount of terrorism that is border-related, we shall be able to obtain great benefit if we achieve more effective co-operation. It is my determination and that of the Government continually to strive to improve co-operation. Coupled with that is a determination to deny terrorists resources and refuge, hence our efforts to improve arrangements for extradition with the Republic, our success with the supplementary treaty with the United States and the recent extradition from the Netherlands. All these activities and events are part of the growing international support and the strategic approach that are designed to make the fight against terrorism and its conquest more effective.

Our strategy is to fight terrorism within the law. We want the most effective and vigorous action, but we believe that it must be always within the law. That is morally right. Any alternative will be bound ultimately to become counter-productive. It is the responsibility of the police, who lead in the fight against terrorism, to bring people to justice before the courts. Our aim and ambition is that the laws under which the courts will operate are fair and must comply with international standards of human and civil rights. Against a background of terrorism and the difficulties that that causes, the courts must diverge as little as possible from the ordinary law. It is vital to maintain the confidence of both communities in the institution of justice and we must do all that we can to ensure equal rights and remove grievances if they are fairly demonstrated, thus further to isolate the men of violence.

I have said that there must be as little divergence as possible, but perhaps the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) will advance the argument that there should be no divergence. I do not wish to anticipate his contribution, but there may be those who say that there is no case for this legislation, which within it contains divergence from the normal law. We do not believe that that approach is sustainable. Learned papers have recently been produced suggesting the return of jury trial for all terrorist offences, but we do not believe that that is a realistic proposition at present.

If we seek to maintain certain differences under the emergency provisions, however, it is our duty regularly to scrutinise them in great detail to ensure that they are justified and that any improvements that can be made are carried out. That will be done against the background of the original work of Lord Diplock, which was reviewed by Lord Gardiner and then reviewed by Sir George Baker, and I am presenting this evening some of the conclusions and implications of the further review.

I have said that we do not believe it possible to return to full jury trials for all offences, but we wish wherever possible to see more jury trials. An improvement that has already been made in advance of this legislation and the recommendation of Sir George Baker is that power has now been obtained by order for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General to certify a greater range of cases where it would be possible to opt for jury trial.

We have also considered whether two or three judges are appropriate for trials in a court of first instance. We have given these proposals the most careful thought and I believe that the House will be interested to hear why we have decided not to incorporate in the Bill any provision to change the present arrangements. In considering the issues we bore in mind the conclusions of the Gardiner committee and of Sir George Baker that no change should be made to the Diplock procedures. Equally, we took full account of the recommendation of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights that scheduled cases should be heard by three judges.

The case for establishing such courts was presented forcefully by the representatives of the Irish Government in the course of discussion during the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. All the evidence shows

that the Diplock procedures, taken as a whole, successfully have maintained the highest standards of justice. In each of the past four years, acquittal rates in the Diplock courts have been within 2 percentage points of acquittal rates in the ordinary criminal courts. Despite the unfettered right of appeal from the Diplock courts, in 1985 proportionally fewer appeals were lodged against conviction for scheduled offences than in ordinary criminal cases.

The force of the safeguards often is not appreciated. When convicting, a judge must prepare a written judgment setting out his reasons. There is an unfettered right of appeal to the ordinary, three-man Court of Appeal against conviction or sentence, and on any ground. The effect of these two safeguards, taken together, is that the Court of Appeal effectively can consider issues of fact as well as issues of law. I shall not dwell on the other practical problems that suggest that a three-judge court would not necessarily produce better justice and might actually diminish the rights of the accused. The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights has set them out in a detailed document. Hon. Members may wish to refer to that document to examine certain other points that the commission fairly raised.

After the most careful consideration, the Government are not presently persuaded that this would be an appropriate change to make.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): The right hon. Gentleman is running close to the wind. He almost suggests that trial without a jury approximates to trial with a jury and that there are certain safeguards that commend the former. It is nothing to do with that. It is to do with the terrible tragedy of Northern Ireland and justice—no matter whether it is 2 per cent. or whatever—is not, in the opinion of many of us, carried out in Northern Ireland.

Mr. King: I shall have to think about what the hon. Gentleman said. I am not sure that I entirely follow his remarks.

I was seeking to explain that there had been considerable discussions, as he may know, about whether there would or would not be benefits in changing the Diplock system in the first instance from one judge to three judges. I was seeking briefly to explain why I think that there are problems in that and why, after careful consideration, we are not presently persuaded that there is justification for that change. We have made it absolutely clear—I made it clear also in my earlier remarks—that we wish to keep the procedures under the emergency provisions under close review as we do.

Whatever amendments to the law we may make, such as we make in this legislation if the House approves it, none will be effective unless it has the benefit of a good judiciary. It is appropriate for the House on this occasion, as it has in the past, to pay tribute to the standard and achievement of Northern Ireland judges. From my own observations, Northern Ireland has splendidly been served by its judiciary. In the background against which Northern Ireland judges wor' —the difficult, testing, complicated, but also, at times, dangerous environment in which they operate—their dedication, commitment, impartiality and courage are an example to us all.

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): I echo what my right hon. Friend said about the judiciary. Is he aware that some of us believe that the McGuires and Guiseppe Conlan may have been wrongly convicted by an English jury and could possibly not have been so convicted by a Diplock court with its superior knowledge of explosives matters?

Mr. King: I note what my hon. Friend said. Obviously, I shall not comment on that matter in any detail, save to say that I have seen that comment made and endorsed in an article in *The Irish Times*. By implication, that article recognised the real achievements of the courts in Northern Ireland that operate in difficult circumstances and the way in which they seek impartially to administer justice.

Mr. Mallon: The Secretary of State referred to the fact that, at a later stage, defendants will have the benefit of a three-judge appeal court. He should confirm the fact that people may have to wait four to five years before they reach that appeal court.

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. Nicholas Scott) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Mallon: I notice the Minister showing his disagreement. I refer him to the case of Thomas Power. He was on remand for almost four years before he was even sentenced. As yet, he has not reached the Appeal Court. That is an inordinate amount of time. In prison sentence terms, that is more than 10 years. The right hon. Gentleman's point is not valid. If any hon. Member faced serious charges tomorrow without a jury, and he had a choice of being tried by one judge or three judges, which course would he choose?

Mr. King: The first point that the hon. Gentleman raised is an important one. I entirely accept that the Diplock system — the phrase I used was, "taking the Diplock system as a whole"—has important safeguards. In other words, I take together the court of first instance and the Court of Appeal. Of course, an important protection for an accused is that, if he wishes to appeal against the single judge in the court of first instance, he has that automatic right of appeal without qualification—not on some point of law—if he chooses to take his case to the three-judge Court of Appeal. I accept the point that the hon. Gentleman made. Therefore, I have concerns that that right should be available without undue delay. That is an important point. There have been problems about delay. A number of the changes not contained within the legislation, although one or two will impinge on it, are changes in administration and in arrangements that I hope will help to minimise delays. It is a fair comment that that right of appeal should be exercised with reasonable dispatch.

Part I of the Bill gives the amended Act a maximum life of five years, subject to annual renewal. Clause 11 sets the first renewal date at 22 March 1988, to coincide with that of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984, which will enable Parliament to consider, at roughly the same time, all the emergency legislation that apples in Northern Ireland and help to consider the Prevention of Terrorism Act in its full United Kingdom context. That was a suggestion of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights, and I am grateful for it.

Clause 1 shifts the onus in bail applications in scheduled cases from the defence to the prosecution. Clause 2 increases the maximum period for which persons accused of scheduled offences can be remanded in custody without their consent. At present, they can choose to be remanded

[Mr. King]

for up to 28 days. Most persons accused of scheduled offences and who are remanded in custody have to be produced in court at weekly remand hearings. Sir George Baker pointed out that weekly remand hearings in scheduled cases were an entirely pointless waste of time, money and scarce courtroom resources.

Clause 3 confers on the Lord Chancellor a discretion to direct that a case involving a scheduled offence shall be held at a Crown court other than the Crown court sitting in Belfast. At present, all such cases are held at the Crumlin road courthouse, and this results in some congestion. That is one of the aspects that may help indirectly to meet the point raised by the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon).

Clause 4 deals with the admissibility of confession evidence and makes it clear that the threat of violence, as well as violence itself, if used to obtain a statement, can be a basis for declaring that statement inadmissible. Clause 5 effectively terminates the police emergency arrest power, but there are other powers upon which the RUC will be able to rely. They include section 13 of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 and section 12 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. However, we believe that the power under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act in particular is more narrowly focused and subject to closer control by the Executive, and therefore more appropriate.

Clause 5 preserves the police power to enter and search premises for the purpose of arresting a suspected terrorist. Clause 6 illustrates to the House the developments in the technology of terrorism over recent years. Very sophisticated scanning receivers are now available, which can enable terrorists to monitor security force communications, and can be used for the detonation of bombs by remote radio control. We are therefore including specialised receivers of that type in the list of items in respect of which the security forces are entitled to search dwellings and premises, and stop and search vehicles.

Clauses 7 and 9 extend to Northern Ireland provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act that apply only on the mainland. It will thus become an offence in Northern Ireland to arrange or assist in the arrangement or management of a meeting held to support a proscribed organisation, or to behave in a public place in a manner indicative of support for a proscribed organisation.

Clause 8 extends the categories of people about whom it is an offence to collect information likely to be useful to terrorists, and includes all present and former elected representatives in Northern Ireland. Clause 10 reforms the compensation provisions.

Part II contains provisions to put on a statutory basis the right of a person detained under emergency legislation to have someone notified of his arrest and whereabouts and to have access to legal advice.

Part III is a new provision, which sets out a scheme to prevent persons or companies from operating to the benefit of paramilitary organisations under the guise of offering private security guard services. As many hon. Members know, some so-called security firms are no more than a front for paramilitary extortion rackets, and that can provide a significant source of funds for certain paramilitary organisations. To prevent that, I propose a simple certification scheme. Every security firm will need to possess a certificate to be able to trade lawfully, and such certificates will be issued only to bona fide companies.

Clause 23 requires the existence of reasonable grounds for suspicion where previously the Act required only suspicion as a basis for exercising the powers in question. Clause 24 provides that the provisions of the Bill, like the temporary provisions of the 1978 Act, as amended, should lapse after five years subject to annual renewal.

The House will see from that rapid, but I hope helpful, introduction to the main elements of the Bill that it seeks to make possible the effective pursuit of terrorists and give the forces of law and order the chance to carry out their vital work. At the same time we are maintaining as effectively as we can the rule of law and ensuring that the rights of those who may be accused are protected as fully as possible.

I believe that the Bill, which builds on Lord Diplock's proposals and on the emergency provisions of the 1978 Act, strikes a fair balance between the rights of the individual and seeking to maintain the fairest possible system of justice when we face terrorism. It is our determination to pursue the campaign to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from the beautiful Province of Northern Ireland. We shall maintain our efforts in that respect. We shall seek to do so with the fullest support and commitment of all those in the Province. I believe that in that respect the Bill will be helpful. I commend it to the House.

5.33 pm

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): You may find it difficult to believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the House is enjoying a rare experience—indeed, one which I think is unique in the past few years. We have frequently complained that legislation for Northern Ireland is by unamendable orders. The Government present their legislation to the House on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, although we all know that there is not really an option to leave it because the Government Whips are waiting, if called upon, to eliminate that choice.

Today the Government have introduced in the Chamber a Bill—a right-down regular Bill, just like for the rest of the United Kingdom. If it receives its Second Reading, as we all expect it will, we will be able to suggest amendments. I do not know whether there is a connection between the two events, but I note that it has persuaded Members of the Official Unionist party to emulate the commendable example of the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell), and to attend our proceedings. I hope that they will accept a welcome back to the Chamber. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

In debates in the House, the task of a responsible Opposition is more difficult than that of the Government. When a Minister introduces a Bill, it follows that the Government approve of everything in it. It also follows that if anything is missing from the Bill the Government do not approve of it, or they believe that this is the wrong time, or the wrong occasion, or the wrong Bill to bring forward such a provision. Thus the Secretary of State can make an enthusiastic speech commending the Bill, the whole Bill and nothing but the Bill, as the right hon. Gentleman did today.

Sometimes the task of the Opposition is equally simple. They may regard every sentence in the Bill as a total disaster, and the only approach open to them is

unqualified denunciation. We have seen examples enough of such Bills in the past few years. However, sometimes a Bill is a mixed bag. The Government may have earned some marks for effort. The Bill may bear witness to persistent and effective lobbying on a few selected topics, or even to a capacity among some Ministers to listen to argument, but the gold may be reposing in a deal of dross. The improvements may be few and modest, and the package may include some less attractive items. In that case, the proper response is less simple. We should encourage the Government in well-doing. We on the Opposition Benches have made it clear that when the Government have ears to hear and introduce progressive measures they will meet no unnecessary difficulties from the Opposition, even if we may wish that their response had been earlier and more enthusiastic. We shall not reject the crust because it falls short of a feast.

But we must not leave the Government or anyone else with the impression that that concludes the debate. Where their response is too little in the interests of justice and common sense, we must let it be known that we shall be asking for more. Where the Government have not responded at all, we must give them notice that there are still issues to be resolved. Where the Bill includes measures that we think are wholly misguided, we have to decide whether to oppose the Bill or seek to deal with those measures in Committee.

Let me make it clear at the outset that we shall not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill. We will take it as a payment on account, although we may promise the Government an interesting Committee, but that does not mean that our anxieties about the present Act are now resolved simply because it has undergone some improvement. It would be misleading and hypocritical if we supported the continuance order, and when the time comes we shall oppose it.

Our reaction to the Bill is mixed, and if the trumpet is not to give forth an uncertain sound, we must begin from first principles. I shall take this part of the argument fairly briefly. That is possible because we in the Opposition have set it out so often, and it is desirable because, in the House, brevity is a virtue.

We would all like to see an end to the violence and the lawlessness that overshadow the daily life of every family in Northern Ireland—lawlessness from whatever quarter and in whatever cause. We all believe that a peaceful, constitutionally oriented community can be achieved only by peaceful, constitutional politics. Perhaps I shall be permitted a commercial. Hon. Members who are not numbered among the regular readers of *Tribune* may consider investing in a copy of this week's issue and reading the thoughtful contribution of the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume).

Even though there will be no complete normality, as the Secretary of State reminded us, until the political issues have been resolved, we all recognise the importance of security, and we all pay tribute to the work of the security services. They shoulder heavy burdens in difficult conditions, and I certainly endorse the tribute that the right hon. Gentleman paid to them. Of course, we too condemn the recent attacks. Sometimes, the security services have to take decisions on the spur of the moment, in conditions of great potential danger, without any opportunity of finding out whether someone is a law-abiding citizen and whether he means mischief. They are entitled to ask that we should take all that into account.

Up to that stage, the Government and the Labour party are largely in agreement. It is at the next phase of the argument that we need to give careful thought to where we are being led. There are two issues. First, if we respond to lawlessness simply by devaluing the law, by abandoning our traditional values and by invoking Satan to cast out Satan, the law breakers will have won, because that is their objective. They will have destroyed the very way of life that it is the purpose of the law to protect. Secondly, as the Secretary of State fairly said, if a substantial number of people in both traditions feel that the law is unfair and is administered oppressively, we shall lose that public support and co-operation of which the right hon. Gentleman spoke and on which the security services depend. Every further derogation from people's rights will make the task of law enforcement more difficult, until measures which are intended to assist in promoting law and order become counter-productive.

I cannot improve on what was said by the predecessor to the Secretary of State, the present Home Secretary, in our debate on this subject on 20 December 1984. He said:

"Faced with the tension and the tragedies caused by terrorism, some people, naturally enough, are tempted to look for short cuts in winning the battle. But in a free, open and democratic society such as ours, terrorism is best countered by the resolute application of the criminal law."—[*Official Report*, 20 December, 1984; Vol. 70, c. 576.]

I am content to say amen to that.

When the original Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill came before the House on 17 April 1973, the Government of the day clearly envisaged that it was an emergency measure. The then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, now Lord Whitelaw, said:

"It is the Government's intention that none of the provisions of the Bill, if it is passed, should continue in force a moment longer than it is needed."—[*Official Report*, 17 April 1973; Vol. 855, c. 278.]

The then Attorney-General—now Lord Rawlinson—called the measures in the Bill "draconian". That is why the Government inserted what is now section 33, providing for a six-monthly review by each House. Since then, the House has discharged that responsibility by looking at the Act twice a year to ascertain whether this emergency legislation really continues to be justified and to consider whether and how it should be amended. I can answer the question of the Secretary of State by saying that I do not propose today to argue that none of the Bill's provisions are necessary, but if that review provision is to be reduced to an annual one, so that 12 months may elapse without a review, that is a further step towards institutionalising what was introduced as emergency legislation.

I appreciate that the quid pro quo is that the provisions of the Bill, if passed, will expire after five years—I welcome that—but I am not persuaded that it is in some way a substitute for the six-monthly reviews in the meantime. These are not, in any sense, alternatives. They are two separate safeguards to deal with two separate dangers. It is true that it was a recommendation by Sir George Baker and that it was intended in some sense as a package, but if the Government seek to urge that, they must have regard to the whole package which he proposed.

In paragraph 448 of his report Sir George recommended that the Secretary of State should provide information, largely statistical, on the working of the Act, and that information should be provided quarterly. This is information of a type which is provided in relation to the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act

[Mr. Peter Archer]

1984 and which is valuable in assessing how it is operating. As that proposal is in the same chapter of the Baker report as the recommendation for annual reviews, it is clear that Sir George saw that, too, as part of the package; so if I am accused of breaking up Sir George's package, I must point out that the Government have already opened it and discarded a substantial part of the contents.

Applying all these considerations to the Bill, there are provisions which we welcome. We have waited since April 1984, when the Baker report was published, for some action on the recommendations. we have tried to encourage the Government in well doing. Whatever the processes that persuaded them to act, we applaud this outcome.

We welcome Clause 1. It is unacceptable, as Sir George Baker pointed out, that the onus of proving why bail should not be granted pending trial is on the defence, and that anomaly will be reviewed by the Bill.

We welcome the repeal of the powers of arrest without warrant in section 11 of the present Act. Sir George Baker recommended in paragraph 304 that the various powers of arrest lurking in assorted statutes should be brought together in one statutory provision. Clause 5 repeals the power in section 11, leaving the authorities to their other powers of arrest without warrant and, particularly, to section 12 of the prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act. We do not take the view that the prevention of terrorism power is beyond criticism, but the repeal of section 11 is clearly a move in the right direction.

More difficult to understand is that section 12 of the present Act is left intact. It empowers the Secretary of State to detain someone without a trial. That is a draconian power, so much so that it has not been used since 1975. Sir George Baker recommended that, since it is not used and ought not to be used, it should be repealed. Indeed, sections 11 and 12 go together. The power of arrest in section 11 was clearly intended to be used as a prelude to detention under section 12, although, in fact, it was frequently used for other purposes. Section 11 is now being repealed, yet section 12 is to remain.

Why do the Government disagree with Sir George Baker and wish to retain a power which has not been used for 11 years and which, I understand, they have no intention of using? I seem to remember the predecessor of the Secretary of State, the present Home Secretary, telling the House on 20 December 1984 that he would like to retain the power in case there was

"a sudden short-term crisis, which might occur when Parliament was in recess."—[*Official Report*, 20 December, 1984; Vol. 70, c. 581.]

I do not believe that that is the proper approach to emergency legislation, which, as the Government recognised, distorts the normal processes of law and requires to be justified as exceptional. It is not good enough to say that the situation does not call for it now, but perhaps one day it will.

I return to the implementation of some of the Baker recommendations which we welcome. We note that schedule 1 substitutes for the word "suspects" in a number of contexts the words

"has reasonable grounds for suspecting".

This will enable a court to inquire not only into the subjective state of mind of the officer concerned, but into the objective question whether the suspect's behaviour really was suspicious. That is to be welcomed.

We welcome clause 4, which strengthens the criteria for excluding alleged confessions in scheduled offences. The existing Act makes a statement admissible unless the accused was subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment. That leaves statements admissible when they have been obtained by any of a range of pressures. The suspect may have been punched, spat on, made to stand for hours on end, denied sleep, abused or threatened. Sir George Baker recommended that at least the statement should be excluded if the accused was subject to violence or the threat of violence, even if it did not amount to torture. That recommendation is implemented in the Bill and is much to be welcomed.

But can the Government explained what is wrong with the test that operates elsewhere in the United Kingdom? Here, a statement is admissible if, and only if, it is made voluntarily. I have not heard it suggested that the test, as it is applied by the English courts, is too libertarian. If a person is to be convicted of an offence on the evidence of a confession, what matters is that the confession is reliable and that it was made because it was true and not to get out of a police station or to stop some kind of pressure.

In 1978, the Royal Commission on criminal procedure, chaired by Sir Cyril Philips, was established partly because of mounting concern about the way in which some confession statements were obtained. Research carried out by the commission showed that most people incarcerated in a police station, anxious and tense, whether or not they had committed an offence, and questioned for hour after hour when they were desparate to get out, were likely to end by saying almost anything.

Of course, allegations of ill treatment are easy to make and as easy to deny. The court may not believe the allegations, but we are concerned about what is to happen if the court finds as a fact that such treatment has taken place. Is it still to admit the statement? Of what probative value is a confession if it was made for some reason other than its truth? So our welcome for the provision is mingled with regret that the Government did not follow the logic of their own reasoning.

Before I leave the congratulatory part of my remarks, I welcome two provisions which do not follow from the recommendations of Sir George Baker, but which are intended to bring the Northern Ireland position broadly into line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Clause 11 provides a right for a person in custody to have someone told about what has happened so that hours of anxiety for his family can be avoided, and someone can set in train whatever is necessary to safeguard the welfare and rights of the accused.

Clause 12 provides a right of access to legal advice, but again the Government have devalued their own gift. The rights are subject to delay on a whole plethora of different grounds. In Committee we shall wish to explore whether they are all necessary. We know that these provisions will be applied differently, by different officers. There will be some who will seize on whatever excuse presents itself to nullify the right which the Bill seeks to confirm. That is not being critical of the police: like any other collection of human beings, they include the good, the bad and the

passable. It would be as silly to suggest that they are all perfect as it would be to suggest that they are all part of some sinister conspiracy.

But we do not have to postulate any dishonest policemen or even any who prefer their task to be made easy. Let hon. Members imagine a conscientious, hardworking police officer who has before him someone whom he believes to be guilty of an offence. It is easy to understand whey he should want a confession in his hand before the subject sees a lawyer. If he is tempted by being supplied with a long list of exceptions where the right does not apply, he will have to be objective and fair beyond average not to seize on some of those suggestions. We know in this Chamber that that would not necessarily serve the cause of justice, and one does not fight terrorism by convicting the wrong people. Someone may say that we are not at the sharp end and that we do not share the pressures, but that is precisely why we should exercise judgment and not leave it to those who may be too deeply committed to exercise it fairly. We are speaking of a right which Sir Henry Fisher, in his report on the Confait case, regarded as so fundamental that he recommended that any confession obtained in breach of it should be automatically excluded.

Before I leave clauses 11 and 12, I shall ask the Minister a question which I hope he will answer at the end of the debate. These rights are already accorded to the rest of the United Kingdom and they are enshrined in United Kingdom legislation. In Northern Ireland they are being enacted, in a piece of legislation which is expressed to be, and I hope is intended to be, temporary, in order to respond to an emergency situation. They apply only to people arrested under emergency provisions. Is it proposed, at an early date, to re-enact them—I see that the Secretary of State is nodding—in more permanent legislation so that the citizens of Northern Ireland will have them on the same basis and for the same range of purposes as the citizens of the rest of the United Kingdom? I am grateful to the Secretary of State for indicating that that is so. Perhaps at the end of the debate the Minister will tell us the time factor involved.

I turn to some recommendations made by Sir George Baker which do not appear in the Bill. Sir George's report was a careful piece of work, to which we have all paid tribute on other occasions, but it is hardly a piece of radical libertarianism. It could scarcely be suggested that to implement it fully would be to risk a breakdown in law and order. I understand the reasons for that, and I point out only that the Government have not seen fit to implement even all of those modest recommendations.

I have already mentioned the failure to repeal section 12 and Sir George's proposal that information should be made available about the working of the Act. A further recommendation that is missing from the Bill is the proposal to limit remand in custody while awaiting trial to a period of 12 months before committal proceedings. The average period of remand in Northern Ireland is 15 months. The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) pointed to the Power case, where remand has been substantially longer than that. In some cases other than the Power case, remand has been up to two years. Allowing for all the rules governing remission, the accused will have served the equivalent of a four-year sentence before it has been decided whether he is guilty.

Sir George Baker said:

"I find it impossible to conclude that there is no injustice."

His recommendation was modest enough. He suggested that anyone held in custody for 12 months before committal should be released. If, by that time, someone has not even been committed and he is likely to face a further period in custody before he is tried, he has, by any standard, some reason for complaint.

Scotland seems to find no difficulty in living with a limitation period of 110 days after committal and an overall period of 124 days. On 20 October 1985 the Home Secretary announced to the House a series of what he called "field trials" in several English towns to see how time limits could work in England. Why, then, should there be no limitation period in Northern Ireland?

The long remands are a feature, in particular, of supergrass trials, which are a development within the Diplock procedure which was never envisaged when the Act was passed in 1973. In Committee we shall want to explore the whole of that development. Indeed, one of the most controversial matters in the Act is the existence and extent of the Diplock procedure. We have often debated the reasons why, in 1973, the Government of the day decided to remove the right to jury trial for a wide range of offences, and what evidence exists about that now. I do not propose to rehearse all that, other than to remind the House that trial by jury is a very important part of our criminal procedure. It subjects lawyers, as experts everywhere should be subjected, to an element of constraint by those whose function it is to represent common sense and an uncomplicated commitment to fair play.

We on this side of the water would not lightly relinquish that entitlement, but we are prepared to countenance a different standard in Northern Ireland. That is not intended to reflect any discredit on the Northern Ireland judiciary. Indeed, I echo the tribute paid to it by the Secretary of State, but I am troubled about the burden that we cast on it, which is not borne by judges who sit with juries.

The offences in the schedule are defined by categories and not by any observable connection with terrorism in a particular case. One of those offences, for example, is armed robbery. It is true that paramilitaries sometimes commit armed robberies, but it is certainly not the case that all armed robbers are paramilitaries. Moreover, we are all familiar with the research of Mr. Dermot Walsh, which showed that 40 per cent. of those convicted in the Diplock courts had no observable connection with terrorism.

Most of those who have given thought to the question would like more cases to be channelled back into the normal jury system. I thought that I detected an assent to that in what the Secretary of State said. Several suggestions have been made about how that might be achieved. The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights suggested two steps. It proposed removing a number of offences from the schedule altogether, because experience shows that, even assuming the other steps in the argument, they are not needed, and it proposed enlarging the number of offences in which the Attorney-General is empowered to certify a specific case out of the Diplock procedure. That is a proposal which commended itself to Sir George Baker, and he listed the offences that he had in mind.

In the amendment order of 1985, the Government introduced a measure empowering the Attorney-General to certify out offences of kidnapping, false imprisonment

[Mr. Peter Archer]

and certain other offences. We welcomed that order as spring watchers welcome the first snowdrop, but it missed the real point. The National Council for Civil Liberties illuminated the figure of 40 per cent., given by Mr. Dermot Walsh as the proportion of convictions under the Diplock procedure which appear to have had no connection with terrorism. It transpired that the majority were offences involving real or imitation firearms — that is to say robbery, aggravated burglary and the possession of firearms while committing a variety of offences.

Those are serious offences, but if in any specific case they are not connected with terrorism, the argument for the Diplock procedure disappears. In the absence of the paramilitary element, the fact that an offence is a serious offence, involving the prospect of a long sentence, reinforces the importance of having a jury trial. Sir George Baker's proposal was not that these categories should be removed from the schedule but only that the Attorney-General should have power to certify out in appropriate cases. However, the Government's measure in 1985 did not extend to the offences through which the problem arises, and the Bill does not seek to remedy the defects.

As the Secretary of State said, there have been other suggestions for moving towards a solution of the problem, for example the three-judge court to replace the single judge. We have in mind Sir George's proposals in paragraph 151 for contingent jury trial. There have been proposals by Mr. Stephen Greer and Mr. Anthony White in their thoughtful book on the subject. This is not the occasion to discuss in detail the merits of all the proposals, but it is hoped that in Committee we will demonstrate one of the advantages of legislating by Bill rather than by order. It is that it provides an opportunity to discuss thoughtful suggestions that are all too often lost because there is no opportunity for ventilating them.

The House may be relieved to hear that I do not propose today to comment on every provision in the Bill, nor to list all the matters which are missing from the Bill that we would like to have seen dealt with there. I have no doubt that someone, inside or outside the House, will profess shocked surprise that in the whole of this speech —perhaps in the whole of the debate—there has been not a single mention of some matter which is of great importance to someone. However, there will be opportunities in Committee.

I am looking forward to the Committee, whether it takes place here or upstairs, or partly here and partly upstairs. It will provide an opportunity to discuss many matters relating to security and civil liberties. No one can refuse to take part in a Standing Committee on the ground that it was brought into existence by the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Participation will not entail either an affirmation or a rejection of the agreement. All those who have painted themselves into corners where they cannot take part in a dialogue except on conditions that someone else cannot accept can come to the Committee without loss of dignity or principle.

I hope that the Government and their business managers will have two things in mind. First, I hope that there will be room in the Committee for representatives from every part of the House so that they may all take part in at least one important discussion. I hope that the Ministers will come to the Committee with open minds and listen to suggestions and arguments. We shall not resolve every disagreement, but if it is a constructive Committee, those who practise the politics of abstention will see things happening in their absence, and they may consider that they would do better to attend to represent those who sent them to the House.

Who knows, the Government may acquire a taste for legislation by Bill, and we may all come to appreciate the advantages of discussing things, of give and take, of seeking a consensus. That may prove to be a step towards resolving the political differences which gave rise to the security problems in the first place and towards restoring that constitutional process which will end all talk of an emergency.

6.4 pm

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I hope that the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) will forgive me if I do not follow him, but I do not possess his forensic skills, so find myself in difficulties in commenting on the legislative points that he brought out in his interesting speech.

When he was introducing the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973, which was updated by the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978, which in turn is amended by the Bill before the House, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my noble Friend Lord Whitelaw, said:

> "The onus must be on Her Majesty's Government to prove to the House why the special legal provisions in the Bill are necessary in the current situation in Northern Ireland. We here have a clear responsibility to the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland and for the security forces who are protecting them.
>
> Terrorism still constitutes a major threat to peace and order in Northern Ireland; a threat which, if it is allowed to go unchecked, will jeopardise all efforts to bring about peaceful political progress."

In the same speech—the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West has already quoted his words — he said:

> "The Bill therefore provides that none of the main provisions should last for more than a year without an order being made that would have to be approved by Parliament. I believe such a procedure to be an assurance in itself that, given a cessation of violence for political ends in Northern Ireland, the Government will be only too glad to see these provisions brought to an end."—[*Official Report*, 17 April 1973; Vol. 855, c. 275-8.]

Those words were spoken more than 13 years ago, and while we have seen considerable improvement in the internal security of the Province, the terrorism that produced the Acts of Parliament to which I have referred continues, to a point where today's legislation, albeit a refinement of the 1973 and 1978 Acts, is an obvious necessity. What is more, the "peaceful political progress" referred to by my noble Friend is not just as far away as it was in 1973, or 1978, but in some respects even further away. Not only are we facing the continued menace of the terrorist, the gunman and the bomber in their attempts to destabilise the Province, as today's bombing in Belfast underlines, but we are obliged to survey the wreckage of the political initiatives of 1974 and 1982, with their attempts to create devolved government. There is also the failure of the Northern Ireland Convention and now the uncertain start to the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

To some extent, each of these initiatives has contributed to the instability in the Province and thus to the environment in which the terrorists thrive. I make that statement because it seems relevant to the Bill before us.

As the late Sir George Baker asked in his report, is this legislation not based on a misnomer if it is described as an emergency provisions Bill, when the emergency has lasted 17 years, and the definition of an emergency is "a sudden or unexpected occurrence"?

I prefer his suggestion that the legislation should be called the Protection of the Peoples Bill, because it frees us from the unreality of believing that we are likely to see the end of this legislation within the five years written into the Bill and that if we get rid of the terrorist, "peaceful political progress" will automatically follow. That is not necessarily a consequence of getting rid of the terrorist, and until we recognise that we have two problems to resolve, both of which to some extent create instability in the Province, we do not come to the root of the problem. I see a certain contradiction in an emergency provisions Bill which is to be renewed annually rather than every six months as is the case now.

Someone in the Northern Ireland Department seems to to be agreeing with my assessment of the likely duration of the present situation, as well they may, for the Provos and INLA publicly state their determination to continue their campaign of violence indefinitely. Judging by the figures for the past year, the first year of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, we have still some way to go to prove that the security situation has radically changed as a result of the new arrangements with the Republic of Ireland.

I have before me figures given to me by the Library on 15 December. I see that in the 12 months till 4 December 1986, there were 60 deaths, and in the 12 months ending October 1985, there were 54 deaths. There were 282 deaths through shootings in the 12 months to November 1986 and 197 in the 12 months ending October 1985. There were 237 deaths as a result of bombings in the 12 months ending November 1986 and 201 in the 12 months ending October 1985. Whatever we may hope to get from the Anglo-Irish Agreement, we have to admit that, for the moment at least, there is no proof that it is producing better security in the Province. As a result, I suggest that one of the premises on which the Bill is based is flawed. It should be regarded not as something transitory but as something semi-permanent while normal democratic procedures cease to exist or are positively spurned and derided by a section of the community.

On page 4 of his review of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provision) Act 1978, which forms the basis of the Bill, the late Sir George Baker wrote:

"the political process has no real chance of developing until terrorism is eliminated but terrorism cannot be eliminated until there is a political solution."

Those are wise words—even more so today than when they were written in 1984, because the situation in the Province has entered a new phase with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement a year ago.

The Bill must now be judged against the new circumstances that prevail in the Province. A section of the community has taken up arms against the Government and a large part of the population feel left out of the political process, not because they refuse to recognise this Parliament as their Parliament but because, in its search for peace, stability and reconciliation, Parliament has chosen to ignore their entreaties.

I suggest that we have an infinitely more dangerous situation than we had even in 1973 or 1978, and until we have resolved the political centre of that new problem, we will not get anywhere near making the provisions the emergency ones that we claim them to be.

In 1973 and 1978, Northern Ireland Members of Parliament from Unionist and other parties came to the House and, until one year ago, attended the Northern Ireland Assembly. They played their part in the governance of their Province. Now we see an alienation from Parliament of most of their representatives, with the exception of the four hon. Members who are sitting on the other side of the House.

If this Bill, or any other relating to the Province, is to be accepted and made workable, it must be debated and accepted by the parliamentary representatives of all of the people of Northern Ireland. That is why I am convinced that, however well intentioned the Anglo-Irish Agreement may be, it is a stumbling block to peace and better relationships between the communities in the North and, dare I say it, between the two parts of Ireland, because it undermines the basis on which the people of Northern Ireland are governed and accept the laws that we make for them.

If the agreement is to remain, it must follow that leaders of the three main political parties in Northern Ireland should be included in the intergovernmental conference. Only by doing that can the people of Northern Ireland feel that their elected representatives are having a say in whatever is discussed about their Province and its security.

Fortunately, the changes from the 1978 Act which are encompassed in the Bill would not in their generality seem likely to create much hostility to the Bill in the Province, and I suspect that many of the amended parts of the Bill will make the new Act a better piece of legislation than anything which has gone before.

I should like to refer to one important addition to the Bill—the section about security companies—and to one omission from the Baker report—a new definition of the proscription of political organisations. I welcome the intention to bring security companies in the Province under some form of legislative restraint, bearing in mind the work that they carry out.

It is right to create certain criteria for the establishment of such companies and to ensure, as far as one can, that those who work for them are bona fide employees. That suggests to me that, of necessity, the police will be asked to give personal details about people who are being considered for employment. Otherwise, I do not see how the conditions in clause 16 can be met in any meaningful way.

When, in the past, there has been talk of statutory controls on security companies on this side of the Irish sea, it has always been asked whether it is reasonable for people who run security companies to seek from the police the potential employee's personal file to discover whether he has been involved in crime. It has usually been argued that making such information available would infringe the civil liberties of the individual.

I recognise that, in Northern Ireland, we are dealing with different circumstances, but if we are anxious to bring the law of Northern Ireland and that in the rest of the United Kingdom into line, if the Bill allows the Secretary of State to expect of an employer that he has been to the police to check out his prospective employee in Northern Ireland, I find it extremely difficult to see any reason why we should not do the same on this side of the Irish sea. I believe that that would be a step forward in the security

[Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson]

industry. I am aware that we are concerned with paramilitaries in Northern Ireland but, bearing in mind the amount of violence that is to be found generally today, it would be helpful if everybody who ran a security company could vouch for his employees as persons of absolutely honourable and honest character.

Finally, I want to consider proscription. Sir George Baker went to some trouble to discuss proscribing Sinn Fein and the Ulster Defence Associaton. He made it clear that, despite the arguments that can be used for proscription, he did not feel able to make a recommendation. In paragraph 424, however, he refers to a suggestion made to him by Professor Wilkinson of Aberdeen university, an international authority on terrorism, who suggested that political parties which refuse to renounce violence should be disqualified by statute from parliamentary and other elections. I think that that is an excellent suggestion and I am sorry that it has not been included in the Bill.

It seems natural justice to argue that those who think that they can pursue their political ends with the ballot paper in one hand and an Armalite in the other should be made to decide which option they intend to pursue. I do not believe that the political process is helped by the present equivocation, and I can see no reason why Professor Wilkinson's suggestion should not be written into the Bill in Committee or on Report. His suggestion for what would in effect add up to a description of that which would proscribe an organisation would bear most careful consideration by the House.

6.17 pm

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): I know that when I speak about the Bill I speak against a background of great violence and threats of violence in Northern Ireland. I appreciate the difficulty of speaking about a humane and compassionate regime or process of law in the face of such problems, but, unfortunately, that is the minefield through which we have to tread.

I remind the Minister of State, whom I am glad to see present, of his perceptive and accurate remarks in Munich when he spoke recently about security and terrorism. He said:

"Democracies should seek to derogate as little as possible from the standards of justice and Government which would normally apply".

I agree, and take these words as a touchstone against which the Bill should be judged. Unfortunately, the Minister's task is extremely difficult, if not impossible. Amending legislation such as the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 is, one could argue, impossible. It is somewhat like writing a travelogue for Siberia. No matter how well the photographs look, how glossy the presentation is or how well scripted it is, Siberia will remain Siberia, unchanged and unchangeable. This is akin to that.

I note the points made by the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) in relation to this measure being a Bill. But is it in essence a Bill, or is it amendments to existing legislation? Making that distinction presents difficulties for me and, I presume, for many others. If those changes were to stand of themselves I would be pleased to varying degrees about them, but the fact that they are changes to repressive legislation causes me great problems. I have difficulty deciding whether we have lamb, or mutton dressed up as lamb. Perhaps that may be teased out in Committee. I seek the repeal of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. That should be our objective and every step taken should work towards it.

In his speech in Munich the Minister also said:

"Repressive policies, without regard to moderation, civilisation and restraint could actually feed terrorism."

How right he is. He put his finger on the classic Northern Irish dilemma. Since 1922, when the state was formed, there has never been a period when we did not have derogation from the normal standards of justice. We have always had emergency repressive legislation. That has given a potent propaganda weapon to the men of violence, which they have used successfully, and it has alienated large sections of the community, especially young people. As a result, confidence in and respect for the law has diminished to a frightening degree.

To paraphase the Minister's words again, to what extent has terrorism fed off this repressive legislation and the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act during the past 16 years? How much has that legislation encouraged people to resort to violence? Will these changes help to win the battle for the hearts and minds of people to support a proper system of justice and a proper impartial system of law? That is the battle that must be won. If these changes can help us move in that direction, they are of themselves good.

Unfortunately, the tone of the Bill—I shall call it a Bill until I seek and get further clarification—is set by the failure to remove from it the power of internment. It gives an insight into Government thinking and signposts their fundamental attitude, which could read—I hope that they do not find this too harsh—"Amend some peripheral matters, take a small step forward in others, but do not ever get to the heart of the problem." Later I hope to show where the Bill has avoided getting to the heart of the problem.

Internment without trial is the most serious derogation in any democratic society. We have had it in Northern Ireland every decade since 1922, but it has never defeated violence. It simply fuels it, recruits for it and passes on the ethic and subculture of violence to future generations. It should never be used again. The retention of this power is essentially a vote of no confidence in the future and a clear negation of the Minister's perceptive conclusions about repressive policies. I regret that internment has not been removed from the statute book once and for all.

Some of the Bill presents a small step forward, but other parts are scratching the surface. There is one other glaring, regrettable omission, and that is any change, or sign of change, in the Diplock court system. That omission is like a cloud hanging over the Bill, casting a shadow on provisions which may be worth while and questioning the Government's will to get to the heart of the matter.

I noted that the Secretary of State said that the Government were not "presently" persuaded about the need for change in the Diplock system. I take some heart from that and look forward in future to finding out what the word "presently" means. If those changes are not made, some good provisions in the Bill will lose their impact and conviction.

There is an overwhelming need to change the Diplock system by introducing a three-judge collegiate system. It is not merely a question of obtaining a better system of

justice; nor is it a question of doubting the attitudes or abilities of individual judges. Rather it is that it would be seen publicly as a fairer system of trial, given that juries have had to be removed. The Government-appointed Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights stated:

"The wider interest of the administration of justice would be better served if there was a system of trial which inspired greater public confidence than the present method."

Of overriding importance is the ultimate protection of the accused. The judicial process is not merely for lawyers, but for lay people also. The judiciary is the final arbiter —the only agency standing between you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, me, all of us, and a prison cell. When Parliament removed the protection of the jury from us as individuals, it had a right to try to replace it, but it has not done that. The only system that goes some way towards doing that is the introduction of a three-judge collegiate system.

I keep asking a simple question of myself: if I had to face serious charges tomorrow without a jury and I had the choice between being tried by three judges or one, what choice would I make? I have no doubt what my answer would be. I would have much greater faith in the experience, wisdom and judgment of three judges acting together than in the experience, wisdom and judgment of one man. Those accused of scheduled offences in Northern Ireland have a right to that protection, and the community has a right to a system in which it can have confidence and to which it can give full support.

The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights stated:

"The introduction of three judge courts is one of the amendments to the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act which could be made without reducing the effectiveness of the legislation but which nonetheless might lead to a wider acceptability of a system which inevitably has to derogate from the ordinary principles on which criminal justice is administered."

I am afraid that the Government have fluffed it. It is a sorry mistake that the introduction of a collegiate trial system is not included in the Bill. That will cast a cloud on some of the improvements in the Bill

I welcome some changes as a small step forward, but they do not bridge the derogation gap. Section 2 of the 1978 Act will be amended to give judges wider discretion in granting bail. I welcome that and commend the Minister for it. It will bring the law into line with the judges' practice and go some way towards eliminating the suspicion that often a refusal to grant bail has been used as a form of internment. However, it would be much better if there were a statutory presumption in favour of bail.

The Bail Act 1976, which applies to England and Wales, states:

"A person shall be granted bail unless,"

whereas this Bill states:

"A judge may, in his discretion, admit to bail".

Reading that as a layman, I understand it to mean that the judge still has a residual discretion to reject bail even after the prosecution has failed to show why it should not be granted. That is a fundamental weakness. We must reconsider that point and try to apply the same conditions as apply in England and Wales.

The changes in the Bill in relation to the admissibility of evidence are also a step in the right direction. Under the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 as it stands, the present grounds for non-admissibility are a bare minimum compared with article 3 of the European convention on human rights, under which

"no one shall be subject to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment."

That lowest minimum or lowest common denomination factor has led to problems. It has been iniquitous, open to abuse and the rule of the lowest common denominator. It has been a temptation for interrogating officers, because they have always felt that the law was on their side, that there was a sufficient gap, and that if only they took a little step further they might obtain the confession.

That lowest common denominator has been, and is still, a corrosive influence on the whole process of justice. Indeed, it might act as an encouragement to interrogators to treat an accused person in somewhat less than the way in which he should expect to be treated. I believe that the proposal should go further. I welcome the fact that it now includes the threat of violence and not just actual violence. Clause 4 also gives the judge the power to exclude statements or evidence on the ground that not to do so would be unfair to the accused or contrary to the interests of justice. That is a strengthening of the power to make dubious evidence non-admissible. That is a step forward and I welcome it. However, it should go further and exclude all statements obtained by any threat, inducement or oppressive treatment.

Changes are also proposed to sections 11 and 12 of the 1978 Act. I welcome those changes. Since 1922 an unqualified suspicion has been the only requirement for search, seizure and arrest. Is it any wonder that a member of the South African Government is on record as envying those draconian powers? For the past 65 years in the North of Ireland, anyone's house could be searched, anyone could have property seized and a person could be seized under arrest simply on the suspicion of an officer of the police or the Army. That is now to be changed to reasonable suspicion.

That may not seem a very substantial step forward. However, the legal people believe that it is. If I may make the distinction in the words of Sir George Baker:

"The test for Section 11 is a subjective one: Did the arrestor suspect? If his suspicion is an honest genuine suspicion that the person being arrested is a terrorist, a court cannot inquire further into the exercise of the powers. But where the requirement is reasonable suspicion it is for the court to decide the reasonableness of the suspicion. It is an objective standard."

That surely must be an advance on the situation that pertained until now, and at least it removes the unfettered form of arrest from the arresting officer. I commend that change and it is long overdue. However, I do not think that it goes far enough, because section 18 of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 has not been touched. There may be a legal provision for that which I cannot find.

I recognise that schedule 1 to the Bill restricts the powers of arrest of the Army or UDR personnel. However, section 18 of the 1978 Act—the power to stop, search and interrogate people on the streets on an almost unlimited basis—does not appear to have been changed at all. This is one of the great bones of contention in the North of Ireland—and I know that the Minister knows that it is one of the great bones of contention—and it is one of the main alienating factors.

While we are making this series of changes and amending what we know to be an unsatisfactory piece of legislation, we leave section 18 untouched. In other words, we give to an 18-year-old private or to a UDR person who

[Mr. Seamus Mallon]

may not be well disposed to the person with whom he is dealing — a power which we do not even give to the Chief Constable of the RUC. This is ludicrous and should be changed, in the interests of young people and those who are being alienated in the clash between the security forces and the paramilitary groups. Young people are suffering under section 18 of the 1978 Act. They are being squeezed and alienated into the arms of the men of violence. We must do something about section 18.

Clause 12 is a slight improvement. I do not consider this in the way others have considered it, because I believe that the seven-day detention period is much too long. Any officer of the law would say that the vast majority of cases are made to stick within the first 12 to 14 hours. Detention from five to seven days is not required. The whole of this clause should be re-thought, because there is a practice at present—which no one would deny—of detention for up to 72 hours or for seven days, literally for the purpose of information gathering rather than on suspicion — not even reasonable suspicion — of that person's involvement.

I deal with such problems almost on a daily basis, and I dealt with six such problems last week. I know the difficulties that it causes for people, their families and for the areas in which they live. However, I recognise that there are occasions when someone is involved in a serious crime and there must be a provision whereby that person can be properly interviewed. However, there must be cast-iron guarantees against having information gathering used under the guise of detention. There can be no justification for removing any man' or woman's freedom for one hour, 48 hours, 72 hours or seven days, simply to fit together the pieces of a jigsaw about an event or a crime which that person was not a part of but which he may have witnessed as he was in the vicinity and about which he may be able to provide information.

The authority placed in the hands of the police not to inform relatives within 48 hours or to obtain a solicitor for the person being held is wide open to abuse. I can understand the position of a policeman who believes that if he does not inform a person's relatives or provide a solicitor he can obtain information, but we are placing a serious temptation before that policeman. We will condemn it when abuses take place, but at the end of the day it is our responsibility to provide the legislation within which the police officer can work safely. I cannot see any circumstances where that will not be seriously abused, and that provision must be reconsidered in great detail during further discussion in Committee.

I should like to consider the provisions in relation to the so-called security firms. I give these provisions the warmest possible welcome. It is tragic to witness the way in which paramilitary groups, be they loyalist or republican, or whatever they care to call themselves, have abused the position. They have put small firms out of business and have hived off millions of pounds worth of public funds, ordinary people's money and mine, into their organisations through these so-called security firms. They have put thousands of people out of work by their demands and threats. I welcome the provisions to deal with them and suggest that they should be stringently enforced, because these firms are a blight on the face of Northern Ireland and should be removed as quickly as possible.

Another section of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 deals with the power arbitrarily to take over a person's land or property. Nothing rankles or annoys people more than to wake up some fine morning to see other people in possession of what one owns, be it land or one's house. There must be some provisions where at least people will be told that that terrible thing is going to happen, so that they can bring their solicitor in and make provisions for compensation and where, at least, they can bring in their assessor.

I refer the Minister of State to problems which he knows I have and to others which he has in relation to what has happened in parts of south Armagh. I do not think that any Government should have the unfettered power to take what does not belong to them in such an arbitary way without making any provision for the rights of individuals.

I do not know what my views will be at the end of the discussions on this piece of legislation. I do not know whether I will regard it as a Bill or as an indication of the Government's future thinking. I do not know whether I shall regard it as a set of changes or as a way of trying to dress up mutton to look like lamb. I hope that the changes suggested will improve the situation, both for the individual and for the community in the North of Ireland. I hope that in Committee we can get some of the provisions changed radically. I hope that we can look at the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 and deal with the omissions. I hope, too, that at that stage of the Bill we will be able to get to grips with some of the problems which I have tried to identify.

6.41 pm

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you seek evidence for the truth of the proposition that the subject of Northern Ireland does not excite the keen interest of the House of Commons you have only to note that, with the distinguished exception of the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), there has not been any Back Bench Member of the Labour party present during the debate. I hope that the——

Mr. Archer: In fairness, the hon. Gentleman would add that there are six Back Bench Members of the Conservative party present.

Mr. Gow: Six is a considerably higher proportion than one.

I hope that the hon. Members for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) and for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) will not think that it is in any way presumptuous or patronising, because it is certainly expected to be neither, to say that I for one, and I think that I speak for many of my hon. Friends, very much welcome their presence in the Chamber. Ever since 15 November 1985 I have believed that those who represent Northern Ireland constituencies in the interests of the Ulster Unionist party, should bring their fight, which is my fight, against the Anglo-Irish Agreement to the Floor of the House. I believe that the best interests of the Union and the Ulster Unionist party will be served by them being the most active of the parliamentary activists and I believe that the justified complaint that the Unionist people of Northern Ireland have against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, could and should be expressed most forcefully and continuously on the Floor of the House.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): I appreciate the kindly welcome and I acknowledge that it is not patronising. The hon. Gentleman mentioned 15 November. Does he share my feeling about the fact that that was the anniversary on which my predecessor, Rev. Robert Bradford, was murdered by the enemies of this nation in the performance of his duty and that it was on that day in a subsequent year that the great betrayal was perpetrated on our people? Today, I am in the House when south Belfast has again suffered lamentably, to my mind, at the hands of the enemies of the nation. This Bill deals with that and I would like to think that the Government would be explicit in performing their duties to defend the people of south Belfast and Ulster.

Mr. Gow: The predecessor of the hon. Gentleman was a friend of many of us in the House. We have the most respectful memories of him. Everyone who has heard what the hon. Gentleman has just said will understand the reasons that prompted him to say it.

In moving the Second Reading of the Bill my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State referred to the intergovernmental conference and to the representations that have been made by Ministers in the Irish Republic about the administration of justice in one part of this kingdom. My right hon. Friend did not remind the House, but I shall, of the provisions of article 8 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. It is headed:

"Legal matters, including the administration of justice."

I want to remind the House of two sentences that state:

"The two Governments agree on the importance of public confidence in the administration of justice. The Conference shall seek, with the help of advice from experts as appropriate, measures which would give substantial expression to this aim, considering inter alia the possibility of mixed courts in both jurisdictions for the trial of certain offences."

My right hon. Friend told the House that the Government have decided not to accede to the representations that have been made by Ministers of a foreign power——

Mr. J. Enoch Powell: At present.

Mr. Gow: I shall deal with the point made by the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell). I too, noted and wrote down the words of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. Like the right hon. Member for South Down I intend to be vigilant about the words that fall from the lips of my right hon. Friend.

My right hon. Friend referred to the refusal of the Government, at any rate at this stage, to accede to the requests made by Ministers from the Irish Republic about the composition of courts in that part of the United Kingdom known as Northern Ireland. My right hon. Friend did not confirm but I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will when he replies, that no further discussions are taking place at meetings of the intergovernmental conference at ministerial level and that no discussions are taking place among the secretariat or elsewhere on the really preposterous suggestion that there should be mixed courts in both jurisdictions for the trial of certain offences. Any such proposal would be deeply resented by the judiciary and that is something of which my hon. Friend must be well aware.

I shall now turn to the words that I wrote down. The *Official Report* will tell us tomorrow whether I wrote them down correctly. My right hon. Friend said:

"We are not presently persuaded that there should be three judges in the Diplock courts rather than one."

He said, "not presently persuaded." I wish to ask my hon. friend the Minister what new factors there could be that would lead the Government to a conclusion different from that they have reached already.

We all know what was behind the suggestion put forward by the Irish Government. The suggestion was not simply that there should be three judges instead of one, but was that one of those judges should be a Roman Catholic. I certainly hope that the appointment of judges to the bench will not depend on whether they are Roman Catholic or Protestant. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will make it crystal clear that the criteria for appointing those to the bench, whether it is the High Court of the court of appeal, will rest solely on their suitability to act as judges.

The speech of the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) was deeply critical of my right hon. Friend's decision, which I support, although I do not like his use of the word "presently" and seek clarification of its use. I am wondering whether the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh has studied the excellent report of Sir George Baker and whether he has noticed that in paragraph 119 on page 35 of that report Sir George said:

"The single judge in Northern Ireland always writes his judgment and gives his reasons, stating the law as he has applied it to the facts that he has found."

Does the hon. Gentleman believe that it would be possible to have a three-judge court in Northern Ireland with, say a majority of two in favour of a conviction and one against, or the other way round? Separate judgments would have to be written by each judge, the very point to which Sir George Baker addressed his mind. He asked:

"Are there to be three judgments from which it will be obvious that there has been some disagreement, or only one? Two judges would have to be unanimous for a guilty verdict but what of three? Suppose two consider there is a prima facie case or that a statement is admissible, the third does not: what then?"

On the grounds of jurisprudence and of justice, there is no reason for the Government to weaken the decision that they and their advisers have consistently taken. We must never yield to political pressure, notably political pressure from foreign Governments about how to fashion our own system of justice.

Sir George Baker's report is most compelling. In the same paragraph he said:

"Of one thing I am certain: in Northern Ireland a plural court be it with judges or assessors would be subject to as much if not more criticism than the trial by judge alone. No judge is in favour as far as I am aware and most counsel and other colleagues with whom I have spoken are against. One has described any such change as 'a recipe for disaster'."

When my hon. Friend the Minister of State replies to the debate I hope that he will endorse Sir George Baker's words. I hope that he will explain exactly what his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State meant when he said that the Government "are not presently persuaded" of the wisdom to move to three judges at the request of the Government of the Irish Republic.

My right hon. Friend rightly referred to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and to the intergovernmental conference at ministerial level. I hope that when he replies to the debate my hon. Friend the Minister of State will deal with article 7 of the joint communiqué that was issued immediately after the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

My hon. Friend is well aware that the Taoiseach has said that it is the intention of his Government to accede as soon as possible to the European convention on the

[Mr. Gow]

suppression of terrorism. Yesterday marked the expiration of the 13th month since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. What do the words "as soon as possible" mean?

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State knows that legislation is now before the Irish Parliament on this subject. However, to repeat a question that I have asked my right hon. Friend on previous occasions; does he expect that legislation to reach the statute book? That is an essential precondition if the Republic of Ireland is to accede to the European convention on the suppression of terrorism. My right hon. Friend also knows that the Government of the Irish Republic have sought to link three judges in the Diplock courts to the Irish Government's accession to the European convention on the suppression of terrorism. I fear that that will be the peg upon which the Irish Government will seek to hang their refusal to accede to the European convention on the suppression of terrorism. I believe that my right hon. Friend has rightly resisted the Irish Government's attempt to secure three judges instead of one in the Diplock courts.

Many months ago I predicted—although my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State disagreed with me—that the Republic of Ireland would not ratify the European convention on the suppression of terrorism during 1986. There is another fortnight to go before my prediction, with which my right hon. Friend disagrees, comes true.

I do not say that the Bill is incapable of improvement. I believe that it can be, and that it will be, improved. I hope very much that I shall have the opportunity to serve on the Standing Committee that is to consider the Bill. Should there be a Division tonight I shall vote in favour of it. I look forward to the reply of my hon. Friend the Minister of State.

6.57 pm

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): It is over 12 months since I was estranged from the House because of the behaviour towards me of those who govern Northern Ireland, namely, those who occupy the Northern Ireland Office. Despite the sincere comments of the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) and the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), I am in no way reconciled.

This debate has followed much the same pattern as previous debates since I entered Parliament in 1983. The Secretary of State's presentation of the Bill did not reassure me. He was quick to climb on the backs of the members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the security forces. He tried to engender goodwill by paying compliments to them. If his comments were sincere, the Secretary of State would not have allowed one of his senior officials, Mr. Brian Blackwell, to try to bring political pressure to bear on senior members of the RUC.

The Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir John Hermon, has always asserted that his force is free of political interference, that it is bound only by the law and that he would not tolerate it otherwise. Yet the Secretary of State permitted a senior official in the Northern Ireland Office to encourage and to try to place an onus on an assistant chief constable to enter into some sort of political liaison in order to defeat the intention of the majority of the community in the Province.

The Secretary of State allowed that to happen, but he also created or helped to create circumstances in which that professional police force which he has mentioned and for which I have great respect could not carry out its duties as it wished. In my constituency, policemen are constantly having to withdraw from the area where they live because the resources—the resources of the law which we are debating tonight—are inadequate to deal with terrorism. During the past few days, two more policemen have had to move house because of the threat of IRA terrorism. They moved because of terrorism from the people for whom the Secretary of State tonight used the euphemism "gentlemen" and then tried to explain it away by saying, "Of course, they are innocent until they are proved guilty."

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office, who is sitting beside the Secretary of State, was very quick during the riots, which I deplore and condemn, to label those who participated as thugs. They were thugs. I called them thugs, but I have a right to call them thugs. Those who have indulged in political thuggery in the Northern Ireland Office use that term with less justification. They use such a term about one group of people and then use the euphemism "gentlemen" for the terrorists who continue to kill the citizens of Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has a political system of which I am no part, nor am I permitted to be a part. Those professional policemen, whom the Secretary of State mentioned tonight, must now, if they hope to gain promotion, give a political opinion about their attitude to the Anglo-Irish diktat. The Secretary of State and his hon. Friends do the members of the RUC little justice in the way they treat them.

Of course, the Secretary of State is not alone. His co-chairman of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, which sits from time to time behind barbed wire in Stormont Castle, was induced on 13 November to suggest that members of the Roman Catholic community should join the RUC. Immediately, members of the party of the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) were quick to refute that advice. The chairman of the SDLP, the party's spokesman on legal affairs, the party leader and, indeed, the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh all suggested that it was not yet time for the Roman Catholic community to join the RUC. We did not hear the Secretary of State allude to that this evening, nor did we hear him allude to the declaration of the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh on 3 December 1985:

"we are not going to have during the rest of this century a situation in Nationalist areas where there will be support for the RUC."

Mr. Mallon: Perhaps the Minister of State will confirm when he replies that in the North of Ireland only two parties have no truck whatsoever with paramilitary groupings, do not join them in marches on the streets, have no association with those political parties which form armies almost on a monthly basis, have not caused any trouble whatsoever for the RUC through street demonstrations and have not attacked the police on the street during the summer as members of the party of the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone have done. They have not been a party to the sort of ethics which has resulted in RUC men being burned out of their houses.

We should confirm that there are only two parties in the north of Ireland which fall into that category. I have the honour of belonging to one of them—the SDLP. The

other is the Alliance party. I look forward to the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) stating his party position and explaining to the House, seeing that he has raised this matter, how he can justify his association with people who run and organise paramilitary armies in marches on the streets in public, and who associate with someone like the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) who forms armies every time anything happens in the North of Ireland.

Could I ask him to justify——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Interventions should be brief.

Mr. Mallon: I thank you for your direction, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should just like to finish——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I call Mr. Maginnis.

Mr. Maginnis: I shall have considerable difficulty answering the speech of the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh. It is misleading the House for him to suggest that his party knows nothing about street politics. His party was born on the streets. His party has successfully over the years managed to ride on the back of violence which was more intense than mere street violence. He has of course notably failed to answer the point that he and his party will support the minority Roman Catholic community joining the RUC.

Mr. Mallon: If the hon. Gentleman will give way, I will certainly do that.

Mr. Maginnis: No, I shall not give way.

Mr. Mallon: I am sorry, but the hon. Gentleman cannot attack me on the one hand for not answering his point and on the other hand not give way for me to do so. Our party position is very clear. We support the police in impartially enforcing the law. Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting for one moment that we should support any police service that partially enforces the law?

Mr. Maginnis: I am constantly told that the best way to put anything right, is from the inside. The hon. Gentleman has not answered his assertion that during the rest of this century there will not be support for the RUC in nationalist areas. However, I rest my case there.

The Bill is intended to provide better justice for the people of Northern Ireland—better justice in the face of terrorism, the facts of which are often misrepresented and on which the House hs been misled by none other than the Secretary of State as recently as 23 October. On that occasion the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh asked the Secretary of State if he would confirm that of 37 people who were not members of the security forces or the provisional IRA and who were killed in the period since the signing of the Anglo-Irish diktat, the majority were killed by loyalist paramilitary groupings. The Secretary of State replied that he could confirm those figures. That was misleading to the House.

During that period, there were 56 terrorist murders and 28 of those were civilians, to which the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh was alluding, not 37. Of the 28 who were killed, 16 had been killed by Roman Catholic and 12 by Protestant terror groups. It is deplorable that the Secretary of State should mislead the House in that manner.

I have tried to break down the figures to find a way in which the Secretary of State could be justified. I thought that the best thing to do was to look at the Roman Catholic victims of terror during that period. There were 21 of them, compared with 35 Protestant victims. Of the 21 Roman Catholic victims, 11 had been killed by Roman Catholic terror groups and 10 by Protestant terror groups.

Mr. Tom King: The hon. Gentleman has made a serious charge that I misled the House and he has tried to work out how that could be. It would have been a courtesy to the House if he had read out the whole of the question asked by the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) to which I was responding. I am sure that the hon. Member for Fermanagh and Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) did not intend to mislead the House about the answer I gave.

If the hon. Gentleman looks at the question to which I was replying, he will see that when I said that the figures were correct, I was referring to the first part of the question. The question referred to the number of deaths in the first year of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the first year after the signing of the Sunningdale agreement. The hon. Gentleman has made a serious charge and has made rather heavy weather of it. I am obviously anxious not to mislead the House in any way. I said that the first figures were correct. I gave a separate answer to the second part of the question, but I did not confirm what the hon. Gentleman said in that part. I hope that it will satisfy honour on all sides when I say that the figures in the first part of the question put by the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh were correct, but the hon. Gentleman is right to say that it is not true to say that the second part is correct. I checked the figures subsequently. I was referring to the first part of the question, which the hon. Gentleman left out in his misleading statement.

Mr. Maginnis: I accept what the Secretary of State has said at the Dispatch Box today. However, whether intentionally or otherwise, it is misleading for him to be selective in the way in which he answers the question. If he looks at his answer I think that he will agree with me that he did not say that he confirmed the figures in relation to the initial comparison. He just confirmed the figures. However, I shall let the matter rest there. I am glad that he has borne out the facts that I have related to the House this evening.

It is in the light of such figures that we must review the Bill, which is meant to help to bring about a system of justice, whereby the people whom I represent, who feel that they have been denied their democratic rights, can at least expect protection under the law.

I shall not examine the Bill in detail because that will be done in Committee, but I want to convey to the House the extent to which that protection under the law is missing. Again, that was not dealt with this evening by the Secretary of State, when he indulged in a serious series of clichés and platitudes to establish a platform on which to try to sell the Bill to the House.

Since 1971, there have been 178 terrorist murders in my constituency. Of those, three were committed, I am sad to say, by the Regular Army. But two of those murders by the Regular Army have been solved and soldiers are serving life sentences for them. Twenty-two of the murders were committed by Protestant terror groups. Eleven of those murders — 50 per cent. — have been solved. The House might consider that to be an encouraging figure, but, compared with the 153 murders by Roman Catholic

[Mr. Maginnis]

terror groups, of which 139 are as yet unsolved—91 per cent.—one will understand my assertion that there is no protection under the law for the people whom I represent.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: The hon. Gentleman referred to Protestant paramilitary groups and Roman Catholic paramilitary groups as if we were talking about a religious war. Surely he is using the wrong sort of definitions.

Mr. Maginnis: I take the hon. Gentleman's point. I should like to be able to express my point differently. But if I referred to the IRA, the common terminology used for the Roman Catholic republican terror groups, and then referred to Protestant loyalist terror groups, the common parlance that one reads in the press, I am in many ways removing from the Roman Catholic community the responsibility of recognising that it is from within that community that a lot of the terrorism emanates. By using the term "Protestant terror group" I am recognising the terror that emanates from the community of which I am a member. I wish that I could give the hon. Gentleman a more euphemistic account of the harsh facts that I am presenting to the House this evening.

If we are to have any change—none has emanated from the Anglo-Irish diktat — in the condition that prevails in Northern Ireland of law and justice, we should bear in mind, as we examine the Bill, Sir George Baker's comments:

"In my analysis of the powers I try to be as objective as possible remembering, when striking the balance that my terms of reference require, that there are human duties as well as human liberties on the one hand to equate with powers needed in a civilized community to protect its members on the other."

From what has been said, I get the impression that we may fall into the trap of examining the Bill in terms of how we can in some way make things easier for those who commit crimes, or perhaps if not easier for them, easier for their families. I heard one hon. Member allude to the tragedy that terrorism presented for the families of those who perpetrated the terrorism.

The real crux of the matter is that we are living in a Province which, for 17 years, has not had protection under the law, let alone democracy. There appear to be vast gaps in the Bill and those gaps must be filled before we can feel that it can serve the purpose for which it is intended.

Broadly, we in the Ulster Unionist party favour the Baker recommendations. We will not oppose the Second Reading, but in co-operation with the Opposition and other hon. Members we will seek to improve the measure in Committee. I am disappointed to learn that the Committee stage is not to be taken on the Floor of the House. I noted what the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West said. He said that hon. Members will have the opportunity to examine and debate the Bill in Committee. That will not happen if the Committee stage is taken upstairs. It should be taken on the Floor of the House.

7.21 pm

Sir John Farr (Harborough): The hon. Members for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) and for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) will forgive me if I do not follow too closely the line of their arguments. They presented those arguments in great detail and were a great help to the debate. I should like to speak about a matter mentioned by several hon. Members and especially by the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer). They spoke about where the Committee stage of the Bill will be taken. The hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone said that it ought to be taken on the Floor of the House.

This is a major Northern Ireland Bill of great importance. Because of that there could be a case for considering it not upstairs in Committee on Tuesday and Thursday or on the Floor of the House but in Northern Ireland itself on a couple of days a week. I gather that Stormont is empty and virtually unused. We could meet there on two successive days, say Wednesday and Thursday or Tuesday and Wednesday, and make good progress. Indeed, by doing that we would be following the example already put to good use by the Scottish Grand Committee.

As I have said, this is an important measure and, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, we owe a lot to the late Sir George Baker for his work. The Bill confers certain rights on detained persons and emphasises that these are to apply in Northern Ireland. Those rights are detailed in part II of the Bill clauses 13 and 14 and I shall shortly say why I am interested in those rights. I am also interested in part I, clause 4 which deals with:

"Admissions by persons charged with scheduled offences".

Under clause 4 statements will be disallowed if there is a hint of force. Part II is about the rights of persons detained in police custody under terrorism provisions. Clause 12

"provides that such a person has a right to have someone informed that he is being detained".

Clause 13 provides a right of access to legal advice and clause 14 is an interpretation of the terms used in part II.

This is a wide-ranging Bill and in these four clauses big steps are taken to protect somebody who has been detained under the terrorism provisions; they try as far as possible to make sure that any confessions which a prisoner may be alleged to have made were made voluntarily and without the use of force by those who have detained him and who have interviewed him. That applies to the police or whoever may be involved in the arrests, placing in custody and interviewing of a prisoner who is to be sentenced. These four clauses strengthen the panoply of protections for a prisoner who may be falsely accused. In that respect they go some way towards the House making certain that as far as possible and at any rate in Northern Ireland, nobody will be brutalised or ill-treated while in the hands of the police.

However, the Bill goes further than the four modest clauses about which I have spoken—clause 4 in part I and clauses 12, 13 and 14 in part II. I should like to see included in the Bill something which would be a major step in protecting prisoners who may not be ready to make a confession from brutalisation by the police in Northern Ireland or anywhere else. I should like to see the large-scale use of video cameras. We do not use video cameras much in Great Britain and do not use them at all in the handling of prisoners in police custody in Northern Ireland. I see no reason why we should not use them, because modern technology and the low cost of video cameras make it possible to set up a system of video camera protection by right for all accused persons, certainly in Northern Ireland but later I should like to see that take place in Great Britain.

I can see no reason why a prisoner's statement which he has to sign cannot finally be recorded on video; nor can I see any reason why, when the whole of the session at which the charge is read out to the prisoner cannot be recorded on video and made available for the courts to study. It may not happen under the terms of this Bill, but certainly within five to 10 years all prisoners in police custody for terrorist offences will have the whole of their interrogation in custody covered on video. That will come because the system is cheap and available now.

I ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to take a forward step in that direction. Why cannot one police station in Belfast, in parallel with one on the mainland, be used for the introduction of video screening of all interviews of this nature next year? My hon. Friend the Minister of State may not even bother to reply to my remarks, but I know that generally he is courteous and diligent. If he takes up this issue, he may say that the cost would be excessive and that it cannot be considered. if that is his position, I remind him that many of the fastest growing businesses are video shops. Video cameras and films are available to everyone in Britain and the cost of a pilot scheme in one named police station for one year in Belfast and one in London would not be excessive.

Mr. Scott: All interrogations in Northern Ireland take place in front of video cameras. They are monitored by senior officers. Video cameras are available for the protection of prisoners following the recommendation of the Bennett report on interrogation by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. There is a distinction to be drawn between having videos for the protection of prisoners and using videos for the presentation of evidence in court. There are real differences on that score and my hon. Friend knows that they are being addressed, at least in the context of some offences in Great Britain.

Sir John Farr: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for saying that he has seen the value of video equipment for the protection of innocent people who may be accused of crimes for which they are not responsible. I do not want to detain the House, and with those few words I shall resume my place, having said that I support the Bill.

7.31 pm

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): I am sure that the Minister will agree that it is about time we had cameras to assist with cricket umpiring decisions, with the provision of immediate replays. That would be a useful facility when a batsman is declared to be out somewhat suspiciously for being caught behind or lbw.

The Bill has been a long time coming, but we can at least thank the Government for honouring the undertakings that they have given over the past couple of years to introduce this legislation in the lifetime of this Parliament. I welcome the announcement of the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) that the Official Unionists intend to table amendments to the Bill and to argue their case in Committee. Indeed, I have been given copies of the amendments that they intend to table. I think that everyone in the House will welcome their participation. It is only right that they should play a major part in the deliberations of the Bill in Committee and on Report.

I am disappointed by the limited nature of the Bill. It is good as far as it goes but it does not go far enough. The publication of Sir George Baker's report was way back in April 1984, long before the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Unfortunately, the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) is not in his place. At that time my right hon. and hon. Friends made it clear that we thought that Sir George could have been bolder. We regretted that he had not felt able to recommend the return of jury trials wherever practicable. We regretted, too, that he had not insisted on independent corroboration of supergrass evidence and had not recommended that Northern Ireland should be brought into line with Scottish practice, with the introduction of the 124-day rule. This he explained in his report at page 52. Another disappointment was that he did not recommend that the number of defendants should be restricted to 10 or fewer per trial. If he did not make a recommendation, he suggested that there should not be more than 20 defendants per trial. We wanted the maximum number of defendants to be reduced to as few as six, which may have been asking too much.

Having scrutinised the Bill, we find that Sir George's recommendation of automatic bail after 12 months if a defendant has not been committed for trial by that stage has not been included. Similarly, the Bill does not include the removal from the Diplock courts of trials for less serious offences or of any offence not connected with a paramilitary force. Sir George went into some detail on these matters and I refer the House to recommendations 12 and 13 at the end of his report.

I accept that for the time being at least the series of supergrass or accomplice cases is almost over. A substantial number of these cases have been thrown out, or earlier convictions have been reversed on appeal. Is this really the end? Surely the Bill should provide some protection for those implicated by the often dubious claims of those admitting guilt and deciding to turn Queen's evidence.

My right hon. and hon. Friends have supported consistently the proposal emanating from many sources that non-jury trials should be conducted by three judges rather than one. This has nothing to do with the Anglo-Irish Agreement or pressure from south of the border. I recognise that this issue was taken up by Sir George Baker and argued cogently. The present system places an enormous burden on the individual judge and I pay my tribute to the judges of Northern Ireland, in company with the Secretary of State. I have enormous respect for them. They are mostly brave and honest men and I am sure that they do the best job that they can. The statistics that have been presented to us bear that out.

I readily appreciate the difficulties of implementing the three-judge proposal when Northern Ireland has a limited judiciary, because the statistics were set out in some detail in the report which appeared in 1984. I recognise that appeals are heard before three judges, and we know from the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) that appeals often take an extremely long time to be heard. The hon. Gentleman mentioned three to four years. There have been options suggested if the three-judge proposal is not acceptable, and the Northern Ireland Alliance party has suggested that there should be two judges instead of three. The right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), before he became Secretary of State for Northern Ireland way back in 1973, succeeded in having an alternative approved by the House, which did not necessarily involve all judges. I am disappointed that the

[Mr. Stephen Ross]

three-judge proposal has not been taken on board, and I am aware that it has been argued cogently in the context of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

It is accepted by the Dublin Government that the British Government do not wish to be committed, and they are not making any fuss about that. That should be put on record.

The time that defendants may be held in custody in Northern Ireland without a trial is a serious matter and one that should be tackled without further delay. That comment applies also to the rest of the United Kingdom. The figures that were given to Sir George Baker by the Northern Ireland Alliance party showed that at that time the average remand without bail before trial in 1979, 1980 and 1981 was no fewer than 370, 301 and 306 days respectively. Those were the averages and some remands were much longer than that. The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) has produced some more statistics.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Would it be possible to clarify the number of postponements that take place because an accused has chosen a certain barrister to represent him and not because a judge is not available to hear the trial? I have found as a representative of defendants that postponements are the result of an individual having selected a particular barrister to defend him and not because judges are not available to hear cases. If a certain barrister has been selected, a defendant will have to wait his time in the queue.

Mr. Ross: I am sure that that is a pertinent point. I do not know whether the Minister can provide some up-to-date statistics on this matter. I am not a qualified lawyer, but when I have attended courts in the past as an expert witness I have been staggered by the practices of the law in Great Britain. I remember attending Winchester assizes on behalf of a lady who had a strong case. She was told that Mr. Justice Brown was not available and that the case would not be heard before Mr. Justice White because her advisers thought that he would not come to the right decision. We had to wait for Mr. Justice Blue. The lady did not want to change her barrister but a new one was suddenly introduced to her, as the original one had been called to another case. If the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) is saying that the selection of a certain barrister can lead to delays, I understand his argument. Delays are far too long, however, and it is up to us to try to reduce them. It is for the Law Society in Great Britain and its equivalent in Northern Ireland to try to do so and to put their houses in order.

I suspect that evidence was given to Sir George Baker that the conditions in which prisoners are held for long periods left a great deal to be desired. My inspections of prisons in Northern Ireland led me to think that they tended to be better there than in Britain, and substantially so. I do not know whether that still applies but I suspect that it probably does.

My right hon. and hon. Friends and I welcome clauses 1 to 11 which, seem to be much in line with Sir George's recommendations. Clauses 12 and 13 are also a limited improvement on current practices and bring Northern Ireland into line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. I suspect that part III, although welcome, is not only too late but will prove to be inadequate to deal with the problem that is now rife, particularly in Belfast. In a recent article in *The Irish Times* — I hope that it is acceptable to the House—Mr. Jim Cusack wrote:

> "A retired professional from Belfast this week said that he had visited a friend who was still in business and who told him that he had encountered a group of Protestant and Catholic paramilitaries involved in discussions across the street from the entrance to his site. He believes they were arguing over the division of spoils from his business. It appears that the two sides reached agreement as both Catholic and Protestant workmen remain on the site and although the cost of this was not mentioned the going rate for protecting a building site is between £500 and £2,000 a week."

In the same article Mr. Cusack said:

> "Some four years ago, the RUC set up a special anti-extortion squad to see to this business. It is understood that it remains a tiny group which, although it has had some signal successes in stopping tax evasion frauds on building sites, is just not big enough to even begin to tackle the problems posed by the paramilitaries' alternative economics."

The Minister is aware of that article. I suspect that the clauses, which are welcome, will not deal with that situation. It is important that we try to co-operate.

Neither the Minister nor the Secretary of State will accuse me of not being supportive of recent Government policies in Northern Ireland. I often find myself almost alone during these debates. Although Bills went through the House by a colossal majority, Government Members who assiduously attend always opposed the matter under debate and tried to bring it into line with something that had gone wrong with the Anglo-Irish Agreement. There are times when the Minister puts that support at risk. My party will not oppose the Second Reading, but we do beg the Minister to be more forthcoming in Committee. We also support the renewal of the existing order under the 1978 Act for another six months. I welcome the fact that it will be an annual event from now on—after the six months have passed, one hopes—and that the Bill will terminate after five years.

7.41 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): The last words in the Bill are:

> "This Act extends to Northern Ireland only."

One might just as well see the words

> "This Act extends only to Northern Ireland."

This legislation is designed to deal with a difficult situation that applies to a part of the United Kingdom. I welcome the Bill and the fact that it is a Bill. It provides an opportunity to consider these questions in Parliament, with the co-operation and assistance of Opposition Members whom I welcome to the debate.

In the past I have advocated the idea that Bills of this type—if such a Bill were ever to come before the House during the recent troubles — should be referred to a Special Standing Committee. Further investigation into the reasons why these provisions should be dealt with in the House and in Committee could usefully and fruitfully be carried out by a Special Standing Committee. The Bill is for all citizens of Northern Ireland. A Bill such as this will be able to alleviate much bigotry and prejudice. I welcome the Bill and wish it every speed in Committee.

7.43 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): The remarks of the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) were brief. I shall not seek to follow him, but will refer to the substance of the Second Reading.

In a sense, this is the third Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill in the past 15 years. It is

pleasing to see in the House the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) and my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). Both hon. Members were in the House in 1973 when the first emergency provisions Bill was introduced. All the measures since 1973, including the present Bill, will end up by being institutionalised and a part of our legal system.

The noble Lord, Lord Whitelaw, when he was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, introduced the first emergency provisions Bill in 1973. He declared:

"none of the provisions of the Bill, if it is passed, should continue in force a moment longer than it is needed."—[*Official Report*, 17 April 1973; Vol. 855, c. 278.]

Through no fault of the noble Lord, those words may be billed as famous last words, certainly in relation to Northern Ireland and the emergency provisions. It is a measure of implied defeat to find political settlements and solutions for Northern Ireland that, rather than renew the emergency provisions legislation on a six-monthly basis, we are talking of renewing it on a yearly basis. The Secretary of State was kind enough to tell the House that the next debate on this subject would be in March 1988, to coincide with the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984. As he rightly said, we shall all be here. Of course, at that time Labour Members will be on the Government Benches, not on the Opposition Benches.

It was, strangely enough, Miss Bernadette Devlin, now Mrs. McAlisky, the then hon. Member for Mid-Ulster, who foresaw the consequences of the first emergency provisions legislation. She warned that it would lead to a gradual erosion of civil liberties and traditions. She considered that the Diplock Commission's report, on which the legislation was built, was "conviction oriented" and she wondered what had happened to the sense of British justice in which all men were innocent until proven guilty. Bernadette McAlisky saw in the 1973 Bill an erosion of the respect and a respect for democracy. She was not far wrong.

Mr. Tom King *rose*——

Mr. Bell: The Secretary of State, from a sedentary position, seeks to contradict me. The first casualty was that of trial by jury, that time-honoured right of a man charged with serious criminal offences to be delivered up to his fellow citizens who would ascertain the facts of the matters held against him. This last bastion of a man's personal liberty and individual freedom was the first casualty of the bomb and the bullet which, of course, deprived the victim of the most important, fundamental human right of all, the right to life.

The hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson) referred to a former colleague, a Member of the House, Mr. Robert Bradford, who lost his life in the service of the House while conducting a surgery on the morning of Saturday 15 November.

In her speech of 1973, Bernadette McAlisky quoted her namesake, Lord Devlin, who wrote in a book entitled "Trial by Jury":

"Trial by jury is more than an instrument of justice and more than one wheel of the constitution: it is the lamp that shows that freedom lives."

The text is none the worse for a collision of metaphors, but if it is true that a jury trial is the lamp that shows that freedom lives, it has been extinguished for many people in Northern Ireland.

The Government perceived this to be the case. Twenty-one months after the late Sir George Baker issued his review of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978, the Government introduced in 1985 the limited but nevertheless important reform of allowing the Attorney-General to certify out of the Diplock courts, and therefore back to jury trials, a list of so-called scheduled offences to include kidnapping, false imprisonment, intimidation, damage to railways and some firearms offences. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) said that it did not go far enough. It did not mean, nor does it mean now, that all the cases tried before the Diplock courts are directly associated with terrorist crime.

Since 1973, in addition to non-jury trials, plastic bullets have been imported on to the mainland to be stored against eventual use. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 has been placed upon the statute book. It was based, in part, on Northern Ireland policing experience. There have been allegations of a shoot-to-kill policy. This has not attracted the attention of the House tonight, but it has certainly claimed one innocent life. Our common law has been contorted to make way for confessions made other than with the full consent of the accused. Prisoners have been held on remand for more than a year prior to committal for trial. The onus for bail has been moved from the prosecution to the defence, and now, thanks to the Bill, it is moved back again.

I should like to say a final word on the Diplock courts. The hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) made a cogent and interesting speech. He drew the attention of the House to the prospect of three judges disagreeing among themselves. However, the significance of the three judges is in the context of Northern Ireland and the atmosphere there. I shall come back to this in a moment.

It is a matter of regret for the Opposition that the Law Officers of the Crown have reportedly advised the Prime Minister against three judges sitting in the Diplock courts. It is true, of course, that there is an automatic appeal to an appeal court that has three judges, but that hardly assists a person convicted by a single judge without a jury when delays to the appeal court appear interminable and when his conviction is quashed because it was unsafe in the first place. One can understand the concern of civil rights organisations, but equally, in political terms, one can understand the ripples of legitimate grievance that manifest themselves in further alienation and moroseness on the part of the Nationalist community.

The truth is that over the past 15 years the administration of justice has become intermingled with the political, economic and security situation in Northern Ireland. It is to political and economic development that we must look if we wish to see an alleviation in the principles of the administration of justice as they apply to Northern Ireland.

The situation has not changed too much since the right hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior), the then Secretary of State, stood at the Dispatch Box and declared that in broad terms the people in Northern Ireland still require special protection from terrorism

"and exceptional powers are therefore necessary". —[*Official Report*, 5 July 1984; Vol. 63, c. 559.]

Today again, sadly and tragically, we have seen the Provisional IRA launch its pre-Christmas onslaught on fellow Irish men and Irish women with a 1,000 lb bomb on a Belfast police station, with seven people injured. Regrettably and tragically, there may be more to come. We ally ourselves with the statement by the Secretary of

[Mr. Bell]

State, supported by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West, that we wish to give full support to the security forces. We give them that support in the execution of their duties, to prevent the death and injury of those who live in Northern Ireland at this time of festivity and peace among men.

The IRA has no peace in its heart, only murder in its mind and soul, and this will darken the holiday period to which we are coming. No future Labour Government will ever let up in their pursuit of terrorists, of whatever paramilitary ilk. I agreed with the intervention by the hon. Member for Newbury that it is the wrong designation to list those people in a religious fashion. They are paramilitaries, men committed to violence. Nor will the future Labour Government shirk the political and economic initiatives to lessen the conditions in which violence breeds and the attraction of young people towards men of violence. That point was touched on by the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon), who said that young people were alienated from the society in which they live and were attracted towards violence.

We have had a short but interesting debate on the Second Reading of the Bill. I do not wish to prolong it unduly. The Government have said that the Bill will be repealed in five years' time. That repeal will be contingent, in the Government's mind, on the political situation becoming normal in Northern Ireland. That must be a matter for those who seek to resolve their identity in the island of Ireland—whether they can live in peace and whether a will to peace can be brought within the political framework that would make such peace durable.

A future Labour Government will look at all prospects and possibilities of bringing a form of local government back to the people of Northern Ireland, without gerrymandered boundaries fixed to give one party an inbuilt majority, and which is widely acceptable to the people who live there, whether Unionist or Nationalist. Thus, local power could be given back to local people and the great cloud of bewilderment and depression could be lifted from the lives of ordinary people.

Only a political solution acceptable to all can bring the criminal law in Northern Ireland back into its proper focus, without Diplock courts, without supergrass trials, without long periods on remand, in custody and without trial, and without intervening court appearances. Thus, the long assault on civil and human rights in Northern Ireland could be brought to an end.

The hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) said that the Bill did not go far enough. In fact, the Baker report made about 72 recommendations. In Committee we shall seek to further and advance the cause left to us by the late Sir George Baker, by improving and modifying the Bill.

7.55 pm

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. Nicholas Scott): It is clear from our debate that we can look forward to a busy Committee. It is certainly not for me to make any decision about the form that those proceedings might take, but other ways of making representations about that are open to hon. Members.

Some hon. Members mentioned the need to derogate as little as possible from what we regard as normal practice in terms of the administration of justice in our necessary attempts in Northern Ireland to combat terrorism. Others have said that the Bill may be going too far; it may make life too easy for the terrorist. Those two clear views emerged during the debate. My judgment, subject to what is said in Committee, is that we have the balance about right.

Our policy on terrorism in Northern Ireland has two aims. The first is continually to search for new ways to erode the effectiveness of the terrorist's campaign, to deny him the free movement of men, the money, explosives and weapons that he uses for his work, and increasingly to be able to deny him the opportunity to use the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as a weapon in his armoury. At the same time we seek to win the confidence of the public in Northern Ireland across both communities for the activities of the security forces and the administration of justice. It is a balance that has to be held, but, as Sir George Baker said eloquently in his report, we must never forget that the first and principal right that we have as citizens in a liberal democratic society is the right to life itself.

I know the feelings of the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) and how he feels about the toll of terrorism that has been wrought in his part of Northern Ireland. We need to make sure that we provide the resources in terms of money and legislation to enable the battle against terrorism to continue.

I am grateful for the welcome given by several hon. Members to the measures that we intend to take against firms that masquerade as security firms simply to run protection rackets in Northern Ireland. I believe that we have an effective way of tackling that problem.

The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) mentioned statistics on the working of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act. A parliamentary question has been answered today giving such information as we have about the operation of the Act since 1973. I am afraid that it has taken longer than I should have wished to organise the statistical basis to produce the statistics that would be meaningful and helpful to hon. Members. They are being assembled from several different sources. In future the statistics will be published regularly, as they are for the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act.

In the context of certifying out, the right hon. and learned Gentleman mentioned the Cobden Trust study on the number of defendants appearing before Diplock courts who have no connection with terrorism. I do not intend to go into the detail of that argument, but I say simply, as I have said on the Floor of the House before in more detail, that the Government do not accept the methodology that led the authors of the Cobden Trust study to come to that conclusion. It is unsound. We do not accept the 40 per cent. figure.

Clauses 12 and 13 are equivalent to provisions in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. I think that the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West understood from the reaction of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and me that the Bill only confers these rights on people detained under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984. Just as the terrorism provisions are temporary, so these rights are temporary. As for the ordinary law of Northern Ireland, we are giving consideration to enacting legislation for Northern Ireland which is equivalent to the provisions in

the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. I hope that we shall be able to publish proposals for a draft order within the next year or, indeed, beat that deadline.

The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West mentioned the admissibility of confessions and asked what was wrong in relying on the ordinary test of voluntariness which applies on this side of the water. I refer him to the Diplock report, especially paragraphs 73 to 92, which set out the difficulties of that approach in Northern Ireland. The Diplock commission found, in brief, that the common law test of voluntariness had been interpreted particularly strictly by the Northern Ireland courts in a manner that could render almost any statement inadmissible. The proposed new section 8 of the 1978 Act seeks to prevent that happening so that such evidence can at least be considered by the courts.

In addition to the points raised by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, I draw attention to the conclusion of clause 4 which gives general discretion to the court to take any of the steps mentioned earlier in that clause

"if it appears to the court that it is appropriate to do so in order to avoid unfairness to the accused or otherwise in the interests of justice."

That blanket discretion to set aside or to disregard a statement is extremely widely based.

I should like to respond to three points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson). He criticised the terminology of the Bill's title and asked why it is still called "emergency provisions" legislation. I think that it is right to bring home to the House and to the public in the Bill's title that we are dealing with what is essentially an exceptional state of affairs, which we are anxious to bring to an end as soon as possible. But exceptional cases need exceptional measures. It is important, at least in the five years before the legislation is repealed, that there is a moment when we again look fundamentally, apart from any annual reviews, at the emergency legislation needed to deal with the position in Northern Ireland.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury expressed the hope that elected representatives from Northern Ireland could play some part in the working of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. It is an intergovernmental conference, but, if elected representatives from Northern Ireland wish to be involved, consulted and informed about the conference's affairs, I do not have the slightest doubt that appropriate arrangements could be made to allow that to happen. Earlier this year when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister saw the leaders of the two Unionist parties, she made the offer to talk to them about their worries. That offer remains open. I urge the leaders of those parties, if they wish to be involved, to take up my right hon. Friend's offer, discuss their worries with her and together find out what arrangements we might make to involve them in that process.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury referred to the proscription of Sinn Fein or the need for political parties, or perhaps individuals, to make a declaration of non-violence before taking part in the democratic process. That is not an unattractive idea but, before going down either road, we should have to be absolutely clear that we were taking steps that would work in practice and not doing something that, in the end, could be exploited by Sinn Fein and other organisations which support paramilitary action. The idea merits careful consideration and is not something that the Government have ruled out in all circumstances.

The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) raised a number of points. He referred to three-judge courts, as did my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Sir I. Gow). The hon. Gentleman asked especially about the requisition of land in his constituency, and I understand his point. I do not believe that it would be practical to give prior notice of the intention of the security forces to requisition lands, not least because of the risk that that would pose to them. But I can assure the House that, when an act of requisition takes place, the Government and their agencies make the most strenuous efforts to provide prompt and adequate compensation. No land or property which has been requisitioned remains in the Government's hands any longer than is absolutely necessary in the interests of security. Such measures are regrettable—I understand the feelings that they arouse—but they are necessary in dealing with the vicious campaign of terrorism that Northern Ireland has had to endure.

I should like to assure my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne of two points. First, mixed courts are not on the agenda for discussion in the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. Secondly, the appointment of judges in Northern Ireland has taken place, and will take place, entirely and simply on the basis of the merits of individuals available for those posts irrespective of religious, political or any other affiliation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne asked why my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that we were not presently persuaded by the arguments in favour of three-judge courts. We have heard both sides of the arguments. Some hon. Members favour three-judge courts and some are against them. I think that the arguments are finely balanced. The Government's position is clear. We are not presently persuaded that the advantages of going down that road outweigh the disadvantages. But nothing is for ever. One does not make commitments about matters when the arguments are finely balanced. We have made our position absolutely clear, and I understand that my hon. Friend agrees with the Government's view.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne referred also to the European convention on the suppression of terrorism and the Irish accession to it. The Irish Government have signed the convention. The Committee stage of the Bill to ratify the convention is taking place in the Dail today. I know of the Irish Government's determination to see this legislation through the Dail before Christmas.

The hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone raised a number of points, and I wish to respond clearly and unequivocally to one in particular. There is no political interference with the Royal Ulster Constabulary and its operations. The Chief Constable and the police authority for Northern Ireland would not tolerate it for one moment and Ministers would not seek to have any such influence.

The hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone asked why my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had not responded clearly to the lack of support expressed by the Social Democratic and Labour party for the RUC. The right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) may well remember the last oral questions on Northern Ireland when my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that he very much welcomed Mr. Barry's statement and said:

[Mr. Nicholas Scott]

"as I made clear in an earlier answer, I very much hope that the SDLP will support it as well."—[*Official Report*, 27 November 1986; Vol. 106, c. 426.]

It is unfair to criticise my right hon. Friend on those grounds.

The hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) asked about automatic bail after one year on remand. The Government are absolutely committed to the elimination of avoidable delays in the judicial process in Northern Ireland. By the appointment of an additional judge, by a considerable number of additional senior counsel and by speeding up the processes of the RUC in the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, we want to do our best to reduce those delays to the minimum. That is in the interests of everyone as well as of the administration of justice in Northern Ireland. We are monitoring the field trials being conducted in England and Wales with a view to ascertaining whether they have any relevance to the very different circumstances in Northern Ireland.

In my view, Sir George Baker's proposal would be a rather crude weapon, which might give defendants an incentive to slow down or delay progress in their cases coming to trial. It is worth remembering that some of the most difficult cases involve the most serious terrorist input. We are anxious to cut delays, and we shall monitor those trials. We have not ruled out the possibility that it has some relevance to the situation in Northern Ireland.

In an intervention the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) asked whether we had any statistics on delays or postponements caused by the non-availability of defence counsel. The short answer is no, but I well know that that is a considerable factor in delays in cases coming to trial in Northern Ireland.

At the conclusion of this debate the House will be invited to consider a money resolution. The expenditure required by the Bill arises under part 3, in that the Northern Ireland Office will probably be required to employ an extra executive officer at a global cost of about £15,000 a year in order to administer the certification scheme for the private security industry. Nobody is in the business of empire building, and no other provision in the Bill will have any significant effect on public expenditure. In the light of that brief explanation, I hope that it will be possible for the money resolution to be taken on the nod.

We shall also be asking the House to renew the continuance order for the temporary provisions of the 1978 Act. I believe that we have made a case for retaining a framework of emergency powers. We are, in this Bill, reforming them and making them more in tune with Northern Ireland's present needs. But we need to have the continuance order so that there is no gap between the existing provisions and those proposed in the Bill. I hope that the order will also be dealt with formally.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

NORTHERN IRELAND (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS) BILL *[MONEY]*

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any expenses incurred by the Secretary of State under provisions of that Act relating to the regulation of the provision of security services.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

NORTHERN IRELAND

Motion made and Question put,

That the draft Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Continuance) (No. 3) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 18th November, be approved.—*[Mr. Scott.]*

The House divided: Ayes 217, Noes 126.

Division No. 42] **[8.11 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Bryan, Sir Paul
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Galley, Roy
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irving, Charles
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*

Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Penhaligon, David
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Sackville, Hon Thomas
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shersby, Michael
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'lch N)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Wilkinson, John
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Gerald Malone.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'rmline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hardy, Peter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R. *(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Chris Smith and
Mr. Derek Fatchett.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Supplementary Benefit

8.23 pm

The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled (Mr. John Major): I beg to move,

That the draft Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 10th December, be approved.

I understand it may be for the convenience of the House if we take at this time the prayer in the name of the Leader of the Opposition—

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Supplementary Benefit (Claims and Payments) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 2154), dated 8th December 1986, a copy of which was laid before this House on 10th December, be annulled.

These regulations are the product of a long consultative process that began 18 months ago in the Green Paper "Reform of Social Security". The Government declared their intention then of discussing with buildng societies and others

"arrangements whereby less emphasis — particularly for claimants on benefits for short periods — would be placed on help through the social security system".

We confirmed that those discussions were continuing when we published the White Paper last December. We said then that these would include

"the possibility of a limit on the proportion of mortgage interest which would be met during the initial period in receipt of benefit".

These regulations are not, therefore, novel or surprising.

In May this year, draft regulations incorporating the Government's proposals were referred to the Social Security Advisory Committee for consultation. The main proposal was to limit the amount of mortgage interest eligible for reimbursement through supplementary benefit to one half of the interest payment during the first six months on benefit. This was to be applied only to claimants under 60. After the six-months period, it was proposed that interest would be met in full together with extra help with interest on any arrears arising from the restriction.

A number of protective measures were also included with the main proposal. These included a new linking rule between claims, to avoid penalising short breaks in benefit entitlement. This is self-evidently important. We proposed also a special disregard of income from mortgage protection policies to encourage people to protect themselves against short-term inability to meet their mortgage commitments, and to help them when they did so.

Other changes were proposed which were designed to ensure that supplementary benefit was used specifically to help claimants with accommodation costs rather than with business-related costs as well.

The Government received the advisory committee's report in August. We gave it very careful consideration before we decided that it was right in principle to limit supplementary benefit assistance with mortgage interest. I announced this conclusion to the House last Wednesday, together with two important modifications to our original proposals. These are both incorporated in the regulations before the House tonight.

First, the restriction period has been reduced from six months — literally, 26 weeks — to 16 weeks only. This change not only materially reduces the impact on individuals but also concentrates the change, rather more so than previously, on shorter-term claimants. It also reduces the savings from £30 million, under the original proposal to £23 million. An estimated 75,000 claimants are likely to be affected at any one time. In the average case, if a claim runs for the full 16 weeks, then up to £170 less benefit may be payable. Most claims do not last this long, as about half those unemployed leave the register within three months and their loss of benefit is correspondingly smaller.

Secondly, we have accepted entirely the advisory committee's recommendation that action should be taken to avoid creating a mortgage interest trap and the regulations provide for this. Consequently, if a claim results in a nil award solely because the assessment was based on half the mortgage interest payments the claimant will be eligible—when he claims again after 16 weeks—to have the full interest payment taken into account. He will in effect be treated as if the 16 weeks restriction period had been served, and we shall advise all claimants refused benefits on the initial claim to reclaim again after 16 weeks. The purpose of this change is to help claimants who might otherwise not have been eligible for benefit at all and we hope that it will do so.

We have also decided to carry forward all the other proposed changes which were referred to the advisory committee. These were supported without exception by the committee in its report, which we laid before the House on 10 December, together with the Government's detailed response.

The main reason for the Government's action in this area is our wish to strike a fairer and more reasonable balance between the borrower, the lender and the taxpayer.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Squalid and rotten.

Mr. Major: The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) is once again gracing us with his presence. It is always a delight to see him here. The other week, he gave us his celebrated impersonation of a mixture of Uriah Heep and Jaws, and I see that he is intending to do the same thing again. I forget who it was said of whom that he greeted every problem with an open mouth and a closed mind, but it applies well to the hon. Gentleman.

The House was treated, if that is the correct word, to the full galaxy of thespian histrionics when I announced the Government's decision the other day. Lord Olivier would have eaten his heart out had he heard the hon. Members for Walsall, North, and for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher). The hon. Member for Oldham, West led the charge at some length, as I recall, but he should reflect on what he says before he says it. That would be an improvement.

Mr. Winnick: Squalid and rotten.

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman may be squalid and rotten, but I do not point it out to him more often than is necessary.

Last week, the hon. Member for Oldham, West painted a picture of unimaginable horrors, widespread evictions, marital breakdowns and homelessness. The trouble with the hon. Gentleman is that his instincts tend to run away with his judgment. He presented himself in the unlikely guise of the home-owners' champion which, in view of his record during the past few years, is brazen in the extreme.

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): Does the Minister deny that there have been evictions?

Mr. Major: I am coming to that. The hon. Gentleman got it wholly out of proportion.

I shall remind the House of some facts about the main change. The 16 weeks restriction will not apply to anybody who is aged 60 or over. *[Laughter.]* Hon. Members might not think that that is favourable. Perhaps they will say so if they catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker. After 16 weeks, every penny of mortgage interest will be eligible for help. In addition, any extra interest which is due on arrears that arise from the restrictions will also be eligible for help. That provides guaranteed assistance for everybody whose claim proves to be longer lasting.

There is now an eight-week linking rule to ensure that people are not discouraged from taking up a job. There is a special disregard of income from mortgage protection policies to allow claimants to benefit from such policies and thus to cover their mortgage interest payments fully. The main change will affect mostly short-term claimants, as half of those who are on the unemployment register go off it within three months. I repeat those points to illustrate our anxiety to produce a fair and reasonable approach. I believe that we have succeeded.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): My hon. Friend talked about striking a balance between the borrower, the lender and the taxpayer. A home is an asset and its ownership is aided by tax incentives. Surely it would be cheap and easy for people to insure against the eventuality of their not being able to pay the mortgage for 16 weeks. Many people do just that and I do not understand what the drama is about. Most prudent people insure against unemployment, sickness and death. Does my hon. Friend have any idea what the actuarial cost of a commercial insurance policy covering somebody who is unable to pay a mortgage for 16 weeks might be?

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend has made a valuable observation and I wholeheartedly agree with him. The insurance that he has in mind might vary in cost according to a variety of factors, but is unlikely to exceed £10 per year, which is not an especially onerous proposition. I hope that the House will note what my hon. Friend has said.

I remind the House of what the Social Security Advisory Committee and the Building Societies Association have said. The committee said, in paragraph 54 of its report:

"For the majority of claimants the proposals should not bring significant financial hardship."

That, of course, was in the context of the original six months' limitation, not the much shorter 16 weeks now envisaged. Therefore, its comment is even more apt in regard to the shorter period. The Building Societies Association has given assurances that it would respond to these changes sympathetically and reasonably. Its press statement last week said that it

"saw no reason to expect that people will lose their homes as a result".

Those statements put the change into proper perspective. I look forward to Opposition Members acknowledging these points and admitting that their forebodings last week were substantially overcooked.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): I hope that the assurance that the Minister is giving on behalf of the building societies will be met. Will he say a little more about his discussions with the Building Societies Association because, at the beginning of his speech, one could have concluded that there has been continuous negotiations ever since the Green Paper was published? One of the groups about whom hon. Members on both sides of the House are concerned is people who become unemployed but already have arrears because, before becoming unemployed, they were on short-time working. In his negotiations with the building societies has the Minister received an assurance that they will look and act sympathetically towards that group.

Mr. Major: These proposals change nothing in regard to arrears. I should correct the hon. Gentleman on one point — we were not negotiating with the Building Societies Association. There have been discussions with it at official level — not with me — in advance of the reference to the Social Security Advisory Committee for consultation. Any subsequent consultation was undertaken by the SSAC before it produced its report to the House.

Mr. Frank Field: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way again. He has brushed aside a matter that is important for many of our constituents. There is all the difference in the world between falling into mortgage arrears because one is on short-time working and going on to the dole when one has no money to put towards the mortgage, whereupon arrears will mount quickly, even if that happens for 16 weeks. If the Minister cannot assure the House that he has followed that matter up with the building societies himself or at official level, will he undertake to follow it up after this debate?

Mr. Major: Like the hon. Gentleman, I do not want people who fall into arrears to find themselves in undue difficulties. People often fall into arrears through no fault of their own. That was not a subject for discussion with local authorities because it was not directly related to the proposals before us. I shall bear in mind what the hon. Gentleman has said about arrears as I share his anxiety that people who have ventured into home ownership should remain in home ownership. That is in their interests and in the interests of their families and everybody else.

The third reason why Opposition Members were mistaken in their strictures of the Government last week is that they forgot, or in some cases chose to ignore, the experience of a very long miners' strike and how mortgage lenders reacted to it.

Mr. Winnick: That was completely different.

Mr. Major: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity to explain why if he catches the Chair's eye.

I should like to say why I think that the miners' strike is not completely different. Building societies and other lenders did not foreclose during that very long strike. They did not seek repossession and they did not force miners to become homeless. They did none of those things, despite the length of the strike, which was far longer than 16 weeks, and the fact that supplementary benefit for full mortgage interest was not being paid in many cases. So why do the Opposition assume that building societies and local authorities will react any less generously now, especially when full interest will be eligible after 16 weeks and extra help will be available for extra interest as I have

[Mr. Major]

explained? There is no reason, and it will not happen. The Building Societies Association does not expect it, I do not expect it and nor, in reality, do Opposition Members.

Mr. Meacher: Perhaps I can answer that question. It was, perhaps, unwise from the Minister's point of view for him to ask it. The answer is given by the Building Societies Association. It says that the comparison is not a proper one, for four reasons. First, it was clear that, eventually, the miners would return to work, whereas many of those who become unemployed have little prospect of finding employment. Secondly, miners are generally well paid in comparison with their housing costs. Thirdly, the large majority of miners probably have substantial equity in their properties because they purchased them some time ago or because they purchased council or former National Coal Board houses at substantial discounts. Finally, in areas where there are substantial concentrations of miners, there was little point in a building society trying to protect its security by taking possession of a property because it would have been almost impossible to sell. I hope that the Minister will accept that, for all of those reasons, the comparison that he is trying to draw is utterly invalid.

Mr. Major: I do not accept that in any respect.

Mr. Winnick: The Minister has egg all over his face now.

Mr. Major: It is equally clear that people who are unemployed, irrespective of whether they return to work — most of them do within three months, as the hon. Gentleman knows—are certain to return to benefit after 16 weeks, which is a far shorter time than it was envisaged the miners would take to return to work. The façade that the hon. Gentleman tried to construct can be shown to be collapsing. There is also the question of equity between low income families in and out of work. That point cannot be lightly brushed aside.

Mortgage interest tax relief is available to all families whether in or out of work, but social security help applies only to those without jobs. There is an imbalance in support there. The present supplementary benefit guarantee of 100 per cent. help with mortgage interest payments from the first day on benefit is much more than a family in work can expect through mortgage interest tax relief. Obviously, the present guarantee includes meeting domestic rates in full. These are generous arrangements and, indeed, as the Building Societies Association in its publication in January said:

"they are almost certainly the most generous in the world with respect to borrowers who are unemployed."

Opposition Members will undoubtedly be pleased to know that. The change we are making does not significantly alter that position, but it removes some of the present imbalance in state help available during the relatively short initial 16 weeks period covered by these regulations. I emphasise that it is a short 16-week period.

Mr. Nick Raynsford (Fulham): The Minister spoke about equity between the unemployed and low-income home owners with mortgages. Does he accept that the Government's benefits review team recommended that mortgage interest payments should become eligible for housing benefit to overcome that inequity? The Government rejected that recommendation. Does the Minister further accept that progressive cuts in rates assistance through housing benefit have penalised precisely the people about whom he is talking — low-income home owners? They are getting less and less help with their rates because of the three successive cuts in housing benefit on rates. It is completely fraudulent and hypocritical to talk about favouring equity between the group whom the Government have disadvantaged and the unemployed.

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman is rehearsing arguments which we may deal with on Thursday when we discuss uprating and contributions. We shall undoubtedly discuss such matters when we deal with the regulations that will be taken at that time.

The cost implications of the housing benefit review team report render it wholly out of court for us or any other likely Government on the horizon. The hon. Gentleman will know better than most for a variety of reasons — some understandable and some less understandable — of the substantial demand pull on expenditure that has been wrought on housing benefit over the past few years. It is now a substantial burden on the Exchequer and taxpayers. When one reaches the point where one in every three families is subsidised in housing benefit by the other two — this is not the subject of tonight's debate — one wonders whether the system is proper and sustainable. I do not believe that it is. *[Interruption.]*

If the hon. Gentleman wishes to return to mortgage interest and the subject of tonight's debate, I shall happily give him the floor, but I suspect that he proposes to stray on to Thursday's debate. I undertake that I shall give him an opportunity on Thursday to make those points, if he wishes to do so.

Mr. Meacher: To return to tonight's debate, the Minister quoted the BSA view that mortgage interest payments to the unemployed are the most generous in the world. How can he continue to support that view and use it to support his tottering case when in answer to me he said:

"We have no detailed comprehensive information about the assistance with mortgage interest payments given to persons receiving social assistance in all European Community and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries." — [*Official Report*, 26 June 1986; Vol. 100, c. *293*.]

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman mistakes the sense of my words. I was destroying his tottering case, rather than supporting mine. Anybody listening to the debate would have been aware that that was what I had in mind.

It is worth while to emphasise that the Building Societies Association has also said — this is relevant — that it will continue to help as many people into home ownership as possible. It will not hold off helping low-income families and nor will this Government, through mortgage interest tax relief, which we, at least, will keep, and through the right-to-buy schemes, which have assisted hundreds of thousands of people to own their homes, despite the blatant and continuing opposition of the Labour party. The short limitation in supplementary benefit help with mortgage interest will not impair that, and I invite Opposition Members to continue to watch with envy the progress we shall continue to make in further extending home ownership. We genuinely believe in it and will continue to promote and sustain it.

I should draw the attention of the House to five other changes incorporated in the regulations. I referred to these only briefly earlier, since they are unrelated to the main contentious change.

We do not propose to carry forward the present practice whereby interest on a loan for business purposes, which is secured on the home, can be paid for up to six months. This applies where the claimant is intending to sell the home and requires time for it to be sold. In future, help with mortgage interest will be restricted to housing-related loans only. Also, where a home includes a business, for example a guest house, interest will be met only on the part of the house used for living accommodation, where the home is treated as a mixed hereditament for rating purposes.

The third change is that powers are being taken to allow the adjudication officer to restrict benefit where the home is unreasonably expensive in relation to other suitable accommodation in the area. Benefits can be restricted already where a house is in an unreasonably expensive area or is unnecessarily large. This additional power is taken to bring supplementary benefit into line with housing benefit practice.

Powers are also being taken to enable a second or subsequent loan to be treated in the same way as the loan it replaces. This readmits people with replacement loans to benefit, following a commissioner's decision to the contrary and is wholly beneficial. I am sure that the House will welcome that.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): That is an important point and relates to the difficult case that was adjudicated on recently. Will that provision be retrospective for individuals who are caught as a result of that decision?

Mr. Major: It is probably effective from the date on which the regulations become effective, but I shall ensure that my hon. Friend the Minister touches on that specific point when he replies.

The four changes that I have just mentioned were also referred to the Social Security Advisory Committee and were unreservedly supported by it. The committee also agreed that a fifth minor change need not be referred to it for consultation as it, too, was entirely beneficial. This change is to enable foster children to be taken into account when an adjudication officer decides whether or not a home is too large.

The Opposition also prayed against the associated regulations — the Supplementary Benefit (Claims and Payments) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 1986. This must have been a reflex action. Those regulations simply ensure that the existing arrangements for instituting the direct payment of mortgage interest to the lender will continue unchanged. Without them, claimants could face the prospect of having their payments made direct, even where they had paid over the full amount of the interest included in their benefit. That would be a tighter regime than we want since we believe that claimants should generally be responsible themselves for their dealings with their lenders and for their mortgage interest repayments. Therefore, I suspect that the Opposition may not wish to press that prayer to a Division.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Will the Minister confirm that there is nothing in the regulations that distinguishes between different types of mortgages? I am thinking of the insurance endowment mortgage, where all payments are made on interest, and ordinary repayment mortgages. Will everybody be treated in the same way as they are now?

Mr. Major: There is no distinction.

I believe that the draft regulations represent a package of limited measures that will have a limited effect and, in the case of the main changes, for a limited period only. They will not have the dire consequences predicted by Labour Members, but they will achieve a fairer and more reasonable balance of responsibility between borrowers, lenders and taxpayers. I commend the draft regulations to the House.

8.48 pm

Mr. Michael Meacher: The Opposition have already made clear their unequivocal repudiation of the regulations, on the ground that they victimise the unemployed by threatening them with the loss of their home, on top of the loss of their job. Nothing that the Minister said tonight has altered that central fact.

Last week some of my hon. Friends and I said that the measure would cause evictions and family break-ups for the unemployed. Significantly, the Minister was unable to deny it. I do not believe that he could deny that tonight either. We find it almost inconceivable that the Government should insist on going to such lengths to hound the unemployed in order to save £23 million. That is a drop in the ocean compared with the £4·75 billion of mortgage interest tax relief that is handed out unconditionally each year to owner-occupiers, however well off they are.

The regulations will come into effect on 26 January next year. The new year message of this kick in the face for the unemployed is that the Government's discrimination against the unemployed seems to know no end. The unemployed have had their benefit cut by this Government, and it has also been taxed for the first time. Some £3 billion has been clawed back in tax off unemployed benefit since 1982. The unemployed have had their entitlement to earnings-related supplement abolished and under the proposed Fowler Social Security Act they will be forced to pay 20 per cent. of their rates out of supplementary benefit reserved for food, clothing and daily necessities. They now face the risk of eviction and being made homeless.

Mr. Winnick: Apart from the repeated lie that the Labour party is against owner-occupation, whereas Labour Governments have successfully taken measures to increase people's opportunities of owning their own homes —[HON. MEMBERS: "When?"] During the 1960s, under the option mortgage scheme, and other schemes, which made it easier for people on limited means to buy homes which they could not have afforded before.

Mr. Wigley: And build houses.

Mr. Winnick: As the hon. Gentleman has rightly said, we also built houses.

Does my hon. Friend agree it is unfortunate, sordid and disgusting that the measure — which the Secretary of State was not willing to introduce personally this evening —hits people who need every form of income that they can possibly have when they become unemployed, when they are most vulnerable and when they desperately need

[Mr. Winnick]

to retain as much income as they can out of their limited benefit? The Government are hitting and penalising people who are made redundant through no fault of their own.

Mr. Meacher: That is entirely true. That is the main thrust of the Opposition's rejection of the regulations. Compared with the Minister's extremely bland glossing over of the effect of the regulations as a minor measure that will have hardly any effect, I suggest that the regulations will have a devastating effect on many ordinary families.

Let us consider two examples. First, a family consisting of husband wife and two children with a £16,000 mortgage, at present makes interest-only payments of £26 a week. Its supplementary benefit is just under £69 a week. As a result of the regulations that family will have to find an extra £13 a week to pay the building society. That is nearly one fifth of its weekly income.

My second example is that of a couple with a baby and a £30,000 mortgage. Such a case is quite common in the south-east. At present that family makes interest-only payments of £49 a week. If the payments were halved, the family would have to find £25 a week extra for the building society, which would amount to two fifths of its weekly income. If the capital repayment element is also included — as it must be — the family would need to pay the building society more than £32 a week. That works out at more than half its income having to be paid to prevent its falling into arrears. I wonder how many Conservative Members who will no doubt obediently follow the Whip tonight, would impose such punitive sanctions on their married children and families if they became unemployed and had no other source of income.

It is clear from those examples that it is highly unlikely that unemployed families affected by the cut will be able to make the payments from the weekly benefits. Cuts of a quarter to a half of income will clearly make it impossible for people already on the poverty line to manage.

In his statement last week the Minister repeated — and he repeated it again tonight, because I suspect that he has precious little else to fall back on—that the Building Societies Association will respond to changes "sympathetically and responsibly". We may be forgiven for thinking — and I believe that my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) is of this opinion — that such assurances have been given to the Government by the Building Societies Association regarding the proposed changes. In fact—and perhaps the Minister will correct me if I am wrong, because this is a serious matter—I understand that there has been no formal contact between the Government and the Building Societies Association about the proposals. The assurances that have been referred to appear to have been lifted by Ministers from the BSA's response to the Green Paper "Reform of Social Security" published more than a year ago.

I fear that the Minister may have misled the House by suggesting that specific assurances about the operation of the proposals had been given by the Building Societies Association. From my information, it appears that no such assurances have been given. If the Minister wishes to intervene to deny that, I would be glad to give way, because that is a significant and important point.

Mr. Major: Perhaps I can put the hon. Gentleman's mind at rest. I need do no more than quote from the Building Societies Association's press statement, which is a public document. It states:

"Societies will do all they can —"

Mr. Meacher: When was the statement dated?

Mr. Major: It is dated after my statement last week. It claims:

"Societies will do all they can to help people where benefit is restricted, and there is no reason to expect that people will lose their homes as a result of this measure."

That was the Building Societies Association statement on the mortgage interest decision, published last week.

Mr. Meacher: That does not involve any formal contacts or detailed discussion between the building societies and the Government.

Mr. Major *rose*—

Mr. Meacher: I should like to finish. We are simply considering a statement made by the BSA. I should like to know what evidence exists that the building societies will be able to carry out the Government's wish. Frankly—I shall quote the evidence shortly—I do not believe that will happen.

Mr. Major: The statement from which I quoted a moment ago was supplied by the Building Societies Association's head of external relations, with specific authority to be quoted. I have quoted it with that authority and it has been published. Meetings took place between the Secretary of State and the chairman of the Building Societies Association some time ago. Subsequent meetings were held in August, November and December 1985, and there was informal contact prior to the SSAC consultation in May 1986. Over a substantial period there have been a series of discussions about this and related matters. I have quoted from the press statement issued by the BSA, and that is clear and unequivocal. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that.

Mr. Meacher: I shall also provide my quotation from the BSA. The real attitude of the building societies is different from that which the Government have described. In its recent report on mortgage arrears the BSA said about the present mortgage interest payment system:

"If this benefit had not existed"—

and it is this benefit that the Government are proposing to cut—

"the rise in unemployment would have led to a much greater increase in arrears and possessions and this would have led to a slump in property prices locally and possibly nationally as well."

The Government are whistling in the wind when they claim that lenders will cast a blind eye or readily accommodate reductions in payments.

I want to cite two reasons for that which I believe convincingly refute the Government's facade of optimism. One of the Government's own social security policy inspectorate, which found that even under the present rules only two thirds of claimants who had asked for a temporary reduction in their mortgage interest had been granted one. One third had not. The other is the recent Shelter survey, which found that nearly 60 per cent. of local authorities explicitly ruled out a temporary suspension of payments. If local authorities adopt such attitudes, I am sure that other lenders will certainly take an even less charitable view, especially the finance and loan houses that operate on the fringe of the mortgage market.

What is most worrying is the fact that mortgage arrears are already rising steeply. In 1979 there were 8,000 loans in arrears over six months. The number is already, even before these regulations, over 60,000 a year. Similarly, properties taken into possession by building societies as a result of arrears have already risen eightfold since 1979. The number is now over 20,000 a year. In the past year it has risen by 50 per cent. and in the next year it can be expected, as a result of the measure, to grow by a further 100 per cent. It is impossible for the Government to lay claim to the idea of a property-owning democracy or to belief in family life when they allow those trends to continue, let alone exacerbate them. These regulations make nonsense of such claims.

Hon. Members will have seen the briefing from the National Council For One Parent Families, which details the cases where single parents will suffer drastically from the measure. The briefing concludes:

"We cannot believe that the Government could have intended to jeopardise family stability and add more separated, deserted, divorced and widowed mothers and their children to the ever-lengthening list of those who are homeless and forced into unsanitary, temporary accommodation for indefinite periods."

That is exactly the effect that this measure will have.

It is not only that. What is so harsh about the measure is that it is so discriminatory. At present, those with incomes around £100 a week get only about £3 a week in mortgage interest tax relief. Those with incomes over £30,000 a year, which includes members of the Cabinet, get 10 times as much in mortgage tax relief. It is already an excessively unfair system, and the Government are now proposing to compound the unfairness by cutting, on their own admission, about £7 a week on average from the income of families on the official poverty line. A Government who do that while at the same time allowing payment of £30 a week to people with incomes of over £600 a week cannot be said to understand the meaning of the word "fairness", let alone use it to defend their proposal.

There is no conceivable justification for this measure. In saving terms it is piffling, and in principle it is monstrous. The sole defence put up by the Government, which the Minister mentioned again tonight, is that the present system places the low-paid family at a disadvantage compared with the unemployed. The answer to that is not to cripple the unemployed, but to increase the pittance received by the low-paid family. One way to finance that, as the Labour party proposes, is to limit mortgage interest tax relief to the basic rate of income tax and redistribute the saving of £320 million, which is at present devoted exclusively to those on the highest income.

The Social Security Advisory Committee was singularly unimpressed by the Government's case on that point, although it is the only point that the Government have. In paragraph 53 of its report it states:

"We are not convinced by the arguments relating to equity between owner-occupiers on benefit and those in low-paid work."

One of the bizarre aspects of last week's exchanges after the Minister's statement was that the Minister kept calling in aid the SSAC report as if it supported his case. In fact, it does the exact opposite. The conclusion of the report, in paragraph 54, states:

"The borrower with a 100 per cent. mortgage, or with little equity in the property, may find his lender is unwilling to accept interest-only payments, let alone half of the interest payment. The deserted wife may find that there were arrears on the mortgage before she came on to benefit and her lender is unwilling to allow further arrears to accumulate. For claimants like these in a period of trauma and stress the restrictions may be the straw that breaks the camel's back, tilting them so far into debt that eviction and repossession are inevitable."

Those are not the words of the Opposition seeking to stir up political strife. Those are the considered words of a very careful and relatively modest body, the Social Security Advisory Committee. It is the Government's own advisory body. Nothing could be clearer than what the SSAC says there. It reinforces its earlier judgment in the fourth report last year, when it said:

"We do not think that a scheme of this kind could be justified at all, unless the building societies and other mortgage-giving bodies were prepared to give comprehensive assurances about the availability of rescheduling".

Not only have they not been prepared to give comprehensive assurances, but they have not been consulted to any significant extent during the last year, presumably because their hostility was already well known.

Nobody supports this measure. The building societies do not support it, nor do the independent Institute of Housing, the local authorities, the National Consumer Council, or the SSAC. It may scarcely fulfil its minimum objective of making savings, since the cost of mortgage repossession often falls indirectly on the public purse, and homeless families are then allocated local authority housing under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1976. The average saving of £170 per claimant will then be swallowed up by the hotel bill for the first week.

This measure may not even achieve its purpose of increasing the incentives for the unemployed to return to work. If the loan were rescheduled at a higher rate when the four-month period was over, the rescheduled payments could rise to a level which those on low wages would have difficulty in paying. The claimant would then have less incentive, not more, to return to work.

This is a nasty and vindictive measure that will cause intense hardship for 75,000 families, including eviction for many of them. It will generate insecurity among hundreds of thousands of low-paid workers facing the threat of unemployment and all that might follow. It will make building societies less willing to lend to low-paid and single parent families, and it will greatly worsen the discrimination and unfairness of mortgage aid as between the favoured rich and those on the poverty line. Savings amounting to mere £23 million cannot possibly justify such consequences or such suffering. These regulations should be immediately and unreservedly withdrawn.

9.7 pm

Mr. Peter Fry (Wellingborough): I do not intend to emulate the lurid language of the spokesman for the Official Opposition, but I think that I should express the degree of disquiet that is felt by some Conservative Members about the proposed changes to the regulations.

When the changes were announced earlier this year it was my misfortune to appear that day on a television panel programme. The first questioner asked the panel what it thought about the changes. After I had listened with growing incredulity to what was said about them, I said that I could not vote for the changes. The response to what I said then was remarkable. Not one person had a good word to say for the proposed changes.

Why should that be? Most people are genuinely concerned about the effects of unemployment and the

[Mr. Peter Fry]

problems that it creates. Millions of people also fear that they will be make redundant. The last few years have shown that very few sections of our society are immune from the threat of unemployment. Buying a home is the largest single purchase that most people make. I accept that very few people will lose their homes, but the proposals present a considerable threat to every home-owner. They cause additional worry at a time when the Government ought to be trying to reduce worries rather than to add to them.

I am sorry that I have to be so critical. My hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled knows that I hold him in high regard. I am also aware that he had to pick up this issue and carry it when he gained his well merited promotion. I appreciate that the Government have made some changes which they genuinely believe have improved the original proposals. But I want to deal with some of the points made specifically by my hon. Friend the Minister in his statement on 10 December.

First, he asserted that the change would affect only new cases. None the less, if it comes into effect on 26 January 1987 as proposed, a considerable number of mortgagors who have no protection against unemployment will be affected. It is clear — as was mentioned earlier in the debate — that many will have no insurance policy to protect them. Perhaps they should have such a policy. Indeed, I would always advise it, but the fact remains that many borrowers will still find themselves without any protection perhaps because they are already fully stretched by their mortgage payments.

If my hon. Friend had reported to the House that he had been in contact with the building societies and the banks and that they had agreed to insist on some sort of insurance cover as a prerequisite of a loan, the regulations that he has suggested could apply to all new loans from January next year, but not to existing loans. I for one would have accepted such a change as it would not have been retrospective. I have no doubt at all that many of the people who will be affected by the changes are those who have not taken advantage of any insurance scheme.

Secondly, my hon. Friend mentioned that many of the claimants would be unemployed for only a short time. None the less, even on his own figures, they amounted to about 75,000. Any period of unemployment of more than a few weeks is bound to have a drastic effect on a family's net income. In any event, the 50 per cent. of the unemployed who do not leave the register within three months will suffer the most, not only as a result of this measure but because of their longer-term unemployment.

However one considers it, the change will hurt people who are already vulnerable and who may well have to sell their homes. If the solution to the problem raised by the changes is to add the unpaid interest to the outstanding debt, those unfortunate people will find that when the home is eventually sold any balance left over will be that much less, thus worsening their financial plight.

Thirdly, my hon. Friend mentioned the improvements that have been made to the original proposals. By and large, I welcome these. He mentioned, for example, the safeguard for those over the age of 60. I acknowledged that that is helpful, but how realistic is it? Alas, we all know that most people over 50 who lose their jobs are unlikely to find another job that will pay as well as the one that they have lost. We must recognise that. If my hon. Friend were to say that wherever one draws the line, someone will be hurt, I would say that it might have been better not to have proceeded with such ideas in the first instance.

Fourthly, my hon. Friend referred to the savings that will be made — now about £23 million as opposed to the £30 million that was originally considered. Miraculously, £7 million has already disappeared. If £7 million can go so quickly why cause so much fuss over the remaining £23 million because, after all, that £23 million will cause considerable suffering? Why should my hon. Friend and the Government give such ammunition to Opposition Members on such a tender issue, when the Conservative party believes passionately in home ownership? This has been a tactical error on the part of my right hon. and hon. Friends because it has distorted what in so many other areas is a first-class record of caring for people. Indeed, our record in expenditure is one of which we can be truly proud. That is why I am all the more sad that the proposals have been brought forward.

Fifthly, my hon. Friend said that the building societies will be concerned and will treat those who are unfortunate with special regard. It is clear that Her Majesty's Government expect the building societies to pick up part of the responsibility that the Government have had hitherto. The most likely outcome is that the unpaid interest will be added to their capital debt. That may or may not happen. Any change in the payments of the unemployed to their lenders automatically breaks the existing agreements on mortgage repayments. There is no guarantee that the lender will necessarily agree.

I also noted that my hon. Friend said that advice would be given to borrowers who might find themselves in trouble. I do not know what he finds, but in my constituency I find that those who get into the most trouble are those who do not immediately ask for help. They get into a terrible mess and it is in such cases that eviction often takes place. Therefore, it will not be possible to cover all those cases with the kind of assurances that my hon. Friend gave.

It is not always the friendly building society that is the lender. It could be a Japanese bank, and what assurances have we had from foreign banks which have given loans to people in Britain that they will behave in the same way as the building societies? My hon. Friend said that he was hopeful that the building societies would act in the right way. He should be using the word "helpful" rather than "hopeful", because help is what people who are unemployed want.

Despite all those points which arise from what my hon. Friend had to say, my main objection is one of principle. I hope that when my hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary replies he will tell me why, if I pay rent, no matter how long I have been out of work, no matter whether I have never bothered to find work, that rent will be paid. But if I have done what the Government have asked me to do and become part of the property-owning democracy, I shall suffer as a result of the proposal before the House tonight. There is a matter of principle there and it is on that question of principle that I feel strongly.

The answer that my hon. Friend the Minister has previously given on that point is that the home buyer shares in the capital increase in the value of his home. All I can say to him is that if he goes to Aberdeen or Merseyside he will discover houses which have dropped in

value over the past few years. The owners of such houses will feel pretty sick if they become unemployed and suffer as a result of this proposal.

No, I cannot believe that the measure is essential or necessary. It saves little money. My hon. Friend used the word "limited" on at least three occasions—a limited measure for a limited period affecting a limited number of people. If it is that limited, why have we got it at all? It is unnecessary and the amount that we are saving is insignificant. It will cause additional problems for thousands of home buyers who have been doing what the country wanted them to do. It will offend even more. It will offend all those who fear unemployment and it will reinforce those who accuse the Government of being uncaring. This is an unnecessary and unwise change in the regulations. The Government's attitude will not be understood and as a result there will be considerable political damage. Therefore, despite my high regard for my hon. Friend, if he is determined to press ahead, I for one shall be in the other Lobby tonight.

9.19 pm

Mr. Nick Raynsford (Fulham): By no means is this the first debate on this subject, because it comes at the end of a long and rather sorry series of debates based on the Government's plan to change assistance with mortgage interest for people on supplementary benefit. It was heralded in a social security Green Paper published more than 18 months ago, and at that time the measure was universally condemned. It was repeated in a slightly more restricted form in a White Paper published about a year ago and once again it was condemned, even though by that stage the measure had been rather watered down.

Last summer there was a debate in the House in which the watered-down measure was again universally condemned by hon. Members in all parts of the House. Now we are presented with a further watered-down proposal and once again it is receiving widespread condemnation. Surely the Minister must be aware that he has made a mistake—or, to be fair to him, that his predecessor made a mistake in proposing this in the first place.

It is a bad proposal and it should be withdrawn. There should be no more watering down in an attempt to save face. Despite that watering down, the measure is still very damaging. It will create increased debt problems and adversely affect the unemployed. Not only will they suffer the shock of job loss: they will also face the shock of having to meet their mortgage repayments. Although the Minister will argue that after 16 weeks mortgage payments can be made, there is, firstly, the problem of that 16 weeks to get through; during that time many people will feel deeply worried about going increasingly into debt and having no means of covering it.

Secondly, some people will never be able to recover. As an example, let us look at the single parent left alone after a marriage breakdown, which is one of the main causes of mortgage difficulties. Where the partner also has a share in the equity of the house, the financial arrangement necessary to ensure that the woman can remortgage the property in order to keep herself and her children in the matrimonial home is often a finely balanced financial judgment. If it succeeds, it may avert the problem of homelessness, the loss of the home and all the traumas associated with that, and the consequence of a local authority having to pick up the family as homeless. In present conditions that family would probably be put in a bed and breakfast hotel at vastly greater cost to the state than the cost of meeting the mortgage interest in the meantime.

It is in that area that the measure is so foolish, short-sighted and damaging. It is precisely in such marginal cases that the absence of 16 weeks of benefit could well tip the balance between keeping a family together, thereby avoiding homelessness and keeping them in the matrimonial home, or losing the home and going through the horrid, traumatic experience of being homeless. As I have already said, that costs the state rather more than the mortgage interest payments. By itself that is a strong enough reason for the Government to reconsider.

Why are they pursuing this damaging proposal? The argument put forward in the past and advanced in this debate by the Minister is that it has to do with equity and with home owners on low income in work who do not get the same assistance. For that reason, say the Government, there might be some unfairness. As I implied in an intervention from which the Minister did not take my point, this argument is unconvincing, because it comes from a Government who have cut housing benefit assistance on rates to home owners three times in the last three years. There were cuts in 1983, increasing the taper, and cuts in 1984 and in 1985. Three successive cuts affecting home owners receiving assistance through housing benefit show the Government's lack of concern for people on low income in work who are trying to cope.

The Government refuse to accept the recommendation of their own independent housing benefit review body which argued precisely on this ground of equity that mortgage interest payments should qualify for assistance as part of the housing benefit scheme. The Government claim to be concerned about equity for low income home owners, but rejected that sensible proposal which would have given extra assistance to precisely the group of people about whom the Minister is trying to shed crocodile tears. The Government's case is false and fraudulent. It is about cuts, not equity. It is yet a further example of social security cuts, and this time they bear on home owners who are in difficulty. It is a regrettable and deplorable measure. It would be bad at any time, but it is especially bad now, given the trend in mortgage arrears, foreclosures and repossessions.

My hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) referred to the dramatic increase in the number of home owners who are six months or more in arrears with their mortgage. There has been an increase from about 8,000 in 1979 to over 66,000 now. The number of home owners whose homes are being repossessed because they could not maintain their mortgage payments has increased from about 2,500 in 1979 to 20,000 in the last 12 months for which figures are available. It is all very well for the Government to say what they have done to promote home ownership, but they have presided over an unprecedented increase in the number of home owners who are getting into serious debt and losing their homes. They should be paying attention to the problem and doing something to tackle it.

Instead, the Government are introducing a measure that will make things worse for low-income home owners on supplementary benefit. To take away assistance from these people at this time is crass, mean-spirited and entirely untimely. If the Government intended to tackle the problem of equity between low-income home owners in

[Mr. Nick Raynsford]

work and those on supplementary benefit protection, which is an important safety net to prevent homelessness, and seek to improve the position for low-income home owners in work, perhaps by making mortgage interest payments eligible for housing benefit, they would pay for that and make a saving by the simple expedient of restricting mortgage interest tax relief to the standard rate of income tax, which would hurt no one on an income below £20,000 a year. Savings could be made, the poor could be protected and no one on a low income would suffer.

That is the way in which the Government could proceed if they wanted to act in the interests of equity. Unfortunately, they do not want to do that. The Government are interested only in imposing cuts. These are damaging cuts and I fear that they will exacerbate the rising tide of homelessness among home owners over which the Government have presided.

9.27 pm

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): I apologise for not being in the Chamber throughout the opening speeches. I was detained elsewhere, but I came into the Chamber as soon as I could.

I welcome the measure and I welcome also the way in which my hon. Friend the Minister has introduced it. It is a signal of the Government's recognition of the balance that has always to be struck between the responsibilities of taxpayers and those who are in receipt of benefits. No responsible Government can avoid or evade that responsibility.

There is no point in any of us pretending that everyone can always be a recipient of unlimited largesse. We must recognise always that the resources that are available to any Government are inevitably limited. The art is to balance what is fair and reasonable with what can be made available to those most in need and those who are less in need.

We are talking about those who have undertaken the responsibility of home ownership. I stress "responsibility" because embarking on home ownership, which we have rightly encouraged and in which we have been greatly successful, involves much responsibility. Anyone who undertakes home ownership stands to realise a capital gain. He stands to make a profit, which I welcome and applaud, and he will be given tax relief on his mortgage payments, which I applaud also, but he must accept the responsibilities that go with that.

I do not believe that anyone in this place would expect to take the responsibility of home ownership without taking on the reasonable responsibility of insuring against misfortune. One example would be to insure the building and another would be to insure the contents. Everyone must face the requirement of taking every reasonable precaution against loss of employment or loss of income.

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): I have been listening with fascination to the hon. Gentleman's remarks. Can he tell me where attention was drawn in Conservative party election leaflets or in his manifesto for the 1983 general election to the risks that are involved in home ownership as against the advantages?

Mr. Forth: I shall not be drawn into the old red herring of what is or is not in the manifesto. It must be perfectly self-evident that, when one undertakes the challenge and opportunity of home ownership, certain responsibilities go with it. Nothing in this life — in spite of how Opposition Members might wish to kid themselves and, more important, other people — is without risk or responsibility. Home ownership comes into that category.

One must take reasonable measures to protect oneself and one's family. A range of insurance policies and opportunities are available to provide protection against precisely, for example, the loss of employment. I see no reason at all why anyone who is prepared to take on home ownership, accept the mortgage tax relief that goes with it, and accept the possibility of tax-free capital gains on their home, should not at the same time take on the responsibility of providing adequate and reasonable protection for themselves and their families against whatever misfortune may befall them. There is nothing wrong with that. It must be encouraged.

We cannot allow people who take on home ownership to look to the taxpayers, through the benefit system, to cover them in any or all circumstances. My hon. Friend the Member for Wellingborough (Mr. Fry) asked why people who rent their homes are not provided with the same sort of opportunity. It is precisely because people who rent do not stand to gain from the capital appreciation of property and do not enjoy the benefits of home ownership, whereas those who involve themselves in home ownership do so. That is why there is an important distinction. It is one that, regrettably, my hon. Friend failed to make.

The role of building societies has been mentioned at several points during the debate. Surely it is important that people understand the role and relationship of building societies with whom they undertake a contract. It is important that we understand the responsibility that building societies have within society, not only to have a commercial and contractual relationship with the people who come to them for loans, but to expect that, if misfortune befalls them, they will take a reasonable attitude. There is every evidence that responsible building societies have undertaken this attitude and have been able to help those who have fallen into misfortune.

No building society gains by peremptorily dispossessing someone of their home should they encounter misfortune after a short time. It is perfectly reasonable for the Government and for my hon. Friend to look, first, to the home owner to provide for his own future and, secondly, to expect building societies to have a reasonable relationship with those who accept loans from them. Only in the last resort should the taxpayer be expected to stand behind these people and provide them with protection.

The measure that my hon. Friend has brought before the House today provides a correct and reasonable balance between the responsibilities of home owners and taxpayers. That is why I welcome and support this move.

9.32 pm

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): The hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) suffers from what I would describe as an extreme case of Joan Collins's disease — utter, abject divorce from reality. Little in the hon. Gentleman's comments suggests any sympathy for or comprehension of either the philosophy that his own Government have preached since 1979 or the

reality of those who find themselves unemployed and who, under the strictures of this measure, as from next month will be considerably worse off.

I have great sympathy with the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), who described this measure as shabby and squalid. Although I do not wish to make personal remarks about the Minister, I can hardly think that he is particulary proud of the task that he has to perform tonight in the name of Her Majesty's Government. The best that can be said about the Minister, his performance and his case is that his heart is not in it. That is the charitable interpretation. I hope that, before the Division, he will have the courage to discover the convictions that were expressed by his hon. Friend the Member for Wellingborough (Mr. Fry).

Why is there so much against the philosophy of the Government? It should not be lost on Conservative Members, especially the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire, that a Government who spend so much time rightly encouraging and rightly giving people opportunities to enjoy home ownership and responsibilities must themselves carry certain responsibilities. In any proper society that operates, such as this one does, under the theory of contract, responsibility has to be a two-way process. The Governnent have led the horse to water, but instead of enabling it to drink they have cut the rope and let the cask fall into the well. That is not fair on those who are in a vulnerable position and who are unlikely to be able to support themselves as a result.

Why is it so wrong for the Government to encourage home ownership and then to introduce this measure? I refer to a report of April this year by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, entitled :

"Mortgage Arrears: Owner Occupiers at Risk ".

The report made this important point:

"Local authority borrowers have lower incomes than borrowers from banks or building societies. Low income has been shown to be closely associated with repayment difficulties. If building societies continue to have plenty of funds for lending 'downmarket'"—

I do not like that phrase; I should prefer "on the financial margins"—

"and to right-to-buy purchasers, local authorities will find themselves even more in the position of lenders of last resort, with a higher proportion of high-risk borrowers than formerly. This will tend to exacerbate their arrears problems."

That is precisely what is happening. As a result of the measure, local authorities, under the right-to-buy legislation, will be faced either with heavier arrears on their own account, which is bad enough, which will show up in their spending programme and, in turn, will feed through to the Government's controls on local authority expenditure, or there will have to be more repossessions. If there are more repossessions, local authorities will still have to pick up the tab to a greater extent, because they will have to add those same people to already stretched waiting lists.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Does the hon. Gentleman recall that the Conservative party has been trying to run a campaign against councils which have not been so harsh in collecting rents as it would like and have allowed those who cannot pay to run up arrears? Will the councils which have allowed owner-occupiers who borrowed from them to run up arrears of interest charges be subject to the same attack? Will they be attacked as loonies of the Left?

Mr. Kennedy: Far be it from me to come to the defence of the loonies of the Left, to use the hon. Gentleman's phrase. The illogicality of what the Government are doing, in introducing the principle of the right to buy and then this measure, inevitably will lead them to introduce further measures later or take legislative steps along the lines suggested by the hon. Gentleman. I suspect that he is foreshadowing something that will come in due course, although I hope that that will not happen, as he hopes it will not. That is the illogicality of the Government's position in a nutshell. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

I refer to a point made by the Minister. Nobody denies that there is a responsibility to take on home ownership. We hear that more efforts should be made with mortgage insurance arrangements. It is an easy, throw-away phrase to say that all prudent people would take such steps. However, let us look at what the Institute of Housing has to say. It has considered that aspect carefully. It asks that

"assistance with interest payments be continued at the same level for the meantime. It considers it unlikely that mortgage insurance arrangements, in their present form and premium level, could fill the gap provided by supplementary benefit for either the long-term unemployed or low-income owner occupiers."

The Minister is putting much stock on people taking out private insurance schemes. What does he say to the Institute of Housing, which I assume he accepts speaks with authority? It says that in that respect the Government do not have a leg to stand on.

My next point has been alluded to already and I shall not dwell on it. In regard to single parents, we are talking not just about those who become unemployed and who will have to experience the effects of the regulations in the first 16 weeks, but about the large group of people who are not in employment but are not, perhaps, technically registered as unemployed, such as many categories of single parents. The Social Security Advisory Committee said:

"The deserted wife may find there were arrears on the mortgage before she came onto benefit and her lender is unwilling to allow further arrears to accummulate. For claimants like these in a period of trauma and stress the restrictions may be the straw that breaks the camel's back, tilting them so far into debt that eviction and repossession are inevitable."

The National Consumer Council said:

"The safety net provided by mortgage interest payments to those owners faced with unemployment or relationship breakdown is crucial in avoiding repossession and homelessness during the early stages of default when financial problems may escalate to such a level that it becomes impossible to recover from them".

All those points made by a wide range of organisations run completely against the Government's arguments and make nonsense of the points which the Government have been trying to drum up to support their view.

I wish to raise a point about the part of Britain that I represent. I think that my experience is not dissimilar from that of other hon. Members. In the Grampian area in Aberdeen and in the Highlands, which are heavily dependent on the oil industry's fortunes, there has been a considerable boom in the property market and escalating property prices as a result of first, the high salaries which have been paid in oil-related activities and, secondly, the influx of people associated with such activities. The dramatic slump in oil-related activities has resulted in the property market being in a state of complete collapse and,

[Mr. Kennedy]

therefore, building societies repossessing in considerable numbers and tremendous financial difficulties being encountered by many people.

Although salaries for many categories have been higher than the national average, many people on average salaries have become unemployed, without the benefit of golden handshakes to tide them over the 16-week period which the regulations will affect. They are suffering genuine hardship. Several sources in my part of the country confirmed today that the number of repossessions in the Highlands—where repossession is less of a problem than in the Grampian region and Aberdeen—has increased considerably. This measure will greatly exacerbate that trend. It is not in any way sensitive to the peculiar problems of a region which is heavily dependent upon the fortunes of one industry, which, because of the slump, is suffering considerable difficulties.

Among those bodies prominent in submitting evidence to the Social Security Advisory Committee were the city of Aberdeen housing department, the Grampian welfare rights project, the Grampian regional social work department and Scottish Women's Aid. The slump in the oil industry is a large part of the reason for those submissions. I should be grateful if the Minister would announce what flexibility there is in the regulations to take account of that part of Britain.

The Government argue that the measure will increase incentives to assist people in becoming re-employed. The SSAC makes it clear that that is unlikely to happen. It has pointed out:

"If mortgage interest is not met for an initial period on benefit, but instead an arrangement is made to reschedule the loan at a higher amount once the period is over, an owner-occupier claimant could well have less incentive to return to work."

Again, the SSAC has contradicted many of the Government's points.

I echo the general points made in the debate. The bigger the mortgage, the bigger the tax contribution and the greater the relief to those in work. That sits oddly with encouraging those at the top in order to hit hardest those at the bottom. That is why my colleagues and I agree that tax relief on mortgage interest should be restricted to the basic rate. That view is based on the very principle of equity that the Government make so much play of in these regulations. Consequently, we utterly oppose what the Government are doing. The regulations are wrong in principle and, moreover, they are even worse in practice. If the Minister and his colleagues had any sense of governmental decency or felt for the human dignity of those affected, they would withdraw them tonight.

9.45 pm

Mr. Gwilym Jones (Cardiff, North): The regulations involve the sum total of £23 million per year, and it is legitimate to consider how that money could be used elsewhere within the social security budget. After all, great strides have been made within the DHSS, most obviously in the improvements made to the NHS.

We all recognise that there are many other facilities that could fairly lay claim to the £23 million that is available per year. It is certainly not irrelevant to remember that when considering our spending priorities. It is traditionally difficult for hon. Members to hold a rational debate on social security. However, for once the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) made a comparatively restrained speech from the Labour Front Bench although it was, in its way, the traditional over-the-top performance that we are used to from him. Indeed, I sometimes think that he does more to underline how much the Government care than any other hon. Member.

I welcome some of the features of the regulations. It is now to be 16 weeks before the cut-off, as opposed to the previous proposal of six months. There is now some recognition of the mortgage trap that the SSAC pointed to. Provision has been made for intermittent claims and a special disregard was announced for mortgage protection policies. It is right to expect and encourage people to make provision against the possibility of becoming unemployed. But we should not get carried away and regard mortgage protection policies as a total solution.

In my experience, such policies are usually not long-term, not cheap and not even easily available. If they were widely issued, they would probably represent a crude application of the actuarial science and might be little different from having old-fashioned savings as a protection against the possibility of unemployment. Perhaps I should declare an interest, as I am the director of an insurance broking company. However, to my knowledge, I do not think that we have ever sold such policies, or are likely to sell many of them.

Thus, I welcome some features of the regulations and I appreciate that it is legitimate to examine how the money now spent could be better employed. But we should also have regard for the immediate consequences for those who become unemployed after the rules have changed. Several hon. Members have stressed the findings of the SSAC. One of my constituents, Mrs. Lysaght, was until recently a member of the committee and she has told me of some of her contributions towards its conclusions. The committee's report examined the earlier proposals put before it. As has been said more than once, they would not have led to any significant financial hardship. However, I tend to feel that the conclusion was rather academic, and that the SSAC was looking at the total cost of a 50 per cent. reduction during a six-month period compared with the total cost of a mortgage over 300 months of the life of a 25-year mortgage. Instead, the cost within a six-month period, or now within a sixteen-week period is significant.

In the committee's report, the example often used is of a mortgage of £16,000. I estimate that that means now a reduction in assistance of some £16·50 a week. Is that example most relevant? It does not cover every case, for the average mortgage now being taken out is significantly higher than that. Consider instead a new mortgage of £30,000, where the loss in assistance would be more like £34·50 a week which, however we describe it, will be lost for 16 weeks and never made up.

Instead of dwelling on an academic point, it might be more appropriate to look at part of the conclusions of the SSAC. Paragraph 54 refers to the position of young families with large mortgages, borrowers with high mortgages and deserted wives are quoted as an example. That paragraph has been quoted in part before, but I shall quote more of it, for completeness. It says:

"For claimants like these in a period of trauma and stress the restrictions may be the straw that breaks the camel's back, tilting them so far into debt that eviction and repossession are inevitable. Others may struggle to continue paying the full amount of interest during the first six months causing hardship to the family."

The use of that word "hardship" can be compared against other quotations about "no significant financial consequences".

It is argued that these are short-term effects, but this is a continuation of the academic argument. Beyond the 16-week period, it is envisaged that the interest is rolled up and capitalised against the debt and those still claiming beyond 16 weeks will be assisted in full. Part of paragraph 53 is relevant to set against that proposal. It says:

"We regret that, as in other areas of supplementary benefit, the claimant who gets into debt may be entitled to extra assistance while the claimant who cuts down on other areas of expenditure to avoid going into arrears in the mortgage will gain nothing for his pain."

This must be true, for in arriving at the calculation of £23 million available for reallocation, allowance has had to be made for the effect of roll-up beyond the 16-week period.

The regulations are now to provide for housing-related loans only, excluding business use, whether for separate business premises or business premises within the house. This may be simple to operate, but it may not. The new restrictions where housing costs are unreasonably high in comparison to similar suitable accommodation in the area worries me. I readily recognise that there is the opportunity to appeal against the decision on either or both of these points. I suggest that we should be concerned about the element of hardship here, particularly in an area of high unemployment. That high unemployment may have come about suddenly, resulting in an inability to sell because of the lack of purchasers. The use of the words "in comparison to" similar suitable accommodation will have to be taken into account in any determination of claims under the latter headings.

My hon. Friend the Minister has rightly had regard to equality of treatment between those in and those out of work, but that is not the only comparison that can be made. I see in the SSCA's report that supplementary benefit claimants in rented homes will continue to have their housing costs met in full. Is that fair or equal? I think not, but I am not advocating a change for rented accommodation

Above all, I am concerned about the anxiety and trauma of unemployment. In every other way, the Government are doing all that is possible to encourage and facilitate a return to employment. This change is bad psychology. It is no exaggeration to say that it places a sword of Damocles over the family home. That fact is accentuated by this being a change in the rules. If there were no provision in force, we might have to consider comparisons as to the generosity of the arrangements.

Somebody who is trying to promote a new invention and wants to set up with some colleagues who have already invested quite a substantial amount of money, visited my surgery on Saturday morning. It is an interesting product called Safetyflec. It is a marvellous product which will make an excellent contribution to motoring safety. All Government Departments should consider it for their cars. My constituent said that he and his colleagues had "put our houses on the line." I should have thought that all of us would want such an endeavour to succeed, but what a demotivating factor these proposals are.

The Government's proposal is not the right psychology and it is wrong for a variety of reasons. I wish that there was an opportunity to change minds, but if the die is cast, I am afraid that I will not be able to support my hon. Friend the Minister on this one.

9.56 pm

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): I hope that the hon. Member for Cardiff, North (Mr. Jones) will have the courage of his convictions and not just refrain from voting with the Government. I hope that he will vote against them.

It is difficult to believe that this is our last week before Christmas, because there is very little of the Christmas spirit about the regulations. For a mere £23 million, we are screwing some of the most vulnerable people in society.

The hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) said that it was the responsibility of individuals to take out insurance policies to protect themselves in the event of unemployment. No doubt he advances the same argument in regard to ill health and other misfortunes that can hit people. I shall enjoy using his speech in the general election campaign and telling poor people who are out of work and scraping together every penny to pay the mortgage because they are in fear of losing their home that the answer of Conservative Members is, "Tough. You should have taken out an insurance policy." There is a charitable spirit for people who are suffering! They are often the very people who followed the Government's advice and bought their own homes. I support home ownership, but we must also have policies which underpin people when they lose their income and are unable to pay the mortgage.

We have 20 per cent. unemployment in my constituency. Major capital construction schemes ended, and young people who followed the Government's advice and bought homes are now out of work. They cannot sell because their mortgage is higher than what they can get for their home. One building society out of eight in Caernarfon has 50 people who are caught in that trap.

So dire are the circumstances that, on 19 November, I wrote to the Prime Minister drawing her attention to this serious difficulty. In her reply, which I received today, she said:

"Building Societies are well aware of the need to maintain the prudence they have traditionally shown in their lending policies."

I do not remember her telling people that when she urged them a few years ago to buy their homes. The letter continues:

"Recent speeches by the Governor of the Bank of England, the Chairman of the Building Societies Association, and the Economic Secretary to the Treasury have reinforced the message that over-generous lending criteria are not necessarily in the best interests of the lender or the borrower."

No doubt that is right, but it is not very good saying it now to people who are out of work, own a house, have high mortgages and are unable to pay. They will be much worse off as a result of the proposed change.

A married couple with two children who have a £15,000 mortgage will lose about £12·50 a week in interest payments. That, together with a £3·50 repayment, makes a burden of some £16 a week on that family. The long-term supplementary benefit rate is £48 a week plus £10 for each child, which makes a total of £68. The burden placed on such families is £16 out of that £68. Moreover, many of them are young people who do not have resources behind them and have high mortgages.

One of the industries in my constituency where the Government urge people to work is the tourist industry. Those who work there often do so for three or four months a year. Because of the regulations that relate to seasonal workers, those people will not receive unemployment benefit, but will depend on supplementary benefit. On a

[Mr. Dafydd Wigley]

cyclical basis for four months every year they will lose out on part of their supplementary benefit. In other words, this is a positive disincentive to working in the tourist industry. Let that message go home in my area and elsewhere where there are many people on low incomes and the areas depend on tourism.

We have many people who depend on Manpower Services Commission schemes. We know that when they come out after a year they will rapidly face supplementary benefit after a period on unemployment benefit. Single parents are in a most invidious position.

The regulations should be rejected by the House tonight. I hope that the Minister will have the decency to withdraw them. If not, I hope that Conservative Members will stand up for those people whom they have urged to be home owners and ensure that they are not trampled on by this measure.

10.1 pm

Mr. Peter Bruinvels (Leicester, East): I am unhappy with these proposals, but for a different reason from that of the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley). I do not consider them to be particularly fair or reasonable in view of the fact that the Conservative party and Government have always encouraged people to buy their own home. As those who bought their homes were given no warning that this might happen, and as they were not encouraged to take out a mortgage insurance protection plan, this seems unjustifiably hard and mean.

This morning I heard the Minister on "Breakfast Television" making a clear case, but many people who become unemployed do so through no fault of their own. I can speak from personal experience. I found myself redundant at two days notice when I had a brand-new house and had just entered into a mortgage arrangement. Without the help of my parents and wife who was working —no thanks to Robert Maxwell, who was my employer —I would have been in grave difficulties.

Robert Maxwell may be known for many reasons, but he certainly did not pay us as and when required. I had to sue to get my redundancy pay and there was no money coming into our household. I urge my hon. and learned Friend the Minister to remember that being unemployed is not always a self-created state. In some case it takes a long time to get the money through and while waiting for it, the last thing one wants to worry about is finding additional funds.

I appreciate that the Exchequer will pay 50 per cent. of mortgage payments, but that is to address the problem from the wrong side. My hon. Friend the Minister should consider that, as some of the funds paid in supplementary benefit have been abused, the money should be paid directly to the supplementary benefit claimant's building society. That would ensure that there would be no abuse of that money.

We must give great consideration to those who may, justifiably, feel let down. I acknowledge that the concession made from 6 months to 16 weeks is a step in the right direction. The regulations will cause trouble outside the House and several of my constituents have already expressed concern, as has my Conservative association, that something should be done to ensure that in future when people buy their houses they will not face any disincentive.

We are still trying to encourage people to buy their homes, but this will deter people from doing so. While the building societies will never repossess, I am particularly worried that people who believe in a property-owning society — those in the Conservative party and in government — will feel particularly discouraged if these regulations are passed. I urged my hon. Friend to reconsider. I regret to have to inform him that I cannot support the Government tonight.

10.4 pm

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): This has been a most constructive and interesting debate. I concur with the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) in asking what it is about the festive season that brings out the worst in the Government. Perhaps they think that most people will be too busy celebrating to notice what they are doing.

According to the Government's own figures, the average cost to the families affected by the proposals will be a loss of more than £10·50 a week. Even those proposals show that either the Government miscalculated the effect and the figures that they first gave or they misinformed the Social Security Advisory Committee because the figures are higher than those upon which the committee's remarks were based.

The Government have argued that the proposals are necessary because people need an incentive to return to work. As the advisory committee stated, if it is believed —many of us do not believe this—that it is an incentive that is lacking rather than the opportunity for work, that incentive exists because only interest, not capital, payments have been met from supplementary benefits. There is no necessity to increase that so-called incentive. In fact, the way in which the regulations are likely to work suggests that there will still be an incentive to stay out of work if that work is low paid, because otherwise people affected by the regulations are likely to lose.

The reasoning and the timing of the proposals are extraordinary. They come at a time when figures for the number of people losing their homes through defaulting on mortgages doubled last year. The targeting is even more extraordinary. It is bad enough to save £23 million at the expense of the unemployed but to save it also at the expense of single parents, the sick and disabled is the action of a Government bereft of reason.

The few Conservative Members who spoke in favour of the proposals suggested that there was no problem because mortgage protection policies are available. The hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth), whom I am glad to see in his place, raised that point, as did the hon. Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry), who is no longer with us. Both hon. Members have their facts and figures wrong.

A survey of building societies has shown that less than 10 offer mortgage protection policies of the kind quoted by the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire. They are offered only with restrictions, such as no payments whatsoever for the first nine weeks of redundancy. The Minister's figures were also wrong, because he quoted premiums for a policy such as I described of £10 a year whereas the figure given by the Building Societies Association is £10 a month. That may not seem much to hon. Members but it is a substantial sum to many individuals.

Both Conservative Members to whom I have referred ought to have the wit to realise that the people who most need these policies are those least likely to be able to obtain

or afford them. Perhaps the Minister could tell us what he expects the cost of the special disregard of income from these policies to be which the Government have written into the regulations. That will give us some idea how widespread the Government expect these policies to be.

There have been a number of very courageous speeches from the Tory Benches. The hon. Member for Wellingborough (Mr. Fry) quoted the fact that it is during the early stages of redundancy that financial help is most vital because that is the stage at which problems escalate to a point from which it is impossible for families to recover. That point is endorsed by the National Consumer Council.

The hon. Members for Cardiff, North (Mr. Jones) and for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) said that the Government have consistently claimed to be the friend of the home owner. That claim needs to be amended. The Government are now the friend only of the home owner with secure employment. Under this Government, that is a small and diminishing group.

The Social Security Advisory Committee has been much quoted this evening. I should like to make one last quotation from it:

"while we are not convinced by the arguments on equity and incentives which have been advanced in support of these proposals, we acknowledge that the Government is desirous of making savings."

The only reason for the changes is the wish to save £23 million. It is impossible to call that a justification, because injustice runs through every line of the proposals.

10.9 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Lyell): The opening words of the debate for the Opposition contained the usual gross exaggeration from the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) and were followed quite soon by the usual special pleading by the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford). As one would expect from the Social Democratic party there was much talk of rights and responsibilities, with a keenness for rights, but very little keenness for responsibility. All that was in marked contrast to the excellent speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth). When one comes to serious discussions of the issues one has to look to the speeches made by my hon. Friends the Members for Cardiff, North (Mr. Jones), Wellingborough (Mr. Fry) and for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels).

There are three true issues. There is the question of fairness btween lender, borrower and taxpayer, the question of hardship and homelessness, so grotesquely exaggerated by the hon. Member for Oldham, West and the so-called question of the paltry £23 million, as if £23 million grows on trees. It does for the Opposition and the pseudo-Opposition who seem to spread the mortgage tax relief about 10 times over.

I shall first deal with the fairness between lender, borrower and tax payer. I commend to my hon. Friends the fact that if someone on average earnings were to go out of work for a short term — just three months, that is what this measure is about — and one compared his position with someone on three quarters of average earnings, his net earnings for the year would be exactly the same. However, the person who had been toiling on and whose taxes would be paying the benefit would be £1,000 — to be strictly accurate, £988 — worse off than the person getting the benefit. It is not fair to the low income taxpayer in work.

On the question of hardship and homelessness, I simply remind Opposition Members of what has been said by the Social Security Advisory Committee. It said that in most cases there was no reason to expect any significant hardship. It said that when the figure was six months, and before we secured the mortgage interest trap point. It is now four months. When one talks of evictions it is flying in the face of what is said by the building societies. They have made it entirely clear in their recent quotable statement that they will do all they can to help and there is no reason to expect that people will lose their homes as a result of this measure. There is also no reason to expect that local authorities will behave any less responsibly.

On the matter of the "paltry" £23 million, I ask my hon. Friends to consider the good measures we are taking or proposing to take. For example we are easing the capital rule to encourage thrift and raising it by a sliding scale from £3,000 to £6,000. There is the increased help we announced in the summer for the elderly in nursing homes and residential care homes and the increased help we are giving to the severly disabled by the severe disablement premium. Those measures cost respectively £10 million, £20 million and £10 million. It is that sort of priority we are freer to deal with.

This is a fair and reasonable measure. The regulations will not cause significant hardship and will not cause eviction or homelessness. The building societies have made their position clear on that. The regulations achieve a fairer balance between lender, borrower and taxpayer and they yield worthwhile savings, helping this Government, who have increased social security benefit spending by no less than 35 per cent. in real terms — £4 billion on increased benefits, £4 billion for more payments to the elderly, long-term sick and disabled and low-income families in work — to target help where it is most needed. I commend the regulations to the House.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 221, Noes 193.

Division No. 43] **[10.14 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan	Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Alexander, Richard	Bryan, Sir Paul
Alison, Rt Hon Michael	Budgen, Nick
Ancram, Michael	Bulmer, Esmond
Arnold, Tom	Burt, Alistair
Ashby, David	Butcher, John
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.	Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*	Butterfill, John
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*	Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*	Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Baldry, Tony	Carttiss, Michael
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*	Cash, William
Bellingham, Henry	Chapman, Sydney
Bendall, Vivian	Chope, Christopher
Biffen, Rt Hon John	Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Blackburn, John	Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter	Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas	Colvin, Michael
Boscawen, Hon Robert	Conway, Derek
Bottomley, Peter	Coombs, Simon
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*	Cope, John
Boyson, Dr Rhodes	Corrie, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin	Couchman, James
Bright, Graham	Crouch, David
Brinton, Tim	Currie, Mrs Edwina
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon	Dickens, Geoffrey

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roe, Mrs Marion
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Francis Maude and
Mr. David Lightbown.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'rmline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dover, Den
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Freud, Clement
Fry, Peter
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert

Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Chris Smith.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements and Resources) Amendment Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 10th December, be approved.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that it is not desired to proceed with the prayer.

Fishing Industry

10.27 pm

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Selwyn Gummer): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the proposals by the Commission of the European Communities set out in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's two unnumbered explanatory memoranda of 10th December 1986 on 1987 total allowable catches and quotas, and in the Ministry's unnumbered explanatory memorandum of 9th December 1986 on the EC-Norway fisheries agreement; of European Community Document No. 10549/86 on 1987 fish guide prices; and of the Government's intention to seek improvements in the proposed arrangements for the benefit of the United Kingdom fishing industry consistent with the requirements of conservation of fish stocks.

Before I deal with the detailed proposals before the House this evening I should like, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, to make one or two more general remarks.

First, we should see the coming negotiations on total allowable catches and quotas against the general background of the common fisheries policy and the developments over recent years. There is no doubt that over the past few years the United Kingdom's fishing industry——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will hon. Members kindly leave the Chamber quietly, please?

Mr. Gummer: There is no doubt that over the past few years there has been a considerable improvement in the state of the United Kingdom's fishing industry which went through a difficult time, not least because of the closing of its traditional fishing grounds in Iceland and elsewhere for the far distant fleet.

Prices obtained by fishermen are now higher than ever, thanks partly to a buoyant demand for fish in our increasingly health-conscious society, while the price of oil, which is one of the industry's main costs, is down. Increasing interest is being shown in the construction and modernisation of fishing vessels, and that is surely a sign that the industry is in good heart. I am not suggesting that there are not still considerable problems, and we have some major problems of restructuring, but the truth is that there is a degree of confidence in the fishing industry which is greater than it has been for some years.

The common fisheries policy is in good shape and some considerable improvements and changes have taken place, not least because of the work of my right hon. Friend the Minister during the six months of the British presidency. We are now able to say that Britain's influence on the common fisheries policy has brought about major changes, all in the direction of conservation, which we could not have expected had we looked forward from July when we took over the presidency.

I remind the House that we now have an effective method of Community policing and that the Community can close fisheries where over-fishing has taken place. countries which have not obeyed the law up to now are beginning to take very much tougher measures. Both the Dutch and the Danish Ministers have had to take measures which we in Britain have taken for granted for years. Now the Danes and the Dutch have to bring home those measures to their fishermen.

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Banff and Buchan): Does my right hon. Friend accept that the conservation measures proposed by the Community could considerably harm Scottish fishermen, who have consistently kept to their quota targets? If other countries in the EEC continue to break the targets, Scottish fishermen will be greatly penalised.

Mr. Gummer: In the past there was some justification for the argument that British fishermen, in general, as well as Scottish fishermen in particular, obeyed the rules perhaps more clearly than did other countries. I am impressed by the number of countries which have considerably improved their rules about fishing. I have already mentioned the measures taken by the Dutch Minister. The Dutch are now firm about the way in which their fishermen keep to the rules, and at long last the Danes have taken steps to implement the rules.

Given the improvement throughout the Community, my hon. Friend will agree that it is important to have rules that can be obeyed. We must be able to make people pay for over-fishing, and my hon. Friend will know that if a country over-fishes, and as a result has to close its fishery, it will have to pay back that surplus fish in the succeeding year to countries which have not been able to take their full catch. That is crucial and will deal with the problem we all know about — that our total allowable catches and quotas have been less than they ought to be because other countries have been taking too much fish. Because of that we had to have lower quotas. I hope my hon. Friend will agree that things will now be much better as a result of our hard fight.

The first three documents mentioned in the motion before the House were recommended last week by the Select Committee on European Legislation for the consideration of the House. At this time of year there is always a problem about the timetable, and last year we were unable to have the debate before the Fisheries Council meeting. The Council meets tomorrow to deal with TACs and quotas.

We cannot start negotiations with third countries until we have the full scientific evidence and recommendations on the amount of fish that will be available. We cannot accept that evidence any earlier, because if we did it would not be up to date and sufficiently accurate. We then have to negotiate with third countries, especially with Norway, in whose waters there are a great deal of the fish that we take, and we have to do that before we know how much will be available to divide among the fishermen of the Community.

I should like to thank the Select Committee on European Legislation, because it accepted the problems, met the deadlines and was prepared to make its decisions and investigations on inadequate information. It was the best that we could do, but the Select Committee was willing to accept that, and I am sure the House will agree that there is no way of doing it better without impairing our ability to make the right decisions for our fishermen. If that is the choice, we must put our fishermen first. We must accept that the debate has to take place speedily and that we must embark on the necessary research and read the papers rapidly.

Despite the evidence of rush in the procedure, the Government believe that it is preferable from the point of view of the House to have the opportunity to debate the Commission's proposals before they are discussed within the European Community, and those discussions will start tomorrow. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State

for Scotland and I shall be advancing the United Kingdom's case and fighting for British fishermen over the next two days, and we welcome the opportunity to learn what the House feels about the various proposals that are before us. As three nights have passed since I slept because we have been discussing agriculture in the Community, I hope that the House will forgive me if I am not as quick off the mark as usual if I am asked questions while going through the proposals.

The procedure last year was not ideal and we have tried to improve it this year. I am sorry that everyone has been asked to do things more quickly than any of us would like. I am disappointed, as I know the whole House will be, by the proposed levels of total allowable catch for the main white fish stocks in the North sea. The TACs have emerged since the Commission's consultation with Norway. Last year I had to be extremely critical of the way in which the Commission entered into consultations with Norway. I had personally to introduce the issue into the debate because I believed that the Commission had carried on its negotiations with little discussion with the British Government or any other Government. If we are to have that sort of negotiation, it will not help.

This year there has been dramatic reform. I can make no complaint about the way in which the negotiations have been carried out or the way in which we have been kept informed. I think the House will want to know that the new Portuguese Commissioner and his staff are clearly determined to do their job well. I say that because occasionally we find ourselves criticising those who deal with Common Market matters. The new Commissioner has been extremely helpful, and likewise he was helpful to the fishermen of England and Scotland during his visit to Britain. That has been his approach since he has learnt something about our problems.

It is disappointing that the stocks have proved less resilient than we had hoped for, and the need for firmer management and conservation measures in protecting the future viability of the fisheries has become imperative. I know that I shall carry the House with me when I say that we must put conservation first. The problem is that there is no doubt that in the past we have allowed ourselves to be gulled by the argument that if we set a higher total allowable catch than that urged by the scientists, there will be more fish to share out among the member states and everyone will feel better. Feeling better, however, they go to fish the fish, and the fish are not there. That is an unacceptable way in which to run a common fisheries policy. The policy is a great success because we make decisions fairly among ourselves, rather than hitting one another over the head with a marlin spike to enforce individual wishes. We must be honest with one another.

Unfortunately, the scientific evidence is worrying. For North sea cod, the proposed total allowable catch for next year is down from 170,000 tonnes, which was a difficult figure last year, to only 125,000 tonnes. That is the highest tonnage that the international scientists have been prepared to envisage. It would be possible for the United Kingdom to argue that the British fishing fleet could not manage on 125,000 tonnes, but I not prepared to advance that argument. If I did so, I would be saying to our fishermen, and to their children, that we are not prepared to protect their future, when we have the clearest evidence that we should do so. I am prepared to consider the evidence in the best possible light, but not with rose-tinted spectacles. I shall consider it in the best way that can be envisaged, but it would not be proper for us to try to push up the TAC. If we did so, we would be denying our fishermen a future, and the same would apply to their children.

Mr. Michael Marshall (Arundel): My right hon. Friend was helpful with a recent problem affecting some small fishermen along the south coast. As he examines this difficult matter, will he consider the possibility of trying to find some flexibility for smaller fishermen, who cannot readily move to waters with a wider variety of catch, for example, by allowing exemptions for boats of 10 m and less? That might help to meet some of the problems that are peculiar to smaller fishermen.

Mr. Gummer: I thank my hon. Friend for his kind remarks on the question of cod on the south coast. I have found that the most difficult thing in the job of trying to look after the fisheries in the United Kingdom is that every section of the fisheries industry has a different interest. The problem is that it is not a sort of homogenous family to which one can say, "All right, you have got that lot." There are all sorts of perfectly reasonable arguments between fishermen about natural historic waters, the size of boats, their need to get a certain catch to make larger boats viable — all those issues. Another problem is that of the quality of fish. Those who produce the best quality of certain kinds of fish in one area are different from those who produce the best quality in other areas.

I promise my hon. Friend that I shall continue to try to get the balance right. We are looking carefully again at the way in which we manage the quota referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel (Mr. Marshall). There is a great worry about that quota. We got it right every year before now. This is the first year that we have got it wrong. In future, it may never be like it was this year. If we change the system, we may find that we do not catch the cod that we could have caught from these much lower total allowable catches, that is a worrying thing. I shall certainly examine the point that my hon. Friend raised.

The fishermen would prefer us to get it right by being tough this year rather than continuing to have a declining biomass and smaller and smaller year classes. We have secured an increase — although it is not a big enough one — in the minimum mesh size for the North sea next year to 85 mm. The Commission has proposed a seasonal closure in the German bight in the first and last quarters of 1987 to protect the young cod. We shall support that proposal, although we must recognise that difficulty that it will entail for the industries of some other member states:

Last year I warned that we got the TAC for cod wrong. I fought against it being as high for Britain as it was last year because I thought that it would cause damage. I am afraid that my worst fears have turned out to be right. In the case of North sea haddock, I am less happy with the scientists' recommendation. It seems that it is difficult to accept that, last year, we could have 239,000 tonnes and this year we can have 120,000 tonnes. On the surface, I find that recommendation difficult. Like all those of us who are not scientists, I cannot say that I can guess better than scientists can.

I intend to support the Commission in the slightly more optimistic figure that it has suggested of 140,000 tonnes. That figure is agreed with Norway. We thought that it

[Mr. Gummer]

could be a little more, but that would be a matter of non-scientists trying to find an answer. We shall try to secure a review of the TAC early in the year, so that if a real and practical view of the scientists' ability to forecast enables us to be a bit more helpful, that is what we shall do.

I do not honestly think that I should go further than that. If I do, I should cast into doubt the whole of the conservation proposals and measures. We have been the leaders in Europe for the conservation of the fishing stocks. We have the greatest interest in conservation because we have the largest amount of stocks. We did an extremely good deal when it came to the sharing out of fish stocks. Therefore, we need to remember that conservation does us more good than any other country in the European Community. Even those among us who do not share my enthusiasm for the Common Market can at least share a kind of patriotism that will enable us to be on the same side on this occasion.

The proposed TAC for North Sea saithe is also down to 170,000 tonnes. Again, the need for restraint is clear in the interests of future conservation. In this case, it is probable that the figures are not wrong.

The whiting TAC has been held at the present level, and plaice is due for a further reduction. I have to support that. It has been largely the depredations of the Dutch that have put us into this position. I have had a long series of talks with the Dutch Minister in what are referred to as the margins of the Agriculture Council, which has been sitting for 90 hours, so there are fair margins in which to have a chat. He has made valiant efforts to make a change. He admits that there are real problems because of the over-provision of boats in Holland, about which we warned the Dutch. We told them that if they did that, they would end up with far too large a fleet, with far too little to catch. It is not the Minister who made those decisions. He has taken some brave and tough decisions himself, and as a result is extremely unpopular among his fishermen. He has not been in the fishing Ministry very long, and his fishermen appear to want to make sure that he will not be there much longer. It is nice to see a Minister who is unpopular for the right reasons. I hope that it will happen to more of us, on those matters anyway. We must be pretty tough about the plaice. We are reaping the damage done by others, but they are putting their house in order, and we must support them in what they do.

North sea sole is not a joint stock. The Commission proposes that we should follow the full rigour of the scientific advice by cutting the TAC, which was reduced last year, in half, from 20,000 tonnes to 10,000 tonnes. I must mention my interest, in the sense that, as the Member for Suffolk, Coastal, I know only too well the problems that too low a sole quota could pose for our fishermen. My family knows too well that I do not pick from Aldeburgh and Felixtowe the sole that I would like to choose. I cannot believe that we should take lightly the danger for that stock, although we shall reconsider whether there is any possibility of even the slightest increase in that quota.

I am sorry that it takes a moment or two to do this quick Cook's tour of our fishing areas. I now move across the North sea to area VI, the west of Scotland. The Commission proposes reductions in the TACs for cod, haddock, anglerfish and megrim, which are all important to our fishermen, although the scientific basis for those changes is not as clear cut as in the North sea. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay), will be anxious to pursue any opportunities for adjustment in the proposals. He will start off the negotiations tomorrow, and I shall join him after the agriculture statement tomorrow afternoon. The two of us expect to go through the night. One of the things that we shall work closely on is what we can do in that area, where there is some room for manoeuvre, but we must be careful to do it in a way that does not undermine our position on other matters.

In area VII, I am particularly aware of the importance of the sole and plaice stocks to our fishermen in the west and south-west. My hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) has pointed that out to me regularly. I have been to that area four or five times since I have been responsible for fisheries. What had to be done has been clear to me. I am glad to see that the combined United Kingdom quotas proposed for sole and plaice are up, by only 65 tonnes and 70 tonnes respectively, but that is a sufficient amount. At least it is better to go in that direction. There may be some scope for further upward adjustments on individual stocks. The precautionary TACs proposed on angler fish and megrim are down. We shall do all that we can to improve availability. The proposed TAC for cod is down, despite the evidence that this year's limit was unduly restrictive of effort in all member states. We shall look for some easement. It looks as if we have been a little over-cautious. Therefore, I hope that we can do something better there.

I am pleased at the sizeable increase in the TAC on hake, and therefore also in our quota, which will be welcome, not only for our own use. On occasion we have found that hake is also liked by others, and we are able to do the sort of deal that helps our fishermen on that front.

The stocks in areas VI and VII have been subject to quota for the first time this year following enlargement, particularly nephrops and pollack. We are still feeling our way. The allocation of quotas last year was on a provisional basis only. We aim to ensure as far as possible that our fishermen's needs are covered fully.

Western mackerel is a fishery of major importance to our pelagic sector. Rather surprisingly, the Commission has proposed a reduction in the present availability to a level below that recommended by the scientists. I believe in conservation but not in masochism. It would be better to try to do something about this. The problem is that there is clearly over-fishing by certain member states, and it continues despite the efforts of some Governments. This is a control problem. I want to improve control rather than say that the amount available to our fishermen must be cut.

I am sorry that this has been so rapid a tour of the fishing grounds. No doubt some hon. Members found that I was not able to mention their particular fishing interests. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will answer the points that are raised.

Changes in the guide prices for the 1987 marketing year have been recommended for our consideration by the Select Committee. That is a separate matter. The Commission's proposals are in three parts, but only the first is of interest to the United Kingdom, because it covers the species caught by our fleet; for example, cod, haddock, herring and mackerel. The proposals are broadly neutral, suggesting for most species increases in the range of zero to 2 per cent., although there is a proposed reduction of

10 per cent. for herring. The proposals take account of the Community's budgetary problems, the overall reduction in inflation rates and the consequences of green rate changes, from which all member states will benefit next year, except Germany and the Netherlands. The proposal for herring reflects the increased availability of this species on the world market and the significant increases in the available catch next year.

There are, of course, difficulties in obtaining agreement on prices for a wide range of fish species, but it is important that we should do so, so that the new guide prices can be brought into operation on 1 January. It should be possible to finalise an agreement close to the Commission's original proposal at tomorrow's Council meeting.

All is not right, and we shall have to take very tough decisions on some matters. They must be taken wherever the scientific evidence is clear. The great achievement of the past six months and, indeed, of the whole common fisheries policy, is that we now have a forum in which these decisions can be made in a sensible and civilised manner to protect the future of our fishermen and their sons and daughters.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): When the right hon. Gentleman goes to the next exhausting round of meetings, starting tomorrow, will he take on board the concern about the sensitive areas definition and the fear, especially in areas such as the north-east of England, which are depressed by any economic standards, that boat grants will be substantially lower than in areas such as the west of Scotland as a result of the discussions that have taken place?

Mr. Gummer: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point. My hon. Friends from the south-west have made it to me, and the hon. Gentleman's colleagues from the north-east have said the same. It is a fact of life that, if an area is designated as needing special help and is given special help, others not so designated find themselves at a disadvantage. I understand the problems. We shall consider ways to help areas that might be unduly hurt by the comparison. The situation is difficult. The hon. Gentleman will know that national rivalries and histories are involved, not the least of which is the fact that the English fleet suffered most from the ending of the availability of the cod fishery off Iceland. It has taken longer for the English fleet to begin to find a new place for itself, and therefore it finds it difficult to accept occasions of this sort. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, who, of course, has a particular interest in Scotland, will agree that there are particular problems of this kind.

10.53 pm

Mr. Stuart Randall (Kingston upon Hull, West): Labour Members are glad that we have the opportunity to debate these matters before they are finally negotiated in the Fisheries Council, unlike last year. I appreciate the Minister's comments about having to rush his consideration of these matters, but it has been of concern to all of us and to the industry that we are embarking on this debate without having seen the documents, which were only received by the industry on Friday. That made consideration difficult, and I hope that we have as much information as possible in future.

Mr. Gummer *indicated assent.*

Mr. Randall: I appreciate the Minister's agreement.

There is a general feeling in the industry that 1986 has been quite a good year. The drop in oil prices reduced operating costs, and the firm prices of fish in the market place meant that incomes were high. However, there is still a substantial problem of indebtedness in the industry, especially in England and Wales, where many of the fishing vessels are antiquated and under-engined and do not compare in efficiency with part of the Scottish fleet or with some of the fleets of our European partners.

Mr. McQuarrie: Although the hon. Gentleman says that there are problems only in Wales, he will no doubt accept that the same problems apply to Scottish fishermen. They have had to replace their old vessels so that they can catch fish in our difficult seas.

Mr. Randall: I am interested in that intervention, but I referred to part of the Scottish fleet. Although there has been considerably greater investment in total in Scotland compared with England and Wales, I understand that parts of the Scottish fleet still need investment and still have inefficient and old vessels.

However, the point is that poor profitability has led in general to under-investment and to unacceptable levels of inefficiency. Further massive strides need to be made by the industry in the marketing and quality control of fish. In 1986, only a small percentage of the total amount of fresh fish was sold in supermarkets. I believe that there is immense scope for enhancing the marketing and sale of fresh fish. The sale of pelagic species, however, and particularly of herring, could have been more successful in terms of income if outlets other than the monopolistic eastern European klondykers had been available to the industry.

In 1986, there has been more optimism and higher morale in the industry. However, the industry believes that the quotas that the Government have negotiated for 1987 will have a very damaging effect because of their severity. I noted carefully what the Minister said about conservation. However, that is what the industry is saying, and it is important that we should put on record what those involved feel. The question of severity applies in particular to cod and haddock, because there will be cuts of 25 and 30 per cent. respectively for the 1987 quotas. As a result of the cuts, the loss of income to the industry has been estimated at about £40 million for 1987.

My hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) is unable to attend the debate, but he has expressed serious concern about the impact on the fishermen of Great Grimsby, and in particular about the simultaneous effect of the cuts in the cod and haddock quotas, which are the main white fish sources. He believes that the industry should be financially compensated by the Government because of the severity involved.

The core of the common fisheries policy is fishery management and enforcement. As we all know, the policy has been in operation since early 1983. However, if it is to be successful, seasonal closures of some fisheries may be necessary to ensure that juvenile species or stocks are not damaged. Moreover, control over mesh size must be enforced. I understand that the French are still not doing that satisfactorily, and I know that hon. Members on both sides of the House believe that member states should do more to stop such abuse.

I listened carefully to what the Minister said about the Dutch. We know that in practice they are still landing

[Mr Kendall]

more than their allocated quotas and that must be cut out. The Irish could also do more on enforcement. I understand that in some sectors the United Kingdom fishery protection personnel spend more time boarding British vessels than boarding vessels of all the other EEC countries put together. I would like the Minister to explain why he is permitting this behaviour while abuses by other member states still take place.

In relative terms, I understand that the efforts and resources provided by the other member states in enforcement is not as great as that provided by the United Kingdom. Are not these shortfalls in resources accounting, at least to some extent, for the breakdown of the quota system? I also understand that the Commission has produced a paper that highlights some of the enforcement problems associated with the common fisheries policy, and provides information on what needs concentrated attention. Will the Minister tell us more about this and about what he expects to ensue from it?

In addition, a set of control regulations, to which the Minister did not refer, which deal with matters such as overfishing and quotas was recently agreed. What worries me about this system is that, if certain unscrupulous people or member states purposely break quotas, innocent people as well as the guilty can be penalised and lose their livelihoods. I would appreciate it if the Minister would comment on what I believe to be a serious matter. It is wrong to have a system that creates such anomalies.

A notable characteristic of the common fisheries policy are the substantial fluctuations that we get in the annual quotas. This year is no exception. We have had big reductions in cod, haddock and other species. This is clearly undesirable for the industry and could make investment programmes difficult to implement. I do not want to take the time of the House analysing all the reasons for these large quota fluctuations. However, the methods of the marine scientists in assessing fish stock levels are regarded as imprecise, as an art rather than a science. It should be added that the quality of estimates and research is related to the amount of resources. Is the Minister satisfied that sufficient resources are being devoted to this work?

The fishing industry is concerned that the marine scientists have not yet been able to complete their work on haddock levels and have had to produce a temporary quota for 1987. As the Minister has pointed out, this will be reviewed in May. Does the Minister have any views about stabilising total allowable catches? The industry has suggested that consideration should be given to setting TACs for three years rather than one, and that variations should not exceed 20 per cent. I would welcome the Ministers' comments on these points.

The United Kingdom quota for the important species of cod has been reduced from 76,000 tonnes for 1986 to 55,000 tonnes for the coming year. This is a cut of about 25 per cent. in the United Kingdom fishing quota. In 1986, the industry was unable to make up all its quota because of over-fishing and hence poor catch rates. The fish were just not there to be caught. The industry seems to have accepted that the TACs for 1987 will have to come down, but the total EEC TAC of 125,000 tonnes for 1987 compared with 170,000 tonnes for 1986 is regarded by the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations as being too severe for the industry to cope with. The Scottish Fishermen's Federation also supports that view.

I believe that the industry is anxious to appear responsible, but it believes that another 10,000 tonnes of cod could be added to the United Kingdom 1987 quota without imposing unreasonable strain on the quota management regime. The NFFO believes that the proposed quota will force fishermen to break their quotas, which could result in discarded fish, which is bad for conservation and entails a loss of income to the fishermen.

I would welcome the Minister's comments on the common sense of increasing the quota by 10,000 tonnes, although I noted what the Minister of State said about conservation. I understand that the marine scientists proposed to Fisheries Ministers a partial—I think six-month—closure of the Heligoland and German Bight fishery for conservation of cod during the spawning period. Why was that important recommendation rejected?

As for haddock, there is considerable alarm in the industry that there is to be a cut in quota of about 30 per cent. for 1987. The total TAC will drop from about 230,000 tonnes for 1986 to about 140,000 tonnes for 1987. The United Kingdom quota will drop from about 151,000 tonnes to about 101,000 tonnes. The industry feels that there is a much stronger case for increasing the quota for haddock as stocks are regarded as stronger than was estimated, especially as the scientists admitted that they made an error when estimating the number of juvenile fish in 1983.

The industry will lose a substantial amount of income as a result of the cod and haddock quota reductions because the prices for those species are so high. That will create difficulty for the industry in the coming year.

I understand that it has been agreed that the scientists will carry out the review of haddock stocks in May to see whether the TAC can be increased. Why can it not be done now? I should like an explanation from the Minister. That would enable fishermen to plan their fishing for the year much more effectively, whereas a change in May will introduce special difficulties.

Does the Minister accept the case for relaxing the haddock quota by about 20,000 tonnes? Is that not specially desirable, bearing in mind the fact that the cod quota has been cut? Perhaps he will tell us why he appeared to be taking such a strong line on that species.

The quota for saithe has been reduced from 20,300 tonnes in 1986 to 16,200 tonnes for 1987. Why? Does the Minister realise that saithe is an important home water species for the larger vessels from ports such as Aberdeen, Fleetwood and Hull? Fishermen in those areas will be hard hit by the quota reduction.

Plaice and sole quotas are also being reduced. I have been led to believe that there is a reduction in sole catches because of the uncontrolled development of the Dutch beamer fleet. What is the Minister doing about the relaxed enforcement by the Dutch Government of quotas on that species? Although discussions with the Dutch are taking place, I believe that much more progress must be made. Perhaps, when he is sleeping tonight, the Minister of State will dream how he will deal with the problem of the Dutch.

The pelagic fishermen seem not too unhappy with the herring deal. Norway will have about 55,000 tonnes from European Community waters, but the industry is concerned at a footnote which makes it clear that a further

10,000 tonnes of herring could be allocated to Norway. That could push the Norwegian share up to 65,000 tonnes, which would be unacceptable to the United Kingdom industry. Will the Minister clarify what that footnote is about and what the Norwegian tonnage of herring will be? Will it be 55,000 or 65,000? I should like a detailed response on that.

The United Kingdom fishing industry has been worried that during the past 18 months there has been a sharp increase in the number of ex-Spanish vessels on the United Kingdom shipping register. It is estimated that by the end of the year there will be 90 such vessels. The Spanish have been fishing mainly for hake, a species in which until recently the United Kingdom showed little interest. But now the position has changed and United Kingdom fishermen want to exploit those quotas themselves. Clearly, there is a clash of interest.

Under the common agricultural policy, quotas are allocated to a particular country on the assumption that they will benefit that country. Under the present arrangement, nominal ownership of those vessels is with the United Kingdom, but beneficial ownership is with the Spaniards. In other words, the fish is being landed for Spanish markets and the United Kingdom industry is not benefiting from it It has been reported that one of the United Kingdom companies operating Spanish fishing vessels is taking the Government to court on this matter. I am not sure whether the matter is sub judice, but I would welcome the Minister telling us exactly what the Government policy is on this important matter because it affects the use of United Kingdom quotas.

An important squid fishery is the Falklands. The major problem of overfishing comes from the considerable presence of Eastern European fishermen. Licences were due to be allocated from 12 December. Will the Minister tell us what progress is being made and what the plans are for policing? *[Interruption.]* I accept that that may not be in the document, but Rockall squid fishery is, and when talking about squid fishing, one cannot separate one fishery from another.

Many people in the industry are worried about exploiting that fishery, but at the same time they are concerned about security. It will impede investment if we cannot be sure that the Royal Navy will lend a hand if times get tough. Perhaps the Minister will tell us whether the Navy is on station?

It is encouraging to see fish being promoted as a health food. That is good news. But with the proposed cuts in quotas, especially in cod and haddock, it seems likely that fish prices could rise unacceptably through shortages. Does the Minister agree that those shortages in species could dampen the demand for fish, impeding the promotional work that has been going on? I would welcome the Minister's comments on that important point.

11.13 pm

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Banff and Buchan): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in this debate. Because of the shortage of time, I propose to deal with only one of the unnumbered documents which relates to the proposal for a Council regulation, fixing for certain fish stock and groups of fish stocks occurring in the Commission fishing zone, provisional total allowable catches for 1987; the provisional share of those TACs available to the Community; the allocation of the share between member states in quotas; and the conditions under which TACs may be fished.

My right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has been widely accepted by the fishermen in my constituency and the rest of Scotland as being sympathetic to their cause. He will lose that respect if he is not seen to be fighting for the fishermen when he attends the Fisheries Council meeting tomorrow. The Government successfully secured the common fisheries policy in 1983 and that was hailed by the fishing industry as the greatest step forward for many years. The industry went from strength to strength, and rightly so when we consider the hazards that the fishermen have to face. However, we are now taking steps backward instead of forward on the security that the common fisheries policy was meant to maintain.

We have to consider tonight a number of EEC documents that are mind-boggling. There are also certain documents of which we have been asked only to take note but there is no real security for the fishermen because the Council of Ministers has not finalised the decisions.

I sincerely hope that the Minister who, as he has said, has not slept for three nights because of the CAP discussions in Brussels and who is to return to Brussels tomorrow to discuss the very important matter of the TACs for 1987, will read these speeches before he departs and learn of the serious concern of the fishermen of the north-east of Scotland, and especially of those in my constituency, at the proposals which can only do immeasurable damage to their livelihoods.

I want to consider the two species to which the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall) referred, which are the mainstay of the fishermen in my constituency and which are liable to suffer in the proposals before the Community.

The first of these is haddock. The scientists say that they over-estimated the 1983 catch very heavily—by as much as 70 per cent. That, as we would all accept, was a gross error. They had to adjust downwards as a result. The scientists reached the conclusion that the haddock catch for 1986 would be no more than 140,000 tonnes for the whole Community. The same scientists have set the TAC for the Community and Norway at 230,000 tonnes. They say that on their estimates, the total TAC caught by the Community fishermen will be 140,000 tonnes,. That is absolute nonsense when we consider the facts. The United Kingdom fishing fleet alone will catch about 140,000 tonnes before the end of 1986. In addition, the Danes have 23,000 tonnes of haddock and have now stopped fishing because that is their allowable quota. On top of that, the Norwegians, French, Dutch and Germans have all been catching the quota to give a TAC of 230,000 tonnes. It is obvious that, as usual, the scientists have got it wrong.

The Scottish fishermen cannot deal as the position stands because that would mean a loss in catching of something like 45,000 tonnes. They have always been accused of going to Brussels seeking a rise in the TAC. Last year it was not the fishermen from Scotland or the United Kingdom who wanted a rise in TAC. It was the scientists who fixed the TAC in the upward direction. Naturally, the fishermen accepted that.

That only highlights once more that the scientists got it wrong. Why is that the scientists can get away with a TAC reduction of some 50 per cent. when the fishermen cannot accept that level of fishing as being sufficient to

[Mr. Albert McQuarrie]

gain their livelihood? That is no way in which to run an industry. A cut of some 50 per cent. in normal production in any industry would cause serious problems. That industry could not hope to succeed. No one could hope to continue to run such an industry. Why has no one asked the fishermen what they think? At the end of the day, who goes out to fish? The scientists do not go out, looking into scientific registers. The fishermen go out into the deep waters. They know where the catch is to be found. Why do the scientists continually fail to ask the fishermen to give them their views on this matter?

Although I am aware that the massive cut will be resisted by the fishermen, they are the first to admit that conservation must be securely considered. I am sure, as the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West has said, that if a realistic figure such as 160,000 tonnes was proposed for the TAC for the Community, the Scottish fishermen would be prepared to go along with it. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Minister of State and my hon. Friend who is to reply, since my right hon. Friend has left us to get some sleep so that he can bring pressure on the Council tomorrow morning, will be able to tell the United Kingdom fishermen that they will accept that we require a TAC of 160,000 tonnes. I hope that that will be my right hon. Friend's objective when he goes to Brussels tomorrow along with my right hon. Friend the Minister of State.

The second species I want to deal with is cod. The TAC for the current year for the Community is 170,000 tonnes. The deal proposed for 1987 by the Community is 125,000 tonnes. The 170,000 tonnes included not only the Community, but Norway. The original recommendation made by the scientists was 150,000. However, the scientists are now proposing 125,000 tonnes.

It is recognised that cod, the jewel in the crown of the fishing industry, the species of which the fishermen endeavour to catch as much as possible, has now been decimated in its quota. It is recognised by the fishing industry that there must be conservation. However, I do not consider that it is realistic to ask the fishermen to accept a cut of 45,000 tonnes in that species, which is already difficult to catch because there is so little of it. I am sure that the fishermen would be prepared to go along with a TAC of 135,000 tonnes, which is only a 10,000 tonnes increase. I must ask my hon. Friend to tell the House that that will be his resolve and the resolve of my right hon. Friend the Minister of State when they go to Brussels tomorrow.

There is a precedent for that request. In the eleventh-hour negotiations last year, the North sea plaice TAC was increased by 10,000 tonnes to suit the Dutch. In those circumstances my right hon. Friend and my hon. Friend have a weapon they can use in getting the best cod deal for the United Kingdom fishermen, which will guarantee that they will be able to earn a living, or at least part of a living, so long as they are able to fish that species.

My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland addressed the Scottish Fish Merchants' Federation in Aberdeen last Friday about the processing industry. That industry will suffer very severely if the cuts are imposed by the EEC when the decision is made tomorrow. My hon. Friend said:

"The successes of the catching sector should provide opportunities for the processing sector . . . There has been a great deal of press publicity about the probable cuts in the total allowable catches next year for white fish, and particularly for haddock. It is understandable that the industry should be concerned, particularly the processing sector where there is anxiety about the possible employment consequences."

In a constituency such as mine, were there is a large number of processing industries, my hon. Friend has to take cognisance of his own words. There is considerable concern because there will be a considerable loss of fish coming on to the markets in my constituency and other constituencies in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. We are not only talking about the fisherman, but the fishing industry as a whole, especially the processing part of the industry.

My hon. Friend then went on to say:

"The white fish stocks—indeed all the fish stocks—are vital to the Scottish industry and they must be protected to ensure a continuing and flourishing fishing industry."

Is that not exactly what we intended in the 1983 common fisheries policy? That was intended to secure the safety of the fishing and processing industries for the foreseeable future.

Concern has been expressed about the haddock TAC. The scientists said that the TAC for 1987 should be 120,000 tonnes. That figure has now been increased by 20,000 tonnes. A TAC for 1987 of 140,000 tonnes is significantly greater than the TAC for 1986. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland said that everybody recognised that the TAC for 1986 was too high and that catches would fall far short of it.

I said earlier that there is no way in which the Community's TAC of 230,000 tonnes will not be reached. The Scottish fishing industry will certainly reach the TAC figure of 140,000 tonnes.

My hon. Friend said:

"The TAC will be reviewed in the middle of next year, in the light of the final catch figures for 1986. It may be possible to increase the TAC, if the stock at that time seem healthier than the scientists currently fear."

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West rightly asked why the scientists should be allowed to decide in the spring of 1987 whether the TAC should be increased. Why should not the TAC be increased now? Why should the scientists be allowed to dominate this decision? The fishermen should be consulted. From time immemorial the scientists have always got it wrong. They got it wrong last year; they got it wrong this year. Let us make sure that they do not get it wrong next year, to the detriment of fishermen in the whole of the United Kingdom, but in particular to the detriment of Scottish fishermen.

11.26 pm

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): This debate, before the final decision is taken, is to be welcomed. The Ministers who will be representing United Kingdom interests tomorrow will therefore be fully aware of the views of right hon. and hon. Members on all sides of the House.

The TAC has dominated the debate so far, in particular the white fish TAC. The explanatory memorandum points out that for the main white fish stocks in the North sea the proposed TACs, and consequently the United Kingdom quotas, will be substantially lower than in 1986. Reference has already been made to the TAC for cod and haddock.

The right hon. Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer) was sceptical about the scientific information upon which the TAC for 1987 has been based. The

justification for such a low TAC is that in earlier years it was overestimated. We cannot therefore be entirely satisfied that the scientific prognosis for 1987 is right. The great variation between the 1986 TAC, particularly for haddock, and the proposed 1987 TAC is causing considerable concern. The Minister said that some time next year he would try to secure a review of the TAC. However, the Opposition believe that he should try to do something about it now, so that fishermen may have some confidence about the 1987 TAC.

There should be no more than a 10 to 15 per cent. change in the TAC from one year to another. Scottish fishing merchants have said that there ought to be a flexible five-year plan that leads to much narrower tolerances from one year to another. That is an important point. That is particularly important when planning for those parts of the country that have a sectoral quota. A change as large as that proposed for 1987 could put strains on parts of country, including my constituency, with a sectoral quota.

As the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie) rightly pointed out, we should not lose sight of the implications of a much reduced TAC for the processing industry. That industry is important in providing employment around our coasts. Onshore jobs are important, and, clearly, if the volume of the catch is to be considerably reduced in 1987 it will have implications for the processing industry and the continuity of employment for those who find valuable work in such industries. Therefore, I urge the Under-Secretary of State to convey to his right hon. Friend the Minister that we hope that they will be pressing for an increase of at least some 15,000 to 20,000 tonnes more, particularly on the haddock quota.

The amount of white fish that we have been allowed obviously has something to do with a trade-off with Norway, and has certain implications for the amount of herring that will be caught next year. The Minister of State was right to say that he was far more satisfied, as I am sure the House is, with the way that negotiations with Norway have proceeded this year compared with last year. Considerable dissatisfaction was expressed last year with the powers that the European Commission assumed to agree a deal with Norway. That has not been the case this year and for that we are glad.

The agreement has been heralded as one which, on the face of it, would appear to say that this year 29 per cent. of the North sea herring stocks will be fished by Norway. Whereas last year the 40 per cent. agreement gave rise to considerable criticism within the industry, the new agreement would, at first glance, appear to be a remarkable improvement. However, in many respects it is a question of fiddling with figures. As I understand the position, the 29 per cent. is a figure based on the areas 4A, B and C in the North sea, and it is rare that the Norwegian vessels would fish in the southern North sea. If one takes what has been allowed to Norway from areas 4A and B, that goes up to 32 per cent. of the stocks. If one then takes the extra 50,000 tonnes which have been allocated to Norway, that brings the figure back up to 40 per cent. — the figure which caused so much controversy last year.

It may well be that the overall basis of the agreement for future years is a relatively satisfactory one, but we should not lose sight of the fact that what it appears will happen in 1987 is really no better than what we had to put up with in 1986.

I hope that the Minister will say something about the efforts that have been made by the Sea Fish Industry Authority to promote the marketing of herring. The consumer clearly lost the taste for herring during the years when the herring fishery was closed. I cannot understand why, because I like herring. But there is still much to be done to promote the marketing of herring and I should like to hear what is being done to achieve that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) has mentioned the recent proposals for grants for boat building. As I recall, in the preamble to the legislation on the common fisheries policy the European Community said that it would have particular regard to the more peripheral areas of the Community where the fishing industry was of considerable importance in providing employment. I make no bones about it: the proposals that have emanated from the EC are welcome in my constituency. At a time when my constituency is having to face up to some of the impact, particularly on employment, of the downturn of the oil industry, that boost is welcome.

I can understand the disappointment of my hon. Friends the Members for Berwick-upon-Tweed and for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), who has an important fishing industry operating out of Eyemouth. Other hon. Members such as the hon. Members for Kingston upon Hull constituencies have fishing industries. We are conscious that the great fishing ports of Grimsby and Hull, which were great when I was doing geography at school, no longer have the fishing industry wealth that they once had. Those areas need support and no doubt will look to the Government to provide it.

While one would welcome any sign that those areas could continue to rely on a considerable measure of national support, we would not like to see national measures being used to neutralise what are clearly the objectives of the Community in supporting peripheral areas. I am sure that those two paths can quite consistently be followed.

The Minister has fishing interests in his constituency and will know that there can be considerable delay in the payment of EEC grants to fishermen. Often, the national grant is welcome because of the speed with which it is processed. However welcome the increased grant from the EEC, the fact that it sometimes takes a long time to come through means that those depending on it have to pay considerable interest charges. I am sure that the Minister must have been asked by fishermen in his constituency whether anything could be done to speed up the processing of these grants. If that could be done, their value would be even greater than the amount of the increase in the grants.

The motion talks about conservation and I should like to raise a small but important point which is of interest to those who fish in the North sea. I understand that all EEC vessels — of course, that includes all United Kingdom vessels — are obliged to have a calibration graph for the measurement of stocks. Norwegian boats are not required to have such calibrated tanks. Our vessels fishing Norwegian waters are obliged to abide by the Norwegian regulations. Can the Minister tell us whether any moves

[Mr. James Wallace]

are being considered in the EEC to oblige Norwegian vessels to comply with the stringent regulations laid on our vessels?

My final point is about the review of pelagic licensing. I think that in October 1985 I asked the Minister when we could expect a report or statement on the outcome of the review. He said that he hoped the report would be available by Cristmas. That was Christmas 1985 and we are within days of Christmas 1986 and still waiting for that report. It is important for those in the industry and for people engaged in the fishing boat building industry to have that report. They would like to see the position clarified because it is important for continuity of ordering. Perhaps the Minister can tell us when the outcome of the review is likely to be announced.

The common fisheries policy is one of the success stories of the EEC. We can all find things to criticise and point to areas which could be improved, but the policy has brought some stability, and that is welcome. As the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan said, the great fluctuations being foreshadowed for 1987 shake that stability to a considerable extent. I should be grateful if the Minister in his negotiations tomorrow can do anything to retrieve something of the position. If he can do that, he will have our support.

11.40 pm

Mr. Peter Griffiths (Portsmouth, North): I welcome the comments that my right hon. Friend the Minister of State made in responding to an intervention about the need to maintain a balance between the interests of fishermen using different sizes of vessels. I want to speak briefly in support of the concept of split quotas or a reserved part of quotas for inshore fishermen, especially those who use vessels that are shorter than 10 m.

Bodies such as Southern Commercial Fishermen, which represent family fishermen using small inshore vessels in the Solent and the south coast area, tell me how their members could have been faced with virtual disaster had the emergency restrictions on cod fishing not been able to be lifted because of arrangements with our friends in Ireland. At that stage virtually no cod had been taken by inshore fishermen in the area.

Inshore fishermen are perhaps the most concerned about the conservation of stocks. They are family fishermen and they wish to see stocks conserved from one generation to the next. They have been faced over the years with damage to their income in the Solent area from dredging, oil spillage and seismic surveys. They are now faced with the threat of reduced quotas. The time may arrive when the quotas are taken by larger vessels before the opportunity for catches ever arises for the inshore fishermen in the central southern part of England.

It is important that the Ministry takes on board the needs of the inshore fishermen in the area. When they invest in new vessels or equipment, it is often their virtual life savings that are involved. When they are faced with the threat of a reduction in the minimum size of bass to be caught and changes in mesh sizes, there is an enormous threat to their family incomes. Whatever the quotas may be — I am sure that inshore fishermen accept quota limits as much as anyone else—it ir important that the inshore fishermen get a fair share. Whatever the size of the quota, there should be a reserved share available to them.

11.42 pm

Mr. Michael Marshall (Arundel): I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute briefly to the debate. I shall be brief because I know that others want to make contributions.

I endorse the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, North (Mr. Griffiths). I, too, speak on behalf of inshore fishermen. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland will know that I made representations to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food following meetings with local fishermen in my constituency on 21 November. Their concerns were precisely those that affect the Solent fishermen. I sought by way of an intervention in my right hon. Friend's speech to urge upon him the case for considering exemptions for those operating with boats of 10 m or less. I did so because under the present arrangements it is the fact that there are no controls over the smaller boats, but if we run into problems with our quota the operators of these boats will be faced at the year end with the destruction of their businesses and livelihoods.

Surely that cannot be justified, and that is why I was urging exemption across the board for the inshore fishermen. They cannot go out into the wider waters where there is a greater variety of catch to make up the cod which is crucial to them. That is my sole point, and it is one that I understand my right hon. Friend will consider further. I urge my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary to say that he recognises my concern, that of my hon. Friend the Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson), who raised the matter on an Adjournment debate, and that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins), along with many others who represent constituencies along the south coast. Some of them are in their places and hoping to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

11.44 pm

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): In Hastings and Rye we like catching fish, and we do not like cod bans that are imposed with 72 hours' notice. I say to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, who I fully understand cannot be with us at this moment, and to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, who is to reply, that in the late 20th century we should be able to see the statistics of the cod catch developing and those of any other catch, note what is happening and not inflict upon men who have devoted their lives to fishing—I am delighted to say that in my constituency there is a growing and thriving industry —an abrupt and worrying ban on the fishing of cod. I have written to my right hon. Friend. After a month I eagerly await a reply. Can we hope that this type of ban will not abruptly be inflicted upon us again? It is not only unfair but it is unreasonable and totally unnecessary.

The beamers have departed. We welcome that departure, but we still have another problem, and that is the gravel deposits off the coast of Sussex. Those gravel deposits have been there since before the time of William the Conqueror and before my family landed at Hastings. I do not like the occasional forays into those gravel deposits. Whenever somebody applies to dig them out, officials from the Department of the Environment and other people come forward. They adjudicate and

pontificate — perhaps they pontificate and then adjudicate — and come up with the answer, "No, you cannot dig them out."

Will the Minister kindly instruct the foreigners — as we in Sussex call them, no matter where they come from — who want to dig out those gravel deposits, to stop? There is no scientific evidence against our belief that the area is the spawning ground for our plaice and cod, which provide Dover sole and Dover plaice — in other words, our fish and chips. Will the Ministry do something that will convince the Department of the Environment to stop these occasional forays into the gravel deposits?

I wish to make two points of praise that I think are not heard in the House as often as they should be. First, the Royal Navy does a wonderful job in fishery protection. We should wholeheartedly praise the Royal Navy and record the appreciation of all those around the coast of the British Isles for the job that it does. In the heyday of our attempts to negotiate sensible limits within the Common Market, we used to criticise the Royal Navy. The Royal Navy chaps do a super job in all weathers.

People such as coxswain Joe Martin and his crew in Hastings must also be praised. In all weathers they protect our fishermen all around the coast. They do wonderful work for the people who go to sea in their ships in all weathers. We should praise and acknowledge them at this time.

11.47 pm

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): Human nature being what it is, it is perhaps in the nature of this debate that we tend to concentrate on our fears and on what has gone wrong. Therefore, perhaps I should break a little with tradition and put on record that about 10 days ago, the record for landing the most valuable catch in Newlyn, the main port in my constituency was broken twice in the same day. Not all is gloom in the fishing industry—far from it.

I shall now refer to my concerns and my fears. First, the subject of sensitive areas has been referred to. Will my right hon. Friend the Minister tell us the basis for the designation of such sensitive areas? The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) correctly referred to the emphasis that is supposed to have been placed on peripherality. Cornwall has been excluded. Is that as a result of what is known as the Hague agreement? Incidentally, that agreement was entered into by the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) when he was Foreign Secretary.

I shall approach the next topic with some sensitivity, as my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland is to reply on behalf of the Government. Last week I read a story in *Fishing News* under the headline

"Pursers to head for south-west".

I do not wish to stir up controversy at this late hour of the night, particularly because of at least one person who is listening to the debate. Nevertheless, I delicately suggest that it might be just as well for the Government to ensure that factory ships are not stationed at Falmouth, because it is inside the mackerel box. I do not wish to suggest that our friends from northern waters would dare to fish in the mackerel box, it being a conservation area, but the temptation might be a little too strong if they have to steam through that box to take landings to factory ships. Policing will be difficult in those circumstances. Therefore, I say, please, no factory ships at Falmouth, but if our friends from Scotland come down and fish outside the box, of course they can do so.

I hurriedly pass on to something that we can all make common cause on — the Spanish threat, which has been mentioned in the debate. It is real, and growing. In a parliamentary answer on 25 November, my right hon. Friend the Minister of State gave me what he reckoned were the latest figures on the number of Spanish boats. I regard them as Spanish boats — they are the boats that either have been transferred to our register, or, according to a new phrase that seems to have entered the language, they are ex-United Kingdom vessels on the register that

"are beneficially owned by Spanish interests." — [*Official Report*, 25, November 1986; Vol. 106, c. *184*.]

According to my right hon. Friend, the latest figure is that there are now 73 such boats, compared with 54 a year ago — an increase of 19. Like the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall), my information is that the number is larger than that. Perhaps some of them are still being transferred. The number is increasing. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that probably by the end of the year there will be about 100 of those vessels. It is a scandal that we have allowed this threat to grow. It must end. I shall go on fighting this issue until the Government bring it to an end.

11.51 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. John MacKay): We have had, as is usual, an interesting debate on fisheries. It has ranged more widely than the documents before us. I assure my hon. Friends and Opposition Members that my right hon. Friend the Minister of State and I will read carefully what they have said on those other matters. I hope that my hon. Friends will forgive me if I concentrate on the matters that my right hon. Friend and I have to discuss in Brussels tomorrow. I hope that the outcome of the Fisheries Council will be as successful from the British point of view as the outcome of the Agriculture Council over the past days has been for British farming.

I think that the right place to start is with the problem of the cod and haddock TACs. Undoubtedly, the industry is concerned about the reduction proposed by the scientists and the Commission in the TACs for those two most important white fish stocks in the North sea. It is well worth reminding the House that the scientists advised a figure of 120,000 tonnes. In the negotiations with Norway, we reached a figure of 140,000 tonnes, 20,000 tonnes above the figure recommended by the scientists.

I heard my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. McQuarrie), and I well understand his plea that we should try to find another 20,000 tonnes, but one has to be cautious about that. My hon. Friend quoted my speech in Aberdeen last Friday, but I noticed that he did not quote the end of it, which was also reported, when I said that Ministers had to be careful that we did not put quotas on fish that meant that the fishermen lived now and paid later. It is not just next year's fishing that has to be protected, but fishing and jobs in the years after that.

I say to hon. Members who mentioned the matter that my right hon. Friend and I are well aware of the problem, but we have to take not just next year but the longer term into view. We have agreed that a review will be carried out

[Mr. John MacKay]

as early as possible next year, but we have to wait for the final 1986 catch details, which will not be known for some time.

I do not agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan that 140,000 tonnes is out of the ordinary. In fact, it is above the level of the landings in three years this decade—1980, 1981 and 1984. My hon. Friend may be right when he tells me that landing this year will be up to the quota level, but that just underlines the importance of waiting before we move any further from the scientists' advice until we have this year's final figure. There will be no one more pleased than me if, when that evidence comes before us, we can move this important quota up to 165,000 tonnes, or as near as we can get to it.

I think that everyone agrees that the stock of North Sea cod is under pressure. The fishermen have explained the argument about haddock to me, but there is little argument about cod. The 125,000 tonnes agreed with Norway was the maximum figure that the scientists were prepared to allow. Although we shall consider the details in the Fisheries Council, it would be unfair to everyone to suggest that, just because it would be nice to come back with more fish, we should do so. As I said, the dangers for the following years are considerable.

There was no reference to the following point, but I shall mention it now. We need only look back to see what happened to herring in the North sea. The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) said that the market and the taste were lost. Although we now have a good amount of herring, we have lost much of the British market. That reminds us of the danger of overfishing and how quickly the stock can decrease if the pressure becomes too great. That goes to the point about why we cannot plan three or five years ahead.

I was asked why the saithe TAC has decreased. This reflects the scientific advice that fishing mortality is at its highest level since 1970 and has led to a low level of spawning stock. Obviously, that is serious.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall) mentioned other possible means of conservation and drew my attention in particular to the German bight closure. He asked why the idea had been rejected. It has not been rejected. We are supporting it, but, as my right hon. Friend the Minister said, it would mean considerable difficulties for other member states. I cannot promise the House that we shall achieve that aim, but it has not been rejected at this stage. I am sure that everyone fully recognises the difficulties.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of the proposals by the Commission of the European Communities set out in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's two unnumbered explanatory memoranda of 10th December 1986 on 1987 total allowable catches and quotas, and in the Ministry's unnumbered explanatory memorandum of 9th December 1986 on the EC-Norway fisheries agreement; of European Community Document No. 10549/86 on 1987 fish guide prices; and of the Government's intention to seek improvements in the proposed arrangements for the benefit of the United Kingdom fishing industry consistent with the requirements of conservation of fish stocks.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

Merchant Shipping

That the draft General Lighthouse Authorities (Beacons: Hyperbolic Systems) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 17th November, be approved.

Overseas Development and Co-operation

That the draft Asian Development Bank (Fourth Replenishment of the Asian Development Fund) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 21st November, be approved.

Rehabilitation of Offenders

That the draft Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment No. 2) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 2nd December, be approved.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

Common Land Register

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

11.57 pm

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to raise the specific case of one of my constituents and the general issue that flows from that case. This matter relates to Mr. Andrew Castellain, who lives in the old coastguard station at Zennor on the north coast in my constituency not far from Land's End. Mr. Castellain has owned his house for some years. To his utter amazement, not long ago he discovered that some years ago his house had been registered as common land. I found that incredible when he came to see me, and I suspect that any other hon. Member, including my hon. Friend the Minister, would think so, too.

What happened was that under the Commons Registration Act 1965, all that was initially required was that any person should register provisionally what he or she thought was common land. There was a lady in my constituency, who has since died, who was secretary of the West Cornwall footpath preservation society. She was a public-spirited lady, and she fulfilled that requirement under the Act and went round registering what she thought was common land. She did it in good faith, but perhaps her enthusiasm was not matched by her accuracy. Be that as it may, by one means or another Mr. Castellain's property was included in the map that she submitted to Cornwall county council, the registration authority under the 1965 Act.

Under that Act, which you will remember well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a period of time in which objectors to registration could press their objections. I believe that that period was about three and a half years, although a much longer period was recommended by the Royal Commission that drew up the report that formed the basis of the legislation.

The trouble was that people such as my constituent had no idea that their property had been provisionally registered, because all that was required was that an official notice should be put in the local newspapers or newspaper. In the case of my constituent, that notice did not specify his house by name. It referred to various plot numbers, and I suspect that it would have meant nothing to him if he had seen it. Consequently, it was only when he was considering installing electricity that, by accident, he came across the fact that several years earlier his house — not garden — had been registered under the Act. Moreover, it had not just been provisionally registered, because the period for objections had elapsed, and so the property was definitely registered.

My constituent was not too worried. He thought that it might be a simple matter for the mistake to be rectified. Oh no! He wrote to Cornwall county council, which replied that it was sorry and understood his predicament, but that it had no power under the 1965 Act to rectify the mistake. He then came to see me, and I wrote to my hon. Friend the Minister and received a reply from Lord Skelmersdale, the Under-Secretary of State, who confirmed the position. He admitted ever so politely that the law was nonsense but said that there was no provision under it, except for a very narrow category, for rectifying mistakes over registration. Furthermore, he told me that there were several people who were in the same predicament as my constituent. Perhaps that was an understatement, because since becoming involved in this case I have come across many similar cases, not necessarily involving houses but, rather, land.

For example, the National Farmers Union tells me that hundreds of people have had their land or property registered by mistake and can do nothing about it. Many hundreds of cases are known, but many more people must be in blissful ignorance of the fact that their property has been registered as common land under that Act. As the law stands, nothing can be done about that. The consequences of wrongful registration can be quite serious. In the case of my constituent, or anybody else who has had a house registered by mistake, I suspect that it would be difficult to find a buyer for the house. Although the law may not be clear on the consequences of registration, many potential purchasers would probably shy off, on learning from their searches that the property has been designated as common land. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will comment on that.

A few years ago various bodies got together to form the Common Land Forum in order to try to agree on a reform or review of the law on commons. Its report was published in September. It is quite a large document, of which only part deals with the problem of wrongful registration. The other parts of the document deal with more controversial aspects, such as access to common land.

The Common Land Forum was formed under the aegis of the Countryside Commission and includes various bodies, ranging from the Country Landowners Association on the one hand, to the Open Spaces Society and the Ramblers Association on the other. The document amounted to a compromise on changes in the law. Almost without exception, the members of the CLF are anxious that their carefully compiled package should not be broken apart to deal with the problem of wrongful registration. They want legislation on the whole package, and I suspect that that might be the attitude of Her Majesty's Government. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will make his first statement on the report and on the Government's attitude to the report.

My view is clear. Many innocent people have suffered or could suffer as a result of a defect in the 1965 Act, which has resulted in inadequate notice being given to owners of land and property that their land and property was being registered, albeit provisionally. They have suffered because of the failure of this House and the other place to ensure that there was some mechanism in the 1965 Act to rectify obvious mistakes and nonsenses.

I want the Government to introduce legislation on this matter. I want the Secretary of State to have the power to rectify, in a simple manner, obvious nonsenses and mistakes, and cases such as that of my constituent Mr. Castellain, who suddenly discovered that his house is technically common land.

I look to my hon. Friend the Minister to give me, and more particularly my constituent, many other people who have already found themselves in similar circumstance, and many more who are blissfully ignorant of the situation concerning their property, some assurance that the Government will introduce legislation, or enable me or some other hon. Member to bring in a simple Bill to rectify this defect in law.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Does the hon. Gentleman have the consent of the hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) and the Minister?

Mr. Favell: I do.

12.8 am

Mr. Favell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) for giving me the opportunity to make this short intervention.

I have a great deal of sympathy with the plight of Mr. Castellain. I am a practising solicitor, and my firm is representing a person with a problem similar to that of Mr. Castellain. He has a house and garden that has been registered as common land, although it was never the intention of the Commons Registration Act to register houses as common land. This house is well over a century old, and has always been occupied by families, and the public have never had access to it, except with the consent of the owners. It is on a large moor in Northumberland, large sections of which are registered as common land. For some reason, the house and its small garden were included in a registration of many acres of land.

My client is unable to have the register rectified because the land was originally registered by mistake. If it had been registered as a fraud, action would be open to him, but there is no reason to suggest that the original application was made for fraudulent reasons. It was done purely by mistake. It is indeed difficult for the owner of a property in these circumstances to sell it, for the simple reason that no building society, knowing the facts, will lend on it. That is an injustice and only this House can rectify it.

12.9 am

The Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning (Mr. William Waldegrave): I find myself in considerable sympathy with my hon. Friends the Members for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) and for Stockport (Mr. Favell). I do not think that the procedures on the Commons Registration Act 1965 were very well advised in that, to take the example of St. Ives, the publication of notices in a sub-regional newspaper is unlikely to be drawn immediately to the notice of people in remoter areas who are perhaps most affected.

I can confirm the account that my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives gave of how the Commons Registration Act 1965 works. As he said, anyone could apply for land to be registered under it. A number of worthy and, as he described the lady in his constituency, public-spirited people went about with greater enthusiasm than accuracy when using ordnance survey maps, and there have been some strange results.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stockport has professional experience of these matters. There are several examples scattered all over the country. They would be almost comic if they were not so irritating. I hope and believe that the Castellains, who have pursued their case vigorously—I have even read about it in the national newspapers — may have overcome the immediate difficulty with the electricity supply. With a little entirely legal connivance, they can probably overcome their problem. The electricity distribution authority operates under legislation which may help them.

Circumstances such as my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport described remain a real problem. A building society or bank, faced with such uncertainty, may raise questions. Being good entrepreneurial characters, they may put another point or two on the interest rate or put other obstacles in the way.

There is no doubt in the Government's mind that this is an absurdity which must be put right. The only question —it is quite a question—is in what time scale it can be put right. As my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives said —I have little to add to his speech—the Common Land Forum has been at work on a package of measures. Under its able chairman, it has brought together pretty good agreements involving a wide group of potentially disparate interests. It is loth to see bits of its package taken out separately, as it fears that its structure of compromise and agreement might fall to pieces. I understand that.

I am willing to respond to my hon. Friend's friendly challenge to give the first preliminary views on the Common Land Forum report. We hope to put out a discussion paper very shortly. My noble Friend Lord Skelmersdale said "by Christmas", but Christmas always seems to come earlier than one expects. It might not quite be before Christmas, but, shortly afterwards, we will go out to consultation. I have no hesitation in saying that we greatly welcome the work that has been done by the Common Land Forum. Although we are tidying up some details of our response to some of its recommendations, we think that it sets out the way forward in a reasonable way.

The question is: can we get legislation from our colleagues in the great pile of legislative measures that hang over any Government? My Department alone is anxious to denationalise the water supply and to introduce rate reform and all manner of measures. This matter is not particularly contentious, but it is a case of getting this matter agreed early.

We shall seek to introduce a package of measures on this issue as quickly as possible. If there should be any untoward delay, I would understand it if my hon. Friend proposed measures to deal with this issue. He provides an incentive to us to introduce a major package. We cannot leave constituents and clients in this ridiculous, indefensible position indefinitely.

I ask the indulgence of my hon. Friends tonight in that I cannot now state when the Government will introduce legislation. What they have said are powerful additional arguments for endorsing this useful collection of agreements that the Common Land Forum has produced. Their arguments provide piquancy and urgency and will be taken fully into account when we consider these matters.

These matters may be small, but they concern injustice to individual citizens and the House is largely constituted to rectify that. I am grateful to my hon. Friend's for raising the subject, but this evening I cannot state the date for legislation. All I can say is that they have added urgency to our search for solutions.

Mr. Harris: I understand the difficulty facing the Government. Nevertheless, injustice affecting the rights of individuals is involved. Would my right hon. Friend consider co-operating to enable me or some hon. Friend to introduce a ten-minute Bill? Is that a possibility?

Mr. Waldegrave: It depends on whether we can introduce the package early. I understand why my hon. Friend should want to do that and I would want to do so in the same position. If he introduced a ten-minute Bill,

hon. Members from both sides would add matters and the package of compromises would begin to fall to pieces. Therefore, although it is his right to do so and if he introduces such a measure we must consider it on its merits, I ask him at least to await our consultation paper. However, he should not diminish his efforts to press us to solve these matters soon, because it is in all our interests so to do.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eighteen minutes past Midnight.

House of Commons

Wednesday 17 December 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

TRADE

Resolved.

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, That she will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House a Return of Statistics relating to Overseas Trade of the United Kingdom for the year 1987 and for each month during 1987.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

Oral Answers to Questions

ENVIRONMENT

"UK 2000"

1. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from local authorities about his Department's document on the environment entitled "UK 2000."

The Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning (Mr. William Waldegrave): We have received 22 letters from local authorities and one from a local authority association.

Mr. Colvin: I am sure my hon. Friend will welcome the fact that local authorities have been among the first to welcome the initiative for tidying up Britain. I am sure also that the House will congratulate my hon. Friend on putting up £750,000 of Government money to help fund the scheme and welcome the fact that business has responded with a further £400,000, but, under the present financial restrictions placed on local government, will it be able to come in with its share of funding of a scheme which, if it is not based on plural funding, will probably not succeed?

Mr. Waldegrave: I agree with my hon. Friend. The initiative has got off to a good start with £400,000 coming from the private sector before any appeal has been launched, which bodes well for the future. Local authorities already carry an enormous burden of work in this area. I agree that they should be seeking co-operative schemes with the private and voluntary sectors and that "UK 2000" is a good way of doing that. They are already taking advantage of the increased provision that we have made for training with the help of the Keep Britain Tidy Group.

Mrs. Clwyd: Since some demolition work may be involved in "UK 2000" projects, will the Minister look at ways of tightening up the safety laws governing demolition when asbestos dust is present in view of the Appeal Court's ruling yesterday showing loopholes in the law?

Mr. Waldegrave: I saw the reports this morning, which I think deal with matters under the health and safety at work legislation and potential defects in that. I shall discuss that matter with my hon. Friend who is responsible for those matters.

Mr. Chapman: As one of the objectives of "UK 2000" is to green our cities, will my hon. Friend confirm that with imagination physical improvement can be brought about, particularly in our inner city areas, at relatively little cost? Will he encourage competitions to find schemes which will contribute to that objective and cost relatively little?

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is right. The combination of private sector money, local authority skills and volunteers can often do a great deal with little funding. My hon. Friend also makes the point that "UK 2000" goes much wider than a litter initiative. It is the first time that the seven principal voluntary organisations, ranging from Friends of the Earth to the Civic Trust, have sat down together to try to work out a strategy to cover schemes such as the rehabilitation of Tynemouth station.

Mr. Straw: Does the Minister recognise that much of the untidiness in Britain has been caused directly by other Government policies? Why have the Government cut 10 per cent. in real terms from the grant for refuse collection? I see the Secretary of State smiling. Perhaps he will explain why in April this year, as Secretary of State for Transport, he issued a circular saying that all litter bins should be removed from all trunk road laybys. How did that policy contribute to tidying up Britain?

Mr. Waldegrave: It is well known that the existence of those litter bins often turned out to be a source of fly tipping and dumping, making the situation worse. The truth, as the hon. Gentleman should know, because, unhappily for him, he has been stuck in his present job for a long time——

Dr. Cunningham: Listen to who is talking.

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall be delighted to remain in my job for several years more. However, the hon. Gentleman knows that if the worst and most inefficient local authorities came up just to the average on litter collection, more than that 10 per cent. could be saved.

Vandalism and Graffiti

2. **Mr. Nicholls** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the cost of vandalism and graffiti to local authority buildings and those for which his Department has responsibility during 1985; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope): No central statistics are held by my Department on the cost of damage caused by vandalism and graffiti to local authority and Government buildings.

Mr. Nicholls: Does my hon. Friend accept that, even if there is no central information, the problem is considerable? Is he aware that a number of existing techniques could be used to great effect? Is he satisfied that the local authorities which might be able to benefit by the use of those techniques even know about them, and does he think that his Department could have a role to play in disseminating that sort of information?

Mr. Chope: I am not satisfied that all the techniques are well known to local authorities, but I understand that a

firm in my hon. Friend's constituency called Graffiti Management Ltd. is keen to evaluate existing ways of removing graffiti and to test new ones. I wish it success.

Mr. Cartwright: Will the Minister accept evidence from constituencies such as mine that the incidence of vandalism, on council estates in particular, can be substantially reduced by effective neighbourhood watch schemes? If that is so, is it not monstrous that some local authorities should deliberately obstruct the development of those schemes? Will he encourage them to see the error of their ways?

Mr. Chope: I wholeheartedly agree with the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Heddle: Can my hon. Friend confirm that some Labour authorities are refusing to remove certain graffiti, on the ground that it is sexist or racist? More seriously, will my hon. Friend confirm that the more people who buy flats in local authority owned blocks, the more pride they will have in their own environment and, furthermore, the more that tenants become involved in the government of their own environment the greater respect they will have for the common parts, such as the lift or the staircase?

Mr. Chope: I agree with my hon. Friend. I understand that Camden council, for example, discriminates against certain sorts of graffiti. A ratepayer telephoned recently to ask for the removal of the slogan, "Kilroy was here." He was told that it would not be possible to have that removed. He then inquired further and was told that if the graffiti had said, "Kilroy was queer" the council would remove it.

Mr. Dubs: Does the Minister recall that on 24 November his Department issued a press release announcing certain improvement grants to tackle graffiti and other matters? Is he aware that a grant of £105,000 was in that package for Wandsworth Plain estate in Wandsworth? Was he aware when the press release was issued that Wandsworth council had already disposed of that estate?

Mr. Chope: I do not have the detailed information on that. However, one thing is certain: the quality of the Wandsworth Plain estate is much higher than it has ever been.

Mr. Squire: Does my hon. Friend have any information to suggest that there has been an improvement in either the grammar or the spelling of graffiti since the Government came to office? In particular, can he draw any distinctions between graffiti in Labour education authority and Conservative education authority areas?

Mr. Chope: We shall have to consider seriously making inquiries and gathering statistics on that. Ultimately it depends on the quality of the local education authority.

Mr. John Fraser: When will the Minister raise his standards above that of the graffiti artist? Bearing in mind how much money is spent on things such as early warning systems and so on, how much money are the Government spending to find a simple antidote to the aerosol can and the felt tipped pen which disfigure so much of our public property and public transport, and much of which is abusive in racial and sexist terms to the general public? What are the Government spending on that which is an affront to many right-minded people?

Mr. Chope: When looking around the country, particularly in Southampton, some of the most offensive graffiti just says, "Militant." As I understand it, that is something that Labour Members are prepared to support.

Marine Nature Reserves

3. **Mr. Harris** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met members of the Nature Conservancy Council to discuss marine nature reserves.

Mr. Waldegrave: I met the chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council and council members at their 100th meeting in Peterborough on 2 December. The council expressed its pleasure at the designation by my right hon. Friend on 21 November of the first marine nature reserve at Lundy.

Mr. Harris: Now that the first marine nature reserve has been designated around Lundy, has my hon. Friend any plans for further designations? When considering any possible further reserves, will he ensure that the livelihood of fishermen is one of the factors taken seriously into account?

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes, Sir. The chairman of the NCC has written to me about Skomer, and there are about five more reserves in the pipeline. Time was taken in negotiating the first marine nature reserve largely because we tried to reassure the local fishermen. Now that Lundy has been established and we have shown that reserves can be established without endangering fishermen's livelihoods, I hope that we shall be able to proceed faster and perhaps with fewer suspicions.

Sir Hector Monro: Does my hon. Friend agree that time was taken to produce the first marine nature reserve because there was full consultation with recreation, fishing and other interests? Now that the pattern has been established, more reserves will be designated much more quickly.

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend has a record of distinguished service on the NCC council. I agree that it has been worth proceeding slowly and carefully. That having been done, I hope that we can accelerate progress.

Common Land

4. **Mrs. Shields** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish the Green Paper on reform of common land legislation.

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): Yes Sir; as soon as possible.

Mrs. Shields: What proportion of common land does the Secretary of State think is likely to be deregistered when the Government introduce legislation on this matter?

Mr. Ridley: A consultation paper will be published early in the new year and legislation will follow as soon as it is possible for the Government to find time to bring it forward. I can assure the hon. Lady that the legislation will be high in our programme, but I cannot speak for the Opposition.

Mr. Colvin: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the difficulty that has been experienced by commoners this year in evicting hippy convoys from common land? Will

he ensure that at least one section of the Green Paper deals with this problem, which may be a recurring one, especially in my constituency?

Mr. Ridley: I am aware of these problems because I have such a common in my constituency. I think that my hon. Friend will be reassured by the action taken under the Public Order Act 1986 to deal with the problem. I hope that that action will be satisfactory.

Mr. Barron: Is the Secretary of State aware that over 30 years ago a Royal Commission said that when dealing with common land, the ownership of the soil, the boundaries of the land and the common rights should be on the public record? Past legislation has failed grossly to meet those criteria, especially in respect of ownership. Will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that any new legislation will include provisions to enable the public to check the ownership of common land claimed by individuals?

Mr. Ridley: Under the chairmanship of the Countryside Commission, the Common Land Forum has produced a nearly unanimous report on what new legislation should contain. That is such an achievement that the House would be wise not to suggest deviations from what is recommended, without good reason. I hope that the consultative paper will be met with the same nearly unanimous reception.

Dr. David Clark: When does the Secretary of State intend to publish the consultative paper? Secondly, will he be more explicit about when he expects to be able to draw conclusions from it? I think that there is accord on both sides of the House that the work of the Common Land Forum — covering the views of the National Farmers Union, the Country Landowners Association and all the amenity bodies — is a worthy basis for legislation, and we expect early proposals from the Government.

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's welcome. I have said that we hope to publish the consultative paper early in the new year. It has not been possible to do that before the House rises for the Christmas recess. Consultation will take place for several months and we look forward to hearing what the public think. I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's support.

Local Government Finance

5. **Mr. Allan Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next proposes to meet the Consultative Council on Local Government Finance to discuss local government finance and the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement.

The Minister for Local Government (Dr. Rhodes Boyson): The Secretary of State and I have no proposals to meet the Consultative Council on Local Government Finance to discuss further the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement.

Mr. Roberts: Will the Minister admit that the Secretary of State and his predecessors have been breaking the law since 1980, because of political interference in the drafting of that legislation, which was urged by Tory local authority associations to enable those authorities to increase rents and to make profits on housing revenue accounts that could be deducted from their total expenditure so that they could obtain extra grant? Was not that political interference with the legislation, which has made the Government behave illegally for the past seven years, a scandal?

Dr. Boyson: The simple answer is no. Obviously, amendments will be made shortly to the 1980 Act. However, that legislation was introduced at the request of the local authorities——

Mr. Roberts: Tory local authorities——

Dr. Boyson: In 1980, presumably at least one local authority was labour-controlled, even if one needed a magnifying glass to find it. The hon. Gentleman's reaction shows the danger that arises when a Government become over-reasonable in dealing with people.

Mr. Holt: When my hon. Friend holds his discussions, will he take up the question of rent arrears from council tenants, as the figures are now astronomical? In Middlesbrough, in my rate-capped constituency, £1 million of arrears is an utter disgrace.

Dr. Boyson: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. If there were a league table, I think that Brent would be even higher, since about 60 per cent. of council house rents and rates are not collected each year. I share my hon. Friend's view, and I am aware that the councils that shout loudest for more money would not need it if they collected the rents and rates due to them.

Mr. Simon Hughes: In the light of yesterday's farcical statement on local government finance, can the Minister say how he will deal with rate-capped authorities? As the Government have now taken responsibility for determining the finances — there was one sentence in yesterday's statement — may we at least have a guarantee that authorities will be considered separately and that each authority's finances will be given due and proper consideration?

Dr. Boyson: I do not think that yesterday's statement was farcical — *[Interruption.]* A Government of a different hue would not have acted on the information, and that would have been farcical. I understand the hon. Gentleman's concern about rate-capped authorities. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said yesterday that the rate-capped authorities would know what their spending limit was, as that would appear on the face of the Bill. We have been seeing people regularly before making up our minds. Indeed, we shall continue to do so until this Friday. There is a longer queue of people wanting to see us than would be found in any dentist's surgery, but in this case they want to take extractions instead of giving them. However, the figures will be on the face of the Bill.

Mr. John Mark Taylor: Does my hon. Friend believe that the rating environment would be considerably improved if local authorities confined themselves to their statutory responsibilities, desisted from social engineering, and got rid of unnecessary landholdings?

Dr. Boyson: I have not heard a better or shorter speech in the House today. If Opposition Members adopted that as a new year resolution, the world would be a better place next year.

Mr. Madden: How can the Minister be surprised that his Department is besieged by people wanting to see him, when he and his ministerial colleagues keep doing daft

thinks and keep robbing ratepayers of money? I assure him that his Department's reputation does not ride high in Bradford, which has suffered the second biggest cut in rate support grant of any metropolitan district in the country. Recently we had to take the Department to court, as we again challenged the rate support grant figures.

Will the Minister give an undertaking that there will be an urgent review of the rate support grant settlement for Bradford, especially given yesterday's lamentable statement, which clearly shows that yet again his Department has broken the law more often than any Department in living memory?

Dr. Boyson: I shall try to remember at least some of the points made by the hon. Gentleman in his speech. He said that more money was needed for Bradford. Bradford football club should get more money, because it is in a higher division. I should like to mention to the hon. Gentleman, in fairness to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and myself, that long before the events of yesterday unfolded themselves in the House people were beating a path to see my right hon. Friend and myself, which is a recognition of our reasonableness in dealing with people and the attractiveness of our conversation.

Mr. Watts: As it has proved necessary to find legislative time to plug a few loopholes in the 1980 legislation, will my hon. Friend consider whether it might make better sense to make use of that time to scrap the present unsatisfactory and unfair system and introduce a fairer and simpler system such as that set out in the Government's Green Paper? May I assure my hon. Friend that such an approach would be extremely welcome in my county of Berkshire, and, I suspect, in many other areas?

Dr. Boyson: I welcome my hon. Friend's comments. I know that throughout the country thousands, indeed millions of people are awaiting the introduction of what we proposed in the Green Paper. Most people want legislation immediately, but they will have to wait a little longer. We have promised that legislation, at the latest, in the first Session of the next Parliament. [HON. MEMBERS: "Now."] Hon. Members may say, "Now", but they must wait. One cannot have all the goodies at once. Father Christmas does not go everywhere in one day.

Dr. Cunningham: Why is it that we have just the understudy in today's matinee performance of this Whitehall pantomime? The Minister is now forced to admit that he knew of this fiasco in October. Why has the Secretary of State for the Environment gone through the charade of issuing two more consultation documents on rate support grant without being frank and candid with the House and with the local authority associations about the desperate situation in which he finds himself? Would it not have saved weeks of time, and would it not have eliminated several months of delay, if the Secretary of State had began immediately, as soon as he found out the problem, to discuss solutions with the local authority associations — all of them? Why was the right hon. Gentleman not able to do that? Surely that would be not only the quickest and best way, but the most honest way of resolving the problem?

Dr. Boyson: We are running three plays simultaneously. We have a recycling Bill, a local government Bill — the goodies are coming all the time — and now we have this Bill, so we need a heavier cast. One cannot run all three plays with the same cast. Let me answer the hon. Gentleman's question. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made it clear yesterday that, if he had come to the House at the end of October when the information came into his hands and said, "We have a problem. We do not know what to do about it," Opposition Members would have been the first to object. Instead, my right hon. Friend had to take careful legal advice, having once been slightly misled by taking the advice of the local authority associations. It would have been a disappointment to hon. Members if we had not taken legal advice before we came to the House.

Sellafield

6. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations have been received from the Irish Government about discharges to the environment from Sellafield.

Mr. Ridley: I am aware that the Dail passed a resolution on 3 December calling for the closure of Sellafield. In view of the improvements that have taken place at the plant since 1979, to which the recent safety audit by the Health and Safety Executive has drawn attention, I regard the Dail's resolution as misconceived. British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. is undertaking a multi-million pound capital programme at Sellafield, which has already reduced discharges to the environment to one sixth of the level in 1979, and further reductions should be achievable in the 1990s.

Mr. Howells: Now that the Secretary of State has confirmed that the Irish Government want the Sellafield reprocessing plant to be closed due to the threat to health, the environment and the fishing industry, what are his views?

Mr. Ridley: That is not what I said. The hon. Gentleman has got it wrong. The Dail is not the Government. He might as well equate the House of Commons with the Government of this country, but I would not expect him to make such a mistake. In fact, 99·8 per cent. of the radioactivity in the Irish sea is natural radiation. Most of the remaining 0·2 per cent. comes from fallout from past nuclear weapons tests. There is no appreciable evidence that the Irish sea has suffered from Sellafield.

Mr. Forth: When considering the representations on this issue, has my right hon. Friend put them alongside those from other Governments about emissions from coal-fired power stations — for example, concerning acid rain — or about oil leaks caused by extracting oil from the earth? Can he put all these matters together and weigh up the fact that all sources of energy have their hazards? We must not get the impression that any one source of energy is necessarily more dangerous or hazardous than any other.

Mr. Ridley: We seem to be getting a great deal of advice on energy policy from many other countries. It is right that the Government should continue to provide the cheapest energy possible for industrial and domestic consumers compatible with the highest levels of safety and environmental purity.

Mr. John David Taylor: Is the Minister aware of the concern on the Isle of Man and in Northern Ireland about

Sellafield? Does he intend to approve any further nuclear plants that will discharge nuclear waste into the Irish sea? Should not the present recommended safety measures be carried out at Sellafield within the next 12 months? Will he consider the closure of Sellafield?

Mr. Ridley: The right hon. Gentleman will be reassured to know that an expert committee commissioned by the Irish Department of Health published a report last month that demonstrates clearly that Sellafield has had no observable environmental impact on the incidence of childhood leukaemia along the east coast of Ireland since the study started in 1977. That is not a British Government but an Irish Government view. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will be reassured by that.

Mr. John Mark Taylor: Does my right hon. Friend accept that, despite all the excitement that is sometimes generated about Sellafield, the plant operates comfortably within any known international safety tolerance? Is not nuclear-generated electricity the cheapest in the world? Is not this country now beginning to import it from France?

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. It is time that we took credit for the enormous improvements that have taken place at Sellafield. It now has a very high record on operating safety, as was recently endorsed by the HSE audit. I congratulate Sellafield on behalf of the House on that massive achievement.

Dr. Cunningham: While no hon. Member should defend policies concerning past discharges into the Irish sea, will the right hon. Gentleman ask the Government of the Republic of Ireland what scientific or medical evidence they can provide to support their position and whether they will publish any such evidence?

Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that the Health and Safety Executive's audit is provided in the Vote Office? Hon. Members and others have asked for the report and it should be available to the House. Will he ensure that the management of British Nuclear Fuels complies with the directions of the Health and Safety Executive within the 12-month time scale envisaged? Will he—*[Interruption.]*—right hon. and hon. Members have a lot to say about these matters—[HON. MEMBERS: "Get on with it."] I am sorry that these matters, which are of crucial importance, are treated with such scant regard by Tory Members. Will the Secretary of State ensure that there is the necessary investment by British Nuclear Fuels at Sellafield to eliminate discharges to the Irish sea?

Mr. Ridley: I congratulate the hon. Member on having the wisdom to ask that question rather than leaving it to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark), who is responsible for these matters on the Opposition Front Bench. His good sense as a constituency Member with the interest of his constituents at heart and his sound attitude to these matters puts the hon. Member for South Shields right into the shade. We now know where power resides on the Opposition Front Bench and we are very pleased to know it. *[Interruption.]* I am trying to praise the hon. Gentleman.

I entirely endorse the hon. Gentleman's point that it would be a very good idea if the Irish Government would produce any scientific evidence that they may have of pollution of the Irish sea arising from Sellafield. I shall make immediate inquiries to ensure that the Health and Safety Executive audit is available in the Vote Office. By law, Sellafield must comply with the report within a year. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy will ensure that adequate resources are available to BNFL to carry out the necessary investment in years to come. Massive investment is already taking place and will continue.

Sulphur Emissions

7. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the United Kingdom to have reduced sulphur emissions to 70 per cent. of their 1980 level.

Mr. Waldegrave: By the end of the 1990s, if not before.

Mr. Wigley: Is the Minister aware that more than 200 lakes in Wales are now devoid of fish life due to growing acidification and that a survey in Scotland has shown that a reduction in emissions of more than 50 per cent. is required to abate the acidification level? As the Government's programme will achieve a reduction of only 14 per cent., will the Minister consider a further programme of investment, with particular regard to Aberthaw power station in Wales?

Mr. Waldegrave: I am well aware of the Welsh situation, but in referring to it the hon. Gentleman reminds us of the other issues involved. A good deal of the Welsh acidification has probably been caused by forestry. The programme announced by the Government will achieve a 14 per cent. reduction in addition to cuts already in train. We shall have achieved a reduction of perhaps 55 per cent. from peak by the mid-1990s. Few countries will have done better than that.

Mr. McCrindle: Can my hon. Friend tell us anything about mercury emissions and whether there are any plans for a reclamation programme for the millions of batteries jettisoned by people in this country every year?

Mr. Waldegrave: That is a serious matter, on which the European Community is preparing a directive. There has been contact with manufacturers in recent years to secure a reduction in the amount of mercury in batteries, but further action may be required.

Mr. Alton: Is the Minister aware that his replies have not changed since January, despite the Prime Minister's much-vaunted visit to Norway, and that nothing has been done to take this country into the 30 per cent. club of nations or to incorporate fluidised bed combustion units in our power stations to reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide, of which 300,000 tonnes continue to fall on the people of Norway every year from our coal-burning power stations?

Mr. Waldegrave: An excellent article in this week's *New Scientist* shows a shift in scientific consensus towards nitrogren as being responsible for the damage.

Mr. Allan Roberts: It is tree damage.

Mr. Waldegrave: As the hon. Gentleman says, it is tree damage. These matters are always changing. Another change since the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) asked about this in January has been the commitment of £600 million of electricity consumers' money to improve the situation further.

Council House Sales

8. **Mr. Colin Shepherd** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publicise the new discounts for council flats under the Housing and Planning Act.

The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten): The new discount scale will be brought into operation from 7 January. An information campaign to draw the attention of tenants of flats to the new scale and other changes in the right to buy will be launched early next year.

Mr. Shepherd: I welcome my hon. Friend's announcement, but can he give a little more detail about the publicity? Will it be sent to all council flat tenants personally, and will those who have already bought their homes be informed of the new discount claw-back periods?

Mr. Patten: We are doing everything that we possibly can to meet the second of my hon. Friend's requests. As for the first, we shall endeavour, with the co-operation of local authorities, to ensure that every flat dweller in England receives publicity about his or her new rights. I am happy to report that many local authorities, of all political colours, are co-operating freely with us. Only 40,000 of the 1 million public sector houses that have been sold thus far have been flats. We must improve that, and we must improve it fast.

Mr. Tony Banks: Does the Minister agree that, rather than put out more incentives to sell off council accommodation, it would be better to allow local authorities to spend the estimated £7 billion of accumulated capital receipts from earlier sales of council property? Newham has more than 100 tower blocks, which one could not even give away, let alone sell. People do not want them. We want to build houses and low-rise accommodation. Why will the Minister not let the local authority spend the money that it has in the bank just earning interest?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman is right. It is sometimes easy to give away the family silver, but I suspect that it is also quite easy sometimes to give away tower blocks to people who want to develop them. The hon. Gentleman has put his finger on it. There are 100 tower blocks in his constituency. They are the mistakes that we all made collectively in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The Government believe that one way in which to improve the environment of those tower blocks is to vary the tenure. That is why we are making certain that all tenants know their rights.

Mr. McLoughlin: Will my hon. Friend consider extending the scheme to enable all council houses that are empty for more than 12 months to be sold on a homesteading basis to people who live in the district, thus giving them the opportunity to improve those houses and the council housing stock?

Mr. Patten: That is a tempting suggestion. As I speak, there are 115,000 empty publicly owned flats and houses in England.

Mr. Loyden: When can we expect the Minister to extend his generosity to rented housing in the private sector and offer tenants of privately rented flats the discount that he is making available to council tenants?

Mr. Patten: The Government have a twin track approach to improving the lot of tenants of flats. In the public sector we are giving them a radically increased discount and incentives and, in a Bill which is to be introduced after Christmas, we shall do all that we can to help the condition of tenants in private sector blocks of flats following the recommendations of the committee chaired by Mr. Edward Nugee, QC.

Water Rate

9. **Mr Hicks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from water authorities about the 1987-88 water rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I have now received responses from the chairmen of most authorities. The overall reaction is that the settlement is reasonably fair.

Mr. Hicks: As the external financing limits of water authorities have been increased by some £14 million nationally, why has the provisional figure of £1 million for the South West water authority been withdrawn, with the probable effect of water rate increases of 5 per cent. rather than less than 4 per cent.?

Mr. Ridley: The settlement for the South West water authority allows it an average increase of 9 per cent. in investment, with only average increases in charges of under 6 per cent. It has the highest operation cost rises among those that are planned for next year. If it could hold its operating costs to something near the rate of inflation, it would be able to have higher investment or lower charges, or both.

Mr. Boyes: Nevertheless, the Secretary of State must be aware that some chairmen of water authorities are expressing concern. For example, in a letter to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks) the chairman of Wessex Water says that the large reduction in borrowing imposed by the Government leaves the authority with a dilemma—either to increase charges to a level which the authority regrets, or to postpone capital work to the detriment of present standards of service. Because, since 1978-79, water authority charges have increased by a staggering 143 per cent., is it any wonder that Mr. Anson, Mr. Watts, the Confederation of British Industry and others are expressing concern about the Government's attitude to the water industry?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman must know of the massive increase in investment in water, but I question the extent to which that should be described as investment. It is largely a matter of replacing worn-out capacity and renewing the capital stock of the water authorities. It is an overhead and an on-cost which should properly be paid for from charges, which is why the charges have increased. It would be wrong to borrow to replace normal assets.

Sport (Sponsorship)

10. **Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent discussions he has had with members of the tobacco industry regarding the sponsorship of sport; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Richard Tracey): I am now coming to

the end of detailed negotiations leading to a new voluntary agreement. I hope to make a statement early in the new year.

Mr. Carlisle: Many people in the sports world will be somewhat disappointed that my hon. Friend has not reached a conclusion with the tobacco companies. At this late hour, will he remember that sport has benefited enormously from the tobacco industry? In further negotiations will he remember that that money will not be easily replaced? Will he give the House a categorical assurance this afternoon that the Government will not go down the road that the Labour party has followed and outlaw tobacco sponsorship in sport?

Mr. Tracey: As I made clear in the House on 21 February, I have always believed that a voluntary agreement is the right way. Indeed, a considerable contribution has been made to sport through sponsorship, although as a proportion of the whole of sport sponsorship the tobacco contribution is declining.

Mr. Freud: Will the Minister also remember that an increasing number of young children are now smoking and that it is absolutely essential to remove the glamour element of tobacco sponsorship in sport? Does he agree that while it is possible for children to ascribe their smoking habits to television sports programmes which are sponsored by tobacco companies, such sponsorship is not of service to the country?

Mr. Tracey: That is one of the points that we have considered carefully in our negotiations with the tobacco companies. The voluntary system was first adopted in 1972. Now 36 per cent. of men and 32 per cent. of women smoke, compared with 52 per cent. and 41 per cent. in 1972. That is an improvement and it is continuing.

Mr. Robert Atkins: Does my hon. Friend agree that cigarette companies in particular have done an amazing job in supporting the great game of cricket both here and in Australia? Does he further agree that this obsession with doing away with an organisation's support for great games, such as cricket, does those associated with the move no great credit? Does he agree that the sooner we lay off it and concentrate on the real issues the better it will be for all concerned?

Mr. Tracey: When we began the negotiations leading to the new voluntary agreement we began consultations with all interested parties. It is right to say that tobacco sponsorship has made a contribution to cricket, although that contribution is now declining, as it is in other sports.

Mr. Robert C. Brown: When will the Minister face up to the fact that, having banned direct tobacco advertising on television, to allow sponsorship of major contests, such as snooker championships, which many young people watch, is a direct incentive to youngsters to start smoking?

Mr. Tracey: As I said earlier, that is one of the points which we have taken into consideration during the negotiations, leading to a voluntary agreement.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Does my hon. Friend accept that the very parties in this House which preach libertarianism stand against people doing what they want to do, for example smoking? Will he assure the House that until the Government or any other organisation can provide sport with the resources currently provided by tobacco companies, he will not take any penal action against the tobacco industry sponsoring what people want to do in sport?

Mr. Tracey: As I have said, and as I made clear as long ago as 21 February, the Conservative party believes that a voluntary agreement is the best way of dealing with sports sponsorship by tobacco companies. Tobacco sponsorship of sport now amounts to just short of £10 million, whereas the overall sponsorship of sports runs at £150 million a year.

Mr. Denis Howell: While welcoming the fact that the Minister is progressing with a voluntary agreement first started by a previous Labour Government, and declaring an interest in the Howell report on sports sponsorship conducted on behalf of the Central Council for Physical Recreation, may I ask what attention he is giving to sport, and what negotiations he is having with those involved as distinct from the tobacco industry?

Mr. Tracey: As I said, from the beginning we have invited consultation from sport and, of course, from the Tobacco Advisory Council as well as from others. I am perplexed by the right hon. Gentleman's attitude, because he seems to take a different view from that of the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), the shadow spokesman for health, who said on 21 February:

"It is now and has been since 1982 the policy of the Labour party that we wish to stop the sponsorship of sport by tobacco companies."—[*Official Report*, 21 February 1986; Vol. 92, c. 638.]

Planning Appeals

11. **Mr. Sims** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance he gives to his inspectors as to the weight they should give to local representations in respect of planning appeals.

Mr. Tracey: In the light of the Department's published guidance on policy, it is for the inspector to decide, in each case, what weight should be given to matters about which representations are made to him.

Mr. Sims: Has my hon. Friend seen press reports suggesting that, in the past year or two, there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of appeals allowed by local inspectors? Certainly that is confirmed in the borough of Bromley, where, in 1983, 27 per cent. of the appeals were allowed. This year, so far, 46 per cent. of the appeals have been allowed. While I accept the desirability of some sort of appeals system, does my hon. Friend nevertheless not think that, generally speaking, local authorities are the best bodies to judge on planning matters and that to have their decisions overturned to this extent undermines the whole point of planning?

Mr. Tracey: The views of local people and local interests are always given considerable weight in planning matters. Sometimes the publicity given to planning matters gives an incorrect impression. In fact, 98·64 per cent. of local decisions stand.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Is my hon. Friend aware that there is grave concern that in recent planning appeals insufficient weight has been given to local decisions and that his answers so far will not satisfy my constituents?

Mr. Tracey: I am well aware that my hon. Friend makes strong representations on behalf of his constituents in

Berkshire. Local planning authorities and inspectors must, by law, have regard to all material considerations. One of these is, of course, the representations of the local people.

Mr. Meadowcroft: Is there not a particular problem where a local authority is applying to itself for planning permission in relation to a large development, such as that at Leeds market, in that if it grants permission it disallows local opinion the possibility of objecting to the development thereafter? Why does the Minister not have more regard to calling in such applications rather than simply relying on the local authority to give planning permission to itself?

Mr. Tracey: I am well aware that this point was raised with the Select Committee on the Environment. We are considering the matter, but normally a call-in is applied by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in matters of overriding national or regional interest.

Acid Rain

12. **Mr. Lord** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on the results of his latest discussions about acid rain with his colleagues in the European Council of Environment Ministers.

Mr. Waldegrave: As the President of the Council, I tabled compromise proposals aimed at securing progress on acid rain. Sadly, some countres found our proposals too onerous for them.

Mr. Lord: Will my hon. Friend confirm that it is now not the United Kingdom that is hindering progress on this issue? Which countries are still dragging their feet?

Mr. Waldegrave: My hon. Friend is right. The Commissioner, Mr. Stanley Davis, made it clear after that Council meeting that Britain, as the presidency, had made genuine efforts to take matters forward. The countries that had most difficulty at the previous Council were Spain and the Republic of Ireland, but several other countries, such as Portugal, also face problems.

Mr. Chris Smith: Instead of always seeking compromise proposals which preserve Britain's status as one of the major world producers of sulphur dioxide pollutant, why do the Government not implement the recommendations of the report from the Select Committee on the Environment, which was produced more than two years ago?

Mr. Waldegrave: Because it is the judgment of the Government that to spend so much money in such a short time would produce no benefits worth the expenditure. The hon. Gentleman is a little out of date in constantly harping on about the problems, as he sees it, from the British Government's point of view. Some European countries, including the big polluting countries, such as Spain, have far greater problems.

Dr. David Clark: Will the Minister stop deluding himself into believing that Britain is no longer regarded as the bad neighbour of Europe when it comes to acidic emissions? Will he assure the House that the Government will press ahead with the commitment to retrofit three power stations, beginning next year?

Mr. Waldegrave: On the latter point, yes. On the former point, if Britain has a worse image than it deserves, which is the truth, it is not a little because of our adversarial system of politics, whereby nearly half the Members here spend their time saying that everything done in this country is wrong.

Council House Sales

13. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses have been sold to sitting tenants in England in each of the last three years.

Mr. John Patten: In the financial years 1983-84 to 1985-86 respectively, 117,000, 89,000 and 80,000 tenants bought their council homes. Since this Government came to power in 1979, nearly 750,000 council tenants have bought their homes in England. The figure for the entire country has passed 1 million and, this year, right-to-buy applications are running at the highest rate since they reached their peak in 1982-83.

Mr. Knox: What percentage of the council house stock has been sold to sitting tenants? What is my hon. Friend's assessment of the potential for future sales?

Mr. Patten: I am not very good at percentages, but 4·5 million council tenants are still living in council flats and houses. Of those, we estimate that about 500,000—perhaps 600,000—still have the resources to buy. Those people being encouraged to exercise their right to buy will take home ownership in Britain to about 75 per cent. by the year 2000.

Mr. Ashton: Why will the Minister not allow local councils to use the cash from home sales, especially in coalmining areas? British Coal will be selling 16,000 houses by auction and by tender in the next few months, almost all of which are inhabited by elderly tenants and pensioners who are too old to get mortgages and who could not take one on at their time of life. Many councils wish to buy those houses, and they have cash in the bank from the sale of council houses. Will he allow them to use that cash to buy those British Coal properties?

Mr. Patten: I realise the strong feelings on this issue and the anxieties in the coalfield communities about the sale of some of those houses. I am engaged in discussions with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy and his colleagues in that Department and, through them, with British Coal.

Housing Grants

14. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to ensure that the range of grants aimed at repairing and maintaining houses is sufficient to preserve the housing stock.

Mr. Tracey: Yes, Sir. However, the repair and maintenance of housing is primarily the responsibility of the owners.

Mr. McCrindle: Does my hon. Friend accept that without an adequate range of grants some property owners will be unwilling or unable to maintain the standard of their properties? In those circumstances, and with a thought to the maintenance of the standard of the housing stock, will my hon. Friend take steps to ensure that the level and the number of grants are adequate in the national interest, as distinct from the interests of the individual owners?

Mr. Tracey: The Government are well aware of the value of grants available for improvement, repair work and loft installation. My hon. Friend will be interested to know that under this Government over £3,000 million has been spent on home improvement grants, 1 million grants have been given by local authorities since 1979, and 3 million grants have been given under the homes insulation scheme.

Mr. Rooker: Will the Minister confirm that the latest information available to his Department shows that there are over 501,000 dwellings that are fit but lacking basic amenities? Notwithstanding the massive amount of money that has been spent on home improvement, would it not be possible for the Government to say to those 500,000 families, 400,000 of whom are in the private sector, that the fact that they lack a bath, hot and cold water or an inside toilet or washhand basin is an obscenity in the late 1980s? Should we not at least have a crash programme to offer people the installation of basic amenities within at least a couple of years?

Mr. Tracey: It is interesting to hear what the hon. Gentleman has to say, but I must point out that the public sector renovations this year are likely to be the highest since 1973, and the inside conditions of houses in this country are the highest in western Europe.

Foreign Affairs Council

3.31 pm

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council which I chaired in Brussels on the 15th and 16th of this month. My hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker) represented the United Kingdom.

Foreign Ministers confirmed the re-appointment for a further two-year term of the President of the Commission and the Vice-Presidents.

The Council noted that a solution had not yet been reached in the negotiations with the United States concerning the accession to the Community of Spain and Portugal. Ministers emphasised the need to reach a settlement as soon as possible, and confirmed the decision of the April and June Councils that in the event of unilateral United States action, the Community would take equivalent action to defend its interests.

The Council approved a negotiating mandate for a trade and economic co-operation agreement between the Community and Romania.

The Council expressed its concern about the considerable number of current trade problems with Canada, and invited the Commission to pursue these matters vigorously and firmly with Canada.

The Council discussed the guidelines for the 1987 Asia and Latin America aid programme, and an export stabilisation scheme for least developed countries not party to the Lomé Convention.

The Council discussed two important procedural consequences of the Single European Act concerning the powers of the Commission and the Council's own rules of procedure. I am glad to say that on the latter point, a satisfactory agreement was reached.

The Council also discussed social measures in the coal and steel industries, and held a conciliation meeting with a delegation from the European Parliament on the new regulation on food aid policy and management on which the Development Council agreed a common position on 11 November. The regulation, the United Kingdom presidency initiative, was then formally adopted.

An Association Council at ministerial level was held with Cyprus. Both sides agreed on the importance of bringing the current customs union negotiations to an early conclusion.

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): I thank the Foreign Secretary for making his statement at the end of the British presidency of the Community. At the end of June, the Foreign Secretary told journalists:

"This is the last time I will appear before you as a mere Foreign Secretary. From now on I shall have added lustre".

Can he confirm that as December ends, we have the same old lack lustre Foreign Secretary back before us?

We welcome the resolute nature of the Council's response to American unilateralism on grain exports, although, to quote Commissioner De Clercq, the "unreasonable and undefensible" demands by the Americans are not simply being postponed, and the trade war with the United States still awaits. Like so many problems, has not this crisis simply been sidestepped under the British presidency and passed on to the Belgians to deal with next year?

It is worth remembering today what the Government's objective was during their presidency of the Community. In June the Foreign Secretary said that it was to make

"a real contribution to the lives of ordinary people."

In this aim, as in so many others, we have seen a miserable failure, and nowhere has that failure been more marked than in foreign affairs. In July, a united political stance on apartheid was sabotaged by the spoiling tactics of this Government, which led to the feeble and half-baked stance that was eventually adopted against South Africa. Was that not the root cause of the paralysis in October in response to Syrian terrorism in Britain? Can the Foreign Secretary tell us of the reaction in the Foreign Affairs Council this week to Britian's high-minded and oft-repeated rhetoric about united action on terrorism, in the light of the increasing evidence of, first, our own arms-related exports to both Libya and Iran and, secondly, our acquiescence in the American arms fiasco over Iran? Did not our partners in the Community see through the brazen hypocrisy of the British Government demanding sanctions against these countries, as we simultaneously sell submarine syncro-lift machininery to Libya and send Chieftain tank parts and now £240 million-worth of military radar to Iran? Does this open bending of the Government's rules not debase our own position in uniting the Community against terrorist states?

Is there not something symbolically important in the fact that the European nations could not even agree on one candidate to put forward for the position of managing director of the International Monetary Fund, a position that is being voted upon today when the Governments of the world have to choose between two separate and distinct European candidates? The lustre that we had never noticed has gone from the Foreign Secretary. He, and we, will have to admit that his grand designs for the British presidency have produced precious little for the ordinary people of the Community. For that failure alone, his presidency will be memorable.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I must say that the hon. Gentleman's intervention will itself be memorable for its almost total lack of connection with the subject under discussion. He has embarked upon a discussion of the sale of arms to Iran and Libya, neither of which was under discussion at the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council, upon which I am reporting——

Mr. George Robertson: Why not?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Because not one of my European colleagues dwells anywhere near the land filled with fantasy which the Opposition Front Bench occupies. The reality of co-operation on foreign affairs matters in Europe in the last six months has been more effective co-operation than ever before over the development, under British leadership of a policy against terrorism, and more effective co-operation than ever before over the development of a common policy in relation to drugs, terrorism and crime throughout Europe.

To turn to the point at which the hon. Gentleman entered the subject, he was kind enough to commence his otherwise somewhat rambling intervention by congratulating us upon the firmness with which the Community had faced up to the United States' trade negotiating policy. In relation to the successful launch of the GATT round, the reality is that the Community has

been firm under British leadership. On the solution of American-European Community trade disputes, throughout the early autumn the Community was firm under British leadership and effective agreements have been reached on steel, pasta and citrus fruits, for example. *[Laughter.]* Hon. Members may laugh, but the threat of United States action could destroy more than £500 million-worth of exports from the European Community, affecting such vital products as whisky, about which the hon. Gentleman may not be prepared to laugh so lightly. In all these respects the Community has taken firm action. I know that the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) is interested in the IMF post. I am sorry that we were not able to put forward his name, but two good candidates from Europe were put forward for a job in which the right hon. Gentleman has always had a powerful interest because it was one of his mentors during his tragic time as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Denis Healey (Leeds, East): There are two candidates for the rest to choose from.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: A most effective pattern of decisions was taken during the British presidency and that presidency set a record for decisions agreed and adopted on the internal market. We agreed on more help than at any time before for small businesses, on an action programme for employment, total co-operation on illegal immigration, visas, terrorism and crime. Yesterday, a series of decisions on the common agricultural policy went further than anyone could have imagined on the most fundamental reforms ever agreed to that policy. Those things were all undertaken under the British presidency during the second half of the year. The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) should re-examine his assessment of these matters and be prepared to pay generous tribute to a dramatic series of successes.

Sir Anthony Kershaw (Stroud): Is it not clear that, while agreements on things like citrus and the like may be a matter for mockery by the Opposition, they mean the difference between prosperity and poverty for the people who produce them? Is it not also clear that the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) must have been talking about a different meeting? I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on the lustre that he has given to Europe during the last six months. The British presidency has laid the foundation for a Europe that works properly and which will be able to contribute to peace and prosperity throughout the world.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his kind tribute and for underlining the realities that the work being undertaken by the Community is about the jobs of people in Britain and in Europe, about which the Opposition seem to care not at all.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): Will the Foreign Secretary enlarge on his rather delphic reference to the Single European Act? Who conceded what to whom, and to what effect? Can he tell us whether, in the last Council that he chaired, any advance consideration was given to the matter of a common electoral system for the European Parliament, given that the Political Committee of that Parliament has, as he knows, now reached an agreement? Does he agree that the existing electoral system in Britain is clearly unfair to the electors and distorts the position in the European Parliament? Can we be sure that, even though we did not have a change by 1984, as the Home Secretary hoped we would, we will get one by 1989?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am sorry to disappoint the hon. Gentleman, but no suggestion was made by any member of the Council that the electoral rules, a matter dear to his heart, ought to be considered. The two matters discussed yesterday in connection with the Single European Act were the powers that are to be granted to the Commission to enable it to implement decisions taken by the Council. We also considered a proposal already considered by the House Scrutiny Committee, but not recommended here for debate, which will enable us to specify more clearly the way in which the Commission will exercise its powers to implement decisions. That was not brought to a conclusion, but we were able to agree changes in the Council rules of procedure which form the other part of the Single European Act.

Those changes do not affect the Luxembourg compromise or the basic provisions about whether or not a decision can be taken by unanimity or by majority, but they make it easier to take decisions where majority voting applies and enable the presidency to call a vote on its own initiative or when a majority of Council members are in favour of so doing. It was a considerable achievement to reach agreement on those important procedural changes.

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on the determined and constructive resistance that he has offered to those who advocate protectionist solutions to the present problems that exist between Europe and the United States? Is it not necessary to remind those who advocate such solutions that the worst depression that the world has ever seen was the result of the reciprocal influence of the Hawley-Smoot tariff and imperial preference, whereas the most massive prosperity that the world has ever enjoyed has been the result of the enforcement of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing upon his formidable knowledge of these matters and reminding us of the central principles. It is right to say that the Commission, working jointly with the Council under our presidency, has stood robustly in favour of liberal trading agreements. For that reason, we have made clear our desire if possible to bring the article XXIV (6) negotiations with the United States to an early and agreed conclusion. But, in order to sustain the strength of our negotiating position, we have also agreed that, if unilateral measures are introduced by the United States, the Community will take equivalent action to defend its interests as already agreed. That is the right balance of robustness and pursuit of the right principles.

Mr. Reg Freeson (Brent, East): Considering that three of the world's six leading arms traders are Germany, France and Britain, and that that massive trade is a major cause of poverty, which was referred to earlier, as well as a cause of major leakage into terrorist hands of weapons of destruction, why was the international arms trade and the control and reduction of that trade not a subject of major discussion at the meeting?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Because it was not on the agenda.

Mr. Freeson: Why not?

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Does my right hon. and learned Friend recall the journey which he made to Hillsborough on 15 November 1985 when the Irish Government committed themselves to accede as soon as possible to the European convention on the suppression of terrorism? How does my right hon. and learned Friend explain the decision of the Irish Minister of Justice yesterday that the Irish Government would not now be proceeding with the Bill to accede to the European convention on the suppression of terrorism?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: That matter was not on the agenda of the European Council yesterday, nor was it discussed in any other forum on that day. My hon. Friend must understand, because he attaches so much importance to it, the difficulty of securing the enactment of such matters in many legislatures around the world. The Irish Government have committed themselves to that objective, and it remains, no doubt, an important one.

Mr. John David Taylor (Strangford): Can the EEC Ministers really be serious about a customs union between the Community and Cyprus or do they, in practice, simply mean a customs union between the Community and southern Cyprus? If not, how can there be a customs union with an island which is effectively divided by a customs barrier?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The discussion that we had with the Cyprus Foreign Minister made it clear that we attach importance to the independence, sovereignty and unity of Cyprus. Our customs union is intended to be compatible with that. The policy so far pursued is consistent with article 5 of the association agreement, which states:

"trade shall not give rise to discrimination between . . . nationals of Cyprus."

That remains the objective.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): As the Community is committed to strong action against terrorism, what action has been taken to establish how Mr. Mordechai Vanunu was removed, first from London, and then, apparently, from Paris, against his will?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: That matter has not been raised within the Community. It was the subject of an Adjournment debate in the House about a fortnight ago.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): In view of the serious financial situation in the EEC, was next year's budget discussed or was it not on the agenda? Is there a danger and a likelihood of the 12th arrangement being adopted next year? In view of the Prime Minister's statement to the House last week, is it not now a fact that the only way in which we can protect our rebate mechanism is to pay subscriptions in excess of the 1·4 per cent. VAT formula?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The budgetary position was a formidable part of the discussion to which the Agriculture Ministers were addressing themselves yesterday. We also discussed the way in which the Commission is likely to be producing its ex novo report for consideration by the Commission and the Council during the course of the next year. On the budget, the hon. Gentleman will know that the Council reached its conclusions within the maximum rate. So far, the Parliament has not reached the same conclusion. In those circumstances, the provisional 12th arrangement is likely to apply in the immediate future. That is not an arrangement with which the United Kingdom has any difficulties.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): What progress has been achieved towards a common extradition policy with regard to terrorists in the European Community? After all, there are many terrorists in the Republic of Ireland who are wanted by the United Kingdom at this moment? If we cannot get any of them because of the obstinacy and refusal of the Irish Government to co-operate in this matter, what hope is there of getting a common European policy?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend will recollect that, in a number of respects, there have been some remarkable successes in securing the extradition of criminals from a variety of Community countries during the past 12 months. There have also been agreements entered into between ourselves and Spain replacing a void that previously existed. In all those respects, matters are advancing. They would not be moving so fast were it not for the framework of European Community co-operation.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): One wonders what past Foreign Secretaries such as Palmerston, Halifax or Bevin would have made of a Foreign Secretary telling us about pasta, even with a lustrous topping. Aid for Latin America was on the agenda. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell us what was decided about the level of aid for Nicaragua? In connection with terrorism, what statement was made or was intended to be made later, about the international terrorism of the United States, with their support for the Contras?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Council did not raise the last topic mentioned by the hon. Gentleman because it takes a different view from him. On the subject of aid, there was a discussion about the likely distribution of aid as between Third world countries and Latin American countries, but it was not possible to bring that to a conclusion yesterday.

Mr. Stefan Terlezki (Cardiff, West): I wish to congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on his presidency of the European Community and on the fact that he has fought so vigorously on the subject of human rights in the Soviet Union. I should like to ask him most sincerely to continue fighting and speaking about human rights in the Soviet Union and the satellite states, so that the Soviet Union will recognise and implement the Helsinki human rights agreement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. That matter is under discussion at the follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the countries of the Twelve are taking a strong and united position, precisely as my hon. Friend would wish.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall endeavour to call before 4 o'clock all the hon. Members who are standing, so I ask them to be brief.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Does the agreement on steel to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman referred mean that we can expect quotas that will smother Ravenscraig in the same way as the present quotas led to the suffocation of Gartcosh?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The agreement on steel that was arrived at during the negotiations in the late part of the

summer and early autumn secured the removal of threatened restrictions by the United States and the United States market as one of several restrictions which would have threatened severe damage to jobs throughout the Community.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman appreciate that the House, with its charitable disposition, does not blame him too much for his lacklustre presidency because it realises that the Prime Minister is growing increasingly unpopular in Europe, for good reason? Specifically on the Hindawi case, does the right hon. and learned Gentleman not realise that there is a fallacy central to his argument in that there is now greater awareness, certainly among European leaders and probably among most European parliamentarians, that in the specific Hindawi case, it was a rigged situation which conned the British court because it was created by Mossad in co-operation with MI5?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman strays a long way beyond the scope of any conceivable agenda. There is no evidence to support his approach to the matter.

Mr. Faulds: Every bit of evidence.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The entire Community supported the action taken against the Syrian Government on the basis of evidence presented to the Community as a result of the decision of a British court.

Mr. Stuart Randall (Kingston upon Hull, West): Will the Foreign Secretary tell the House what the social measures for steel and coal mean for Britain?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The social measures under discussion involved a transfer from the Community budget to the Coal and Steel Community budget which was not acceptable to the majority of countries taking part in the discussion, especially Britain. It would have involved a large distribution in favour of steel and little in the direction of coal. It has been decided that the Commission should give further consideration to these matters when it considers the improved co-ordination of structural funds, which is part of the agenda for the new year.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The Foreign Secretary cannot face both ways on the issue of trade with the United States, claiming great success in terms of lemons and spaghetti while indulging in a little sabre-rattling in his statement about potential American action. Six months ago, when the right hon. and learned Gentleman began his presidency, he was optimistic about trade talks, and we now face the serious possibility of a trade war. Can he tell us what went wrong during his presidency?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Nothing in that respect at all. We started the summer with three specific anxieties between the Community and the United States. The first was whether we should get the next GATT round going as a result of forthcoming talks at Punta del Este. We did so as a result of Britian's successful leadership of the Community delegation. The second was, should we resolve the then current disputes about pasta, lemons and steel, which when taken together were of importance to jobs in the European Community? The answer is that that dispute was resolved satisfactorily. Jobs in steel, about which Opposition Members were concerned, were safeguarded.

The third anxiety was, should we be able to bring to an end the dispute following the enlargement of the European Community, with America claiming the right to impose discrimination against us? That dispute has not yet been resolved, but we have decided that it would be sensible to allow one further month for negotiation. As the hon. Gentleman says it is much better to avoid a trade war rather than run into one. If that is not possible, the Community is armed to take firm, robust measures against the United States on an exactly matching basis. That is the sensible way to conduct these matters.

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): Will the Foreign Secretary tell us in what activity Foreign Council Ministers have engaged in attempting to resolve the problem in the middle east, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict? Did they take any specific action following the use of live ammunition by the Israeli defence forces on the west bank in Gaza over the past few weeks? What progress has been made by the European Council of Ministers in gaining access for produce from the west bank in Gaza to the Common Market?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Arab-Israeli dispute has been addressed a number of times during our presidency. It is because of the importance of the subject that Britain initiated and put in place the policy for Community aid and Community trade access to be extended to the people of the west bank and those in Gaza. That is an important response to the issue raised by the hon. Gentleman and it arises directly from Britian'as initiative in the Community.

The use of live ammunition in incidents in Israel over the past week or so has been the subject of active consideration, in which Britain supported the relevant resolution at the United Nations together with all other Community Members on the Security Council.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): In response to my hon Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson), the Foreign Secretary talked of total co-operation on crime. Can he assure his European colleagues in the House that the complaints by Mr. Sandy Grant of break-ins to and fires at the premises of Heinemann in Australia have nothing to do with the British Government or British Government agencies?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot give any kind of assurance on that matter, about which the hon. Gentleman has given no notice.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I recognise what the Foreign Secretary has said about pasta, lemons and the rest of it, but why were the latest police state restrictions in South Africa not placed on the agenda? Does he not recognise that the latest restrictions demonstrate once again that there is no solution in South Africa while the present authorities remain in office? It is all the more unfortunate that the Foreign Secretary, despite what he says, is undoubtedly a party to appeasement in what is happening in South Africa.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's view, which he presses upon the House at every opportunity. South Africa was discussed yesterday and the Twelve are planning to make high-level representations in Pretoria on human rights generally. We have already taken action on the part of the United Kingdom Government and made it plain, in words that will commend themselves to the hon. Gentleman, that

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

muzzling the press and locking up one's political opponents is not the answer to the problems of South Africa. Our position is absolutely clear.

Mr. Peter Pike (Burnley): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman not regret the fact that, during Britain's presidency of the European Council, it has been Britain that has held Europe back from taking more positive steps and from putting pressure on the South African Government to take this last opportunity to end apartheid by peaceful means? As the South African Government are moving, if anything, in the wrong direction, should not Britain's role be reviewed and even further pressure be exerted than that outlined a moment ago?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman is wrong in his basic analysis. The countries that have, in the past few days, declined to put in place trade measures in relation to coal are Germany and Portugal. The United Kingdom, in line with the position that it adopted in London in August, would have been willing to accept those measures as part of the general Community package. We feel no sense of dismay in not having gone further down the road of sanctions, because all the evidence suggests that the consolidation of opinion behind the authoritarian measures being taken by the South African Government is the result of actions taken by the outside world rather than of the balance that we have tried to pursue. Therefore, there is no reason for me to be apologetic to the hon. Gentleman in that respect.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, arising directly on this statement. Courtesy is important in the House. The Foreign Secretary said that he had been given no notice about Mr. Sandy Grant. However, I wrote to his office this morning—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not a point of order for me.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Have not the six months of the United Kingdom's presidency, which will go down in history as the pasta presidency, been an abject failure? As it is the President who sets the agenda for meetings, does not responsibility for avoiding all the major issues in the Community rest fairly and squarely on the Foreign Secretary's shoulders? At the end of his presidency, we have a growing trade war with the United States, institutions at loggerheads and the budget out of control. Even Jacques Delors, the President of the Commission, in his usual diplomatic way, describes it as disappointing. Does that not mean in reality that it has been disastrous?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman can hardly be faulted for lack of originality. He has returned to the same point as the Opposition Front Bench started from. His remarks have no foundation. We have been successful in launching a new GATT round, in defusing the main trade dispute with the United States, in reforming the food aid programme, in uniting the Community against terrorism, in taking more measures to liberalise the internal market than any other presidency, in establishing the first wide-ranging action programme on unemployment and in ensuring the most important measure of CAP reform ever achieved. That is a presidency of formidable achievement, and it is only the hon. Gentleman who does not recognise that.

Agriculture Council

4.3 pm

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Selwyn Gummer): With permission, I will make a statement on the outcome of the meeting in Brussels of the Council of Agriculture Ministers, which covered 90 hours of negotiations, including two all-night sessions, and ended yesterday afternoon. My right hon. Friend the Minister chaired this meeting and I represented the United Kingdom.

Important decisions were made which involved major reforms to the milk and beef sectors. On milk, the agreement will result in a reduction in production of 9·5 per cent. over the next two years. This is to be achieved first by the permanent reductions in milk quotas of 2 per cent. for 1987 and a further 1 per cent. in 1988 as agreed last April; secondly, by a temporary suspension of quota by 4 per cent. in 1987 and a further 1·5 per cent. in 1988; and finally by a further 1 per cent. reduction which results from a tightening up in the operation of the quota system. I insisted throughout the negotiations that the necessary reductions in production had to apply to all member states, and that was agreed.

Our aim will be to achieve as much of the permanent reduction as possible in the United Kingdom by the voluntary outgoers scheme. I am pleased to say that the maximum rate of Community compensation under the scheme will be increased by 50 per cent. from 2·6p per litre a year to 3·9p per litre a year over seven years.

Compensation from FEOGA for the temporary suspensions of quota will be paid at 6·5p per litre per year, and this rate is guaranteed for two years.

Changes are to be made next year in the arrangements for implementing the supplementary levy in order to make it more effective in discouraging production in excess of national quotas. We succeeded in our aim of retaining formula B and article 4a, which contribute to ensuring the flexible operation of the quota arrangements within the United Kingdom.

As part of the arrangement, changes are to be made in the intervention arrangements. They are designed to prevent excessive recourse to intervention, which has been noticeable in the Community particularly over the past year.

The Council took note of a Commission paper which sets out its plans for a major disposal of existing intervention stock, designed to reduce it to more manageable levels by 1989. The cost of this programme of disposals will be financed over the four years beginning in 1989.

On beef, the Council agreed substantial reforms in the intervention system. They are designed to reduce both the cost and the volume of intervention buying. They involve a reduction in the price levels at which intervention buying will operate. It will take place only when the average price in the Community is below 91 per cent. of the intervention price and when at the same time the average price in a particular member state or region is below 87 per cent. of the intervention price.

Alongside those changes in intervention, various premium arrangements were agreed. They include a new premium worth £16 per head payable on male animals only on specialised beef enterprises up to a limit of 50 head per farm. This particular premium was totally unacceptable to the United Kingdom, and we shall not be applying it here. Instead we succeeded in retaining our existing variable premium arrangements on the existing terms, which are much more favourable. The maximum rate payable averages at about £45 per head and covers heifers as well as steers and young bulls. Moreover, the 50 head limit does not apply to it. In addition, the rate of Community funding for the suckler cow premium is being increased. It will be possible in 1987 to pay up to a maximum of £33 per head. The decision on the actual rate will be taken later.

Those changes to the beef system represent a major shift away from dependence on intervention towards a more market-oriented policy. This is in line with the approach which we have followed in the United Kingdom under our variable premium system. The beef arrangements have, moreover, been agreed until the end of 1988. They will therefore provide an important element of stability for beef producers during a period when the adjustments to milk production, and the effects of that on the beef market, will be felt.

In response to the request that we made last September, the Council agreed to devaluation in our green rate of 6 points for beef and 3·2 points for sheep. Those changes, which take effect on 5 January, will result in support prices in those two sectors being increased by around 5 per cent. and 1·5 per cent. respectively. That will be worth an additional £50 million to farmers in a full year. The devaluation will also help towards restoring our meat traders' position relative to Ireland.

Other green rate devaluations were agreed at the same time: for France in the same two sectors; and for Greece, Portugal and Spain in the sheep sector alone. The Council broadly approved in outline a package of socio-structural measures and agreed that detailed decisions on them would be reached by the end of February.

One major aim of the arrangements is to help tackle the surplus problem. Member states will be required to offer aid for the extensification of production and conversion to non-surplus output, and also to operate an early retirement scheme for farmers who want to abandon production on their farms. These schemes will be able to cover afforestation as well as fallowing. Member states will have a wide measure of discretion on how they will be applied.

The measures will help the southern countries in the Community to restructure their farms. There is provision for Community-funded schemes for environmentally sensitive areas. This is, of course, an important concept which has been introduced into Community legislation as a result of the pressure from the United Kingdom, and in particular from my right hon. Friend the Minister.

The Commission originally proposed a limit on the financial contribution to compensatory allowances for livestock, which would have severely discriminated against some farmers in this country. I succeeded in securing a form of words in the final document that is acceptable to us and to them.

The changes, particularly in the milk sector, will, of course, cause serious problems of adjustment for many individual farmers, but they will be sizeably compensated. But the package agreed at the Council on milk and beef fits in well with the best interests of the United Kingdom industry. *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members who care about

[Mr. John Selwyn Gummer]

the farming industry might listen to what comes next because it matters to farmers. In particular, the cut in milk production will be applied across the Community and we have retained flexibility in the system; we have kept the beef variable premium and an improved suckler cow premium; and we have secured the green rate changes, which will greatly benefit our livestock sector.

The Agriculture Council has, I believe, under the British presidency, taken an historic step forward in tackling the problems of surpluses, which will bring substantial savings to the Community budget. Twelve nations have together found the way forward in agriculture—despite differences so big that once they could have caused wars — *[Laughter.]* Is it not marvellous how Opposition Members will not give credit to the Common Market when it brings home the bacon? It is in the interests of all of us, farmers, consumers and taxpayers alike, that decisions have been taken that put the common agricultural policy on the right road for the future.

Mr. Brynmor John (Pontypridd): I am grateful to the Minister of State for making his statement and, in particular, avoiding any temptation to go into hyperbole about what was achieved. However, the agreement is complicated and the House will want further clarification of what the right hon. Gentleman has just said.

I welcome the three points on which I believe both sides of the House were united in a recent debate on this subject. First is the retention of the B formula, which I presume will have its system of setting off deficits and surpluses unchanged. Second is the retention and extension of the beef variable premium. I am glad to see that other countries now appreciate the value of some such premium. I hope that, whatever standardisation occurs in future, we shall insist that the dual benefits to both the producer and the consumer are retained. Third is the improvement of the milk outgoers scheme. Will the Minister tell the House what thought has been given by the Council to the use of any outgoers money for entry into the beef or sheep sector?

On surpluses, the Minister has announced measures which, if they work, will represent a sizeable step towards reducing surpluses in one of the most notorious areas of surplus, the dairy sector. When does the right hon. Gentleman estimate that, with the benefit of the scheme, production and consumption will be matched? As no less than 5·5 per cent. out of the 9·5 per cent. saving is to be achieved by a two-year temporary set-aside scheme, what will happen to such production after the two years have elapsed? Does the land come back into dairy production, or will it be a permanent loss, based on what was originally a temporary basis?

Will the Minister confirm three points about the green pound? First, the effect of lower intervention prices for beef, even when the 6 per cent. devaluation is taken into account, is to lower beef intervention prices by 8 per cent. net, and United Kingdom farmers will not have the advantage of headage payments to set off against that. What effect will that have on the smaller specialist beef producer?

Secondly, will the 6 per cent. devaluation eliminate, rather than work towards restoring, the advantage that the Irish farmers had recently over their British counterparts, to avoid the incident that occurred recently in Wales? Thirdly, with the United Kingdom and French devaluation for sheepmeat, is there a guarantee that our perfectly legitimate trade in lamb will not be disrupted by French farmers in future?

I revert to the dairy sector. It is clear that some producers will come out of the sector, and I should welcome the right hon. Gentleman's estimate of the number. However, the point was put to him forcibly, again by both sides of the House in the recent debate, that others will be forced out of that sector by the reduction—farm and creamery workers will be displaced by the structural change. Yet there is no word of them in the statement. And is there not yet time for the Government to secure a better deal for those who, unavoidably and through no fault of their own will find themselves without a job?

The chief area about which I am unhappy concerns the importance of not overstating what has been achieved. For example, even if the dairy problem is conquered, that is merely the most notorious of several surplus regimes. There is no mention of cereals in the agreement, for example. Tackling the problem on the basis of a bit at a time, as we have done in the Agriculture Council, does the Minister accept that in other sectors, most notably beef, if outgoers use their money to set up in that sector, by the killing of dairy cows, estimated at 1 million or more in Europe, they are depressing beef prices and building up the 600,000-tonne beef mountain?

Does the Minister further accept that a number of acres—[HON. MEMBERS: "Too long."] No! Conservative Members may be satisfied with the hype in the *Daily Telegraph* but the House is entitled to ask legitimate questions about the agreement. When we are chastised for not taking an interest in agriculture, let the farmers note that the impatient ones are Conservative Members who just want to hurry through the statement so that they can go to their social functions.

Does the Minister further accept that a number of acres—perhaps he will tell us how many—will be left idle by the disappearance of dairy herds? Will not the temptation be to put sheep on them, thus accelerating the time when sheepmeat moves into surplus? The right hon. Gentleman will know that many sheep farmers do not have the luxury of switching, and they need protection to be kept in the sheep farming. Will they get it? Chief, however, among the lessons is that the impetus now created must not be lost. The Agriculture Ministers must not let events back them against the wall before they act on the common agricultural policy. Once started, the House should now insist that we look comprehensively at the CAP so that the policy may be reformed thoroughly in all spheres.

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is right in his final words. However, he must agree that it would hardly be right to suggest that the agreement is doing things merely a bit at a time. There were those who suggested that we should stick with dairying. If we could manage to do that, it would be a huge achievement. Others said that we must concentrate on beef, and others said that we should content ourselves with the special work on the structures package, which was particularly helpful at the beginning of the set-aside scheme for cereals. That would pave the way for the others.

The fact is that Britain went for all three together. Most European countries thought that it was impossible, but we achieved it. This is the largest package that we have

achieved together. In recognition of what the hon. Gentleman rightly says, farming is indivisible, and if one does not make the changes across the board, one pushes some of the problems on to other sectors. But one cannot do more than what is humanly possible in the period available to deal with the matter. I am pleased that no one suggested that we should cover anything else in the marathon that we went through.

We must take the hon. Gentleman's point about impetus. I agree with him that it is important. One cannot overstate how important this part of it is. The agreement is important because it is a major change in the way in which the Community deals with agriculture. If we build on that, we can make a difference. However, the hon. Gentleman is right about the B formula. Its mechanism is unchanged. What has changed is that those who over-produce after the mechanism has operated will receive a considerably greater penalty. That must be sensible because otherwise it is not fair on those who keep within the production targets.

I am glad that the rest of the Community is to learn the benefits of premiums. I have always believed that, once one has a premium system, farmers will understand how successful it is and it will be much more difficult to get rid of it. That is why it has been resisted so stoutly by those who believe in intervention as the only system. If one deals with surpluses on the system that we have used, of course the hon. Gentleman is right. We have called the system a temporary cessation of the quota. However, I think that he will agree that it is likely that that amount will continue thereafter. We were not prepared to support a fixed amount of compensation, which would go on into the distance. It seemed to us that a digressive system was more sensible, because one's initial costs are particularly high as it is then that one is likely to be restricting the number of animals that one has.

I do believe in having a temporary system because we have to get other dairy producers in the world to reduce their production in a similar fashion so that the world dairy market returns to a sensible basis. We want to be in the business of exporting on a reasonable instead of a highly subsidised basis. That means that we must all make reductions. It is not fair to ask British and other European farmers to reduce their production if other countries do not do the same.

In relation to the green pound, we never sought a greater benefit than that which the Irish had been given through the reduction of their green punt. Britain does not believe in changes in the green pound between price-fixings. We were so angry about that decision because it was taken on behalf of one nation on grounds that clearly applied absolutely in the same way to the neighbouring nation. That is why we felt that it was wrong that it had been held up for so long. We still believe that this is a welcome, if late, decision. It will not remove all the advantage from Irish farmers because some of that arises from other currency movements not affected by the decision.

I have a real concern about the problems faced by creamery workers and I was part of the United Kingdom delegation that raised that point with the Commission. The Commissioners have still not given us an answer on how to consider the matter.

Sir Richard Body (Holland with Boston): Has my right hon. Friend made any estimates of how many dairy farmers in this country may have to go out of business as a result of the decision?

Mr. Gummer: That sort of estimate is difficult to calculate. The truth of the matter is that, when quotas came into operation, it was thought that more dairy farmers would have to go out of business than happens year by year. That turned out not to be the case. I do not believe that the changes will mean that dairy farmers will have to go out of business. We will give those who wish to go out of business the opportunity to do so and those who do not wish to do that will be properly compensated for the fact that they perform an important job in producing the nation's food and conserving the countryside.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): Although I welcome the retention of beef variable premiums and the green pound devaluation, will the right hon. Gentleman press for further green pound devaluations at the next negotiations, which I regard as absolutely essential? What effect will the settlement have on the income of the average-sized dairy farm in the United Kingdom? What plans does he have should the market valuation of quota exceed the value set for the outgoers scheme? What will he do if that happens?

Mr. Gummer: It would not be proper now to decide what our arguments and balance should be within the price-fixing arrangements that have still to come. However, the hon. Gentleman will know that, in the past, the United Kingdom has secured proper changes in the green pound that must be balanced against the extra cost to the Community budget. There is a mix to achieve and we must consider other arrangements before we can make a decision.

With regard to dairy farmers income, there is no doubt that compensation for the cut in quota of the temporary scheme is such that it should replace the profit that would otherwise have come from producing that milk—and, indeed, should more than replace that profit. There is, in the package, sufficient to support British dairy farmers without producing a product that cannot be sold. Even those of us with large numbers of farming constituents know that farmers do not want to produce food that is destroyed or sold at impossibly low prices. They want to do a proper job. They want a restriction on the amount that they can produce rather than to continue packing it into butter and then destroying it at the end of the day.

Mr. Colin Shepherd (Hereford): Does my right hon. Friend agree that eventually he will be commended by the agricultural industry for coming to terms with and forcing his colleagues in the Council to accept the underlying instability of agriculture?

Does my right hon. Friend accept that one sector of British agriculture that is feeling particularly squeezed and nervous is the small stock farmer in the hills? Can he spell out how that sector can be reassured by the negotiations in which he has been involved during the past week? Finally, can my right hon. Friend comment on the figures of a loss of £50 to £60 per head of beef animal that have been quoted in the national press?

Mr. Gummer: The reasons for the United Kingdom presidency being so determined that we should deal with

[Mr. Gummer]

dairying and beef production together were exactly as my hon. Friend explained. It is impossible to exclude one from the other, as there is a knock-on effect on the number of cows in the market.

The package helps very considerably. First, there is more than 400 million ecu put aside to get further exports of beef as the cows come on to the market. That will reduce the number of cows in the market.

Secondly, the introduction of premium generally in Europe should have a lowering effect on the price of beef in the rest of Europe, which should be a direct help to consumers. That should mean greater consumption in Europe and a knock-on effect on stocks elsewhere.

The increase in suckler cow premium goes directly to the specialist beef producer. The retention of beef variable premium for this year and next means that the producer has real confidence to a point at which we would expect the major effect of extra beef coming to the market to be a reduction in price. There are no grounds whatsoever for the figures that have been circulating. It is impossible to calculate such figures. There is no way of estimating how the market will operate with the change in intervention. I am sorry that people take an excessively gloomy view when it is such an extremely good deal.

Mr. Eric Deakins (Walthamstow): By how much will CAP expenditure be reduced in 1987 and 1988 as a result of the measures that have been taken? Will the temporary suspension of quotas automatically end after two years?

Mr. Gummer: The answer to the second part of the hon. Gentleman's question is no, they will not end automatically. The only thing that has been fixed for two years is the exact amount of compensation. The milk package will save the Community about £1,200 million over three years and the beef arrangements will save £120 million. That package has taken into account the extra money that is to be paid out.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I welcome this agreement. Few people thought it possible to achieve an agreement of such magnitude and importance in Europe, and all credit should go to my right hon. Friend. Is he aware that, in the light of surpluses, his agreements on milk, the green pound and the reduction in beef premium are very good indeed? Will the increase in suckler cow subsidies be adequate to increase incomes in the beef sector?

Mr. Gummer: There is no doubt that there is an argument that the suckler cow subsidy is the way in which we can most properly direct help to the specialist beef sector. I still believe that it is a reasonable increase, although it is certainly not as big as some would have liked. Taken with the other measures, the beef producer must accept that this is a much more satisfactory agreement than anyone would have thought possible. Those who read the comments of the National Farmers Union must understand that the agreement achieves very much more than the NFU expected and meets all of its priorities.

Dr. Roger Thomas (Carmarthen): What advice has the Minister about diversification for all the ex-dairy farmers who will exist in south-west Wales in the next two or three years?

Mr. Gummer: I do not believe that there will be those ex-dairy farmers. The arrangements that have been produced mean that those who have to reduce quota will be very properly compensated for that reduction. It will be the same kind of contribution to their income as they might have expected elsewhere. The hon. Gentleman knows that I am on record as having proposed a whole range of examples of diversification to assist the part of the country about which both he and I care.

Mr. Eric Cockeram (Ludlow): Has my right hon. Friend considered paying part of the compensation under the outgoers scheme to landlords in view of their reversionary interest in the cancelled quota?

Mr. Gummer: The arrangements have been discussed and negotiated throughout Europe. I do not think that anyone regards the present structure as unreasonable. We have protected the landlords' capital interest in the arrangements for outgoers, but when there is a temporary cessation of this kind, we believe that the money should go to the people who actually suffer the cut in milk production.

Mr. John David Taylor (Strangford): As the net result of the arrangements announced by the Minister will be terrifying for farmers in the United Kingdom and will lead to a reduction in farm incomes, more bankruptcies and certainly more unemployment in rural areas, how can the Minister defend a policy that sacrifices British farmers because of surpluses produced in other countries?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman has got it entirely wrong. This country put the second largest amount of butter—98,000 tonnes—into intervention last year, so it is quite wrong to suggest that we should not share the burden of surpluses. We have achieved a fair deal across the board. The hon. Gentleman would do the Province more good by fighting for the package rather than attacking it.

Sir Paul Hawkins (Norfolk, South-West): Only hours before the settlement was reached, I was with Sir Henry Plumb and the president of the National Farmers Union, who had never believed that such a good settlement could be obtained. I congratulate my right hon. Friend and the Minister on their stamina and on the tremendous success of the presidency, which I hope will be promulgated throughout the country. People in Great Britain are always denigrating their own country. The agreement is a whole-hearted success for both consumer and producer. Will my right hon. Friend ensure that the true story is put over to the British people?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that it will help a great deal to know that my hon. Friend, with his long experience of farming, shares our view that the settlement is a good one. Sir Henry Plumb, who is certainly a good judge, regards it as a success that no one could have expected. The way to inform the people of this country is to give them just the facts rather than the scare stories being put about by people who have no interest in the future of agriculture.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): How does the Minister intend to convince creamery workers who are to lose their jobs in January that this is a good package? How can he simply say that the Commission has not given a reply? When will he do something for people who are losing their employment now?

Mr. Gummer: There is a real problem when people are producing something that no one wants to buy. It may therefore be necessary to reduce the number of creameries. Sometimes the reason is simply that they are out of date and need replacement. The arrangements for workers who are made redundant are more generous than the national scheme. The hon. Lady knows that I take an interest in this, and I shall continue to do so.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Will my hon. Friend, representing the Government rather than just his own Department, see that creamery workers who are made redundant by these quota arrangements receive the same sort of redundancy payments that steel workers received when they were made redundant owing to steel quotas imposed by the EEC? Secondly, will Britain be paying next year the optional 1·6p per litre on 4 per cent. of the quota reduction or will she not?

Mr. Gummer: The arrangements as to the optional matters—those that are national decisions—are made by the Government as a whole. There has not yet been time for the Government to reflect on the matter and to make a decision. No doubt my hon. Friend will be among the first to know when the decision has been made. As for the creamery workers, my hon. Friend is quite right that comparisons could be made with the steel industry, but comparisons could also be made with the textile industry, in which no extra help was given. The answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) is as far as I can go at present.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Does the Minister accept that this extensive and major package shows that common agricultural policy techniques are more variable than opponents of the policy sometimes suggest? To enable us to take a more balanced view of the impact of the package on those affected by it, will the Minister be a little more specific about the milk quota compensation arrangements and say whether he believes that they will be equivalent to less or more than the value of the quota? Secondly, how do the Government intend to exercise their discretion with regard to the socio-economic structural package? In particular, what order of magnitude do the Goverment have in mind for the cash to be made available under the scheme for farmers cutting their farming commitment?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman is right to draw attention to the socio-economic package which, despite its unfortunate name, contains some important measures aimed at the poorest farmers, not just in southern Europe but in the Highlands, in Wales and in other difficult areas of this country. We have not yet reached the stage of detailed discussions about the money that will be available. One reason for that was simply time. We made the essential political decisions, so there is clear guidance as to what the package will contain. We hope that the package itself will be worked out before the end of February. This is a major change and I shall certainly ensure that our policies and principles, which were partly behind the Agriculture Act which introduced the environmentally sensitive areas and other elements, will be shot through the scheme. Much of the pressure for it has come through new ideas from the United Kingdom, which is taking the lead in farm diversification.

As for dairy farmers' income, it is much more difficult to measure this according to the value of quotas, because the figures given for the value of quotas vary considerably. However, the pence per litre compensation for the reduction in quota in the temporary cessation system is rather more than the profit that the farmer could expect to make if he produced that litre of liquid milk, so the arrangements defend the farmer's income.

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Is my right hon. Friend aware that my farmers will be especially pleased at the retention of the beef variable premium for two years and the intention to try for the 6 per cent. devaluation of the green pound, which our right hon. Friend the Minister announced in my constituency on 29 September? Does my right hon. Friend agree that, taken together, these measures will go a long way towards restoring the stability of the beef market which has been lacking in our part of the world in recent months?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend has not allowed the Ministry to forget the needs of her beef farmers and I am sure that she is very pleased at the success of the policy that she has supported.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is the Minister aware that some Tory newspapers today have forecast that, as a result of this great marathon success story, which has turned out a little flat the more questions the Minister has answered about it, beef and milk prices will fall? When does the Minister expect those prices to fall, and by how much?

Mr. Gummer: I think that the hon. Gentleman is probably wrong in his assessment of the way in which the package has turned out the more people have learned about it. I believe that as people have learned more about it they have found it more satisfactory than they had thought. I cannot be responsible for statements in newspapers, but it is certainly true that in most EEC countries which did not previously have the premium the price of beef will fall because the premium will have that effect. We already had the premium. That is why beef prices in this country are lower than in the rest of Europe anyway.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): Following these negotiations, will the common agricultural policy cost less in 1987 than in 1986?

Mr. Gummer: As I have said, the cost of the agricultural part of the CAP will be substantially reduced in successive years as a result of the negotiations.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a recent survey showed that, in west Wales, one in four dairy farmers are teetering on the brink of bankruptcy and that this package will only make their worries even worse because their responsibilities are long term and the two years will not be enough to bail them out? When the United Kingdom is importing substantial quantities of dairy products, they cannot understand the Minister selling them down the river in this way.

Mr. Gummer: I am sorry, but the hon. Gentleman cannot say that with any truth. We import Danish and New Zealand butter, for example, because the British housewife wants to buy those butters and chooses not to buy British butter. New Zealand and Denmark have access to our market but we do not guarantee them a market. I believe that the British housewife ought to have a choice. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not suggesting that

[Mr. Gummer]

Welsh housewives should be forced to buy Welsh butter. I think that Welsh butter is extremely good and always buy it when I do not buy English butter. The hon. Gentleman cannot complain about Britain taking some of the cost of reducing——

Mr. Wigley: You should tell my farmers that.

Mr. Gummer: I would tell them that, because I would tell them the truth. If the hon. Gentleman does not tell them that, he will not be telling them the truth.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): My right hon. Friend is right when he says that farmers do not like money to be spent on food that is being put into intervention. What reassurance can he give small dairy farmers in the 200,000-litre category today, who will be especially hard hit by any reduction in quota? Has his attention been drawn to early-day motion 310, which deals with that point?

Mr. Gummer: I hope that we have met my hon. Friend's reasonable concern for the small dairy farmer. The compensation for suspension will be paid at the rate of 6·5p per litre per year, whereas the average profit on milk is between 3p and 4p per litre. That will mean that there is a margin to cover the increase in cost which arises when there is a lower throughput. It is about the right amount to ensure that my hon. Friend's dairy farmers have some guaranteed support for their income, which is especially necessary in his part of the world, where dairying is perhaps the only thing which farmers can do effectively. That is true of other areas, but it is especially true of my hon. Friend's constituency, which I have known well.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Although we must all be grateful to the Minister for his efforts to prevent another war in Europe by these negotiations, even if he murdered the English language to tell us about it, why has he mentioned the consumer so little today? Can the consumer look forward, now that there is such a large surplus of dairy products, to an early reduction in the price of milk, rather than the continual increases that they have experienced—or has the law of supply and demand been completely repealed in favour of farming?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman ought to remember that the rise in food prices under the present Government has been less than the average rise in inflation. That is noticeably different from what happened when Labour were in government, when food prices rose very much faster. The hon. Gentleman might remember that, as he is a member of the Labour party, he should be on the side of those who do a good day's work getting a reasonable return for their work. I am anxious to support farmers to ensure that they have a reasonable living.

We have always fought for changes in the system which are directed at the consumer. Therefore, we have the beef variable premium for a further two years, which is of direct help to the consumer. We also have a premium throughout Europe which is of direct help to European consumers. The Government have supported such policies, which favour the consumer directly. As for dairy products, almost every consumer in Britain is a taxpayer, whether directly or indirectly, and the fact that the tax bill will be so hugely changed must affect all consumers.

Mr. Alexander Pollock (Moray): I congratulate my right hon. Friend, and especially welcome the devaluation of the green pound, which will improve the trading climate for beef, not least in relation to the unfair Irish price differential. I urge my right hon. Friend to keep the slaughter premium at a realistic price to ensure that there is continuity of confidence in the beef sector, especially when there is an added threat in the shape of the cull of the national dairy herd.

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that my hon. Friend is right. The beef producer will not have the easiest time for the next two years while the dairy herd contracts. Thereafter, as he knows, the indications are that the beef market will become much more stable as supply and demand come much more into line. The Government have tried to be careful with the needs of beef farmers during the next two years.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): Will the Minister confirm that, even when we include New Zealand in our production levels, Britain is no more than just in surplus in dairy products? We consume as much dairy produce as we produce. Can the Minister therefore explain to the counties of Devon and Cornwall which have today seen one tenth of one of their prime industries close down why the height of the Ministry's ambition was to cut our production by the same percentage as that by which other countries are in phenomenal surplus? What intentions, if any, does he have to skew this arrangement to the advantage of small farmers? That is within his power if he chooses to do it, but he has not mentioned it so far.

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman, who is, after all, a member of a party which supports our membership of the European Community, ought to remember that these arrangements are made fairly across the whole of Europe. We are all taking the same burden. Last year, we put 98,000 tonnes of butter into intervention. We imported considerably less than that——

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): No, we did not. We imported 135,000 tonnes.

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend need not be too upset, because, if I have got the figures wrong, I shall apologise to him. There is no need to be upset about it.

Mr. Skinner: You are just a wart on Thatcher's nose.

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman made that joke last week and it was not funny then.

Mr. Skinner: It will be in *Hansard* now. I have been trying to get it in for two months.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I did not call the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton).

Mr. Gummer: It is quite impossible to ask the rest of the Community that we should take a smaller cut while we are costing the whole Community the price of putting 98,000 tonnes of butter into intervention. The hon. Gentleman must tell his constituents that as well.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I will now call Mr. Winterton.

Mr. Winterton: My right hon. Friend is aware that I have strongly opposed and deplored the way in which the Government have treated British dairy farmers, bearing in

mind the fact that they do not contribute year in, year out, to the surplus in Europe of liquid milk or dairy products. We imported 135,000 tonnes of dairy products last year. We are a net importer. Does my right hon. Friend accept from me, as a critic of the Government, that I warmly support the package that he has announced today? It is far better than could ever have been expected by me, as a strong opponent of the Government on dairy matters.

Does my right hon. Friend agree that he does his cause no good by giving the type of abrasive answer that he gave the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor)? Will he direct his attention to perhaps the most important thing in agriculture today—how the small dairy farmers of Macclesfield, east Cheshire, west Derbyshire and north Staffordshire are to look to their future? In what way, will the Government advise, should farmers and others in agriculture manage and fund land which, to date, has been funded by producing food, but which will in future not be used for that purpose because dairy products and liquid milk, which are their only products, can no longer be produced?

Mr. Gummer: I must say to my hon. Friend that it is not the Government who have imported those milk products; it is the housewife who has chosen to buy them. We in the agriculture industry must accept that, if we are to compete, we must enable people to want to buy our products. So long as we cost the whole Community large sums through intervention butter and considerable over-production of cereal products compared with our needs —

Mr. Penhaligon: Ah.

Mr. Gummer: —we cannot suggest that we should be excluded from fair cuts across the board in milk products. We are putting milk products into intervention.

I hope that my hon. Friend will agree that when one makes any announcement on agriculture, part of the House says, "Why on earth should farmers receive this help?", and another part says, "Should not the farmers have some more?". Therefore, my hon. Friend should say to his farmers, "We have tried to create more confidence in the market by ensuring that there are long-term dates so that people know of even a temporary cessation over two years and, again, there is a beef variable premium over two years. We have gradually enabled future planning, so that people can make their decisions." He can tell his farmers that every one of them will be compensated for the compulsory cuts and that that is more than they could have expected to gain in profit on the pints of milk that they produce.

In the long term, this is the only European Government who are taking as a basic part of their policy a programme of set-aside. That will enable us to bring production more closely into line with demand, if we can do it on a European basis.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Does the Minister recall that, when Opposition Members have suggested that the beef and butter mountains should be distributed free to our pensioners, we have been told that, because of the arrangements, it would merely result in more beef and butter being brought into intervention? Since we understand that "vigorous" steps will be taken to reduce the intervention stores, is it not time for the Government to say that, if the new system will work, beef and butter stores will now be given free to our pensioners? What better time to announce that than immediately before Christmas?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman must accept that he would not want us to distribute a good deal of the butter in intervention to our pensioners because it has been in intervention for a long time. If we distributed the butter that he might wish us to distribute, those who normally buy butter would not buy butter. It is no good pretending otherwise, because we had a Christmas butter scheme which showed that.

Therefore, the butter that those people would have bought will go into intervention. We would spend large sums spreading free butter round the country and taking more butter into intervention in its place. That is not sensible. If we could find a way of increasing the market for butter and of helping the least advantaged, we would follow it. I am committed to that, but I have not yet found a way of doing it.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall call those hon. Members who have been standing, but I ask for brief questions.

Mr. Andy Stewart (Sherwood): There is much to be commended in my right hon. Friend's statement. However, the beef package is causing grave concern among beef producers, especially as informed sources are saying that it will cost about £50 per head in reduced subsidies. That is because wholesale butchers have based their bidding price on the present intervention price. If that is reduced by 13 per cent., it will reduce the subsidies by the sum I mentioned. If that fear is founded, will my right hon. Friend take steps to correct it?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend should accept that those figures cannot reasonably be held in the circumstances of our action. They do not take into account our action to stop the full effect of the calf and dairy cows coming on to the market. Nor do they take properly into account the effect of the continuation of the various premiums. Moreover, with the growing firmness of the beef market, we shall be able to see that beef producers pass through these two years more effectively than they suggest. But none of us can be sure, and I am not suggesting that the position will not be tougher than we anticipate.

With this package we have addressed ourselves to the problem in a way which we think will be successful, but obviously we shall keep a close eye on its effect on beef farmers.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): May I welcome what is obviously a significant step down a long road? Has there been an improvement in the arrangements for securing and policing quota compliance by other member states?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is right that there is no point in having quotas if we do not ensure that they are adhered to. Several things happened during the discussions which have ensured that that will happen. By the changes and tightening in the arrangements for formulas A and B and their supervision by the Community, countries which have not been as tough on quotas as others—others have been as good as we have been on that—will find it much more difficult to evade the rules.

Mr. Robert Hicks (Cornwall, South-East): Has my right hon. Friend made any assessment of the impact that

[Mr. Robert Hicks]

the introduction of these measures will have on the structure of the countryside, given that farm incomes form the basis of the economic and social well-being of rural areas?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend has put his finger on the area with which we are most concerned. That impact is the reason why we insisted on proceeding as far as we could with the structural measures in the Community discussions. There were those at home who suggested that Britain should be concerned only with beef and dairy, but we felt that it was right also to deal with the structures measure. My hon. Friend is right — that, as the production ability of British and European farmers increases, so the amount of land needed for food decreases. The whole structure of the countryside, dependent as it is on agriculture incomes, becomes much more fragile. Therefore, we are anxious to accompany these measures with changes such as we have often outlined previously, especially in the set-aside area, which will enable us to ensure that there is a proper basis for a thriving rural economy.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Will my right hon. Friend be generous with the truth in describing the reduction in the cost of the CAP? If he is right, as he hopes us to understand, there will be no need for any increase in contribution from VAT——

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): No supplementary budget.

Mr. Budgen: —and no supplementary budget to the EEC. If, however, we have misunderstood my right hon. Friend's words, we shall be deeply disappointed in future.

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend knows that I am careful never to be economic with the truth. *[Interruption.]* Therefore, I have given him the exact figures. They are that the changes in dairying will mean a reduction in the budget of £1,200 million over the next three years and in beef of £120 million. We have not finished yet. First, the continuing effect of that will be even greater savings and, secondly, the United Kingdom Government are determined now to reduce the cost in other areas.

Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory (Wells): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on this first stage in the reform programme. The overall package will be welcomed generally in Somerset, which is the second biggest milk county. The farming community recognises that the continuing surpluses are doing great damage to the image of British farming and are a monstrous imposition on European taxpayers. Will he give an assurance that the changes in the milk regime will be enforced equally throughout the Community? There has been evidence that in the past the West German Government have allocated more milk quota than was allowed under the rules.

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that my hon. Friend is perfectly right about that. That is why I resisted strongly the West German Government's proposal to change the rules about the suspension of quota and the operation of formulas A and B, which could have legitimised a practice that is clearly illegitimate. We stopped that, with the help of our other Community partners.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: As, sadly, previous Common Market agreements have not always worked exactly as planned, will my hon. Friend publish in the *Official Report* before Christmas the detailed figures showing how, despite the additional subsidies, pensions and premiums, the planned CAP spending will be cut by £1,200 million in 1987? Does national flexibility on disposal, which he mentioned, mean that there will be any transfer of the cash responsibility for disposal from the Common Market to national Governments? Does he not think that it is an appropriate time to publish a report showing what went wrong with the previous quota scheme, which was designed to curb mountains and spending but actually increased both?

Mr. Gummer: The previous quota scheme was never sufficient to solve the problem and it was not sufficient to solve the problem of the growing ability to produce. We have two problems. One is the amount that we can produce at present and the other is a tendency to increase productivity and for the population to decrease its consumption of milk products. These two problems work in opposite directions from the aims of the quota. That is why I am so keen about the very large change that we have made, although it has hurt many of my hon. Friends' constituencies. It would have been much better and much easier if we could have made the change over a longer period. The British Government have always been opposed to the fact that we did not make these decisions earlier and more forcefully, when they would have been more to the benefit of the farmer.

I shall be happy to publish clear breakdowns of the figures, which my hon. Friend can then work over.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Given all the difficulties that my right hon. Friend has faced, may I unreservedly congratulate him on courageously and effectively grasping some particularly awkward nettles? Could my right hon. Friend tell the House that, after the cutbacks in milk, we will still be secure in our liquid milk market?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend is most kind to make those comments, because I know that he perhaps starts considering these matters from a different angle from me. The liquid milk production is as important to his non-farming constituents as to the farmers who produce it. Liquid milk production is easily covered by the large amount of butter that goes into intervention. Even if all the milk came out of butter production, there would still be more butter going into intervention unless we could improve our proportion of the market. I am keen that we should sell more of our butter and cheese on the British market against foreign competition.

Airborne Early Warning System

5.3 pm

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the imminent award by this Government of defence procurement contracts for an airborne early warning system, probably to a foreign supplier, the possible acquisition of the entire British technological alternative package by a European competitor and the consequent forfeiture of export market potential of national economic benefit."

The matter is specific in that it relates to two possible options. One is British, custom-made to Ministry of Defence requirements and modified at ever-increasing cost to the taxpayer as the prospective purchasers upgraded their demands and specifications. The other option is American. It is admittedly a comprehensive system, but it is much more expensive. It is available almost off the shelf. It could have been purchased more than five years ago and it could have provided us with an early warning system much earlier if the need had been as pressing as the Prime Minister would now have us believe—so pressing that we may squander the fruit of British brain power before Christmas.

The matter is important in that the level of taxpayers' investment in this project — a project specific to changing Ministry of Defence requirements—has been colossal. That investment may now prove a loss to Britain and, ironically, a major gain to France. We know that French representatives have been present at all recent technical evaluations of Nimrod at the invitation of the Ministry of Defence. Could it be that the French investor might acquire the GEC package lock, stock and barrel, so reaping the fruit of our investment and probably cornering the considerable export potential that is available?

The matter is urgent, and needs urgent attention, as it is generally thought that a statement on the Government's decision may be made tomorrow. A debate after that announcement would be little more than a self-indulgent display of emasculating exhibitionism. This House must be afforded the opportunity to debate the issues in full before the decision is finalised, rather than afterwards. The House must be allowed to express a view and then vote upon the issue. I appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, to put the matter to the House this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the imminent award by this Government of defence procurement contracts for an airborne early warning system, probably to a foreign supplier, the possible acquisition of the entire British technological alternative package by a European competitor and the consequent forfeiture of export market potential of national economic benefit."

I have listened with care to what the hon. Gentleman said, as I listened yesterday to the submission by the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies). I regret that I have to give him the same answer as I gave yesterday. I am bound by the criteria laid down under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Wright Case (Court Proceedings)

5.6 pm

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the difficulties encountered by those responsible for stating the Government's position in proceedings in the Wright case."

You will have heard this morning, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Malcolm Turnbull, an Australian lawyer, has been making scurrilous allegations against distinguished British public servants. That will not surprise you, Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Turnbull is partisan, and as he has a reputation for brash arrogance and as a publicity monger.

What will have surprised and, I imagine, appalled you, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Turnbull's assertion that the successful pursuit of his case against the British Crown was dependent upon actions by the Leader of the Opposition in this House. In other words, the Leader of the Opposition was creating difficulties for the Crown by using, or more accurately abusing, the procedures of this House for the benefit of Mr. Turnbull. We know that the Leader of the Opposition is naive and inexperienced. What we did not know until today was the extent of his involvement in this case.

In his letter to you, the right hon. Gentleman spoke of several telephone calls, the last five of which came from Australia. The most likely construction that can now be placed on those last exchanges is that the right hon. Gentleman, a Privy Councillor, was receiving his instructions which, if carried out, would—and some may say did—create difficulties for the Crown. No man should be condemned unheard. It is only fair to the right hon. Gentleman that there should be an immediate debate so that the difficulties faced by the Crown's representatives, and the role of the Leader of the Opposition in those difficulties, can be speedily and closely investigated.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the difficulties encountered by those responsible for stating the Government's position in proceedings in the Wright case."

I have listened to what the hon. Gentleman said, but I regret that I do not consider that the matter that he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Reference has just been made to me by a Conservative Member. Were it not for the fact that he is one of the most contemptible Members in the House I would be asking you simply to treat his remarks as being as stupid as they are scurrilous, but I take this opportunity to say that he would not dare, in any shape or form, to accuse me outside this place of taking orders from anyone about anything. It is only the protection of this place that affords him the opportunity to be both ridiculous and—if I may use the phrase—extremely ungentlemanly, as well as lacking any form of courage.

Later—

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, and further to the point of order raised by the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock). Would you rule whether it is in order for one hon. Member to call another "contemptible"? If that is the language that is to be tolerated in this place——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is a word that I have heard used frequently in this place. May I say to the whole House that it is very important that we treat each other with civility.

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton (Fife, Central): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I draw your attention to an early edition of *The London Evening Standard*, referring to Mr. Turnbull in Australia.

Mr. Speaker: Is there a point of order in this for me?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, certainly. There are scurrilous words in Mr. Turnbull's remarks implying perfidy and treachery in this House and in the Government. He says:

"Sir Robert"—
the head of our Civil Service—
"is the classical fall guy"—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Gentleman come immediately to his point of order for me? I am not responsible for anything that Mr. Turnbull may have said.

Mr. Hamilton: During his speech to the court Mr. Turnbull has accused the head of the British Civil Service, the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister of lying. That is a very serious charge, and we are anxious to preserve the integrity of those right hon. Members——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that Mr. Turnbull did not do that in this place. I am not responsible for anything that is said to an Australian court. Will he come immediately to the point of order for me? He has been here for a very long time and he knows the rules.

Mr. Hamilton: You preceded me by a few seconds, Mr. Speaker. The integrity of the House and the Government is being challenged in that court. What can you do to protect that integrity from outside sources?

Mr. Speaker: I am responsible for the integrity of the statements by hon. Members inside this House. I cannot be responsible for everything that might be said about it outside.

Members' Telephone Calls

5.17 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It will be within your recollection that, as reported in c. 1076 of *Hansard* for yesterday, you said that you would consider referring to the Privileges Committee a letter from a telephone engineer which I outlined in detail in my speech on the security debate and which was further referred to yesterday by my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds). Do you have any timetable in mind for action on your part?

Mr. Speaker: I told the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) that I would consider any letter that came to me. It came to me only this morning and I am considering it.

Point of Order

5.18 pm

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I have just dealt with the hon. Gentleman's application under Standing Order No. 20.

Mr. Cook: It is a different point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I ask the hon. Gentleman to sit down.

BILL PRESENTED

PRIVATE SECURITY

Mr. Don Dixon, supported by Mr. Robert C. Brown, Mr. Giles Radice, Dr. John Cunningham, Miss Betty Boothroyd, Mr. Jack Ashley, Mr. A. E. P. Duffy, Mr. Gerald Kaufman, Mr. John Smith, Mr. George Robertson and Mr. Michael Cocks, presented a Bill to provide for and in connection with the regulation of the private security industry: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 20 February and to be printed. [Bill. 40].

5.19 pm

Mr. Frank Cook: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I will take the point of order if it is my responsibility and if it does not refer to the hon. Gentleman's application under Standing Order No. 20.

Mr. Cook: I am most grateful to you, Sir. I must confess that I am genuinely at a loss. In no way do I challenge your ruling on my application under Standing Order No. 20, but I need your guidance.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think I can give it because, as the hon. Gentleman knows, I am bound under Standing Order No. 20 not to give reasons for my decision.

Mr. Cook: But I do not see the reason——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am bound by the Standing Order. I cannot help the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Cook: I need guidance, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot help the hon. Gentleman.

Orders of the Day

Autumn Statement

Mr. Speaker: I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment on the Order Paper.

5.15 pm

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): I beg to move,

That this House approves the Autumn Statement presented by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer on 6th November; welcomes the prospect of continuing low inflation and steady growth as the basis for maintaining the trend of rising employment; and congratulates Her Majesty's Government on the continuing reduction in the share of national income pre-empted by public expenditure.

Before I begin my remarks, may I apologise to the House for the fact that, since this debate has started unnaturally late, I may have to leave the Chamber at a rather early stage in the proceedings for reasons which I have explained to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley).

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): The Chancellor of the Exchequer will confirm, on reflection, that he was courteous enough to send me a message saying that he would be leaving the debate early long before anyone knew the time at which the debate would begin. But putting aside that little slip, will he take it from me that it is wholly unacceptable that when the House has on the agenda the principles of the Government's economic policy, for which he is wholly and personally responsible, and on which the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee has adjudicated and in many particulars found the Chancellor wanting, he should not remain in the Chamber to hear the House's criticism of his conduct?

Mr. Lawson: As to the right hon. Gentleman's first point, I was well aware when my office telephoned his office that there would be an agriculture statement and that you, Mr. Speaker, would let that run for quite a long time because it was a very important statement and many right hon. and hon. Members would have wished to take part. But I have listened to what the right hon. Gentleman said. I have conflicting obligations. I will, of course, consider his request——

Mr. Hattersley: So that the apology, which I repeat is wholly unacceptable to the Opposition, might have a little more grace, will the Chancellor tell us whether he is now going to a meeting to validate the decision on AWAC which the Prime Minister announced yesterday afternoon?

Mr. Lawson: The right hon. Gentleman should know that that decision can be taken only by the Cabinet and that the Cabinet does not meet this afternoon.

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not a fact that the call of the House to Ministers is paramount and must be heeded before any outside demands? Is not the Chancellor simply following his precedent in previous economic debates, when he has treated the House with contempt by listening to almost none of the speeches by hon. Members?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that that is an expression of opinion. It is not a matter for the Chair.

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton (Fife, Central): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Chair is responsible for safeguarding the interests of Back-Bench Members in these matters. As the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) said, Ministers' first duty is to the House. Especially with such a major debate, the Chancellor should know that, whatever his commitments outside, the House must take priority. He has not yet explained to us which engagement is more important than listening to the debate. But whatever it is, the House is far more important. If he does not stop treating the House with contempt, the country will reserve its judgment on him. Will he now say that he is cancelling all outside appointments and devoting all his attention to the debate?

Mr. Lawson: I shall stay as long as I can, but I have to say that this is not assisted by the time-wasting tactics of certain hon. Members opposite.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Where is he going?

Mr. Lawson: I see that hon. Members are not the slightest bit interested in this debate or the economy, and that goes for right hon. Members, so I fail to see why they should make a fuss—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sure the House wishes to hear the Chancellor.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As you will recollect, last Thursday the House approved the business programme for this week. That programme was drawn up by the Government's business managers after consultation with Ministers. They then presented to the House their programme for this week's debates, and many of my hon. Friends have come here so that the Chancellor can hear what they have to say in this most important debate.

Surely it is not enough for the Chancellor to make a last minute phone call, although he has known for a week when the debate was to be, to my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmimgham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) to say, "I am sorry but I am going to slide out when I have said my bit." Surely he should make a full statement to the House about what has taken him away from his prime responsibility.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That point has been made already. I hope that we can get on with the debate.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: This is time wasting, and it is an abuse of the House and totally undermines every single point that the Opposition have sought to make——

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will recall that some two years ago the Chancellor of the Exchequer was so late for the winding up speeches that he did not come in for them. This was drawn to the attention of Mr. Speaker, who issued a statement saying that it was the duty of the Ministers of the Crown to put the House before other commitments. That was written into *Hansard*. We are looking to you for reiteration of that statement, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has no control over the movements of Ministers. I hope, now hon. Members have expressed their view, that we can get on with the debate.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You have said that the Chair has no control over the movements of Ministers. It will be within your recollection that, faced with similar problems, Mr. Speaker Selwyn Lloyd issued what might generally be assumed as guidance to Ministers, stating that the needs and the requirements of the House of Commons were paramount. Is the attitude now being taken different from that of a distinguished Conservative former occupant of your Chair? Has there been a change of policy?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman knows very well that Ministers must be judges in these matters.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Chancellor is treating the House of Commons in an extremely unsatisfactory way. If the Chancellor cannot be brought to cancel his engagements and treat the House with the respect that it deserves, will you consider whether it would be possible to suspend the proceedings until the Chancellor is free to come back, face the House and attend the debate in the proper way?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I say again that time is running out. The debate started late for reasons that we all understand. This is an important debate and I hope that we can get on with it.

Mr. Lawson: I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have learned one lesson from this farcical charade, that in future I shall not make the mistake of affording the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook the courtesy of giving him advance warning.

Mr. Hattersley: Has the Chancellor still not understood that his offence is not against me—that does not matter—but against the House? Until he understands that, he is not worthy to address the House this afternoon.

Mr. Lawson: I understand fully well that it is the House that comes first and that is why I began with an apology to the House, but I also understand that the right hon. Gentleman and hon. Members opposite are wasting the time of the House deliberately.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that we shall not have more points of order on the same point. I have already dealt with it and I suggest that it is in the interest of all of us to get on with the debate.

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The whole House has sympathy with Mr. Deputy Speaker when he faces a difficulty. However, I wish to make a suggestion based on precedent. As you can see, the House is a little turbulent. Perhaps Mr. Speaker could be sent for so that the rest of our proceedings can be orderly. I am not decrying your responsibility, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know well the way that you conduct our business and have no criticism. However, this is a difficult situation. Therefore, I suggest you consider the possibility of asking Mr. Speaker to resume the Chair.

Mr. Winnick: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have rightly complained that the Chancellor has said he is going somewhere else without giving any further explanation. However, in the past few minutes the right hon. Gentleman has aggravated his offence by telling my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) that in future he will not bother to give notice that he will not be here. Does not what the Chancellor is doing show a complete contempt for the House? Instead of trying to correct what he said earlier, he is saying that in future he will not bother to give notification that he will not be here. The least that he can do is to explain why he will not be here. If he is not willing to do so, we shall continue to raise the point.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the Chancellor will now have the opportunity to say what he wants to say.

Mr. Dalyell: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As one who has been asked to withdraw from the House because of his use of language, may I be forgiven for being particular about the use of language? The Chancellor of the Exchequer referred in the hearing of all of us to the House of Commons as a "farcical charade". Is that parliamentary language and is that acceptable? What is sauce for the goose must be sauce for the gander.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It will be much better to allow the Chancellor of the Exchequer to explain himself.

Mr. Lawson: This is the now traditional debate on the autumn statement, and it is a relatively recent tradition. This is only the fifth autumn statement that we have had. The first was the invention of my predecessor, my right hon. and learned Friend the present Foreign Secretary, in 1982, and I have been responsible for the subsequent four, but the tradition is none the worse for its recent origin. This year, however, and unusually, we have already had our debate on the autumn statement by courtesy of the Opposition on the day of the oral statement. That does not mean that this debate has to go over the same ground as the first. It gives the House the opportunity to consider for the first time the report on the autumn statement produced by the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, under the distinguished Chairmanship of my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins). Certainly, I feel compelled to do so, for who could not fail to be moved by the Committee's sole recommendation—namely that I should make any statements on what it calls macro-economic policy in the House and not outside it, as I did with my lengthy exegesis of the Government's fiscal and, in particular, monetary policy to the Lombard Association earlier this year? Moreover, the right hon. Member the Leader of the Opposition referred approvingly to this recommendation only last week.

Some of us may be a little surprised to discover that the Leader of the Opposition has developed a taste for this sort of thing, given the manifest inadequacy of his understanding of it. But I suppose the same could be said of his recent excursions into the field of strategic defence.

Be that as it may, I see little practical alternative to continuing as I have begun during my first three and a half years as Chancellor—and, indeed, as my predecessors have before me—making some speeches, such as the Budget, in the House and others, such as the annual speech to the Lord Mayor's Mansion House banquet, outside it.

I readily concede that some may feel—*[Interruption.]* I am afraid that it is abundantly clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Opposition's pretence that they wish to debate the economy is just that—a complete pretence, because there is no attempt to listen to what I have to say.

Mr. Bell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has referred to his Mansion House speech. On the last occasion that he made a speech to the House on the same subject, he repeated the speech that he gave at the Mansion House. May we have your guidance that this is a different speech from that which the Chancellor made at the Mansion House earlier this year?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order for the Chair. *[Interruption.]* I appeal to the House to give a fair hearing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Lawson: I readily concede that some may feel a sense of deprivation in the fact that this Government have reverted to the old-fashioned practice of having only one Budget a year, unlike the previous Labour Government, who were forced to have them every few months. But I am not altogether sure that this sense of deprivation is shared throughout the House. When, in this year's Budget speech, towards the conclusion of a relatively brief passage, I uttered the words

"I will say no more about monetary policy"

the reaction was scarcely one of profound disappointment. Indeed, *Hansard* records hon. Members as having interjected

"Hear, hear." —[*Official Report*, 18 March 1986; Vol. 94, c. 170.]

None the less—*[Interruption.]* I may say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is, in particular, an insult to the Select Committee. What I propose to do is to deal with the points that the Select Committee has made in its report.

Mr. Hattersley: Sharing the Chancellor's desire to pay proper respect to the Select Committee, will he assure the House that he will be here when the Chairman of the Select Committee makes his speech?

Mr. Lawson: I have already discussed the matter with my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing.

Sir Paul Bryan (Boothferry): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not absolutely obvious that this is organised barracking?

Mr. Richard Hickmet (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If the Opposition wish to cover the confusion of the Leader of the Opposition because of his failure to come to the House to make a statement explaining his behaviour in the Wright case, it does not serve their case to bring this Chamber into disrepute by rubbishing my right hon. Friend's statement.

Mr. Hattersley: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer a very serious question about the relationship between the Government and the Select Committee. I am anxious that these interventions should not prevent the Chancellor from telling us whether he is or is not staying for the speech of the Chairman of the Select Committee.

Mr. Lawson: Let me say to the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook that I shall stay to hear what he has to say. —[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I hope that now we can get on with the debate in a civilised manner and that the Opposition will not create the bear garden that they have been creating.

This is clearly the occasion to respond to the Select Committee's report. Since I shall have one or two critical observations to make, let me hasten to add that I do not blame the members of the Committee for their report—*[Interruption.]* Hon. Members should wait. It is clear that they had little time to alter what had in effect already been published by their specialist advisers.

The report levels two main charges. The first is that, and I quote——

Sir Kenneth Lewis (Stamford and Spalding): In terms of the Select Committee of this House, professional advisers are there to advise. The report is the Committee's report. It must not be other than the Committee's report. I do not think that my right hon. Friend should leave on the record the fact that specialist advice is reflected in the opinions that are contained in the report.

Mr. Lawson: I would say in reply to my hon. Friend that of course the report is the Committee's report. And this speech is my speech.—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Some hon. Members have come to the House today to listen to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech on the autumn statement. It has been suggested that the Opposition are organising these points of order. I notice that you have accepted quite a number of points of order from Conservative Members. I want to hear the Government's response to the Select Committee's report. I am concerned about what was said about the Select Committee's report. I am even more concerned about the Chancellor's contempt not only for the Select Committee but for this House.

I wonder whether you would reflect upon the suggestion by my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Pavitt) that Mr. Speaker should be called and that the sitting should be suspended so that he can examine what has already transpired since the Chancellor was called to speak.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am not prepared to suspend the sitting. I hope that the House will listen to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Chancellor has already said that he will not stay to hear the speech of the Chairman of the Select Committee. He then attacked the Opposition Members of the sub-committee and said that its report is effectively the work of our advisers. That is a slur on the sub-committee. Is the Chancellor going to withdraw what he said?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Interventions in the guise of points of order are an abuse of the procedures of the House. We must get on with the debate.

Mr. Lawson: May I, Mr. Deputy Speaker — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Austin Mitchell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have already heard the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: May I have a ruling on that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have listened to the hon. Gentleman. He knows very well that the point he raised is a legitimate matter for debate or intervenion, but that it is not a point of order for the Chair. The Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: I have not finished my point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Chancellor has made a quite deliberate slur on the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service. Will he withdraw that slur?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make his own speech.

Mr. Lawson: The report—*[Interruption.]*—levels two main charges. The first is that:

"The operation of monetary policy has become increasingly obscure."

The second is that in a number of areas, to quote the report's concluding paragraph which was contributed by that dispassionate seeker after truth, the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell),

"There has been a substantial change of policy."

I will discuss each charge in turn.

The first can be quickly dismissed. As Mr. Gordon Pepper, who has forgotten more about monetary policy than most of the Committee's specialist advisers have ever understood, put it in a talk to the FOREX Association of London earlier this month, and I quote:

"Mr. Lawson has gone out of his way to explain how monetary policy is being operated in practice, and how it has evolved, probably more so than any previous Chancellor."

As I have time and again made clear, the central task of monetary policy is to create monetary conditions that, over time, will bring steady downward pressure on the rate of growth of money GDP, and hence on inflation. The principal indicators of monetary conditions are the rate of growth of both narrow and broad money, and the behaviour of the exchange rate. In present circumstances, when the behaviour of broad money has been particularly difficult to interpret, it is the behaviour of narrow money — most conveniently measured by MO — and the exchange rate that have assumed greatest importance. And the essential instrument of monetary policy is the level of short-term interest rates. The Committee appears to suggest that monetary policy is uncertain because the Government are unwilling to raise interest rates when it is necessary to do so. If that were true, it is difficult to understand how interest rates have come to stand at the level they do today.

I now turn to the Committee's second charge—that is, that there has been a substantial change of Government policy. It is important to be clear on what is in question here. The Committee allows that our central objective has been the same since 1979—to reduce inflation and to create the conditions for sustainable growth—and it also accepts that economic policy has always had two essential elements—firm control of monetary conditions and the reduction of public borrowing. What the Committee—and some others—claim to have found are changes in the way in which we have pursued an unchanging objective. Looking first at monetary policy, let me start with what has not changed, and come on to what has.

There has been no change whatever in this Government's view that monetary policy is the key to controlling inflation, and there has been no change either in our view that interest rates are, and must be, the essential instrument of that policy. And there has been no change either in our view that a sound monetary policy needs to be accompanied by a prudent fiscal policy, by which I mean a low budget deficit.

The Committee suggests in its report that what it calls "the enhanced role" for interest rates is new. But that is surely exaggerated, to say the least. Monetary policy, everywhere and always, has to operate through interest rates, for the simple reason that interest rates are the price of money. Even as far back as 1980, in the Green Paper on monetary control, it was explicitly acknowledged that, alongside fiscal policy, the main instrument for controlling monetary growth was interest rates.

I readily concede, though, that in the implementation of policy, a number of things have changed.

First, interest rates have come to bear more weight in restraining money and credit because we have, quite rightly, swept away a whole apparatus of controls. When we took office, we inherited a corset for the banks, foreign exchange controls for everyone, and mortgage rationing for those buying houses. Such controls have increasingly become unworkable, as the financial system becomes more sophisticated. This inevitably puts more immediate weight on interest rates as the instrument of policy.

Secondly, we did for a while come to use systematic overfunding — the practice of selling more gilts than needed to fund the PSBR — as a way of reducing the recorded growth of sterling M3. This led to undesirable distortions in financial markets, which also made policy harder to operate, and so we concluded that the practice could not be justified—a point made forcefully in the past, as I recall, by the Select Committee itself—and I explained that fully in last year's Mansion House speech.

Thirdly, I accept that in setting interest rates it has become harder to use as a guide the particular measure known as sterling M3. But this is in no sense a bolt from the blue. The 1980 Green Paper said that, and I quote:

"no single statistical measure of the money supply can be expected fully to encapsulate monetary conditions".

That was what we said in 1980. In 1980, it did, nevertheless, make sense to have only one target aggregate, and one with which the markets were already familiar, because it had been the target aggregate chosen by the previous Labour Chancellor, the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), and it was clearly important then to give a simple indication of our commitment to financial discipline. But in the day-to-day operation of monetary policy, we recognised, to quote the 1980 Green Paper again—and I do quote—that

"It is insufficient to rely on one measure alone".

That was in 1980.

We also recognised that the definition used and the choice of target aggregates might need to be adjusted, again in the words of the Green Paper, and I quote from the 1980 Green Paper:

"as circumstances change"

and

"in the face of long term changes in the institutional structure".

And, of course, that is precisely what has happened. Circumstances have changed, and the institutional structure has altered, with the result that the behaviour of sterling M3 has become increasingly hard to interpret.

In what attempts to be a serious discussion of monetary policy, the Committee's report makes hardly any mention at all of these developments. It is even more extraordinary that there is no reference at all to experience overseas, for the experience in this country has been similar to that of other major countries, most of which, including Germany, have found their monetary targets overshooting this year, while inflation has unambiguously come down.

We cannot and we do not ignore the continued rapid growth of sterling M3 and other measures of broad

money, but for a long period now this growth has proved consistent with downward pressure on inflation, so it must be looked at in conjunction with the evidence of other indicators. Principal among these is M0, the broad monetary base, which has proved a reliable indicator with a stable trend in velocity. This is why, throughout my time as Chancellor, I have chosen to set targets for narrow money in terms of M0.

The Select Committee says that it is not convinced that M0 is a useful indicator of monetary conditions. It does not say why. It is clearly absurd to imply that all narrow aggregates are misleading because the behaviour of M1 in the early 1970s did not foreshadow the subsequent inflation. It did not, but had the Committee looked at the behaviour of M0 in the early 1970s instead, it would have seen that it did, indeed, warn of the coming inflation.

In operating and formulating monetary policy, the exchange rate is clearly very important both as a transmission mechanism and as an indicator of monetary conditions. In this country, as in the other major economies, it has come to play a more prominent policy role in recent years, as institutional developments have made the monetary aggregates more difficult to interpret. But as long ago as 1980 and early 1981, interest rates were reduced because the exchange rate was clearly indicating that conditions were tight, despite the fact that at that time there was a monetary overshoot, measured by sterling M3. The 1982 medium term financial strategy explained that, and I quote once again, from the 1982 medium term financial strategy this time:

"The behaviour of the exchange rate can help in the interpretation of monetary conditions, particularly when the different aggregates are known to be distorted . . . the Government considers it appropriate to look at the exchange rate in monitoring domestic monetary conditions and in taking decisions about policy".

— *[Interruption.]* I have to tell the House, and, in particular, the Opposition, that I am responding directly to the sole recommendation of the Select Committee which was that statements on monetary policy should be made in the House, and that is what I am doing.

So there should be no surprise about an inevitable and, many would say, desirable development in the appraisal of monetary conditions. Nor, incidentally, as the date of the quotation that I have just read shows, is there anything particularly recent about this evolutionary change.

Let me now turn to fiscal policy. The Committee's complaint here is not that the Government's policy has changed, but rather that it is the same. Specifically, it is unhappy that the autumn statement reaffirmed the Government's commitment to the same fiscal stance as was set out in the 1986 MTFS.

I find the reasoning in this part of the report obscure, to say the least. In places the report appears to be hankering after a return to the old neo-Keynesian fine tuning of the PSBR, against which this Government have set their face—indeed that is part of the very essence of the MTFS. But at the same time, spurred on no doubt by its advisers, the Committee appears to have decided after all these years to abandon the PSBR as the measure of the fiscal stance. No reasons are given for this change of mind other than the fact that the PSBR can be measured either inclusive or exclusive of privatisation proceeds.

The Committee then goes on to argue that the public sector financial deficit — which is calculated not on a real-life cash basis, but on an estimated accruals basis— is a more "relevant and useful figure". This might be slightly more impressive were it not for table 1 of the Committee's report, which sets out what purport to be the public sector financial deficits for each of the past seven years, together with estimates for this year and next year. For four out of the past seven years, the figures in the report's table are wrong, with an average error of approximately £1 billion. For this year, the Committee's PSFD estimate is a perfectly reasonable one, but its estimate for next year, which, after all, is a matter of some importance, is wholly incompatible, by a very wide margin, with the PSBR figure to which I have already unequivocally committed myself, and which at the same time is incongruously placed alongside it in its own table.

But much more important than that, on the central issue of fiscal policy, the Committee has no advice whatever to offer the House. It questions vaguely whether the PSBR should be held to 1·75 per cent. of GDP next year. But it expresses no view at all as to what would be the appropriate level at which to set either the PSBR or the PSFD. It cannot say whether the Government's current and prospective fiscal stance is too loose, or too tight, or just about right.

This deficiency, though inexcusable, is perhaps understandable. I recall that last year one of the Committee's specialist advisers was urging a PSBR of £16 billion this year and £17 billion next year—something he may well wish to forget. But I find it very hard indeed to understand the justification for the doubt which the Committee attempts to cast on the Government's commitment to hold the PSBR next year to 1·75 per cent. of GDP.

The reason given in the report for this — that any forecast of the PSBR is uncertain and subject to a margin of error—is beside the point, and reveals something of a misconception. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Budget day sets the borrowing requirement at a particular figure, he is not simply making a forecast. He is above all making a judgment about the appropriate fiscal stance and sets tax rates accordingly. And this judgment is an essential counterpart to monetary policy in the Government's overall economic strategy.

Clearly, the PSBR set at the time of the Budget has to be validated by events. But let us have a look at the record. I have so far introduced three Budgets—in 1984, 1985, and 1986. In 1984-85 the PSBR did indeed overrun, but that was because of the cost of successfully resisting the coal strike—an exceptional event which it was clearly right to take on the PSBR.

Last year, 1985-86, the PSBR undershot the figure I had set at the time of the Budget. And this year, 1986-87, the PSBR is clearly well on track. Indeed, as the figures for the first eight months published yesterday show, if anything it is more likely to undershoot than overshoot the figure that I set at the time of the Budget of £7 billion. So the Committee's implication that any figure set in the Budget is likely to be exceeded can be seen to be wholly without foundation.

We have set out to reduce the level of the PSBR, and that is what we have done. At an estimated 1¾ per cent. of GDP, this year's PSBR is low by any reckoning, below the general levels of recent years, below the OECD average, and far below the grossly excessive levels from 1974 to 1979, when it averaged nearly 7 per cent. of GDP or over £20 billion at today's prices. Moreover, this would still be true had there been no privatisation proceeds at all.

[Mr. Lawson]

I do, of course, take account of the estimated proceeds of privatisation in setting fiscal policy. But, as I have always made clear, privatisation is a policy that is fully justified on its own merits. It is emphatically not a policy undertaken to massage the PSBR. Just ask the 5 million successful subscribers to British Gas.

Like other commentators, the Treasury and Civil Service Committee has speculated about the outlook for tax cuts. I decided last year no longer to publish a projection for the fiscal adjustment in the autumn statement so as to discourage the pointless and misleading calculations which are regularly made at this time of year. Subsequent events last winter proved that that judgment was right, but speculation nevertheless persists.

Let there be no mistake about this. As I have said repeatedly, a pound used in additional expenditure is a pound which is not available for reductions in taxation, unless borrowing increases, and I have categorically ruled out higher borrowing.

The House should therefore be in no doubt that the sizeable increase in next year's public spending plans, which I announced in the autumn statement, means that, despite the current buoyancy of the revenues, I very much doubt whether there will be much scope for reductions in taxation in next year's Budget.

On public expenditure, the Committee has again engaged in a textual critique worthy of Shakespearean scholars to try to demonstrate a major change of direction. The true position is very simple. We have long maintained that the state takes too much of the nation's income and its share should be reduced. This formulation can be traced back not only to the 1979 manifesto, but even before that to our policy document "The Right Approach to the Economy". And we have pursued this objective consistently.

It is true that some of the targets we have set ourselves have in the event proved too ambitious. And I have already explained to the House that we thought it right to increase the planning totals this year. But it is better to attempt to meet demanding targets than to have the complete absence of financial discipline to which the Labour party is committed.

The progress that we have made is considerable. As I explained at the time of my autumn statement, the rate of increase of public spending in real terms, even excluding privatisation proceeds, has come down from 3 per cent. in the decade to 1978-79 to 2¼ per cent. in the last Parliament and to 1¾ per cent. a year so far in the present one. Our latest plans continue this improvement.

We have also reversed the trend of public spending as a proportion of GDP. Until 1982-83, the previous long-term growth pattern continued, mainly as a result of the severe world recession. But in the four years since then, the proportion of public expenditure has fallen progressively. Our present plans mean that this downward trend will continue so that by the end of the 1980s public spending as a proportion of national income will be back to levels last seen in the early 1970s.

I have set out the policy in terms of general Government expenditure. I had hoped that the Committee would welcome this approach, because for some time it has criticised me for focusing on the planning total and so ignoring debt interest. Yet this year, when I have based my presentation on an aggregate which includes debt interest I note it now seems to want me to go back to the planning total.

To sum up, as I said in my Lombard Association speech in April,

"The policy we are pursuing today is identifiably the same as that which we embarked on seven years ago. But it has clearly evolved — in terms both of presentation and of substance."

Indeed, it would be extraordinary had it not evolved. Since 1979, there have been enormous changes in world economic conditions, in the position of the United Kingdom, in technology, and in the operation of the financial markets. The Select Committee, the House, and indeed the country would be rightly concerned if Government policy had not evolved in the light of these developments. But to depict this evolution as

"a substantial change of policy"

is absurd.

If the Committee needs to be reminded of what a real shift of policy is, it need look no further than the last Labour Government — pre and post the flight to the International Monetary Fund.

Indeed, if ever there was a year in which I might have been expected to change policy, it would have been this year, 1986, with the halving of the oil price. Many people duly advised me to make such a change. I rejected that advice, and maintained the same course, and there has been no crisis. Inflation has fallen to levels not seen for almost 20 years. After a short pause, growth has continued steadily. The number of people in work has continued to rise, and unemployment now looks to be firmly on a downward trend.

The way that both the private sector and the public finances have withstood the fall in the oil price is remarkable. That is the best possible vindication of the economic policy which we have pursued since 1979, a policy which has brought five years of steady growth, low inflation, and a million new jobs since 1983.

For 1987, I foresee a continuation of this pattern, with growth slightly faster than this year, and inflation staying low. The figures that have been released since the autumn statement confirm that picture. Output and exports have both picked up, with industrial production and exports in the three months to October both 1½ per cent. higher than in the previous three months and manufacturing output up 3 per cent. since the beginning of the year. And the latest estimate that the surplus on invisibles was some £750 million a month in the third quarter of this year, with a still larger surplus likely in the fourth quarter, puts into perspective the advice confidently given to the Select Committee by one of its specialist advisers that the earlier projection of £600 million a month was "particularly optimistic".

Seasonally adjusted unemployment fell by 25,000 in October, making a total fall of 56,000 over the last three months, the best performance for 13 years. While the inflation rate did rise last month, chiefly as a result of the rise in the mortgage rate, the underlying inflation rate remained broadly stable.

The outlook for the British economy will, as ever, be critically affected by developments in the wider world economy. One clear danger, which is more acute now following the recent Congressional elections in the United States, is that world trade will become much less free. A retreat into protectionism would be a disastrous step

backwards. Following the agreement on a new GATT round, it would be tragic if unilateral action were to undermine this progress. The United States would do well to recognise that multilateral negotiation and moderation where disputes arise are in all our interests.

The past year or so has seen substantial changes and discontinuities—the halving of the oil price, sharp falls in other commodity prices, and the major realignment of exchange rates following the Plaza agreement. The world economy is adjusting to all this, with, so far, merely a pause in the growth of world trade. In part at least, this is because the major countries have co-operated in pursuing soundly based policies. The world outlook for 1987, at the present time, like our own, is good; and it is crucial that we do not lose our way through a retreat into protectionism.

1986 has also been a notable year in the annals of the Labour party. It is the year in which it has reassembled carefully all the economic policies that have failed before, and been rejected by the electorate before. It is the year too in which it has broken with the traditions of previous Labour Governments by abandoning the effective defence of this nation. But I had better be careful, because if I am too critical of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook he may cancel his reply, just as he refused to speak to the Confederation of British Industry last week because it criticised his policies. We have sought in vain for clarity about how he would run either monetary policy or fiscal policy. Even on public spending, his views are—shall we say—less than entirely clear. Ever since my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary and I costed Labour's programme at some £28 billion—and that was before we had heard about the £6 billion training levy—the right hon. Gentleman has consistently failed to explain how he would finance it, whether by taxation or by borrowing, or by both. If he intends to drop any of the pledges, he should say very clearly which.

Mr. Alan Howarth (Stratford-on-Avon) *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: I am coming to the end.

I have, of necessity, Mr. Speaker, ranged widely in my speech, and I hope that this has helped the House in its consideration of the autumn statement, even though it is clear that the Opposition are not the slightest bit interested in the economy or in the report by the Select Committee.

In conclusion, let me come back to the autumn statement itself. The forecast it contains offers the prospects of another year of low inflation and steady growth. It sets out public expenditure plans which make increases in spending in priority areas, within a framework in which public expenditure in total continues to fall as a proportion of national output. It is the latest step in a firm economic strategy which has been pursued consistently since 1979, and I commend it to the House.

Mr. Alan Howarth On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not a gross abuse of the House——

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not a gross abuse of the House —*[Laughter.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall take the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth).

Mr. Forsyth: I suspect that it may be the same point of order as my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth) was going to make. Is it not a gross abuse of the House that throughout the Chancellor's speech many Conservative Members who wanted to listen were unable to hear because of the organised barracking led by Opposition Front Bench Members and the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) who has abused the Chancellor's courtesy in telling him that he had to leave the Chamber? Surely Conservative Members have a right to hear the Chancellor and not be subject to such juvenile tactics.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It cannot have escaped your notice that over the past hour there has been a systematic attempt to break up the speech that was being delivered by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. I appreciate that there is nothing that you can do about the yobbo tendency on the Opposition Benches if the Opposition choose to conduct themselves in that way. However, is there nothing that you can do to ensure that such behaviour is not egged on and actively abetted by the Leader of the Opposition? Is there nothing that you can do to make it clear to him that the standards that are acceptable on a Saturday night at a rugby club hop are not acceptable in the House of Commons?

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not preposterous for Conservative Members to make such protestations about the level of noise from Opposition Members when some of the few who have been in their places throughout the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer have been visibly slumbering?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Hon. Members having got things off their chests, perhaps we can get on with the debate.

6.11 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I wish to make it clear, in response to the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), that at no time during the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer did I abuse him. I propose to start doing that now.

I am sure that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will recall that when last he addressed the House one British newspaper of some distinction described him as having turned in a "tawdry" performance. I have no doubt that even now the pencils are being sharpened in the Press Gallery. Let me tell the right hon. Gentleman that his performance matched unbridled arrogance with stupefying complacency. During the Conservative party conference it was put about by his advisers that he was being helped in the preparation of his oratorical efforts by one of the scriptwriters for "Yes Minister". I doubted that at the time, but I do not doubt it now.

Apart from the absurdities at the beginning of the right hon. Gentleman's speech—absurdities that underline the boneheaded insensitivity that marks so much that he does — there was an extraordinary attack on the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service. It was one of the most unexpected attacks that any of us in the House have ever heard. I remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the composition of the Select Committee. It comprises seven Conservative Members, three Labour Members and a Conservative Chairman of great distinction, an ex-Treasury Minister, who is, I believe, respected on both sides of the House. Under his chairmanship a

[Mr. Roy Hattersley]

Conservative majority turned in a unanimous report. It happened to be a report which criticised the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but to justify an attack on the Committee and its advisers——

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: No. I should make it clear——

Mr. Budgen *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. It seems clear that the right hon. Gentleman is not giving way.

Mr. Hattersley: If I give way, I shall postpone the opportunity for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to leave to sabotage the British aircraft industry. I tell the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen)——

Mr. Budgen *rose*——

Mr. Hattersley: I tell the hon. Gentleman and the House that, with the exception of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and that of the Chairman of the Select Committee, the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins), I do not propose to give way to anyone. I take that view because we should be examining—this is what I intend to do—the Government's economic strategy and the commentary upon it which the Select Committee provided. What we should be doing, and what the Chancellor of the Exchequer prevented us from doing in a proper fashion by his earlier behaviour, is taking the opportunity that these debates provide to examine the principles upon which the Government's economic policy is based.

In the recent past—I believe for seven years—we have at least agreed on what comprised the Government's policy, for the principles of the Government's economic policies were set out in the medium-term financial strategy. We knew what the principles were and we argued about their values and merits. We noted that the monetary targets on which the policies were based were consistently and constantly missed. We knew what the policy and strategy were even as we observed their practical results. These included the highest unemployment level in our history, the highest real interest rates in our history, the worst balance of payments in our history and the lowest sterling value in our history. We have known the results of the policies as we have heard the boasts that have been made about them. We have known also of the money that has been spent in an attempt to ensure their success.

The medium-term financial strategy can be compared only with the Chelsea football club. Each week the Chancellor announces that he is certain to win the next match. If we take account of history, however, we note that our performance is worse than that of our competitors. We note that our performance is much worse than it was before the medium-term financial strategy was put in place. For years the Chancellor assured us that as long as the Government kept their nerve and adhered to their strategy, eventually interest rates would fall, sterling would appreciate, the balance of payments would produce a surplus and there would be a real and sustained reduction in unemployment. Up to now none of those things has happened, yet on all the evidence, which was documented carefully by the Select Committee, which is the offence which resulted in the abuse that has been heaped upon it, the medium-term financial strategy has, in truth and reality, been abandoned.

As the strategy has been abandoned, the question I ask, which the House asks, and which the country will ask, is how the Government can possibly justify all the waste and suffering which was inherent in the strategy over the past seven years. If the strategy has been abandoned, for what purpose did we cut public expenditure, close hospital wards, reduce pensions, end local authority housebuilding, increase rate bills and persist with the petty but mean cuts such as the reduction in mortgage interest that is eligible for reimbursement through supplementary benefit payments to the unemployed?

Mr. Michael Forsyth *rose*——

Mr. Nicholls: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: No. I have made it clear that I do not propose to give way.

Mr. Nicholls *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The right hon. Gentleman is saying that he is not giving way.

Mr. Hattersley: I have no doubt that weak-minded Government Back Benchers will argue that the medium-term financial strategy has achieved its crucial objective of lower inflation. Some, in an excess of loyalty, may even assert——

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) to refer to Conservative Back Benchers as weak-minded?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Various exchanges take place and I am sure that "weak-minded" is not an unparliamentary term.

Mr. Hattersley: Those who believe that the medium-term financial strategy is still in place and alive and well should consider some of the passages in the Select Committee's report which the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not deal with when addressing the House. I am sure that he omitted to do so only because he was hurried. I repeat that the Select Committee came to a unanimous judgment with a Tory majority under a Tory Chairman. Explicitly on the Government's inflation record, it stated:

"since its first term in office, the rate of inflation has remained broadly unchanged, and has declined in 1986 mainly because of the steep fall in oil and other commodity prices. Domestic symptoms of inflation have been not greatly affected."

I remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the figures on which that assertion its based. In June 1983, the retail prices index was 3·7 per cent. This month it is 3·5 per cent. It is forecast on the Government figures that it will rise to 3·75 per cent. by the end of this Parliament.

Mr. Alan Howarth *rose*——

Mr. Hattersley: No. I shall not give way. More objective predictions suggest——

Mr. Howarth *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman should know that the right hon. Gentleman has said he is not giving way.

Mr. Hattersley: I do not want the House to miss the figures, so, because of interruptions, I shall repeat them. In 1983 the retail prices index was 3·7 per cent.——

Mr. Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to a Select Committee, and you will recall that a recent Select Committee on Procedure suggested that one of the problems about our debates was that right hon. and hon. Members did not indulge in the old-fashioned practice of giving way, thus ensuring that there was not proper debate. Will you remind the right hon. Gentleman of the findings in that Select Committee's recent report?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As the hon. Gentleman knows, that is not a point of order for me.

Mr. Hattersley: I shall try a third time. In 1983 the RPI was 3·7 per cent. It is 3·5 per cent. this month and rising, and it will be 3·75 per cent. by the end of the year, on the Treasury's own estimates. On a more honest and objective analysis, it will be over 4 per cent.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: No.

In the debate on the economy on 6 November the Chancellor was absolutely explicit about how the Government should be judged. He said that the Government must be judged by what has happened since 1983. Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that criterion, which is his own, for the inflation rate? If so, the Government have not only failed to hold down inflation during this Parliament's lifetime, but will have presided over a period during which inflation has risen.

I suspect that the Chancellor will shift his ground, as he usually does, and will say that the inflation rate has to be measured from 1980; that being the time when the Government, having inherited an inflation rate just below 10 per cent. and having pushed it up to more than 21 per cent., began to bring it down again. As the Chancellor is arguing with me about the base date, I shall ask him—and I have said that I shall give way to him—to tell us the date from which he believes that the Government's economic record should be judged.

In a single speech, in one and a half columns of *Hansard*, the Prime Minister chose five different base years as the basis for her phoney statistics: 1979 for manufacturing productivity; 1981 for economic growth: 1982 for public spending; 1983 for manufacturing output; and 1985 for manufacturing investment. The Prime Minister talks as though the Government came to power bit by bit, when really they are disintegrating bit by bit. The country will want to judge the Government on all their seven years in office. Let me remind the Chancellor of what they involve. Two million full-time jobs have been lost, unemployment has increased by 2 million, manufacturing output is down by 7·5 per cent. and manufacturing investment is down by 17 per cent. Moreover, our manufacturing balance of trade has been turned from a £4 billion surplus into a £4 billion deficit.

One could go on and on listing the failures of the past seven years. The point is that the failures of the past have all been justified on the promise that as long as we stick to the medium-term financial strategy, everything will come out right in the end. But we now conclude that the medium-term financial strategy has lost its purpose, its heart and its central core. In the words of the Select Committee, the Government

"lacks a coherent strategy for the setting of fiscal strategy".

The Select Committee went on to say, in another point that the Chancellor did not deal with, that it

"notes the disappearance of the Treasury's former claim that the MTFS would damp down inflationary expectations."

If the Chancellor wants to argue with that, I shall certainly give way to him. Even the promises on public expenditure, the commitments that so excited those new, hard-faced Conservatives who have done well out of privatisation, have been broken. Whether or not the Chancellor likes it, the Select Committee is explicit and precise in describing his change of stance and position.

The Chancellor's first intention was a reduction in public expenditure. His second intention was to hold it constant in real terms. Now, the best that he promises, or the worst in terms of public services, is that it should be held steady as a percentage of gross domestic product. The truth is that he has constantly failed to hit his targets on spending and on money supply, and now he has left that whole policy to disintegrate.

The medium-term financial strategy has disintegrated partly because of the Government's hope that they can now suddenly pretend to be enthusiasts for public expenditure, and enthusiastic about the public services that that expenditure provides. But the real reason for the collapse of the medium-term financial strategy is its own internal contradictions.

In the real world, the medium-term financial strategy could never have worked. It is now dead, and it is being kept from putrefaction by the one firm item of economic policy that the Government possess and the one firm item of economic policy that the Select Committee identified: the commitment to historically high interest rates, which are very much higher than those found in our competitor countries and in our more successful industrial neighbours. The Select Committee quoted the Chancellor's extraordinary words, when he said:

"the guiding principle of policy is to maintain . . . a level of short term interest rates that will deliver the monetary conditions needed to reduce inflation."

The Chancellor made some references to Shakespearean scholars. As he seems to be in a textual and semantic mood, I shall ask him when short term turns into long term. After all, we have had historically high short term interest rates for longer than ever before. He has maintained interest rates at such a high level that manufacturing industry has been unable to afford the new investment that would enable it to expand output and exports, and to drag our balance of payments back into surplus. It is, of course, the Chancellor's interest rate policy that has increased the RPI this month. It was his interest rate policy that pushed mortgage rates to record heights.

Our real interest rate now stands at 8 per cent., and that uniquely high interest rate is the crutch on which the ailing pound now leans. But it is the policy of high interest rates that has put the pound under pressure, and that has done the damage to sterling from which we now suffer. We all know why there has been pressure on the pound and when it will reappear. International opinion has judged that we cannot pay our way in the world and that without oil we shall become a debtor nation. Those countries have seen oil income fall and they know that it is running out. They

[Mr. Hattersley]

have also witnessed the Chancellor's complacency in the face of that. Three months ago he told us that we had lost half of our oil income in 25 weeks and had survived.

We have survived but at the price of a balance of payments that has moved from surplus into deficit, and at the price of interest rates that penalise home owners and incapacitate industry. That is why, in the long term, high interest rates are putting such pressure on sterling. They have undermined our capacity to export, because they have prevented manufacturing industry from expanding, held back investment, and made it impossible for manufacturing industry to fill the gap left in our balance of payments by the reduction in oil revenues.

We have survived, as the Chancellor said, at the cost of creating a vicious spiral. The monthly announcement of balance of payments deficits undermines sterling. Interest rates are then increased to prop up sterling. The interest rate increases themselves debilitate industry, making it impossible for it to export, and further undermining our balance of payments. The idea that the Chancellor should think that high interest rates are an unequivocal boon when they are destroying manufacturing industry, destroying our export potential, undermining our balance of payments and therefore bringing fundamental pressure on the pound, answers many of the questions about which international opinion now ponders and wonders.

Because of industry's inability to invest, to produce and export, last month we had the brief and crude statistical deception to obscure the balance of payments record during the three months in early autumn. That record was a disaster in August, a catastrophe in September and just plain bad in October. It is against that background that the Chancellor says in his more expansive moods, hoping that he can win a few tawdry votes, that public expenditure is increasing.

As is clear after an analysis of the autumn statement, the real increases in public expenditure that it entails have been very much exaggerated. When the increase is genuine, it is more often than not the result of mistakes rather than intentions. The increase in the social services budget is largely the product of unemployment and therefore higher unemployment benefits. I give the Government credit for that not being their intention when last year's plans were set. On present economic policies, the current level of public expenditure cannot be sustained, for it is being financed by a combination of short-term expediency and long-term profligacy. It is being financed by the sale of public sector capital assets——

Mr. Nicholls: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: When I talk about profligacy, I talk about the sale of valuable national assets, badly underpriced so that the Tory party's friends in the City can get them at bargain prices. If that is not profligacy, I do not know what is. Current public expenditure is being financed by tax income, which has come from the boom in credit and consumption.

Mr. Couchman: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: That boom is sucking in imports and making certain that our balance of payments is in deficit. That extra tax income——

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: That extra tax income — what the Chancellor coyly calls buoyant tax receipts — is the direct result of earnings outstripping the inflation rate — levels of wage settlements which he used to condemn — so I ask the Chancellor again, for I am more than willing to give way to him — [HON. MEMBERS: "Come on."] I ask the Chancellor again, for I am more than willing to give way to him, does he still condemn wage settlements that are moving forward faster than the rate of inflation, and if he does not condemn them—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The right hon. Gentleman must not persist in asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer to intervene——

Mr. Budgen: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is not the attitude of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) an insult to the House? He is not here to have a private conversation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is here to address the whole House. It is no less than an insult to all of us if he gives way only to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Fortunately, it is not my job to determine the attitudes of right hon. or hon. Members. It is my duty to uphold the rules of the House. That was not a point of order.

Mr. Gow: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not your duty to ensure that Members of the House can follow what is being said from the Opposition Front Bench? It is extremely difficult to follow what the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) is saying. His speech is so full of inconsistencies——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. *[Interruption.]* Order. It is, indeed, difficult to follow the right hon. Gentleman because of the noise from the House. We believe in hearing every point of view, and the House would get on much better if there were not so many interruptions from a sedentary position.

Mr. Nicholls: Further to that point of order Mr. Deputy Speaker. May I ask for clarification of the ruling that you have just made? As I understand it, you said that because the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersely) has refused to give way, on any new points that arise, he cannot be asked to give way on them. Why is the right hon. Gentleman under your personal protection, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and why can we not ask—[HON. MEMBERS: "Withdraw."]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I did not hear what the hon. Gentleman said. It is in order for any hon. Member to try to intervene. It is not in order for him to persist when it is obvious that the Member who has the Floor does not intend to give way.

Mr. Hattersley: I shall ask the Chancellor my question again. For some years he has condemned wage increases running ahead of the inflation rate. For some years he has attempted to exhort British industry to hold down those increases. It is that disparity between inflation and earnings that has produced the buoyant economy on which he now relies to meet his tax bills.

Mr. Lawson: Nonsense.

Mr. Hattersely: If the right hon. Gentleman is saying "Nonsense" while sitting down, will he get up and tell us where the new buoyancy is coming from?. Which of the taxes, VAT or otherwise, is providing the extra revenue? Is it the result of the disparity between earnings and prices? Answer came there none. What the Chancellor knows, and why he is wise not to speculate on those matters, is that the expedient on which he relies for paying his temporary bills cannot last for ever. Sooner or later there will be no more national assets to sell off. I describe that policy as profligacy again. Sooner or later the export — import imbalance will be so great that the right hon. Gentleman will not be able to continue in his present vein. The election tactic that the Government now operate is to pray that they can win the race between a general election and a sterling crisis, and in the meantime spend now in the hope that they will be able to make the country pay later.

Sir William Clark: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: No.

The tax cuts that I confidently predict will come in the next Budget, generally financed out of asset sales, cannot be sustained. Were the Tories to win the election, their victory would be followed by a massive increase in taxation——

Mrs. Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Like the last time.

Mr. Hattersley: The hon. Lady is absolutely right. They did it last time. They did it in 1979. I was about to make the point, and I am grateful to her for making it for me, but I shall repeat it. An election victory would be followed by a massive increase in taxation, as it was in 1979. More essential services would be jeopardised by privatisation. There would be more public expenditure cuts. Lord Young's manipulation of Government statistics would be abandoned and even the official unemployment total would begin to rise again.

That leads me to my one criticism of the Select Committee. It seemed surprised as well as offended that the Chancellor chose to make his policy speeches outside the House to carefully selected audiences of bankers and stockbrokers. They like his policy. His policy has pampered them at the expense of manufacturing industry. They like his policy because it has made them rich while it has increased poverty and unemployment. Outside the charmed circle of his own choosing, the Chancellor relies on bogus statistics and fraudulent forecasts. He may care to comment on this, or tell the Minister of State to do so. He is, after all, the Chancellor who dare not publish his own Department's report on the economic effect of income tax cuts. The truth is that the Chancellor has been rumbled. What made him in such a savage temper today is the fact that he was rumbled by a Select Committee with a Tory majority. That Committee proved — and the country knows it — that the Chancellor lives on arrogance, faked figures and borrowed time. That is why we will vote against his autumn statement tonight.

6.40 pm

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): I greatly welcome the positive response of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the report of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee. Its task is to monitor the operation of his Department and to report to the House on the basis of the evidence that it has received. I believe that it has carried out that duty and provided a better foundation for debate than would otherwise have been the case.

Before I consider some of the technical matters to which reference has already been made, I should comment on one or two of the remarks made by my right hon. Friend. If I recall correctly, he sought to say that he did not blame the Committee for its report. I am sure that I speak on behalf of every member of the Committee when I state that we accept full responsibility for what was said in the report and that we reported on a unanimous basis. Of course, we take advice from those who have kindly agreed to give us advice, but the analysis and the report are entirely the responsibility of Committee members who have thought out matters for themselves. The report is based on a Chairman's draft, which I prepared. Indeed, I have done little else for the past three weeks or so except prepare drafts for one Committee or another.

It is wrong of my right hon. Friend to suggest that the report is not the responsibility of the Committee or, as he preferred to put it, that he did not blame the Committee for what was said in the report. Those from outside who advise Committees do so for a pittance compared with what they usually earn. They provide us with expect advice across a wide range of opinion. They are not taken from one or other part of the political spectrum.

There is a more fundamental point. It is a recognised practice in the House that one does not attack the Government's advisers. The reason for that is sound— they are unable to defend themselves. It is unfortunate, therefore, that my right hon. Friend has sought to ascribe blame——

Mr. Lawson: They can defend themselves.

Mr. Higgins: Perhaps they can, but not in the House. However, with respect to the Chancellor, it is not a question of their advice being the Committee's report. That is totally and utterly wrong. The report is that of the Committee. My colleagues on the Committee have developed considerable expertise in the light of the numerous inquiries that have been made.

I should also mention that the Committee has a wide spectrum of members ranging from the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) to my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen). That is a wide spectrum, and there is much opinion in between.

Mr. Budgen *rose*——

Mr. Higgins: With respect, I should like to finish.

As economic policy changes, so, of course, the Committee's angle of attack when taking evidence from the Chancellor is also inclined to change. None the less, the report was the unanimous report of the Committee.

Mr. Budgen: My right hon. Friend seems somewhat offended by the Chancellor's attack upon the Committee. We made a vigorous attack upon some parts of the Government's economic policy. It would have been rude and patronising if the Chancellor had not dealt with such criticism as vigorously as we attacked the Government's policy. There need be no collective sense of irritation because the Chancellor has taken the opportunity to criticise our report with the same vigour as we criticised his policies.

Mr. Higgins: I cannot agree more. I began my remarks by saying that I greatly welcomed the Chancellor's positive response. On one side of the fence is the business of the Select Committee and on the other side is the Chancellor. It is our task to monitor his actions.

I want to quote from the report because that is the nub of the Chancellor's concern. Paragraph 4 states:

"In previous reports we have drawn attention to the fact that, although the Government has been successful in achieving a number of its economic ends, the manner in which these have been achieved has differed from that originally propounded in successive versions of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is important that economic policy should be flexible, and able to deal with circumstances not originally foreseen, but we think it would be more appropriate, when policy has obviously changed, for the Chancellor to admit it. Otherwise it is more difficult for us to learn lessons from past experience or indeed to ascertain what present policy really is."

We drew attention to a number of changes that have taken place. In reply, the Chancellor has stressed that the objectives of economic policy have remained the same. We do not dispute that. Indeed, we emphasise that that is so. However, it is absolutely clear that once we have the objectives—which may be common on both sides of the House—the policy that is adopted to implement those objectives may vary greatly. I do not think that it can be seriously argued, in the light of the clear quotations that we made from previous Budget and autumn statements, that the policy has not changed. We have explained in great detail how it has changed, and I do not understand why the Chancellor objects to admitting that it has changed. No one will complain if the Government show flexibility in these matters.

It is right that we should acknowledge the Government's achievements, not least in controlling inflation. That is very important if we are ever to combat the basic problem of unemployment. We should also recognise the extent to which employment has been increasing and the rate of economic growth.

It would be extraordinary if any Select Committee came out with the view that everything that the Government were doing was marvellous. That is not our function. Inevitably, the Chancellor must recognise that Committees tend to be critical, and to a large extent that is their proper function.

I want to spend a moment or two detailing some of the changes, the most obvious of which has occurred in connection with public expenditure. The Government started off by saying that they were going to cut public expenditure in real terms. Then they gradually moved to a different position and said that it would be held roughly constant in real terms and would decline as a percentage of GNP. That is a radical change in policy, and for many Conservative Members it is a considerable disappointment. The Chancellor must recognise that change. I do not see how it can sensibly be argued that that is not the case.

The report details the change in the use of monetary indicators. We complain not that the Chancellor has been flexible, but that he insists that he has not been flexible. A similiar observation was made about the exchange rate.

I want to consider a technical point made by the Chancellor. We say in the report that the public sector financial deficit is a better guide than the public sector borrowing requirement to what is really happening. That is entirely consistent with a point that the Committee has stressed—that the PSBR is not a good guide when the receipts from privatisation are treated as a reduction in public expenditure. We have consistently argued that that is an absurd way of looking at it. We make the constructive suggestion that the public sector financial deficit is a better guide.

In his speech, the Chancellor objected to the figures that were quoted. He said that some were out by as much as £1 billion. However, if one were to look higher up the page, one would see that the PSBR is subject to a margin of error of something like £2·5 billion. That may be so. We are perfectly happy for the Chancellor to correct the figures if we have got them wrong. After all, he has more advisers than we have and I would not criticise those advisers whatever they came up with. We are perfectly happy to accept the figures that the Chancellor puts forward, but we believe that the concept that we have advanced in what we hope is a practical suggestion is a better guide than that previously advanced. We appreciate that there is a certain convenience about the public sector borrowing requirement—everyone is used to it and to the problems that go with it—but to argue that it is an ideal measure is, in our view, a mistake.

Mr. Lawson: I have listened carefully to what my right hon. Friend has said. If he wishes—I quite understand this and I have made this point on many, many occasions—if he wishes to look at what the PSBR would be if privatisation proceeds were added back in, in other words, if they were not counted as negative expenditure, it is a perfectly reasonable thing to do. But that is no case for looking at the public sector financial deficit, which is a different aggregate, done on an accruals basis with an accruals adjustment in it, on an estimated basis, and fluctuates in a very unpredictable way and which has no relation whatsoever to underlying conditions. What he has not explained is why, if his problem is privatisation proceeds, he does not simply look at the PSBR with privatisation proceeds added on top and why he goes to the PSFD. That is what I do not understand.

Mr. Higgins: I fear that I do not have time to deliver the Chancellor a lecture on the subject, but there are substantial arguments — quite apart from the point about privatisation proceeds — in favour of the public sector financial deficit. Indeed, I have argued consistently that the whole thing should be examined in a balance sheet context as well, because that is very important. The Chancellor says that the public sector financial deficit is subject to random fluctuation, but he knows perfectly well that the public sector borrowing requirement does not distinguish between intended changes in borrowing and changes resulting from subsequent external events, so the same argument applies equally to the PSBR. I hope that we can have a debate about this. One of our recommendations — indeed, our only recommendation, as the Chancellor rightly pointed out — is that these matters should be debated on the Floor of the House, not outside. I therefore welcome his intervention and hope that we shall be able to pursue this matter.

I am anxious not to take up too much time because much has already been wasted, but I should like to deal with two further points. With regard to exchange rates and interest rates, I commend paragraph 19 of our report to the House. In that paragraph we state our belief that at present monetary policy is uncertain because the Government wish to prevent interest rates from rising and the exchange rate from falling. As this relates to changes

in policy, I feel bound to point out in parentheses that, although there has been a reduction in the PSBR which I welcome, there has not been the corresponding fall in interest rates that was envisaged when the policy was originally put forward. As we point out in our report, that is because the exchange rate has been given greater emphasis than before and essentially we now have an interest/exchange rate policy.

The Opposition will be less happy about my next point. I have no doubt at all that if there is any possibility—I do not myself recognise it—of a hung Parliament or a Labour Government there will inevitably be downward pressure on the exchange rate as the election approaches due to fears aroused by Opposition policy. If the Chancellor does not want the exchange rate any lower, as he has stated, there will be upward pressure on interest rates—but he does not want that either. Therefore, as our report points out, there is a real dilemma that the Chancellor has not spelt out in detail and that he did not deal with today.

Having said all that, I think that in many ways the Chancellor is not over-optimistic. I do not share the concern expressed by some about the balance of payments. I think we are very fortunate that exchange rates have moved as they have, with no great change in relation to the dollar but a substantial reduction in relation to the deutschmark. To the extent that we buy in dollars and sell in deutschmarks, that is a good thing. Given the so-called J-curve effect, we may reasonably hope that the balance of payments will remain secure. Therefore, I do not share the concern expressed by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley).

Finally, one of the functions of the Select Committee is to warn of impending problems. We regard that as an important function and we have expressed concern about what the Governor of the Bank of England, in evidence to us last year, described as the overhanging glacier of liquidity. It is a matter for conjecture to what extent comparison of the present situation with the period 1972 to 1974 produces a sense of déjà vu. The Chancellor made a point about MO in his speech today. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about the increase in liquidity. It is, indeed, an overhanging glacier, but it is largely frozen at the moment due to a combination of interest rates and expectations about inflation. Like my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, I believe that inflation will remain at a very low level—a better level, as he rightly points out, than we have known for 20 years or more. Nevertheless, there is a difficult situation and we should expect the Chancellor, in the light of our recommendation, to analyse it in the House, not just outside. If an important statement is to be made on monetary policy, it is right that it should be made in this House.

I have spoken for longer than I expected because my speech was not precisely as I expected. We have pointed out the disappearance of rational expectations from the Government's economic policy, and no one in this place should have rational expectations about what is going to happen next. Having said that, I believe that ours is a constructive report and that our comments are fair. The report is part of a continuing debate, and it is a function of the House of Commons to debate these matters in a serious way. Only if we do that can we fulfil the obligation placed upon us by the electorate to ensure that the economy is managed as effectively as we can arrange. I believe that the Select Committee, having produced a unanimous report on this matter, has made a contribution to the debate—no more, no less. We may be shown to be right or we may be shown to be wrong, but the level of debate and the extent to which policy is examined is far greater than it was before the Select Committee system was set up. I believe that that is an advantage to democracy.

6.57 pm

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question, and to add instead thereof,

"rejects the Autumn Statement presented by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer on 6th November, noting that after seven and a half years of the Conservative Government both long-term unemployment and real interest rates are at record levels; further notes that inflation is once again on a rising trend, that earnings are being allowed to increase far ahead of productivity, and that the current account of the balance of payments is moving into rapidly worsening deficit; and therefore calls on Her Majesty's Government to strengthen investment in manufacturing industry, the infrastructure, and training, to negotiate entry into the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System at a competitive rate and to introduce an incomes strategy to reduce the increase in unit labour costs to the level of the United Kingdom's major competitors.".

I congratulate the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) on opening the debate, as there was very little debate before. The Chancellor's pressing engagement was apparently less pressing than he made out. [HON. MEMBERS: "He has just gone."] I did not expect his patience to stretch so far as to listen to what the alliance had to say. He has never listened before, but he will discover what we have to say when the election comes. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where are your friends?"] There is a higher proportion of alliance Members here than of any other arty. [HON. MEMBERS: "An alliance of one."]

The Select Committee report makes the obvious point that what were thought to be the all-important guides have been dropped. I tried to intervene to ask the Chancellor exactly what were the distortions of M3 to which he referred. I suspect that there is some truth in his claim that M3 does not accurately record for the nation's interest all that it was thought to record. Some of us never thought that it did. Nevertheless, I should have liked to ask the Chancellor exactly what had allowed M3 to reach 20 per cent. in real terms but 23 per cent. in absolute monetary terms. Unfortunately, he did not want to reply.

It is clear from the Select Committee report and from the comments of the Opposition spokesman that there is general recognition that interest rates are the Chancellor's chief weapon today. High interest rates have become endemic in the economy. Few hon. Members are prepared to argue through the reason why the Chancellor is pursuing high interest rates and to outline an alternative.

The Chancellor has admitted once or twice why he is pursuing high interest rates. I believe that he is pursuing high interest rates because he knows that, with such conditions, the pound is likely to sustain a higher value. Not many would argue with that. It is a deliberate ploy to make exports dearer and imports cheaper. Manufacturing industry therefore has difficulty selling abroad and at home. The Chancellor pursues that policy because he wants to put maximum pressure on what he believes to be the engine of pay settlements that are above what he considers a tolerable level.

I am willing to continue the argument through, whereas the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr.

[Mr. David Penhaligon]

Hattersley) is not. I believe that pay settlements during the past several years have been higher than is in the nation's interests. If we want to restore our manufacturing strength and to give some of our young people a real chance in productive employment, we have to do something about pay settlements. As the amendment says, I and my party believe that the method lies with an income strategy which, if announced and discussed during a general election campaign, would command much support, bearing in mind the fact that the alternative is how the Government are running the economy now. High interest rates are destructive. I understand the reason for the Chancellor keeping them high, but there is a less destructive way in which to tackle the problem.

I am not surprised that the debate has drifted somewhat wide of the autumn statement—we have to discuss the general trend and what policies are being pursued. I am deeply disturbed by several things. It is said with increasing optimism by Conservative Members that we might be entering a period in which the number of registered unemployed people declines. That may well be true, but it is worth remembering why. There are four principal reasons. First, we have had 18 recalculations of the number of unemployed. Secondly, we have the restart interview. My constituency was one of the trial areas, so I have some knowledge of restart, and I am not impressed. Thirdly, there has been a credit boom which is generating employment in shops. Fourthly, the Government have an enormous special measures programme.

The jobs involved, which are real for the people who have them, fall a long way short of the self-sustaining real employment that we heard so much about in 1979. I do not believe that even that which we have is sustainable for long. We now have 1·2 million people who have been unemployed for more than one year, a manufacturing surplus of £5·5 billion has fallen to a deficit of more than £3 billion and interest rates are the highest in the western industrial world. They are probably 8·5 per cent. in Britain, which is three or four points higher than elsewhere.

The irony of the autumn statement is that the Chancellor has presented figures which, within his limited ambitions, balance the books, but he has managed to balance the books only because his policies are failing. The Government are near to balancing the books and might be able to make tax cuts, but it is not because their policies have been a success. Consumer credit has increased from 45 per cent. of average annual disposable income in 1979 to 70 per cent. today. We have overtaken the United States in consumer credit during the past 18 months. Pay rises are too high.

Mr. Alan Howarth: If the hon. Gentleman is concerned about the increase in consumer credit, does he believe that the remedy is higher interest rates?

Mr. Penhaligon: I did not accuse the Chancellor—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer."] I do not claim to know the answer to everything but, unlike other hon. Members, I am stupid enough to have a try.

I did not argue that the Chancellor pursues high interest rates to reduce consumer credit. Consumer credit is out of hand because of its availability and we will have to develop some method of controlling it. We will have to revert to artificial controls such as we had several years ago. I remember, when I was first interested in politics, that Budgets were dominated by charts which said that we could borrow 25 per cent. as opposed to 30 per cent. of the price of a television. If the House applied its mind to the consumer credit boom, it might make progress. I am not arguing that interest rates are the solution — the Chancellor has demonstrated that they are not.

The Chancellor's programme might be able to deliver tax cuts, but only because of the failure of his policies. He gets a tax break on the consumer credit boom in the shape of VAT and corporation tax. Most of the money seems to be going on consumer goods, and the Chancellor gets a 15 per cent. cut. The vendor gets a profit—at least, I hope he does—and the Chancellor gets a break on that as well.

As the Chancellor has said, he has had an unexpected tax break from the consumer boom. He also gets a break from the pay rises which he and I believe are too high. He has also gained from public asset sales.

I shall not argue the economic merits of that, but the fact remains that all those forms of income cannot be sustained. The credit boom cannot continue for ever and we cannot continue to sell public assets. I hope that high pay rises will end too, because they are a self-destruct mechanism. The three pillars of the Chancellor's fortunate position are unsustainable or self-destruct mechanisms. His position can be sustained for one quarter of one third of a Parliament at best, but no long-term recovery for Britain is built in.

The only alternative that has been proposed today is the alliance amendment. We are drawing near to a general election. We do not know when it will be, but we will be nearer to it tomorrow than we were yesterday. It is amazing that, in a major economic debate, there is no official Opposition amendment saying what they would do.

We make it clear what our fears are and what we believe is an alternative. We must start to invest in manufacturing industry, infrastructure and training. We must negotiate entry into the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system at a competitive rate and introduce an incomes strategy to reduce the increase in unit labour costs to the level of our major competitors.

Some hon. Members, when trying to be elected to Parliament, are afraid to say, "Elect us to power and we shall keep your wages down." They are right that that does not sound like a ringing phrase which, when delivered to the nation, will cause it to vote for them. At the general election this Bench will explain to the British people why, without an incomes strategy, there is no alternative to the way in which the country is at present run, no hope for young people and no re-establishment of our manufacturing base. Without that ingredient, at best we carry on as we are and at worst have a Government who not only have no incomes policy but who spend money as if it grows on trees. Therefore, we shall vote for our amendment, believing that it makes a useful contribution to the debate.

7.10 pm

Mrs. Marion Roe (Broxbourne): I welcome the autumn statement and its reaffirmation of the Government's determination to achieve the conditions in which this country can flourish. In particular, the statement emphasised two key points: first, that rigorous control of public expenditure will always be vital to the economy,

and, secondly, that that has been the base of economic growth which has allowed for increased resources for priority programmes.

I shall concentrate on the provision for local government and taxation policy. Local government receives the largest increase in the changes that have been outlined. It continues to have a significant effect on public expenditure, and the increase for 1987-88 alone is some £4 billion. In a single year, taxpayers will contribute through aggregate Exchequer grant an additional £1·5 billion.

In theory, that should keep rate rises low—at worst, in line with inflation. Yet we are already hearing rumours of large rate rises planned in some authorities, particularly in the London boroughs. At the same time the Audit Commission has reported that the financial behaviour of some authorities is heaping up trouble for the future. Some authorities have entered into financial arrangements with city institutions, apparently in the belief that they will be bailed out in future. That is alarming.

According to the Audit Commission, in London some £600 million has been borrowed and in Sheffield the figure is £110 million. When repayments start, the citizens of Sheffield and taxpayers will be repaying at a rate of £25 million a year for seven years. That is about 10 per cent. of Sheffield's total budget.

What implications will that have for future public expenditure control? Are these sums included within PSBR figures? There is nothing illegal about these arrangements; either future rates will have to take them into account, or some solution will have to be found by the Exchequer.

We have already heard that Opposition Front-Bench Members have decided to bury their heads in the sand about the activities of those Labour councils. A responsible Government cannot do that. Within the next three years, the problem will have to be solved. It remains to be seen whether the sensible introduction of the community charge will be enough to bring proper accountability to Labour councils. Let us all hope so. With local authority current spending up 9 per cent. this year, the thought of these irresponsibly financed borrowings adding to that is greatly disturbing. We need to hear louder condemnation from the Opposition. Otherwise, ratepayers will begin to realise that they are as unfitted for government as some of their councillors are for local office.

On the tax side, the statement was encouraging. The buoyancy of non-oil revenues would appear to indicate a strong level of underlying economic activity. I congratulate the Government on their achievement of a PSBR unchanged from the Budget forecast, despite the huge drop in oil revenues.

That raises an interesting point. We have heard that the Opposition plan to include in their manifesto for the next election a pledge to raise £3·5 billion by excess taxation of people whom they describe as very rich. Once again, their thinking seems to be set in old, failed policy.

A recent conference organised by the Adam Smith Institute concluded that there was increasing evidence to suggest that reductions in income tax would lead to a greater overall revenue for the Treasury. The consequences of that should be examined, particularly in relation to the boost it would provide to economic activity and entrepreneurial flair. At a time when our major economic competitors, regardless of political persuasion, are cutting tax, we need to examine as carefully as possible the feasibility of extensive reductions in rates.

Finally, I should like to congratulate the Government on their resolve to pursue the reform of personal taxation, in particular through the mechanism of transferable allowances.

7.16 pm

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): We heard a distinguished contribution from the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins). He stated the case, not only for the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, distinguished and important though it is, but for all Select Committees when he pointed out that the Government rubbished his Committee's report. That is utterly wrong.

Select Committee members are chosen by the House. Their task is to report to the House and inform us of the views of several individuals, acting together largely, but not always, in a non-partisan way. The Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee has met the finest standards that we have known in that regard. When we look at its work and advisers, it is clear that to diminish them is wrong.

Some years ago, when I was a member of that Committee, I was pleased and surprised that we could pick the best advisers that we could name. We chose them ourselves. In those days we had a rule that, if more than one hon. Member wanted a specialist adviser, that specialist adviser could be selected to help the Committee. We had five specialist advisers and they were the best advisers that we could think of. They all agreed immediately, despite the pittance that they were paid. To abuse them after they have given their distinguished services is utterly wrong, and the Treasury Bench should be aware of that.

Over time, the expertise of the Committee has increased. It does not act over the whole range of responsibilities of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It does not have to attend Cabinet Committees and perform the many other tasks which the Chancellor must do. Therefore, in the areas for which the Committee has responsibility and in which it has an interest, it becomes extremely expert. Together with its expert advisers, it can question policy in a way that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, however able and well-served he is, cannot question it.

The Committee sees people who are at a much lower level than the people whom the Chancellor would normally see. The members of the Committee see the people who initiated a policy, not those who consider its consequences. They question their assistant secretaries and under-secretaries and find out how the policy came to be adopted in the first place. Then, rightly—continuing the practice that was introduced when I was a member of that Committee — they see the permanent secretary or perhaps the special adviser to the Chancellor and then continue the investigation, bearing in mind the knowledge that they have gained from the people who formulated the policy. They see how the policy was adapted.

Finally, the Committee meets the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have known Committee members who knew more about a matter than the Chancellor. They used to smile indulgently and the Chancellor looked a bit sheepish. Everyone knew that the Chancellor had got it wrong and that the Committee had got it right. They did not make much of that. It is normal for that to happen when a Select

[Mr. Robert Sheldon]

Committee with good advisers and good members decides to investigate a matter in which it has an interest. I am delighted to see that tradition exemplified by the character, demeanour, behaviour, interest and concern of the right hon. Member for Worthing, who shows his value not only in that Committee but in the Liaison Committee of which I have the privilege to be a member.

I say to the members of the Committee, "Carry on your work." It is clearly wrong for Ministers to show disdain for such a distinguished Committee. Ministers are servants of the House, as indeed is the Select Committee, which also acts on our behalf.

I agree with the comments of the right hon. Member for Worthing and the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) on the autumn statement. The amount of money in the economy is a worry to us all. I see from the latest figures that, in October, £2·8 billion of new credit was advanced by finance houses, other specialist creditor guarantors, retailers and bank credit cards. The sums involved are substantial, because house prices have increased enormously.

The hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth) asked the hon. Member for Truro whether he wished interest rates to rise. We must go further back than that. We must understand why house prices rose so enormously. A person with a £40,000 house probably bought it some years ago for £20,000. He may have a mortgage of £10,000 on it and he has £30,000 of collateral. When he walks into a finance house or a bank he is welcomed with open arms. Millions of such people are welcomed with open arms in a way they would never have been years ago. They have collateral that only a few people used to have.

We must ask why house prices have risen. One reason was mortgage interest relief. It makes economic sense, not for the nation—heaven forbid—but for the individual to overhouse himself. As soon as he has managed to reach some equilibrium in the purchase of a house, he sensibly looks to the purchase of a larger and more expensive house to make use of some of his available money. In the rush for these bigger and better houses, prices go up. As the prices rise, the collateral goes up, and as the collateral goes up so, too, does the credit advance. That is one of our major problems.

The north-south divide is causing me increasing anxiety. I am an ex-officio director of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Many of my friends have been associated with it for 20 or 30 years. A claim that I make on their behalf is that they tell things as they are. I always tell them, "I know that you are not all Socialists, but for heaven's sake when you see Ministers please do not get involved in questions of money supply and the public sector borrowing requirement. There are clever people in Government who know all about that sort of thing, but you know what they do not know. You know something about orders, expansion and exports. You go there and you feel that they are cleverer than you. You are wrong. In your area, no one knows more than you." So it was with great pleasure and great delight that, on Thursday of last week, I heard the president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry telling it as it is.

We need a wider understanding of his comments, made in the presence of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister changed her speech either because she knew what he was going to say or as a consequence of what he said.

The president repeated the claims made by the chairman of the Conservative party:

"The north of England has only itself to blame for its problems. He said we suffer from self inflicted wounds which were listed as appalling industrial relations, failure to adopt new technology, left wing councils, and doom merchants. He said that the people in the north are complaining that they are not getting a fair share of the nation's resources."

The president discussed those points one by one at a splendid dinner in the heart of Manchester. He said:

"It seems as though we have been giving out some unclear messages. After Tebbit's blast for the North, here is Morris's retort from the regions. Let me take Mr. Tebbit's points one by one. First, industrial relations in Manchester have been traditionally excellent. This is fitting in the city which gave birth to the Trades Union Congress."

I cannot remember a strike taking place in my constituency. The firms are small, largely engineering; they are owned by the person who is there on the shop floor and problems are settled immediately. The trouble is that not as many of those firms exist as existed seven years ago. Just over a third of them are left. They are the small firms that are supposed to have been given encouragement. They are small, medium-tech, highly skilled engineering firms. They should always have a place in any country, whether it is Japan, the United States, France, Germany or wherever. Traditionally, our industrial relations have been excellent.

The president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry mentioned the Tory party chairman's second criticism of the north—its failure to adopt new technology—and said:

"What an inappropriate criticism for the cradle of the world's first programmable computer, headquarters of the National Computing Centre, ICL and Ferranti, and home of Europe's biggest university campus which is heavily biased towards technical innovation."

The president then mentioned his third attack, on Left-wing councils. I remind the House that that chamber of commerce is not a Socialist grouping. He said:

"They are not peculiar to the north west. But frankly we in the business community are making a far better job of partnership with local government than Westminister seems able to do."

The president also said that certain campaigns were a notable example of local business and local authorities working together.

We do not give local government sufficient credit. It is much more efficient than central Government. The advantage of local government is that councillors and employees and anyone connected with it pass by the problems every day on their way to work or on their way home. What do the people in Whitehall see of these problems? They read about them, if they are lucky. No one doubts that there are some silly councils, but there are also some silly civil servants. We must not forget that, nor the fact that there are some useless Ministers, too. We must not assume that the solutions lie in Whitehall, remote from where the problems exist.

We see how the criticisms of the chairman of the Tory party were counterblasted by the president of Manchester chamber of commerce. He said enough to demonstrate his positive belief in and practical commitment to the economic potential of the region. He stated:

"We do have a problem and we do believe a change in central Government policy is needed to help us put it right. It is a problem which, if allowed to get worse, will not just

prevent the north west from exploiting its potential but will strangle our national growth. This problem is known . . . as the north/south divide but it is actually much more specific than that. It is the escalating concentration of the nation's wealth and resources in the south east. To illustrate the problem consider the wealth of the average English person. It is made up of income and capital. Let us take income first, or to use the jargon of official statistics 'personal disposable income per head'. Income in every single region other than the south east is less than the national average."

That is the predominant statistic.

The president continued:

"What about the Englishman's capital? The most valuable item most people ever possess is their house . . . In every other region house values were below the national average."

In the south-east, they are well above the national average. He continued:

"We all know that the south east is the richest region. But how many realise that the excess wealth in the south east is now sufficient to balance the deficit in wealth of all the other regions put together?"

That is the price we pay for a policy that is geared and motivated towards the City of London, which produces enormous advantages to those who deal with finance and enormous disadvantages to those who deal with the production of manufactured goods.

The problem was analysed 60 years ago by Winston Churchill when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Everyone knows about the problems. The trouble is that the City of London appears daily on the Chancellor's doorstep, whereas the remote regions are visited by the Prime Minister and by other Ministers only now and again.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Does the right hon. Gentleman recall that, during the Labour Government of which he was a distinguished member, when regional policy was in its heyday, the northern regions prospered relative to the south and south-east?

Mr. Sheldon: All that I know is that, during the past seven years, my constituency has lost 35 per cent. of its manufacturing companies. All that I know is that, seven years ago, pay was higher than the national average, whereas it is now lower. Our unemployment was lower than the national average, and now it is higher. That has happened because of the changes in regional policy.

The president of the chamber of commerce went on to mention the implications of the serious gap between north and south. The House is largely divided between north and south, more's the pity. We used to have the enormous advantage of being a united country. Things that happened in one part of the country tended to happen in another, and people's views in one part of the country tended to be similar to views in other areas. The president said:

"The implications of this widening gap for the national economy are serious. We now have severe skill shortages and labour shortages in the south east with high unemployment everywhere else . . . Now we have a growing inability by executives and technical staff to move between the south east and the regions."

The problem is the price of houses.

The president pointed out to the Prime Minister that, in Manchester,

"we search in vain for some indication that Government is adapting its policies to take account of the problem."

There was a time when we addressed ourselves to problems and said that there was nothing insuperable in a problem as important as unemployment. We said, "We cannot be considered as an effective Government unless we can solve those problems." The Government are not dealing with the problem. They are dealing with the unemployment figures, but not with the problems of unemployment, and their failure in that regard is one of the most severe accusations that can be made against them.

The president mentioned the Government's failure to decentralise the Civil Service and commented on the massive public investment in infrastructure to serve the Channel tunnel and to complete the M25. There is some anger about the fact that all the giant projects tend to be in the south of England. He also mentioned the expansion of London's three airports and said that those projects

"will fuel the south east furnace for a generation."

The president went on to say to the Prime Minister:

"The reason you and your colleagues hear so many complaints outside London . . . is because frankly we do not see a willingness to address this problem."

Finally, he quoted from

"an illuminating letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry . . . stating the Government's view that London offers the best professional and legal expertise, communications, living and leisure facilities. With that kind of bias, there is no wonder Government is ignoring the vastly superior investment potential of the regions."

It is useless to talk about a population movement given the housing market. When I was a young man and I went to a new town to get a job, I could walk down the street and get lodgings easily. One cannot do that today. There was much more mobility of labour in those days than there is now. There will be an increasing division in the country. Not just its economic implications but its political implications alarm me. Of course, we will get a few more Labour seats in the north, but that is not the most important thing—*[Interruption.]* Please do not smile at this. This is one of the most serious problems facing us. When I get out of the train in Manchester, I can sense the deprivation there. When I get out of the train in London, I can sense the affluence here. I may be wrong. Millions of people in the north may be wrong. But the Government must take note of the strength of feeling that exists and must do something about it.

7.36 pm

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): One aspect of the Select Committee's report that cannot be faulted is its analysis of public expenditure. I only wish that the Select Committee had been as ruthless in its examination of the reality of public spending as it was in its examination of the rhetoric used by the Government to explain it.

If the autumn statement was the U-turn that it has been painted, I would have welcomed it. On the contrary, all that it seemed to signal was what we already know: that public spending is increasing and, to confirm what we already fear, that public spending will continue to increase. Between 1979 and 1989, the average annual increase in public spending will be about 1·3 per cent. Under the Labour Government, the average annual increase in public spending was only 1 per cent. Indeed, if we exclude receipts from privatisation and the sales of houses and of land, under this Government average annual public spending has grown by about 1·6 per cent. a year as against a reduction in public spending of just under 1 per cent. during the five years of the Labour Government. The continuing growth in public spending leads me to doubt the Government's new objective of reducing the proportion of gross domestic product consumed by public spending.

[Mr. Michael Fallon]

I enter three caveats on the Government's objective. First, we have not yet reduced the proportion in relation to the figure that we inherited. When we came into office in 1979, it was 43·3 per cent. of GDP; today it is 44·5 per cent. Secondly, the target expressed in the autumn statement is the fairly minimal one of 42·75 per cent. by March 1989, or a reduction of only 0·55 per cent. over 10 years of Conservative government. Thirdly, it is only a relative target. If GDP growth has been averaging 3 per cent. a year since the end of the recession in 1981, the Treasury might ask itself why we cannot expect public expenditure to fall in absolute terms from the total that we inherited in 1979.

There are several reasons for this. First, public expenditure continues to be dominated by public sector pay. We all know that pay and pensions in the public service take a huge slice of public expenditure. What is fascinating, looking back over the past seven years, is that despite all the privatisation that we have achieved, despite the cuts in Civil Service staff, pay restraints across the public sector and the freeze on town hall recruiting, wages and salaries in central and local government consume roughly 27·8 per cent. of central and local government spending — almost the same proportion as when we came into office in 1979. In some individual programmes, the percentage is very much higher: 70 per cent. of the law and order programme, 60 per cent. of the education budget and half of the cost of the National Health Service. We have not yet succeeded in reducing the proportion of public spending consumed by public sector pay.

It should be obvious to all of us that either we impose more central control over the pay arrangements of public service workers, teachers, police, and so on, or we delegate that function to responsible local bodies that can truly reflect the realities of regional labour markets. The middle way — such as we have seen recently with teachers' remuneration and other public sector groups — simply leaves public spending as a whole at the mercy of indirect pressures that Ministers cannot control.

The second reason why we have not succeeded in controlling public expenditure is that so much of it is constructed on the basis of political entitlement rather than continuing need. There are sectional interests, to which reference has already been made. One is the demand for mortgage interest relief on second, third, fourth and fifth mortgages taken out by families. Another is the payment of three quarters of the amount spent on child benefit to people in receipt of no other payment, and thus the payment of a fairly meagre sum to those who need it. The addition of both those sectional interests and their removal could allow a reduction of income tax to 20 per cent.—far beyond my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's target of 25 per cent.

As well as the sectional interests, there are important geographical interests. Most dramatically, there is the consistent and continuing over-provision in Scottish spending. The territorial analysis of the outturn for the year 1985-86 shows that spending per head in Scotland is now £2,362 compared with £1,838 in England. That is a discrepancy between England and Scotland of over 20 per cent., and in some programme areas the difference is very much wider. There is 80 per cent. higher spending on industrial support in Scotland than in the regions of the north-east and north-west directly across the border. There is 94 per cent. higher spending per capita on housing in Scotland than in England.

As well as over-provision of public spending in Scotland — the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon) should particularly note this point — there is also a continuing subsidy not to the poorest regions in England but to the wealthiest region. I refer to the subsidies to London and south-east commuters through the £300 million a year subsidy to British Rail and its south-east services and the £275 million a year subsidy to London Regional Transport. It is nonsense that the most prosperous area of the United Kingdom should be in that part of the railway network that is most heavily subsidised.

Thirdly, public spending is still dominated by the demand-led pressures that have been all too familiar from the early years of the Government — agriculture and social security. The containing of such pressures cannot be left to departmental Ministers alone and cannot be dealt with in the annual Public Expenditure Survey Committee round. We need a more concerted attack, combining more than one Department, if we are to get to grips with pressures in both of those sectors.

If I have emphasised the need for continuing restraints on public spending, it is because I wish to seek much further scope for reductions in the burden of direct taxation. I say that because, by my calculations, 7 million people earn less than £7,000 a year. From next year, they will pay a higher rate of income tax than top earners in the United States. We cannot substantially increase their standard of living in any other way than by reducing the tax burden upon them. If they are in the public sector, given low inflation and continuing pressure on public spending, we cannot expect pay awards to be high. If they are in the private sector, given the surplus of labour and the need to keep down our unit labour costs and improve our competitiveness against our European partners, we cannot expect substantial pay awards. The only way in which we can raise the living standards of low-paid people is by deep cuts in personal taxation.

I am certain that only this Government can provide the necessary cuts in taxation to improve the living standards of the low-paid. The Opposition parties cannot help. They can only suggest nominally increasing their wages by printing more money or borrowing it and leaving them to the mercy of higher inflation. Only this Government, by substantially reducing the burden of direct taxation, can improve the living standards of low-paid people. It is a profound disappointment to me that I am not as sure now that we are on the road to meeting that target as I was before the autumn statement.

7.47 pm

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): I hope that the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) will forgive me if I do not follow his argument, because it is one that both time and the Government have passed by. It was an interesting argument, and probably relevant in 1979 and to Government policy in 1980, but now it is best relegated to the deep freeze of history. The hon. Gentleman should carry his own glass case around with him if he continues to put such an argument to a Government like this.

I shall not even deal, as I was going to in my immediate anger, with the Chancellor's vicious and rather silly attack on the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee,

because the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) has well and effectively put the Chancellor in his place. It is best to treat these things dismissively. It was an unnecessary, cheap, petty, vicious and silly attack, and it was entirely in character. All that we can do is to be dismissive of it. I am afraid that this is the way that the Chancellor is beginning to behave before the Committee, and he treated it with contempt in his personal appearances. That is a measure of the man—the fun Chancellor, lightweight in everything but physical shape. If he wishes to act in that fashion, we shall have to judge him on that basis.

A major change has taken place in Government policy. For example, in 1980 we were told that the exchange rate was a mere residual. Clearly, the exchange rate is now central to Government policy and a central technique of management. In many respects, in managing the economy through interest rates being high and exchange rates being kept as high as possible, the Government have reverted to the norms of previous Governments since the late 1950s, even Labour Governments, except that, unlike previous Governments, they do not have the incomes policy that most previous Governments had to deal with the situation.

The Government have reverted to the depressing norm of British economic policy. However, there has been a major change. If the Chancellor were to look at the Labour party's economic policy in 1983, he would find that he has implemented most of our major recommendations. We urged a 30 per cent. devaluation. There has been a 30 per cent. devaluation since the change in the exchange rate at the end of 1982, and it has not been accompanied by the inflationary consequences that the Chancellor predicted. We urged that public spending should be increased and referred to a public sector borrowing requirement—it should have been called a public sector financial deficit because of the Government's privatisation programme—of about £15 billion. Next year we shall have that, too.

We referred to getting rid of monetary targets like M3. The Chancellor is getting rid of them. It is no wonder that he is getting rid of monetary targets like M3, because he has been unable to control them, as the Government said they would control them when they came into office in 1979. Up to the end of September, M3 had been increasing at an annual rate of 18·2 per cent. Because of the increase in M3, inflation should increase substantially on their terms. Since 1979, M3 has increased by 165 per cent., yet prices have increased by only 65 per cent.

What, then, about the connection that the Government told us would be central to their policy of proper control of the money supply leading to control of inflation? The Government have not controlled money supply, but inflation has not increased as it ought to have done, according to their theories.

The Labour party's manifesto of 1983 stated that the balance should be shifted. We said that there ought to be, not tax cuts but Government spending to help jobs. The autumn statement does exactly that. We wanted more jobs to be created through public spending. Those jobs are now being phased in, in an attempt to get unemployment, on the Government's cooked figures, below 3 million before the general election.

In 1983 the Government said that all those policies were impossible, but they have now become a central element of the Government's policy. They are too little and too late, but now they are there. In 1983, however, we were told that our plans were irresponsible. I welcome the Government's conversion, but the Chancellor has much further to go on the learning curve upon which he has now embarked.

Either the lady is for turning, or we should redefine the word "turning". These are major turns in the Government's policy. Government policy is now like "Dallas". There was a certain episode in "Dallas" when the curtain was pulled apart, there was Bobby in the shower, and Bobby was alive, after all. We realised that all the preceding episodes were a dream. Likewise, we realise that all the policies that the Government have implemented since 1979 are a dream. Unfortunately, the nightmare consequences of those policies remain. The fact is that 4 million people remain unemployed, manufacturing capacity has been reduced by 30 per cent., and employment in manufacturing industries has been slashed by 28 per cent. The fact also remains that this country is now a net importer of manufactured goods.

Those are the consequences of policies which now, apparently, are a dream and unnecessary. The economics of incompetence have now been replaced by the economics of electioneering. The Government have wasted the oil by investing the revenue from oil in the productive capacity of our overseas competitors so that those revenues will be dribbled back in rentier dividends to keep up the value of the pound and to destroy and weaken manufacturing—just as happened in the Victorian era when the Tory Government paid similar rentier dividends.

The Government have used the oil revenues to bring in imports, thus destroying jobs in this country. They have wasted the growth which we could have had, which would have improved the quality of life for our people. Since 1979 the growth rate has averaged 1·2 per cent. It is pathetic. It is the lowest growth rate in British history since the war. Because of their incompetent and irresponsible management, that is the achievement of this Government. The Government have thrown away the additional growth that this country could have enjoyed.

What is more important, they have wasted the greatest opportunity in British history to expand. Our oil revenues would have allowed us to ride out the balance of payments problems and to invest in manufacturing industry. It was starved of investment. We have wasted that great opportunity. It will never return. The irresponsible economics of this Government have led to the wasting of that great opportunity. They have taken us back to the balance of payments trap in which previous Governments have wallowed. We are sliding back into the balance of payments trap, haplessly and helplessly, but now we are weaker than we were before the interlude of Tory irresponsibility.

There is under-investment in industry, the work force is under-trained and under-skilled and productivity is still too low. It is lower than the productivity of our competitors. All that the Government have done to improve productivity is to take the advice that I give to the Yorkshire county cricket club: to improve its batting average by shooting the last four batsman. The Government have used that technique to fiddle the increase in the productivity figures.

Labour costs are rising far too rapidly and imports are rising far too rapidly. All that is keeping the economy going is a consumer boom. The Government have helped to generate that consumer boom, but it is financed by credit. It will suck in more imports, which will result in a

[Mr. Austin Mitchell]

rapid deterioration next year in the balance of payments. The Government make noises and preach sermons about wage increases, but they do not want them to stop. They are helping to sustain the consumer boom upon which they pin their election prospects next year.

I emphasise what was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon) about the growing gap between the north and the south. The credit boom is widening the gap between the north and the south. Asset speculation is being fuelled by house prices. Our society is based on the continuous creation of collateral. House prices are increasing, the lending institutions are prepared to lend more money on increased house prices, and the increase in lending on the increased house prices increases the house prices even further, thus making them worthy of more credit. This North sea bubble will burst at some point. It threatens the economic health of the country and it creates a wide gulf between the north and the south. Paper millionaires are being created by house prices in the south. My dog kennel or my garage in London is now worth more than my house in Grimsby. The gulf has now widened to the extent that people cannot move from the north to take jobs in the south simply because they cannot afford to bring their families with them.

The balance of payments problems will cause a major threat to sterling next year. The Chancellor's policy, in the face of that crisis as he described it to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee in his usual dismissive fashion, is one of non-accommodation. He says that he will force industry to keep down its labour costs by keeping interest rates high, thus keeping sterling high. Industry will be punished by cheap imports. Sterling will be kept high by interest rates. The markets, if left to themselves — and the Government believe in market forces more than I do — will bring down sterling. The market will be defied only on this question of the exchange rate. It will be defied by the prop of high interest rates. That is the discipline on industry. That is the logic of the Chancellor's thinking. To punish industry, and to stop it increasing its labour costs, he will keep interest and exchange rates high.

That is the policy of non-accommodation and reveals that the Government do not understand industry. They do not understand its dynamics, its organic nature or the painful effort of investing, building business, winning markets and trying to hold and expand those markets. They do not understand how industry is threatened by the crude tactics of high interest rates, higher than those of any of our competitors, and by an exchange rate which threatens the markets which industry is desperately trying to retain.

The Government may understand money and fiddled figures like MO and M3, but they do not understand industry as an organic being. Indeed, they treat it rather like an exercise horse, pummelling and jumping on it, but they never try to encourage it or help to make its way easier in the same way as our competitors help their industries. There is no logic in punishing industry in this way. It is being asked to do what it cannot do. Industry cannot control most of the increases in wage costs that are now taking place. How can it? What is it to do — interrupt production and lose its markets?

Because of the skill bottlenecks, industry will have to pay to attract the skills that it needs. Is it to deny itself those skills? How will it survive unless it goes along with the trend of escalating wage costs? The engine of inflation is no longer industry. The inflation that we have now is not goods inflation; it is asset inflation, and its engine is the rich and not industry. The engine is the financial sector, the City, the company directors who are paying themselves more. The engine is the escalation of asset prices in the south-east, and industry is being punished because the Government will do nothing about all those things. All they do is preach sermons while their friends feather their own nests and get fatter at the expense of the country. The Government then punish industry for the consequences of their action. What kind of logic is that, and what understanding does it betray of the dynamics of industry?

The front line of the economy is the internationally traded sector. We are asking that sector to run in a fierce competition with a ball and chain on each leg. On one leg it has high interest rates, which penalise investment and stop industry making improvements in productivity and research and design and all the other improvements that it has to make to the quality of its products, and on the other leg industry has an exchange rate which prices its goods at an uncompetitive level. The exchange rate subsidises imports and taxes exports. That is how it works, and the Government use that quite deliberately to make a section of society better off through cheap imports. They do that in the hope of winning the next election.

We must divert resources to the emerging balance of payments problem if we are to survive and pay our way in the world. The only way to divert resources to the balance of payments is by a competitive currency channelling investment into industry. The Government are creating a once-and-for-all increase in the standard of living. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) said, that is being done particularly in the south-east, because it certainly does not have much effect in Grimsby or in any of the huge areas in the north, the heartland areas of Britain.

The Government are creating that once-and-for-all effect through wage inflation and cheap imports, and as a result they are producing all the classic consequences of over-valuation for sterling and consequent harm to industry and its ability to survive in the world. The Government's policy is essentially a holding operation. The Chancellor is trying to bamboozle the electorate with tricks which he cannot repeat and policies which he cannot sustain in order to keep a rickety show on the road until after the election. He is standing in front of the curtain with that marvellous dead-pan Buster Keaton expression at which he is so good and is trying to keep the electorate amused by unsustainable policies in order to distract attention from the disasters behind the curtain. Those disasters are 4 million unemployed, a rising rate of inflation, national decline, an increasingly shabby society and the growing needs of the Health Service and education and all sectors where public spending is important.

The Chancellor's conjuring tricks are a little more public spending and perhaps tax cuts in the Budget, and he will do that until the election comes along. All the auguries are that the election must now be early rather than late, because of the unsustainable nature of the Chancellor's economics. If the Government win the election, the Chancellor plans deflation, still higher

interest rates, a further squeeze and eventual tax increases, because he will have to increase taxes. He will do all those things because they fit the logic of his policy. He will have to increase taxes to replace the revenues that privatised industries are no longer bringing to the Government. Those things will not provide a solution; they are not the way out. They are a holding operation, and that is a disgraceful, irresponsible waste of Britain's time, economic effort, industry and employment.

The Government's policies have manifestly failed, and that is why they are changing them and getting out of policies which are discredited, unacceptable or unworkable. When we form the Government, we will expand the economy. Central to that expansion must be the exchange rate. Since 1968, we have lost 4 million jobs in production industries because we have lost markets at home and overseas. The prime reason for losing those markets is a non-competitive exchange rate. We cannot regain those jobs and begin the work of expansion until we have a competitive exchange rate.

We must regain competitiveness, and we cannot do that by squeeze, freeze and deflation, which is what the Government have been doing, because that penalises investment, reduces confidence and creates the downward spiral that we have had for the past seven years. We can do it only by having a competitive currency and by expansion.

At the end of 1976 we pledged ourselves to the IMF to maintain the competitive position of our manufacturing industries at home and abroad. That is one of the pledges the Government would prefer to forget, but compared to that time in terms of relative export prices the pound is still nearly 20 per cent. overvalued against the deutschmark. In terms of the relative export prices in 1976, we would now need an exchange rate of DM 2·40 to the pound in order to be competitive. No wonder we have a £12 billion trade deficit in manufactured goods with the EEC, central to which is our manufactured goods trade deficit with West Germany. Britain is being reduced to an economic colony of West Germany. Our advantage against the dollar, thanks to its overvaluation, has now gone. We are now overvalued even against the dollar. The dollar markets are currently our biggest markets, and because of that change in our relativities our exports will be threatened. That will have disastrous consequences for large sections of our industry.

The pound will come down next year—it may even tumble. It is held up now, not by market forces, a healthy balance of payments, competitive industry, or a naturally dynamic productive economy, but simply by what my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook rightly described as the crutch of high interest rates. That is the only thing keeping the pound at its present level, and industry of being penalised by that.

It is important that we lift our gaze, not to the next election, on which the Chancellor's gaze is obviously fixed, but to the looming disaster beyond the next election, to the problems that lie ahead in the 1990s. We are hardly surviving now. We have squandered the oil. How will our economy survive in the 1990s as the crisis closes in? Industry is not paying our way in the world now and cannot provide jobs for our people or generate the surplus for public spending, even at the present low and tawdry level.

Once the oil contribution which has kept the Government going fades away, how will we survive? That is the question. That is the perspective on which we must focus, beyond the Government, with their irresponsible conjuring tricks, trying to dazzle our eyes and win support for the next election, to the looming problem of the 1990s. We must begin the work of rebuilding British industry, of re-expanding and reconstructing our economy before then. To do that we must get rid of the tawdry, fiddling flogging irresponsible opportunism which has replaced the discredited doctrines of monetarism as the Government's central strategy.

8.10 pm

Mr. Alan Howarth (Stratford-on-Avon): I have been impatient that we should make more rapid progress towards stable prices. I have been impatient that we should make more rapid progress towards the full employment which I believe is achievable but only in the context of stable prices. But I have also been impatient that we should make more rapid progress towards the fulfilment of other aspirations of our society—that we should move more rapidly towards a better education system; that we should have better health care; that we should invest more resources in dealing with the problems of law and order.

The political process always has to be a process of the accommodation of competing claims and interests. My right hon. Friends the Chancellor and the Chief Secretary are two voices in the Cabinet. The Cabinet is a much larger body and the Cabinet has a duty to represent and implement the aspirations of a society of 56 million people with all their multifarious demands, with all the differentiated pressures of public opinion and of the institutions of a plural society. It is the particular virtue of this autumn statement that it recognises that reality more fully than ever before.

The autumn statement has been criticised. It was criticised earlier this afternoon by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). The right hon. Gentleman does at least have the virtue of consistency. In 1975, under the Government of which he was a member, the PSBR was £12 billion. That was 10 per cent. of GDP. In today's money terms, 10 per cent. of GDP would be £35 billion. If one adds to the £7 billion PSBR which is envisaged for this year the £28 billion of additional public expenditure which the Labour party envisages, one would return to a PSBR of £35 billion, unless the right hon. Gentleman proposes to raise taxes massively. The right hon. Gentleman is at least consistent, but against that background I cannot derive much enlightenment from the criticisms that he had to offer of the autumn statement.

I was more surprised by the rather plaintive tone of the criticisms advanced by the Select Committee. The gravamen of its charge was twofold. It complained that the Chancellor was not sufficiently exact in monetary policy where exactitude is, I think most would agree, impossible to achieve. It railed at him somewhat for his refusal to admit that he has changed policy when, in the essentials of policy, he has not changed. The policy has been consistent in its essential purposes — to bear down steadily on inflation; to create a monetary framework which will tend to reduce inflation; to create a wider framework of economic conditions which will encourage efficiency and profitability and the private sector to take a greater share in our economy.

The critical question has not been about techniques of policy, or the objectives of policy, which have been

[Mr. Alan Howarth]

consistent; the critical question has always been about the pace at which we should move towards our constant objectives.

There is an economic theory which used to be taught, and possibly still is, in Chicago and Vienna, which says that the process of financial stabilisation could be achieved almost instantly by drastic reductions in public expenditure and by a draconian approach to monetary policy. If the term had not already found a more familiar use elsewhere, I would describe that as the economics of the big bang. I suppose that, in some academic world, the economics of the big bang might produce financial stability, but they would certainly produce political instability. They would produce a kind of economic nuclear winter that not even the most zealous of my hon. Friends have ever desired. My right hon. Friends are politicians and they have recognised, rightly, the need to move gradually.

A number of economic commentators, for whom the holy grail of economic policy is an ever-rising gilts market, have been critical of the autumn statement. They have looked at the various items in public expenditure which have overrun the intended totals. But if one looks at those items of public expenditure which have outrun their originally planned totals, or where the plans have been increased for future years, one sees in every case that the increase in expenditure was effectively inevitable, and, in a great many cases, desirable.

My right hon. Friends have proposed that we should spend an additional £300 million a year on the Health Service. With the availability of new but expensive techniques in health care, with the demands on the Health Service of an aging population, it would be an obsessively narrow view of policy which begrudged such an increase. Indeed, we should all take satisfaction from the fact that there are now 70,000 more doctors and nurses working in the Health Service and 4,500,000 more patients being treated in the Health Service every year than there were in 1979, and that 380 new hospital projects are under way.

My right hon. Friends have been justified in observing that their prudent economic policies have led to the sixth successive year of steady growth and they have been justified in saying that a share of that growth should be allocated to improving the nation's health care. But they have not said that the sky is the limit and they have not shrunk from the arbitrary and difficult necessity of making a judgment, of drawing a line, and saying that we can afford to spend this much more, but there we must set a limit.

There is no use, and there is no decency, in complaining that an extra £1·75 billion is to be spent on the social services. The Government have been right to insist that the British economy must adjust itself to the exigencies of earning our living in the contemporary world. But those necessary transitions carry with them social costs. People have suffered in the process. Again, the only humane and responsible policy is to ensure that we find the resources to take adequate care of people who, through no fault of their own, are hurt in the necessary process of economic restructuring.

Who is to say that the Government have been wrong to commit more resources to law and order? Hardly the Labour party, which in recent months has found it expedient to try to extract political advantage from castigating the Government for not doing enough on law and order. The reality is that in every western urbanised society the rate of recorded crime has been increasing by 5 to 7 per cent. a year over a generation. It is a bedrock duty of Government to provide the resources that are needed to preserve law and order. Therefore, the Government have been entirely right to provide resources for an additional 300 policemen in London and a further 500 in the provinces, to add two extra prisons to the prison building programme, and to find more money for the campaign against drugs and for victim support schemes.

I shall not elaborate the case for investing more resources in our schools and universities, in our housing and on our roads. The case for improvement in all those areas is self-evident.

I congratulate the Government on tackling the areas of overrun in public expenditure where there can have been no reasonable justification. I congratulate the Government on their achievement in negotiating improvements in the common agricultural policy which will provide a greater discipline on the excesses of the CAP than any negotiation that I can recall.

I congratulate them too on their willingness to address at a fundamental level the problems of local authority expenditure. Local government current expenditure has been running at 9 per cent. above the planned total. In that area of policy, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has been a prisoner of an ill-designed system. Every device of bureaucratic ingenuity that can be mustered has been brought to bear to try to restrain local government spending. However, the appetite of local authorities to spend more than we can afford in terms of our national economy remains insatiable and the only remedy is to make local authorities far more extensively and effectively accountable to local electors paying the bills for their expenditure. Therefore, I welcome the Government's commitment to introduce the community charge and to standardise the business rate.

Mr. Penhaligon: The hon. Gentleman is obviously keen on the community charge. One listens to what he says and we can argue the merits of that at some time. However, will he tell the House how he understands the way in which the charge for water and sewerage will be levied in England and Wales when the community charge is introduced?

Mr. Howarth: That would be a diversion from the main theme of my argument. I would rather not be side-tracked into a technical discussion of the alternative methods that might be contemplated for charging for sewerage. The hon. Gentleman offers a sporting diversion but I refuse to rise to the bait.

Mr. Steve Norris (Oxford, East): I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that, if the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) had taken the trouble to read the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill, he would have seen in the preamble specific proposals for how to deal with water rates. They are simple and no doubt as commendable in themselves as the proposals for the community charge.

Mr. Penhaligon: The water authorities in Scotland are financed by the local councils.

Mr. Howarth: Cornwall is a long way from Scotland, but even a Cornishman may be willing to acknowledge that lessons can be learned from John O'Groats.

By what criterion should the autumn statement be judged? It should not be judged by reference to some facile definition of monetary policy or monetary conditions. Any such definition would be arbitrary and all too rapidly obsolescent, given the pace of innovation in financial markets and of institutional change. Adherence to any such definition would run the risk of sacrificing the real economy to a totem. I draw assurance and confidence for the future from my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's demonstrable and courageous willingness to increase interest rates when it becomes apparent that monetary conditions have eased too much. Since he raised the basic rate of interest in October, we have duly seen a stabilisation of sterling and a stabilisation of house prices, which are sensitive indicators of monetary conditions.

Mr. Budgen: Would my hon. Friend indicate to the House, in the way that the Chancellor did not, the various items that he would regard as being good indications of monetary and credit conditions being too lax? Since we do not know what the Chancellor regards as his indicators, but my hon. Friend is obviously a party to the Chancellor's thoughts, perhaps he would be good enough to tell us what he regards as important.

Mr. Howarth: The tolerance of the House might soon become exhausted if I were to regale the House with the sort of disquisition that I would be happy to give to my hon. Friend in the Tea Room a little later.

A number of hon. Members have referred to a boom in credit. I respect the point that was made by the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon). There is a problem and we do not know what the proper answer should be. There are difficulties about the controls that the hon. Gentleman advocated — difficulties which I think he recognised. Clearly, it is not an exaggeration to talk of an explosion in consumer credit. That is one indicator that causes me some anxiety — the depreciation of sterling. The surge in house prices——

Mr. Budgen: It should not be disregarded, then.

Mr. Howarth: Perhaps my hon. Friend was not following the thrust of my argument as closely as I might have hoped. I was commending my right hon. Friend the Chancellor for having responded to the symptoms of relative monetary laxity by raising interest rates in the autumn, and I think that we have seen signs that the economy is responding as he and my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) would wish.

I draw assurance, as I hope will my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West, from the Chancellor's firm commitment to maintain the PSBR at 1·75 per cent. of GDP in 1987-88. That is a sanction he has given against any collapse into a laxity that would run the risk of a serious deterioration in the inflationary position.

We should not judge the autumn statement by reference to whether old techniques of policy have been retained in altered circumstances, which seems to be a complaint of the Select Committee. Nor do I think it is appropriate to measure performance on the basis of whether or not previously published targets have been precisely met. The targets set out in public expenditure White Papers are not tablets of stone. They are inevitably, to a degree, negotiating positions. They are cautionary signals to the market. They are also, of course, objectives that the Government should genuinely pursue.

However, given the variables and the genuine unpredictability of economic circumstances and activity, it is absurd to complain if all the targets are not exactly met. I believe that the proper criterion for judgment of the autumn statement is whether the whole configuration of policy tends systematically to reduce public expenditure as a proportion of GDP. By that criterion the autumn statement is vindicated.

It is true that departmental expenditure in 1986-87 has been rising at a more rapid rate than in previous years. However, we heard my right hon. Friend the Chancellor say again today that taking the position over a period of years between 1982-83 and 1988-89 we will see a significant reduction in public expenditure as a proportion of GDP. It is true that the pressures in the later years for public expenditure once again to exceed the targets that have been set will be real and formidable; certainly, there is never a respite in the battle to control inflation and discipline public spending.

It is true that, in the later years, when the Government will receive less assistance in their financing from the proceeds of privatisation, and perhaps eventually no assistance at all, a higher level of expenditure than was originally envisaged will have to be financed. But it would have been absurd not to take advantage of the opportunities offered by privatisation. The merits of privatisation are not simply the merits of offering a relatively easy windfall way of financing public expenditure. As my right hon. Friend explained earlier, the real validity of the privatisation programme is to ensure that those national assets are deployed in the context of market discipline in which they can be most effectively used in the interest of the nation. The Select Committee, in a manner somewhat inconsistent with the generally censorious tone of its report, praised my right hon. Friend the Chancellor for taking advantage of privatisation to redeploy resources in other areas of constructive investment such as capital expenditure, which is raised in the autumn statement by £1 billion a year.

It is encouraging to see that tax revenue is as buoyant as it is and it is perfectly reasonable for my right hon. Friend to assume that, as a result of the growth that his policies are generating, the tax base will be sufficiently buoyant later on to finance the level of expenditure that we shall have.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor observed in his speech that, by the end of the 1980s, the ratio of public expenditure to national output will be back to the level at the beginning of the 1970s. Progress is slow and hard won. We shall certainly need to go further. We shall need to progress towards the sort of ratio we experienced in the early 1960s, before the Conservative Government left office in 1964, when public expenditure was more like one third than two fifths of GDP. We need to move towards a balanced Budget, by a reasonable definition of the term. We need to move towards radically simpler and lower taxes, towards stable money and towards a situtation in which the private sector takes a far larger share of resources and in its expansion moves us back to full employment.

All these desirable objectives can be achieved, but they will all take time. It is no good not recognising that it was over generations that public policy moved away from the objectives which I have described. Too violent and too hasty a reversal would be damaging and would not be politically tolerable. It is always tempting to see my right

[Mr. Howarth]

hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer as Achilles, but he has not overlooked the fact that it was the tortoise which won the race.

8.30 pm

Mr. Ken Weetch (Ipswich): I begin my short contribution to the debate by saying that it is becoming a more common observation among the public that very few things in politics are what they seem. So it is with the Chancellor's autumn statement. At the end of the day the statement was nothing to do with economics. Instead, it was a good deal to do with political adventurism at a critical time.

I shall quote from the *Financial Times*—a newspaper which I am never sure I should be reading. The editorial in the financial section reads:

"The Chancellor does not do things by halves . . . he has responded to the prospect of an election with some blatant pump priming."

That was the editorial comment on the autumn statement.

A vast edifice of complex "economic" argument has been built on the autumn statement, and much of it is not economic; it is blatantly political. The statement was a strong commitment to the Government's determination to pump money into the economy to create a favourable climate to fight a general election. If we take the statement at face value, something can be said on economic grounds. Again, the financial section of the *Financial Times* summed up the statement:

"We are back to the bad old days."

What was the position in those days? First, there was a worsening balance of payments — and the balance of payments will be a real constraint on the economy next year. There was a time when the most important criterion in economic debates was the monthly balance of payments figures. It then disappeared from our debates and it has not been a factor for a long time, but it seems that it is re-emerging. It will be a real constraint, however, in 1987.

When the Minister replies, I hope that he will explain to me the serious deficit on manufacturing account that is now prevalent in the balance of payments. In 1983, for the first time, we had a deficit on manufacturing account in the structure of the balance of payments. The European side of the account is the worst part of the deficit. I hope that the Minister will explain the benefit that the Economic Community has brought to British manufacturing industry. I shall be pleased to hear the explanation, and I shall be listening carefully.

We have a consumer boom that is based on plastic money. It is doing nothing to halt the serious decline in manufacturing industry. On the other hand, it is doing a world of good for the import of foreign manufactures. With between 3 million and 4 million unemployed, a greater proportion of the work force will be absorbed into the service sector of the economy. In parts of East Anglia we are thankful to get jobs even in the service sector, but the serious point——

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman: The hon. Gentleman said "even in the service sector." In some places it is regarded as being extremely important and is relied upon as a growth area of employment. That is the position in places such as Morecambe and Lancaster, the latter being a category A tourist centre. I would not have used the word "even".

Mr. Weetch: The hon. Lady interrupted me at the wrong moment. I was about to say that if we earn our living by providing services as opposed to manufacturing, the service sector can be regarded in a favourable light. The trend is moving too far, however, and many people are being locked into service employment that is low-paid and dead-ended.

One of the serious features of our economy has been the decline in some industries of a highly technical nature. That is a serious phenomenon. An interesting ITV programme is the one that reports job losses and gains. It is notable that jobs are being lost in manufacturing, often in highly skilled sectors, while jobs are being gained in warehousing and in all sorts of odds and ends. It is not that we are ungrateful in these days for jobs in any sector in which they can be found, but the present structural development in our economy is not one of which we can be proud.

Mr. Norris: The hon. Gentleman has spoken about the new balance which is emerging between manufacturing and non-manufacturing employment. Does he agree that, whatever shade of Government we have and almost regardless of the financial policies that are employed, it is inevitable that the technological advancement of the second industrial revolution means that fewer people will be involved in manufacturing and that more will therefore turn their individual attention to other areas of endeavour instead of spending their days sweating in factories? Does he regard that trend in the long-term as an extremely desirable development?

Mr. Weetch: I would agree with that to the extent that productive manufacturing industry will have to support a greater number of employees in the service sector. When I talk to industrial opinion in East Anglia I am told that the trend has gone too far and that we need the political will to put more backbone into manufacturing industry through interventionist polices.

I shall now address the financial part of the autumn statement, which is said to involve a shift in strategy with tax cuts being superseded by increases in public spending. It is being suggesting in today's financial press that we may have both. It is stated that we may have tax cuts in the Budget to come along with public spending increases. I make no further comment about that because we are talking about futures.

When I read the Select Committee's report, the arithmetic suggested that £4·5 billion to £5 billion would be available if public expenditure targets were met. If that money had been directed to producing tax concessions, it would have been enough to bring the standard rate of income tax down to 25p in the pound. It was suggested, however, that £4 billion would be directed to increased public expenditure in the next financial year, which left about £1 billion for tax relief purposes—a smaller sum than was expected.

It is argued that a wise move was made in that tax increases would augment the consumption of foreign imports to the detriment of the balance of payments. It was an odd financial package. Ever since 1979, the Government, with a great degree of self-righteousness, have been preaching financial rectitude. Suddenly financial rectitude goes out of the window, and we can afford all those things previously said to be beyond the pale of public policy. Suddenly we learn that we can have

public expenditure increases of £4·75 billion in 1987-88, and £5·5 billion in 1988-89. That new-found largesse is dismissed or explained by saying that the Government can afford it, and they may even have the money for basic rate tax cuts as well. Given the Government's financial policies since 1979, it is no wonder that people are cynical when they hear, in the autumn statement, that public expenditure increases can be conjured out of nowhere just before the run-up to a general election.

Whenever the Chancellor makes a statement, it must be judged by the contribution that it makes to the long-term soundness of our economy. The Government have not achieved what every Government since the war have aimed at—full employment with a reasonable rate of growth, while at the same time avoiding the evils of inflation. At one point after the war there was relatively full employment but high inflation. We now have low inflation but high unemployment.

We have never been able to achieve the equilibrium of relatively full employment with sound money, an active balance of payments and competitive British industry. We still have not achieved that. The acid test of Government policy will come when the economy is reflated, because we may then once again run into the problem that has arisen so often—inflation. An increase in the rate of inflation is on the horizon now. Hon. Members should make no mistake about it—we shall run into it. There will also be a deficit in our balance of payments. That will take us back to the position decades ago, with no solution in sight.

Despite all the shot and shell and all the suffering that we have been through, we shall have turned full circle and will be back where we started. The Chancellor of the Exchequer plays for high stakes and takes big risks. The City gives the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his antics the benefit of the doubt, because it believes that he will win the next election. If he wins it, the City will be pacified, because the Chancellor will return to the deflation needed to counteract the present attitude of letting things rip.

I am sorry to say that the Chancellor is creating a fast food and ice cream economy that has much froth but no substance. He has encouraged people to run into debt, because our economy is based on plastic money to fuel a spending spree that will create the illusion of prosperity. That economy reminds me of a man with a high temperature whose feverish activity is no guide to his underlying strength.

The Chancellor talks about income restraint. All my life I have supported incomes policies, despite their disadvantages. I know all the arguments against such policies, but in principle it has always been essential somehow to equate the growth in incomes with the real wealth produced by the economy. It is no use the Chancellor preaching restraint to working people while people in the City can earn six-figure salaries for shuffling paper and advising on takeover deals. The Government's economy is one of live now and pay later. The problem is that we shall pay with the continuing decline of the British economy, and that is sad, because we have seen it all before.

8.45 pm

Mr. Steve Norris (Oxford, East): It is always a great pleasure to speak after the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Weetch), whose opinions I generally respect and listen to with interest. However, I shall try to concentrate on some of the basic, underlying economic facts of life from which we cannot escape no matter how much we may talk in high economic terms. The autumn statement and the remarks of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) might lead us into some sort of fantasy land unless we remember some basic assumptions. In the interest of brevity, I shall list just three.

I shall start with an assumption which, if I recall correctly, was originally uttered by Abraham Lincoln. I am not sure in which of his famous speeches it appeared, but I am thinking of the aphorism that the poor are not made richer by making the rich poorer. My second proposition is that one cannot discuss the distribution of wealth in any technical detail unless one first concerns oneself with the concept of wealth creation. Opposition Members, in particular, should remember that.

My third proposition is that money cannot be spent on the basis of desirability, unless one has the resources for that. At budget time, the various political parties on the county council of which I was a member used to debate the options. The opposition's arguments for more expenditure were based almost entirely on the concept of desirability. They argued that we should have, and vote for, more day centres, home helps, care in the community, expenditure on education, and so on. The justification for that was that it was desirable. It always seemed rather misguided of some of my Conservative colleagues to try somehow to deny that desirability. That was a foolish way to proceed. Of course such developments would have been desirable, but they should be considered in the context of the ability of the individual, community or country to pay. That is the third maxim that we must keep steadfastly before us.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth) was interesting and spoke to the point when he discussed how my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has been able to expand expenditure in various areas. The points that he made were well taken, at least by Conservative Members. However, the hon. Member for Ipswich described that increase in expenditure as being profligate. He would be right, and my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon would be wrong, were it not for the most salient factor in the equation, which, as my hon. Friend pointed out, is that increased expenditure is as a smaller proportion of GDP. In other words, we are not squandering resources that we do not have. Instead, we are following the most beneficial of all economic rules, which is that public expenditure can follow in its most desirable forms—which is not to deny the virtues of constant attention to value for money and to prudent economic management—as the tax burden that supports it is capable of being reduced. All the economic benefits of that flow through to industry and to consumers alike.

Let us examine the extraordinary proposition that seems to be at the heart of Labour's economic thinking, that one makes the poor richer by making the rich poorer. The other day I heard the most extraordinary point in a debate, when an Opposition spokesman claimed that this country was suffering from an appalling brain drain. I think that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science was at the Dispatch Box at the time. The Opposition spokesman said that that brain drain was due to the appalling record of investment on research, or on higher education facilities—I forget the exact nature of the appalling failure to invest of which the

[Mr. Steve Norris]

Government were accused, setting aside the logic of the totals, which prove that we are investing more than ever before.

It seemed to have totally escaped the Opposition Member that the real brain drain is likely to be occasioned when more of those with brains engage them on the assumption that the basic top rate of tax in the United States this year will be 28 per cent. and the basic bottom rate of tax paid by people in this country will be 29 per cent. Top rates on earnings are still at a penal level of 65 per cent. Those with brains, initiative, enterprise and enthusiasm, who are capable of generating real wealth and real jobs, are most likely to say, "This is a ludicrous environment in which to operate. I am a person capable of generating wealth, and the minute I begin to create that wealth, and particularly the minute I begin to benefit from that enterprise, initiative and risk," as anyone in private business knows, "I am faced with a putative Government who say that now that I have made it, now that I have created those jobs, they want to control my company through worker councils and increased powers for trade unions, and they want to take away my incentive to create jobs." It is the economics of the madhouse and, worse than that, the most primitive form of pandering to the politics of envy — something with which no respectable Opposition Member should be associated.

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): In the light of the point that the hon. Gentleman is making, no doubt he is as interested as I am in the publication of the Treasury report, which tends to argue against the conclusions that he has enunciated. Will he urge his right hon. and hon. Friends to make sure that the report is published so that we can all judge the truth of the matter?

Mr. Norris: The hon. Gentleman has an advantage over me. It would be dishonest of me to claim that I was as familiar with the report to which the hon. Gentleman refers as he is. Suffice it to say that I am reminded of the fact that it is said that when tax rates on incomes were as high as 98 per cent. the tax take was lower than it now is on a lower top rate of tax. Whether or not that is entirely germane to the point that the hon. Gentleman was seeking to elucidate, I work on the primitive basis of the logic of someone who started his own company, largely thanks to the kindness of a major clearing bank, which I had better not name. My heirs and assigns are likely to be eternally grateful to it. At the time, I remember my wife saying to me, "What happens if this all goes wrong?" I said that we had a wonderful Labour council in Oxford, and no doubt it would be able to do something for us.

One of the few incentives to go into business is that when one has created something, it is something that one will own and can keep and, dare I say it—is it so awful? —something that one can enjoy. If the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) or any other hon. Member who has been through the same experience expects me to put in the hours, the effort and the risk in making money to create real jobs for love, I doubt whether my love extends that far. I got hold of two companies, both of which were on the verge of bankruptcy, and they are now thriving businesses employing people.

I should like to refer to the concept of wealth creation and the Opposition's spending plans. I remember the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook getting frightfully agitated when the Chief Secretary to the Treasury produced a Treasury estimate of Opposition spending plans. I do not know whether the current figure is £28 billion or £35 billion or whether it is likely to be over £40 billion by the time of the general election. However, I know that while the right hon. Gentleman has denied the precise calculations and attempted to dismiss the exercise as merely a political gesture, he has never denied the essential truth that Opposition plans will simply burden the taxpayer through direct tax, borrowing and the printing of money. All those three—the only origins of resource to which a Chancellor has access — will damage businesses and individuals alike.

There may be the argument that that massive increase in public spending will reduce unemployment. To believe that is fundamentally wrong and misguided. Analysing it briefly, surely current unemployment is caused by two main factors. One is demography — that is, the large numbers of young people coming on to the job register compared with relatively small numbers of elderly people coming off the register. The second cause is the second industrial revolution, the process to which I referred in an intervention in the speech of the hon. Member for Ipswich. Under Governments of whatever colour, and at whatever time in their development, fewer people will be employed in manufacturing industry as technology inevitably takes over.

It has always appalled me that the Labour party appears to relish the preservation of those appalling hell holes, such as the great factories that developed after the war, through the 1950s, the 1960s and 1970s, where a man went in in darkness and re-emerged in darkness, having worked in Stygian conditions. Surely all that we want to do is to embrace the opportunity that new technology gives us, to take men out of such an appalling environment. We want to give them the opportunity to work in an infinitely more creative and progressive environment. It is one of the most salient achievements of the Government that since 1983 they have created over 1 million net new jobs in British industry, very few of which involve returning people to the conditions of work to which, it seems to me, Opposition Members wish to return them.

It is a fiction that the unemployed can simply be mopped up by public spending plans, which would make them all net taxpayers. The logic does not work, first, because that false employment places a huge burden on those who are creating real jobs by investing in their own businesses; and, secondly, because there is the combination of trade union nationally agreed rates and extra costs attendant upon creating artificial jobs — the costs of providing the materials that go with the labour. The idea is that one can suddenly fuel a wonderfully vibrant economy by using the national taxation resource to put everyone into a job and make everyone a taxpayer, but it would simply increase massively the burden of tax that each taxpayer would be forced to pay. The equation does not balance.

I believe that the only way to keep the economy moving and to create more real jobs is that outlined in the autumn statement—keeping inflation down and spending within the present proportion of GDP, and lowering it from that level, keeping interest rates as low as possible, rather lower than they are at present, and keeping taxation down because of the burden that that represents for the individual and for businesses. In that respect the

Government have been, until now, extraordinarily successful. I commend my right hon. Friend on his autumn statement, which I believe is a sign of even greater achievements to come.

8.59 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): In four minutes, I want to ask four questions, to which I hope the Treasury will reply in writing.

First, it is monstrous that the receipts from privatisation should be seen as a reduction in PSBR. What has happened to the shares in the radiochemical laboratory in Amersham? I have been told that they have been mostly dispersed to big institutions and that they have not remained invested on the wide basis that was first intended.

Secondly, the Select Committee and the autumn statement referred to the oil surplus. That has greatly affected those constituencies close to the North sea and there is an expected decline of £500,000. What estimate has the Treasury made of this reduction in oil-related industries on the east coast of Scotland and the north-east?

Thirdly, paragraph 2.09 of the statement contains the defence savings that the Government claim will be made in the Falklands. Politicians should not sit on green Benches and promise reductions when our forces — through the Government's commitment; it is not their fault—are in some jeopardy. We know that Argentina has re-armed. In quantifiable terms, what saving will the Government make?

Fourthly, where in the statement is there provision for money to cover the security services? A record 13·6 per cent. rise has been earmarked for the official budget of Britain's intelligence and security services in the new financial year, according to the figures published by the Treasury Supply Estimates on 19 March. The £11 million increase means that the budgets of the services will rise by £32 million. According to *The Times* of 20 March 1986,

"this figure may only represent the cost of salaries and other staff expenditure rather than the global figure for Britain's espionage, counter-espionage and security operations.

The increase could mean pay rises with MI5 and MI6 plus extra staff through reorganisation prompted by Security Commission reports on the services. The budget is described as 'for Her Majesty's foreign and other secret services. The Cabinet office will account for this vote' in the estimates."

Where do these figures appear in the Estimates? Do they appear under the budget of £110 million for other Departments, the Home Office, or the Foreign and Commonwealth diplomatic wing? I am referring to pages 28 and 29 of the autumn statement. I would be grateful to learn, by letter, where those figures arise.

Finally, has the Treasury any control over the competence of the security services? I want to refer to pages 235-238 of the "Pencourt File" by Barrie Penrose, which outlines in detail the muck-up in the mid-1970s when the security services confused the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Clydesdale (Dame J. Hart) with Mrs. Tudor Hart. Tomorrow, the Treasury will receive a letter from me giving the full details of that mix-up. I have reason to believe that there has been massive incompetence in other cases.

I want to know about value for money in the security services. I have kept to my bargain and spoken for four minutes. My speech was necessarily truncated, but the Treasury has some interest in the matter of security.

9.4 pm

Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Stockton, South): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) for truncating his remarks. I too will be brief. I want to comment primarily on the two major defects in the Government's economic strategy contained in the autumn statement. However, first I want to say a few words about the Chancellor's speech and conduct.

The right hon. Gentleman revealed a deplorable lack of respect for the House at the beginning of the debate, and not for the first time. That is why there were protests from the alliance Benches. Today was one of a number of occasions when, during major economic debates, the Chancellor has not paid the attention to the debate that many hon. Members believe he should. His attitude to the House was borne out in his snide remarks about the Select Committee and his attack upon its members. That was entirely unjustified and unworthy. A bigger man would not have stooped to those depths. If he wanted to attack the Select Committee, he should have attacked the arguments and not brushed off the report as the product of the advisers to the Committee. That was deplorable, and I hope that the Chancellor will desist from such action in future.

There are two major defects in the autumn statement, both of which relate to the one subject to which the Chancellor paid hardly any attention—unemployment. It is amazing that, in a major debate on economic policy, the Chancellor's opening remarks showed virtually no anxiety about the continuing high level of unemployment. More than 3 million people are now unemployed and it is the job of those of us with high levels of unemployment in our areas constantly to remind the House that there are levels of 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. unemployment in many wards in the constituencies of Members on both sides of the House. The prime target of the economic policies of any Government should be to ensure that the misery and waste of resources represented by those figures is overcome. It is deplorable that the Chancellor paid virtually no attention to that in his speech.

The first major defect in the Government's policy is in the nature of the demand within the economy that they are stimulating. We have a public sector financial deficit of £14·5 billion.

Mr. Lawson: Rubbish.

Mr. Wrigglesworth: It is not rubbish. It is the forecast in the autumn statement and in the Select Committee report, and it is borne out by many other forecasts. Moreover, it is entirely to be expected.

My point relates not so much to the quantity as to the nature of the demand within the economy. What is wrong is that the Chancellor and the Government are stimulating a short-term consumer boom by allowing wages to plough ahead of inflation and having a very lax monetary policy which is stimulating consumer demand without creating the jobs and wealth in the British economy that we all want to see.

More importantly, the Government are undermining the industrial and economic foundations of this country for short-term political ends. By selective extracts from previous medium-term financial strategies, the Chancellor tries to maintain that he has not changed his economic tune, but anyone who examines the statements and records of Ministers since 1979 knows that a dramatic change in

[Mr. Wrigglesworth]

attitude has been forced on the Government by political expediency and the approaching general election. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen), who still sticks steadfastly to his monetarist principles, knows that as well as the Opposition and the City do. It is a general election strategy, not a serious economic strategy, and it is undermining the long-term interests of the economy and of British industry.

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wrigglesworth: No, I do not have time; the winding up speeches will have to begin shortly.

The second major defect is in the Government exchange rate policy. As our amendment makes clear, and as we have explained on many occasions, we believe that it would help British industry, the British economy and, indeed, the whole of the Western economy if the Government would only do what all their principal Economics Ministers apparently want to do, and certainly what the Confederation of British Industry and the Governor of the Bank of England want to do—that is, to join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. There has been overwhelming support for that from all sections of industry and commerce, but it has apparently been prevented by the Prime Minister. That is amazing. We are told that the Chancellor himself wants to do it, and it is a sad reflection on his position in the Government that such a major item of economic policy that he wishes to pursue should be rejected by the Prime Minister.

We believe that joining the exchange rate mechanism would mean much greater stability in our exchange rate. It would not enable us to overcome all the pressures on exchange rates—clearly, we should sometimes have to defend the rate at which we joined by increasing interest rates — but we are currently paying a premium in interest rates for the present lack of confidence in our economy. One of the reasons why our interest rates are, on average, 4 per cent. above those of our European partners, which is crippling sections of British industry, is that international markets have no confidence in the pound. Confidence would be maintained to a far greater extent if we were full members of the EMS and it is deplorable that the Chancellor has not been able to pursue that course when he apparently wants to.

There is overwhelming evidence that the Government are pursuing a general election strategy rather than an economic strategy. There is a staggering example of that in my constituency. The Government are proposing to set up an urban development corporation to help create jobs and growth in the area, but they then take away the equivalent of 18p on the rates through the rate support grant settlement to provide relief for places such as North Yorkshire, Hambledon and Richmond.

That is entirely a strategy for votes. It has nothing to do with jobs or the economic revival of my area. The same is true for other urban areas. The Government are undermining large sections of British industry because of their short-term general election interests rather than those of the British economy.

9.11 pm

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): Nobody can approach this debate without feeling a sense of obligation to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee and its Chairman. I say nobody, but I must immediately make an exception for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) and his Committee deserve to be congratulated on their report and the dignified yet stinging rebuke that they delivered to the Chancellor for his ill-considered remarks. In a sober and restrained way, the Committee produced a conclusion which we, and, I believe, many Conservative Members, are happy to endorse. It concluded that Government economic policy has changed, that, for their own reasons, the Government have chosen to deny that change and that both the change and the denial leave current and future economic policy in an utterly uncertain state.

The Committee's first point is that the obscurity of the autumn statement makes it extraordinarily difficult to treat it as a satisfactory basis for assessing the Government's economic policy. Changes are made but they are neither acknowledged nor explained. That is not an accident. The right hon. Member for Worthing was characteristically generous to the Government on this. I believe that it is not an accident, but part of a general approach to these matters which is perhaps summed up best, in what has become a time-honoured phrase, as being economical with the truth.

The Chancellor and his ministerial team have undertaken a deliberate attempt to muddy the waters and to cover their tracks because they do not want the full extent of their changed policy to be detected by the British people. So far as one can disentangle the changes from the autumn statement and other evidence, in what respect has the policy changed and why does it matter?

The Select Committee provides an excellent guide to the answer to the first question. It makes it quite clear that what has changed is the whole basis, technique and existence of monetary policy. If, for example, sterling M3 —so long the favourite broad money measure of the Chancellor and his predecessor—were still the basis of economic policy, as it has risen by 18·2 per cent. in the 12 months to September, we should now face an inflation rate of 18 per cent. in the forthcoming year or two. I assume that that is not now the Chancellor's prediction.

That rise in sterling M3 is not being responded to with any rise in interest rates, contrary to the policy options taken earlier by the Chancellor and his predecessor. [*Interruption.*] We have listened to the speeches. I am simply making the point—the Chancellor cannot dispute this — that in earlier days a rise of 18·2 per cent. in sterling M3—well beyond the target range—would have been met with a rise in interest rates.

The role of interest rates is another respect in which economic policy has changed. The point of trying to control public spending, on which the Chancellor laid such emphasis in his autumn statement, is to keep interest rates down. That was spelt out in the original medium-term financial strategy. As the Committee points out, the original MTFS states:

"It is not the intention to achieve the reduction in monetary growth by excessive reliance on interest rates."

Yet we have had record interest rates without any real impact on the rate of monetary growth. Therefore, the Chancellor can claim consistency neither in his original policy nor in his abandonment of it.

The Committee details a range of other changes, such as changes in levels of public spending, monetary targets, public spending targets, exchange rate policy and even in such arcane matters as rational expectations. It my be perfectly clear why some of those changes took place. There may be good reasons—indeed, I believe there are excellent reasons — for abandoning many of those aspects of the Government's economic policy. But it is a mystery why other aspects have changed.

Why has the Chancellor for the first time announced a planned increase in the real level of public spending? That is what the autumn statement says, but there seems no reason why the previous position should have been changed. The forecast for economic growth is lower than it was earlier in the year. Perhaps, surprisingly, the forecast for prices is also lower. Therefore, a given quantity of public spending should have secured a greater volume of services and inputs. Despite both those factors, the Chancellor has deemed it wise and prudent to increase public spending.

No explanation is offered in the autumn statement of any change that has occurred to justify the change in policy. Therefore, we must be forgiven for providing our own explanation, which is that the Chancellor has simply lost control of events. He has been compelled to accept increases not merely in public spending, against which he had set his face, but in public spending of the least acceptable sort—the very sort castigated repeatedly by him — namely, increases in public spending largely gobbled up by increases in public sector wage settlements. That is what the Chancellor has had to yield to, and now he seeks to make a political virtue of that necessity.

The Chancellor is trying to pretend that what has taken place is not a change of policy and technique, but, miraculously, a change of substance which will change the course of the economy. He implied no change in the Government's policy, but the reverse is true. As the Select Committee report makes clear, the Chancellor and the Government have changed their policy, techniques and instruments of control. What is missing is any real change in substance of the volume and scale required to meet the needs of the economy. *[Interruption.]* The Chancellor invented and proclaimed his adherence to techniques, instruments, measures and controls. Now they have been abandoned and he is trying to pretend that that abandonment will somehow benefit the economy on a major scale. That is an illusion and the reverse of the truth.

The Chancellor has abandoned his monetarism in the face of political reality. He has no choice. He has abandoned it for reasons not entirely unconnected with the imminence of the general election. We are forced to conclude that, whereas we used to regard the Chancellor as just a simple-minded monetarist, now we must recognise that the monetarist part of that label is no longer appropriate.

Why does all this matter? Why can we not let the Chancellor off the hook and let him say, as perhaps many politicians before him have said, "We all learn from our mistakes. Now we know that we are wrong and we are making an intelligent adjustment to circumstances as we now see them."? But the very essence of the medium-term financial strategy has always been characterised by its apparent certainty and simplicity.

It is worth recalling just how attractively simple the doctrine was. First, one selected an appropriate measure of the money supply. Then one controlled it. There was no problem about that. One controlled the money supply by fixing a rate of growth at whatever level one chose. Since that fed immediately and automatically through into prices, why not choose zero growth? One then obtained zero inflation. With zero inflation, the economy would suddenly miraculously prosper of its own accord.

That was the simple theory. It was not only simple and certain — here is the real nub of the case — it was immutable. Having set the course and laid down the medium-term financial strategy, the Chancellor, unlike all his wicked and weak-willed predecessors, was going to stick to it come what may. He was not going to be rid of it. That is where slogans such as "There is no alternative" and "The lady is not for turning" came from. The right hon. Lady's reputation is at issue here. Her reputation for inflexibility must be defended. That is why the Chancellor is so unwilling to concede that he has fundamentally shifted course as was well detailed by the Treasury and Civil Service Committee.

In the name of this immutability, simplicity and certainty, immense damage was inflicted on the economy. Another Government and another Chancellor would have realised that the course they had set was doing unacceptable damage, but this Government and this Chancellor persevered. They ploughed on. As manufacturing output and investment fell and 1·3 million jobs in manufacturing industry were lost, as the balance of trade deteriorated and as bankruptcies reached record levels, the Chancellor said, "No, we will stick to our chosen course."

Mr. Budgen: The hon. Gentleman is unfair to the Labour party. Conservative Members sometimes falsely claim that we were the original monetarists. The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins), who then represented a Birmingham constituency, was the original monetarist when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1968 and in 1976. The first overt monetarist was the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), the present shadow spokesman on foreign affairs.

Mr. Gould: As my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) said, the Prime Minister, in almost a single column of *Hansard*, has been known to use five different base dates and starting dates for monetarist policy. It is novel to have yet two more added, going as far back as 1968 and 1976, as I understand the hon. Gentleman's rather convoluted remarks.

For all those reasons, and for the reason that the Chancellor proclaimed—the immutability of his policy—and the fact that, in the name of that immutability, he did, and thought he was worth doing, such damage to the economy, he is now——

Mr. Peter Lilley (St. Albans): Give us quotations.

Mr. Gould: I shall not disappoint the hon. Gentleman. He shall have quotations.

For all those reasons, the Chancellor is unwilling to concede that there has been a change. He knows that if he did, he would have to concede that all the damage has been in vain and the whole basis of his policy has been swept

[Mr. Gould]

away. It has been replaced by nothing comprehensible or intelligible. It has not yet even been replaced by a new mistake to replace the old ones.

As the basis of the Chancellor's policy has disappeared, even the one achievement claimed for monetarism must now be suspect. It can no longer be chalked up to the Government's credit. The Government claim that their policies have produced a reduction in inflation, yet the policies that were set to produce that reduction have never been applied and have been abandoned as a mistake, as a forlorn hope and as something that could never be put in place. It is difficult for the Government to argue that their policies produced the fall in inflation. That is borne out by the fact that, since 1979, our record on inflation has been worse than the average of the leading OECD countries. In 1979, our inflation rate was 117 per cent. of the average for the seven OECD countries. Today it is 144 per cent., and rising.

Mr. Lawson: Quote the figures.

Mr. Gould: I am quoting figures. The Chancellor does not like it because they show that the fall in inflation owes everything to the world recession and the slump in commodity prices, as the Select Committee said. It owes almost nothing—I would say absolutely nothing—to the failed policies of the Government in whose name so much damage has been done.

If, in the light of those facts, the Chancellor still denies that there has been a change, let me try to smoke him out. Let me take as a text the locus classicus—or one of them—of monetarist policy: the speech that he delivered in Zurich on 14 January 1981—the hon. Member for St. Albans (Mr. Lilley), the Chancellor's parliamentary private secretary, asked for some quotations—when he was Financial Secretary to the Treasury. Perhaps he wishes to disown or disavow that part of his career, but we shall give him some quotations. He said:

"The heart of our economic policy is the steady deceleration in the rate of monetary growth over a four-year period."

The right hon. Gentleman may not wish to stick to sterling M3, which has increased by 18·2 per cent. during the past 12 months. In that case, on former theories, we would be looking at an inflation rate of 18 per cent. What would he like to do? Does he wish to place emphasis on PSL1, on which he was especially keen at the time, although I have not heard him mention it much recently —I should be interested to hear whether he wishes to take that measure—or would he prefer one of the narrow money measures? Would he prefer MO or M1? The latter was a favourite for a time. How would that square with what he said, which was that broad money is the most useful guide? Do we detect a change there?

Does the Chancellor still believe that this is

"a highly complex matter, but that is no reason for getting it wrong, still less for abandoning the task."?

Is that still his position? What is the present basis of his monetary policy? What is the assumed connection between any monetary measure the Chancellor cares to select—I am not fussy about which one he selects—and the assumed or predicted rate of inflation? Unless we know that, we cannot know what has happened to what he said in 1981 was,

"the heart of our economic policy".

The Chancellor said in that speech that the fall in monetary growth was to be achieved by a

"steady reduction in the real level of total Government spending."

When was that target abandoned? Why was it abandoned? Why should anyone believe the Government's plans for public spending in the light of the Chancellor's statement in that speech that there was

"a steadily declining trend, until by 1982-83 it will be 4 per cent. lower than in 1979-80."?

Was not the whole point of reducing Government spending the hope that interest rates would be kept down and that there would be no crowding out? Why do we have record real interest rates—the highest in our history and among the highest in the advanced world—and why are our real interest rates twice as high as those of West Germany? Why are we lumbering our industry with such a ridiculous burden? Will the Chancellor give us an answer? He must know.

Let us try another quotation about the exchange rate. In 1981, the Chancellor said:

"The Government has no exchange rate policy as such."

Is that still the case, in view of his repeated statement that he would now resist any further fall in exchange rates and what one assumes to be his preference for joining the EMS although, clearly, he cannot carry his Prime Minister with him? If so, when did the change take place? Is that another change? Can the Chancellor be happy with the situation when the pound is now, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook said, at its lowest level in the trade weighted index, can only be held at that level on the basis of a severely deflated economy — the classic definition of a weaker currency—is bolstered by record borrowing from the reserves, part of which has been spent, has nevertheless produced a rapidly deteriorating balance of trade and is now, as the Prime Minister concedes, too weak to be taken into the EMS and is, above all else, supported by record real interest rates? Is that what the Chancellor believes is an acceptable outcome of seven years of a Government dedicated to what is laughingly called sound money? Is that the apotheosis that the Chancellor so ardently desired?

The Chancellor went on to say that as a result of what had then been done in the name of monetarism—those who remember 1981 and have seen the graphs and the Chancellor's unwillingness to look at any period of government before 1981 will find this a rich irony—

"British companies are becoming more efficient, leaner, tauter, fitter, and more productive."

That is a remarkable statement. Much could have been forgiven if it were in any real sense true. How can it be true when manufacturing output is 7 per cent. lower than it was in 1979, when hundreds of thousands of jobs are lost and investment is down?

Let us be fair to the Chancellor. He may want to avoid looking at the economy in the round; he may want to look at companies as individual entities. Will he nominate those of our main industrial rivals against which we have made up ground in terms of productivity, efficiency, unit labour costs and competitiveness? I do not dispute that he may be able to find some, but I wonder whether he would find them among the ranks of our important rivals such as Japan, Germany and the United States. Where would such examples lie?

Let me give the Chancellor a wide choice. Will he choose just one of the various indices of competitiveness that the Treasury sometimes uses and publishes? I do not

mind which it is—relative export prices, relative import prices, terms of trade, or relative labour costs. Which of any one of those shows an improvement in our competitiveness since the first quarter of 1979? I challenge him to nominate one. If he cannot—and I know that he cannot—I hope that we shall hear no more of that canard trotted out repeatedly and erroneously by Ministers and other Government spokesmen.

It is significant that we have no answers from the Chancellor or the Chief Secretary. It may be that they are adhering to the policy of being economic with the truth. It may be that they are too busy and that their minds are filled with fantasies and inventions about our spending plans. Those fantasies have been totally discredited by the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Phillips and Drew, which have castigated back-of-the-envelope figures. However, this is a debate about the autumn statement, although I would not be surprised if the Chancellor would dearly like to shift the focus.

The real reason why there is silence on the Government Benches is that they are holding their breath. They know and fear that the simplest gust of wind will bring the whole structure, the whole card house, down. The Chancellor knows that sooner or later it will all collapse because, with his abdication from monetarism, he now runs an economic policy that has no visible means of support.

The Chancellor has one last shot in his locker, if he is to ward off nemesis in the form of a sterling crisis, or a balance of payments crisis, or the blowing up of the consumer boom. That one last, desperate throw is tax cuts. Today the Chancellor affected a pose of fiscal rectitude, but I would lay money on there being some tax cuts in the next Budget, which would go some way towards redeeming the promise that has been made every year for seven years that tax cuts are on their way.

Tax cuts might reverse to some small degree the increased tax burden for the overwhelming majority of families, but they would further stimulate the consumer boom and worsen the balance of payments without doing anything for unemployment, and they would be completely unsustainable for more than a few months. If the Conservatives won the next election, they would have to be reversed as soon as the general election was out of the way. Tax cuts could be made only at the price of further violence to the very policies that the Chancellor has paraded for so long as being at the heart of his economic policy. Tax cuts would be the last desperate throw of a Government who know that the game is up and know, as they go into an election year with more than 3 million people unemployed, that they do not, in the words of the chairman of the Tory party, deserve to be re-elected. They will not be re-elected.

9.36 pm

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John MacGregor): I congratulate the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on his appointment to his new post and welcome him to our debates. I shall have a word to say later about his speech and about what he has said elsewhere. As this is my first opportunity since the autumn statement to speak about it in the House, I shall concentrate my opening remarks on the area for which I have particular responsibility, public expenditure.

The hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) accused the Government of major turns in Government policy and of increasing public spending. He described it as the economics of electioneering. On the other hand, my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) emphasised the need for continuing restraint and regretted that we had not made more progress. I should like to begin by reassuring my hon. Friend and disabusing the hon. Gentleman of his notions.

In his speech my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that our consistent view has been that the state takes too much of the nation's income and that our consistent objective is that public expenditure, as a percentage of GDP, should be reduced. My right hon. Friend conceded that some of the targets that we have set have, in the event, proved to be too ambitious.

To reverse public spending trends to achieve the objectives that we have set ourselves requires a constant and firm determination to turn back the inexorable pressures of the 1970s towards higher public spending. Some of them are demand-led pressures, as my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington pointed out. He referred to agriculture and social security. My hon. Friend will be aware that in agriculture the real demand-led area is the common agricultural policy, not the domestic agricultural programme. He will know of the strenuous efforts of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—capped with great success during this week, in very difficult circumstances—to restrain the growth of the CAP. I shall deal later with social security.

I have two points to make about public expenditure as a whole. The trends show that we are succeeding. They also show that the Opposition are a constant reminder that without the disciplines that we have continuously imposed both the total and the proportion of the gross domestic product would very rapidly shoot up again.

The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) never likes to be reminded that when his party formed the Government they increased expenditure, in real terms, by 12 per cent. in one year. With its £28 billion pledge, the Labour party looks as though it will repeat precisely that mistake if ever again it is given the chance to form a Government. With programmes of that sort, it will certainly not form another Government.

If it were the case, as the hon. Member for Great Grimsby contends, that the Government's public expenditure policy has changed this year, one would expect to be able to detect a break in trend—for example, expenditure rising, instead of falling, as a proportion of the gross domestic product or the growth rate accelerating after it had been decelerating. That is not what one finds. As my right hon. Friend explained at the time of the autumn statement, and again today, the rate of increase in public spending, in real terms, as measured by the combined spending of central and local government—including, as the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service would wish, debt interest but excluding the proceeds of privatisation—shows that progressively the rate of increase has been coming down.

It is worth repeating the figures, because the constant hubbub from the Opposition when my right hon. Friend the Chancellor was making his speech probably meant that most of my hon. Friends did not hear all that he said. The figures are quite clear. They went from 3 per cent. in the decade to 1978-79 to 2¼ per cent. in the last Parliament, and to 1¼ per cent. so far in the present Parliament. Far from reversing that trend to slower growth, our plans seek to extend it.

Mr. Fallon: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. MacGregor: I have a lot to say in response to the debate and a short time in which to say it, so I hope that my hon. Friend will not mind if I do not give way.

If one looks for a break in the trend one can find it, but it was in 1982-83 that the rise in public spending as a proportion of GDP came to an end. I concede that it rose up to that period for a whole variety of reasons which I do not have time to go into now, but in the four years since then the proportion has progressively fallen.

With spending planned to grow significantly more slowly than the economy as a whole, the downward trend will continue, so that by 1989-90 public spending as a proportion of national income will, as my right hon. Friend said, be back to levels last seen in the early 1970s. We have succeeded in making a break with the past and reversing the trend. In the 1970s public spending grew faster than the economy, but now the reverse is true, and this autumn statement accelerates that process.

Some Opposition Members have extended their search for the non-existent U-turn into the detailed programmes. That search will be equally unproductive. Certainly the autumn statement makes additional resources available for priority programmes such as education, health and roads, but these are hardly new priorities.

One advantage of this steady commitment on public spending coupled with a rigorous search for economies is that we have been able to increase spending in the areas to which we attach the greatest priority, while at the same time ensuring that public expenditure has never regained the stranglehold that it once had on our economic life. It is important to look at some of the examples. Looking at our record over the past six years, we see that in education spending per pupil is now at an all-time high and that the proportion of 18 and 19-year-olds entering higher education and the number of graduates are also at record levels.

Spending on the National Health Service has risen by over 24 per cent. in real terms since 1978-79, and capital spending on the NHS has risen over 30 per cent. On law and order programmes, spending has risen by nearly 40 per cent. in real terms since 1978-79. Capital spending on housing renovation has risen by nearly 40 per cent., and local authorities and new towns improved and converted nearly 100,000 dwellings last year. Over 600 miles of motorways and trunk roads have been completed since we took office and spending on them has risen by more than 25 per cent.

These are all programmes to which we have given priority in the autumn statement and the figures that I have just given demonstrate that we have been consistent throughout and that public spending as a proportion of national income has been coming down. This autumn statement continues the emphasis on those priorities. We are substantially increasing provision for education and, as the House knows, we have made a generous offer of £¼ billion next year for teachers' pay. That offer was made in order to get value for money and is offered in return for the right terms, conditions of service and a salary structure in the teaching profession. Spending on hospital and community health services will be up by 2¼ per cent. in real terms next year.

The hon. Member for Great Grimsby said that this was an election spending spree, but that increase in real terms is exactly the same as the increase that we planned for this year. We will spend over £700 million more on the police in each of the next two years. By 1987-88 the number of uniformed police will have risen by 10,000 since we took office in 1979. This is not a pre-election spending spree. It is consistent with our progress in the past.

One point to which the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service has drawn attention in the past, but to which it did not draw attention this year, is the balance between capital and current spending. Perhaps this year the Committee did not focus so much on that because it noticed that here again we have been consistent and that our contrast with the Labour record is marked. Since we came to office public sector spending has remained broadly level in real terms, despite our deliberate decision to switch the emphasis from the public to the private sector in the provision of new housing.

The autumn statement shows that we are planning to increase capital expenditure by nearly £1 billion over our previous plans in each of the next two years on roads and prisons, and, despite the switch of emphasis in housing provision, we are making an extra £450 million available next year. We have a £3 billion building programme for the NHS, covering more than 380 major schemes, 110 of which should be completed by 1990.

The interesting point is the contrast between our record on that basis, despite all the attacks that we hear from the Opposition from time to time, on capital spending and on the infrastructure, and theirs. Despite the growth of expenditure under the last Administration, they had to cut capital spending in key areas. Within our restrained totals we have almost identically increased capital spending in the key areas by the same percentage.

The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook referred to the increase in social security spending, which is a marked feature of the autumn statement, and described that as a product of unemployment. *[Interruption.]* It is typical of the right hon. Gentleman to raise a point and then to carry on talking when it is answered. He does not want to hear the answer.

The usual full analysis of expenditure by benefit and type of claimant will be published in the public expenditure White Paper, but it is worth noting that the major factors for the increase that we have announced are an increase in take-up of means test benefits among the long-term sick and disabled and single parents. Average amounts paid in housing benefit to people in and out of work are also increasing, as is spending on family benefits, reflecting among other things a higher birth rate and more children staying on at school after 16.

There is also a continuing increase in the level of take-up of benefits among the existing unemployed. When the right hon. Gentleman puts the burden of the increased expenditure on the unemployed factor, it is worth remembering that most of the social security budget is spent on the elderly, the sick and disabled and on families. Only about one sixth of the social security programme is spent on benefits for unemployed people. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has pointed out clearly, our record on increases in benefits since 1979 is good. We have had to take into account the demographic trends and the fact that many people live longer and need such benefits.

If I had had time, I would have spent a few moments on the speech of the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon). I want to contrast our responsible spending with the programmes of other parties. The hon.

Gentleman was on his own when he rose to speak and he missed a rare opportunity. He could have said what he liked about the alliance's spending plans without fear of contradiction or of being muzzled. He missed that opportunity, but not all his colleagues have done the same.

According to *The Independent* last month, the Social Democratic and Liberal parties have been costing and revising what I have to describe as a pledge-heavy document, "Partnership for Progress". The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) has, we are told, been laying down the law. I noticed that even while "Partnership for Progress" is at the printers, some of the hon. Friends of the hon. Member for Truro have been blowing a hole in the Social Democratic party's plans and have added, on its own estimate, £1·5 billion in a pledge to increase pay in the NHS. We shall look forward to seeing continuing disputes between the two parties as they try to grapple with the problem of responsible public spending.

The hon. Gentleman made one fair point. At least the Liberals and Social Democrats have put down an amendment tonight. The hon. Gentleman drew attention to the fact that the official Opposition have not. No wonder. They are terrified of a focus on their policies.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) urged strongly, both in the Treasury and Civil Service Committee's report and in the debate, that the matters relating to monetary policy in particular should be discussed on the Floor of the House. I agree. That is precisely what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor was endeavouring to do this afternoon in giving a detailed response to the Committee's report. It was, of course, a strong rebuttal in places, but my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing is a fair man and I am sure that he will recognise that, as the report criticises the Chancellor, the Chancellor has every right to give his response. His was a detailed response, because he wanted to take the report seriously and argue it point by point.

If my right hon. Friend and the House study the reply, they will find it a fair, reasonable and persuasive response, but they will have to read it, because of the shameful behaviour of the Opposition, led by the Opposition Front Bench. Every observer outside the Chamber must have concluded that theirs was kindergarten behaviour, except that would be unfair to kindergartens. The Opposition did not focus on a single serious issue for one moment during my right hon. Friend's speech. They treated the key economic policy matters as frivolously in this debate as they do in their own internal party discussions on economic matters.

It is fairly clear that the hon. Member for Dagenham wrote his speech before the Chancellor spoke or, alternatively, he could not have heard the Chancellor, because he concentrated on the frivolous aspects of the matter, as did his hon. Friends. He totally failed to see that the Chancellor had responded to his speech in full before he made it—*[Interruption.]* That is what observers will have seen.

I find the Opposition's attack on these matters extraordinarily hypocritical and schizophrenic. They cannot make up their mind whether the modest increases in spending that we have announced are reckless and a sign of a pre-election spending spree or whether they are totally insufficient. On looking at the Opposition's plans, one must conclude that they would spend a great deal more. They criticise the level of interest rates and inflation. The hon. Member for Dagenham said that we had benefited on inflation this year from oil and falling commodity prices. It is important to look comparatively at the record of inflation over a period of time.

If one compares the record of the last Labour Government and the record since 1979 to the present day, not just in absolute terms, but relative to either the major seven competitors or the rest of the EEC, one finds that under the Labour Government the difference between their inflation level and the average of the major seven was 6·9 per cent., compared with 2·1 per cent. under this Government. Even more strikingly, when compared with our European competitors the average was 4·5 per cent. during the Labour Government compared with 0·1 per cent. now. That is a clear indication of how our policies on interest rates and monetary policy have made a big difference, comparatively, to all that we saw under the Labour Government.

Mr. Gould: I feel justified in intervening, since the inflation rate is the sole achievement that the Government can claim in their economic policy. Does the right hon. Gentleman dispute that our inflation rate today is higher as a proportion of the OECD seven average than it was in 1979 when the Government took office? Does he dispute that, yes or no?

Mr. MacGregor: What matters is the difference that I have just been describing. I utterly reject the hon. Gentleman's statement that inflation, although a key achievement of the Government, is the only one.

The hon. Member for Dagenham wrote a fascinating article in *The Times* last year. He said:

"To say that the Labour party's decline might be terminal has become a commonplace . . . To lay this bare is not to hasten the decline. A proper understanding of what is happening offers the only chance of doing something to halt a possibly fatal process. Within our geographical and ideological laager a kind of siege mentality prevails. Thus, it is seriously asserted that the obstacle to majority support in the country is that we are not Left-wing enough. It is believed that one day the scales will drop from the eyes of the masses and that a demonstration on the Floor of the Commons will bring the triumph of Socialism closer."

It is not really a question whether the debate in the Labour party needs to be fought out in that increasingly isolationist way. If it were, it would not matter to the rest of the country. However, we are seeing that that laager-type mentality is being operated in practice in Labour-controlled authorities involving a not inconsiderable proportion of total local authority spending. The hon. Member for Dagenham knows perfectly well that he was putting his finger on that sort of approach, because he was aware that it could cause increasing unpopularity for the Labour party in the country, but, much more serious, those are the sorts of policies that would be operated if the Labour party ever got the opportunity to return to government.

Labour authority leaders must be worrying the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook enormously. He knows that his colleagues are locked in private discussions. At least, that is what we are told in the press. He must be aware of the irresponsible approach of Labour councillors to public spending. They are piling up commitments for future ratepayers by their creative accounting. Labour controlled authorities continue to spend in the most frivolous fashion, and the right hon. Gentleman must know that the approach that is being adopted by Labour councillors

[Mr. MacGregor]

justifies entirely our attack when we say that in practice a Labour Government would not be able to control public spending.

The figure now in circulation is £28 billion, and it has not been challenged seriously. That is the sum to which a Labour Government would be committed, and other commitments are being added to it. That figure destroys the credibility of any attack by the Opposition on the Government's policies on interest rates and inflation, and all the policies that are set out in the autumn statement.

Mr. Gould: As the Minister has been prepared to range so widely to avoid scrutiny of the Government's policy, perhaps I should have foreseen that he would introduce Labour spending yet again. Has the right hon. Gentleman read the study of our programme by the Institute for Fiscal Studies? Does he know what conclusion the institute reached, and does he accept it? Its conclusion is that he has invented figures, or that they are nothing more than back-of-envelope figures.

Mr. MacGregor: I have read the study in full and that which the hon. Gentleman asserts is not what it states. The study makes it clear that the Government's costing is entirely accurate and is not based on back-of-envelope figures. Secondly, it says that some of Labour's commitments are not absolutely clear. On many occasions I have offered the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook the opportunity to tell us which commitments he will take off the list. Some signs were given in a previous debate that commitments that are dear to the hearts of Labour Back Benchers are now being dropped.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), who is the Opposition's employment spokesman, has said that there are commitments that are not "fully there" of £6·6 billion, which he said should be removed from the overall commitment. That statement was negated by the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), the Opposition's spokesman on social security matters, who added more than an equivalent sum to the figures that do not come within the commitment of £28 billion.

If we consider what is being done by Labour councils, it is no wonder that Opposition Members are so sensitive. The hon. Member for Dagenham stated that inflation was the Government's one achievement for which we could claim credit. Accordingly, I turn to the record for the past five years, which the autumn statement will continue. Since 1981, growth has averaged 3 per cent., manufacturing investment has averaged 4 per cent. and take-home pay for a married man on average earnings has increased by 17 per cent. compared with a drop of nearly 1 per cent. under the previous Labour Government.

As has been said, the Government's record on inflation is a major achievement. The hon. Gentleman talks about interest rates, but he should recognise that there are other factors that are extremely important to companies. The rate of return for all industrial and commercial companies rose to 12 per cent. in 1985, the highest since 1964, and treble the rate in 1975. The rate of return on manufacturing in 1985 was 7 per cent., the highest percentage since 1973. Companies' liquidity and profitability are returning to the levels that we all want to see. These elements can be set against the impact of inflation.

The autumn statement is consistent with what we have done in the past, which has made possible the achievements to which I have referred. It will enable us to secure balanced growth again next year. It is in the most remarkable contrast with the policies of the Opposition, which is why they will never get the opportunity to implement them.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 22, Noes 268.

Division No. 44] **[9.59 pm**

AYES

Ashdown, Paddy
Beith, A. J.
Bruce, Malcolm
Hancock, Michael
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Livsey, Richard
Maclennan, Robert
Mallon, Seamus
Meadowcroft, Michael
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Penhaligon, David
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Steel, Rt Hon David
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Wallace, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Alton and
Mr. John Cartwright.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert

Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Prior, Rt Hon James
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. Gerald Malone.

Question accordingly negatived.
Main Question put:—
The House divided: Ayes 268, Noes 204.

Division No. 45] **[10.13 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacGregor, Rt Hon John

MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Francis Maude and
Mr. Gerald Malone.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'rmline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Dr Mark *(Durham)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis

Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
Mr. Sean Hughes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House approves the Autumn Statement presented by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer on 6th November; welcomes the prospect of continuing low inflation and steady growth as the basis for maintaining the trend of rising employment; and congratulates Her Majesty's Government on the continuing reduction in the share of national income pre-empted by public expenditure.

Water Authorities (Return on Assets)

10.26 pm

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 1952), dated 18th November 1986, a copy of which was laid before this House on 24th November, be annulled.

The purpose of the order is to increase the price of water to its users. We in the Labour party do not accept that it is appropriate to calculate the rate of return on a false valuation of the industry's assets.

My hon. Friends the Members for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) on 2 February 1985 and for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 17 December 1985 discussed the technicality of using the current cost accounting procedure in their speeches on the orders S.I., 1984, No. 1995 and S.I., 1985, No. 1805. My hon. Friend the Member for South Shields said:

"To adopt the current cost accounting procedure as the valuation is a false and incorrect way to handle the issue." —[*Official Report*, 17 December 1985; Vol. 89, c. 257.]

My hon. Friend the Member for Perry Barr discussed the issued at some length and I do not wish to take time rehearsing the arguments again. However, I wish to consider the implications of the order, which are serious for the people whom my hon. Friends and I represent. There is a clear connection between the return on assets and the level of charges to customers.

An analysis of the figures reveals a number of facts, two of which I wish to highlight. First, since 1984-85 the target rate of return has increased for all water authorities and, secondly, a comparison of the range of rates of return with the previous two years reveals a widening gap. Last year, for example, the range was 1·5 per cent. to 1.73 per cent., whereas this year it is 1·7 per cent. to 2·1 per cent. Why is that happening, when the Government's initial intention was to move to a common rate of return for all authorities?

I am sure that the Minister will have had sight of a document from the Confederation of British Industry about the order, entitled "CBI: the Industrial View", which states:

"it is reasonable to assume that next year's targets are being set to even out price increases rather than encourage effective management with the authorities."

The price to the average householder is increasing dramatically, as a few figures will illustrate. Between 1978-79 and 1986-87, the increase in prices to all water authorities averaged a staggering 143 per cent., ranging from 123 per cent. for South-West Water to 163 per cent. for Northumbrian Water. The average price increase for the past two years was 11·7 per cent. in 1985-86, when all water authorities except one increased prices by double figures. For 1986-87, the average is 8 per cent.—still more than double the inflation rate.

Those increases resulted in extraordinary profits. Northumbrian Water increased its profits seven times and Thames by £45 million from £105 million to £150 million. Clearly, this is completely unacceptable. However, the same customers must accept further increases in 1987-88, which could be as high as 10 per cent. It is certain that they will be well above inflation, which suggests another question to the Minister. In the White Paper on privatisation, price controls of retail price index minus X were proposed. Why are today's customers facing an increase of RPI times X? Not only householders are affected by price increases. Business customers are, too, and the CBI is rightly worried that, after a series of increases exceeding inflation, businesses will have difficulty in keeping down operational costs and remaining competitive. That will have serious implications for jobs, which concerns my hon. Friends.

The water authorities have no option but to increase prices. The Government are slashing their borrowing powers by £100 million; that means that the only alternative is to cut capital spending which, with the current state of the industry, is not a serious option. Mr. Roy Watts, chairman of the Thames water authority, is so worried that he has written to all London Members. In his letter, he says:

"It seems as if we shall once again be asked to substantially increase our repayment of long term debt in the coming year . . . We shall be entirely debt-free within three years, which amounts to a very poor deal for today's customers."

Mr. Malcolm Anson, chairman of Wessex water authority, wrote in a letter to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Mr. Cocks) on 10 December that the effect of the Government's policies could only be to the "detriment of our present standards of service."

As a result of price increases and of reductions in the external financing limit—the borrowing powers of the water authorities—Richard Evans wrote in an article in the *Financial Times* on 17 July 1986:

"The authorities have become much more financially attractive since the prospect of privatisation was first raised 18 months ago."

It appears that the Government are still committed to privatising the water authorities. Or are they? From previous announcements, one cannot be sure of the Government's thinking on the industry. On 19 December 1984, the former Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Macfarlane), said:

"We have absolutely no intention of privatising the water industry. The Government have no plans to urge that upon the water authorities. There has been some press speculation about it in the past, but there is no intention to do so." —[*Official Report*, 19 December 1984; Vol. 70, c. 457.]

Just over a month later, on 31 January 1985, in a written answer, the Prime Minister said:

"The Government would welcome new ideas on privatisation. However, the water authorities are natural monopolies for many of their functions and we need to be particularly careful when considering replacing a public monopoly by a private one."—[*Official Report*, 31 January 1985; Vol. 72, c. *292*.]

On 5 February 1986, all had become clear. The Secretary of State for the Environment, now the Secretary of State for Education and Science, said:

"The Government have now decided to transfer the 10 water authorities in England and Wales to private ownership."—[*Official Report*, 5 February 1986; Vol. 91, c. 287.]

The position was confirmed by the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction when he moved an amendment to a motion of the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) on 23 June 1986 which

"welcomes the Government's proposals for the privatisation of the water authorities."—[*Official Report*, 23 June 1986; Vol. 100, c. 36.]

But that is not the end of the story. On 3 July—just over a week after the Minister had spoken—the

Secretary of State for the Environment was forced by my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) to come before the House at 10 pm to make what my hon. Friend described as

"a pathetic and inadequate statement."

In that statement, the Secretary of State withdrew the Government's privatisation proposals. However, he said:

"I reaffirm the Government's intention to proceed with water privatisation as soon as practicable." — [*Official Report*, 3 July 1986; Vol. 100, c. 1261.]

I will not ask the Minister to make a statement today. He must realise that this is a bit of a minefield. However, I have a serious comment to make about his Department's water legislation division. In 1985-86, costs other than staff were £103,000. In the first half of 1986-87, the costs had reached a colossal £1·3 million. On what is that money being spent? Should the Government bring back their proposals to privatise the water authorities, I assure the House that they will be opposed as vigorously as they were before.

My hon. Friends and I condemn any proposal to privatise a basic necessity of life. We believe that the water industry should be kept in the public sector, the integrated river basin management retained, and until a regional tier of government is introduced, regional water authorities should continue. However, there will be changes to democratise the boards, as we cannot allow a small group of people meeting in secret to determine policy. We shall invest in the industry to clean up beaches and improve the quality of drinking water. We shall not ask water authorities to become what Roy Watts described as "covert tax collectors" for the Government. Under a Labour Government, water authorities will be able to use profit to improve both quality of service and water to the consumer.

This week, a report by the Nitrate Co-ordination Group, "Nitrates in Water", describes how nitrate levels in some areas are above EEC limits and there is a danger that heavy nitrate concentrations could cause serious health hazards. The Government are also concerned about the state of beaches in the United Kingdom. It is incredible that only 27 beaches in the United Kingdom are designated as possessing bathing water meeting EEC quality standards.

To satisfy the requirements of both the nitrate and bathing beach problems would cost about £600 million. Some £200 million is estimated as being needed to solve the nitrate problem, and £400 million for the bathing beach problem. Ian Hill, the chairman of South-West Water, in *The Independent* on 13 December is reported as saying that the Minister's announcement on bathing beaches is

"incompatible with financial restrictions currently being imposed by the DOE . . . It is just not good enough to order these costly monitoring and improvement works while ignoring the financial implications."

Will the Minister be producing hard cash for the water authorities to carry out these tasks, particularly the £400 million for the short term and urgent need to clean up the beaches?

The CBI, in the note already cited, states:

"The increases in charges expected next year will add between £80 million to £100 million to business and industry's costs . . . The signs are that where large water users discharge effluent to public sewage works it is becoming increasingly attractive for them to instal their own treatment plants."

The writer of the note correctly points out that this will lead to unused and unusable plant in the hands of the water authorities, and consequently, the opportunity for investment in the productive areas that could create employment.

I should be glad to have the Minister's comments on this matter, along with answers to the other questions that I have raised. This is a shabby, unacceptable order. I urge the Minister not to press ahead with it but to take it away and come back with a more acceptable proposal. Unlike Conservative Members, my hon. Friends and I care about the water industry.

10.38 pm

The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten): I am afraid that I must disappoint the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) after his excellent speech, which contained some penetrating questions. We shall be pressing ahead with the order, and we have every reason to be proud of our record of investment in the water industry since 1979, as I shall be able to demonstrate.

I remind the House of our policy, which I outlined a year ago when the previous order was debated. This is exactly the same policy as that announced in 1984 by my distinguished predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), who I see here tonight. Two years ago we were seeking convergence as much as possible, in answer to the hon. Gentleman's first question. *[Interruption.]* I do not know what the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) finds so funny about this. I am trying to answer the questions put to me by the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington.

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): It was a compliment.

Mr. Patten: If that is a compliment, I shall give way gladly.

Dr. Cunningham: Not to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Patten: In that case, I shall not. I thought that, as it is Christmas time, I might get a compliment from the hon. Gentleman, but, alas, I shall not.

I agree with the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington that there has been some divergence, but this divergence reflects the financing needs of the authorities. Anglian has the highest target, reflecting its heavy investment requirements and its need to reduce the heavy burden of interest.

We have asked water authorities steadily to improve the rate of return that they earn on their capital assets. The previous figure of approximately 1 per cent. was an inadequate return on the considerable investment in the water industry. In 1984 the target announced for 1987-88 by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne was an average of 1·9 per cent. The average figure in the order that was laid on 24 November is close to that figure, but at 1·875 per cent. it is not quite so tough.

The hon. Member for Houghton and Washington was a little unfair about the Government's record since 1979. In 1986-87, water authorities' capital expenditure, excluding expenditure on the tricky subject of land drainage, is £925 million, about 40 per cent. of revenue. That is not bad. It represents an increase of 35 per cent., in volume terms, since 1980-81. In some areas the increases, in volume terms, are even higher — 70 per cent. in the South-West, 74 per cent. in the North-West and 110 per cent. in Wessex. I do not see any Members

[Mr. Patten]

from Wessex constituencies here; clearly they are very satisfied with the volume of investment in their area. It is more than the 70 per cent. increase in the South-West, where the volume of investment is considerably above the national average.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Of course the Wessex Members of Parliament are satisfied. They obtain a great deal of their water from a new reservoir, paid for out of capital, in the South-West water authority's area.

Mr. Patten: The South-West will have its own splendid reservoir when Roadford reservoir is constructed.

In 1974, virtually all the investment by the water authorities was funded by borrowing. Inevitably, that placed a burden on public expenditure. By 1980-81, 40 per cent. of the investment was funded by borrowing. In 1987-88 the industry will pay for virtually all its investment. That has been achieved while the burden on public expenditure has been reduced.

The water authorities deserve praise for their efficiency. They have reduced their total operating costs by 6 per cent., in real terms, since 1980. Efficiency in most water authorities has improved year by year. Unfortunately, it has slipped back in recent years in a few authorities. Operating and management expenditure per head has been reduced for all major services. Standards of service have been maintained or improved, although a few water authorities could do better. On the whole, though water authorities are doing more work for less expenditure. That is an impressive record.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Does the Minister know of any public sector body from which the Government have required such a large pay back of borrowed money in the last three years?

Mr. Patten: There is nothing wrong with a businesslike rate of return of 1 to 2 per cent. on water industry assets. Any business would expect to earn considerably more. I can tell the official spokesman for the alliance, its representative here today, that water authority debt stands at about £5 billion and interest charges take no less than one quarter of the whole of the revenue from water authority customers. That is too much, hence the policy laid down by my predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne.

Amidst all the understandable concern about bathing beaches and the quality of river water, which the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington did not mention, let us remember that 99 per cent. of Britain's households are connected to mains water and 95 per cent. are connected to sewerage. Those are the highest percentages in Europe.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Thanks to public enterprise.

Mr. Patten: Thanks to public and private enterprise over the best part of 200 years. Every year, service standards to maintain these improvements are monitored through the process of the corporate plans produced by water authorities.

Mr. Spearing: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Patten: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not. This is a short debate and I must make progress. The number of customers experiencing inadequate water pressure has fallen considerably. In every area the quality of drinking water has improved, and I am happy to report to the House that the number of properties affected by sewage flooding is low and has fallen in most authority areas. The reductions in operating costs achieved by most authorities have not been at the cost of a reduction in service standards. That is a tribute to the publicly owned water authorities and, where appropriate, to the excellent record of the privately owned water companies. I am pleased to see my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Sir J. Page) in his place.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: They do not dispose of sewage.

Mr. Patten: They do not; I am well aware of that. However, they supply water and have a good record for supplying potable water at a good cost. The underlying gains in efficiency are better than steady and, even after all these service improvements, there has been a 6 per cent. reduction in operating costs.

Despite the evidence of improving levels of service, we still hear frequent complaints about the state of the water industry's assets. That is a bit of a myth, because asset condition is now reported annually in the corporate plans of water authorities, and we discuss those with the authorities, as I have done this year with every water authority in England and as my hon. Friend the Member for Newport, West (Mr. Robinson) the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, has done with the chairman of the Welsh water authority.

Thanks to the independent-minded work of the Water Research Centre, the water industry now has manuals describing the best way of conducting and interpreting surveys on the condition of assets. All authorities are making considerable progress with these surveys.

The record shows increased investment and lower operating costs. There have been improvements in service standards, certainly an improved knowledge of asset condition, and a reduction in the burden of public expenditure, which I applaud. The present order continues that policy. It is a great contrast to the policy which led to declining investment for which some right hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition Front Bench were responsible in the Labour Government before 1979.

In 1979 we saw declining investment and seemingly bottomless deficit financing of the water industry. That was the picture that faced the Government when we took power in 1979. It was not a happy picture, and the progress that has been made since 1979 is a remarkable tribute to the efficiency of the water authorities and to the Government for the substantial sums of money invested in the industry.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): How many jobs have been lost?

Mr. Patten: About 20 per cent. Of course, aspirations must go on rising and I share those aspirations, as does my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. As scientific understanding and environmental awareness develop, and as general living standards continue to rise for most of — though not all — our citizens we will have to apply ever-higher standards. We are not trying to measure our achievements in the water industry against one benchmark. The water authorities have been brought to a much stronger financial position

from which they can face the problems. Their corporate plans show that they recognise the problems and have the will to tackle them.

The order continues the Government's progress before privatisation, to which the Government remain committed, in discharging their responsibility to ensure that the water authorities operate in an effective and businesslike way.

It is a long time now since the water industry was the poor relation of local government, which it was for too long. The Government can rightly claim that we have created the conditions of sound finance and commercial flair which now, more than ever before, permeate most water authorities and reflect what their customers expect. That is why we intend to press the order home tonight.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. I remind the House that the debate must finish at 11.30 pm and the Front bench spokesmen are hoping to catch my eye at 11.20 pm.

10.51 pm

Mr. William O'Brien (Normanton): The debate has been initiated because of the impact of the Government's financial policy on water authorities' charges next year. Current signs are that the charges for most water authorities will increase by between 8 and 10 per cent., with the majority being at the 10 per cent. mark. That follows an increase in excess of 10 per cent. for the current year. Therefore, there is little comfort in what the Minister has offered tonight to water consumers throughout the length and breadth of Britain.

If there is one Minister in the Government who has his head in the sand, it is the Minister who is responsible for water charges. The Government's policies have meant high prices, well above the rate of inflation, and, in most cases, a reduction in services. If consumers had the choice, would they go for a rise in water charges in order to receive a higher level of services? We often hear that question posed in the water industry.

Mr. John Patten: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. O'Brien: The Minister was the first to say that this was a short debate, yet after two minutes he asks me to give way. I am afraid that I must refuse the Minister on this occasion. The Minister refused to give way to me once in Committee because he wanted an apology. I shall not give way to the Minister.

In Yorkshire, charges have been increased, yet we are still suffering from discoloured water, soil collapse and flooding. If the Minister comes to Yorkshire he will see how higher charges are reflected in the services provided for the people there. He did not mention Yorkshire.

It is politically impossible for the Government to rate-cap local authorities to fight inflation and then to increase charges to water consumers by an average of 10 per cent. It is also an unnecessary burden to increase charges for industry, particularly the big water users, such as the food processing, chemical, pharmaceuticals, textiles, brewing and paper industries. I believe it is an attack on job opportunities in the large water-consuming industries. The object of the 1983 reorganisation was to ensure that the water authorities were run as highly efficient businesses. The way in which the Minister has described the order tonight suggests that they are just turning water authorities into tax collectors because the order is nothing more than a tax increase on water charges.

I should like to raise the question of the water authorities opening their meetings to the public and the press. We are talking about water charge increases which will affect all water consumers, especially in Yorkshire, yet there is no opportunity for members of the public or consumers to try to find out how decisions are reached.

Earlier this month the Yorkshire water authority at a board meeting, revealed:

"the increase would have been nearly 2 per cent. higher if it had not been for two factors: the welcome relaxation by the Government of financial controls which permit more borrowing".

If to "permit more borrowing" is the criterion for reducing charges, why do the Government not allow that to continue? That is the Yorkshire water authority's suggestion to keep charges down.

On behalf of the Yorkshire water authority, I must say that if we are to be reasonable to consumers we should allow more borrowing to take place, as has been described by that authority, in order to keep prices down. I hope that we will reject the order.

10.56 pm

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): There are many defects in the argument that my hon. Friend the Minister put forward. If he had been listening at Question Time, he would have heard his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State say that he regarded borrowings not as debt but in the nature of an overhead. If that is the case, it is nonsense to talk about return on capital. The Minister cannot call it capital for one argument and for another call it overhead. He should make his mind up which it is, instead of trying to ride both horses or they will split him down the middle because they are going in different directions.

The Government are trying, we understand, to control inflation. Therefore, what possible reason can there be to bring in orders the effect of which is to increase the water rates by more than the rate of inflation? Water is the tool of the trade of many industries—for example, the paper industry. It must be remembered that retirement pensions increase only as function of the retail price index and, moreover, they are not subject to abatement, unlike rates. Those are two good reasons for keeping water charges below the rate of inflation and not allowing them to go above it.

The other major point I want to make is that the Department of the Environement is supposed to be a coherent Department of State. There are many reasons for believing that that is a false assumption. It is simply not coherent to have one Minister exhorting water authorities to spend immense sums of money on new sewerage works to process sewage, instead of what is politely known as macerating it and then releasing it into the sea—that may be commendable—and then to have a zero external financing limit imposed on the water authority that has the longest coastline of any per head of population and whose population increased by a tremendous factor in the summer—it has approximately on quarter of the tourist activity in Britain—when water flows are at a minimum.

The use of capital expenditure for the purpose of cleaning up the beaches is not compatible with the order against which the prayer has been laid. I shall be voting for the prayer because the order does not contain a

[Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop]

coherent and sensible policy and because it is not compatible with what the autumn statement has to say about inflation.

11 pm

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): This issue of water charges in Wales has been a contentious one for a long time and it has become more contentious in recent years because of the substantial increase in the cost of water under the Government's policies. Welsh water rate payers have to pay £4 million more a year in water rates as a result of a deliberate act of policy by the Government when they did away with the Water Equalisation Act 1977. There has been a historic high level of water charges in Wales, which for the most of the time have been at the top of the league table of charges in England and Wales, and in the past couple of years there have been forced increases in water charges arising from the requirement to have a set return on the capital base.

Water rates in Wales will increase next year between twice and three times the rate of inflation as a result of the order against which we are praying. The charge for water will increase by 6 per cent., 7 per cent. or 8 per cent. compared with the going rate of inflation, which is 3 per cent. That will hit those who can ill afford to pay such charges.

Why are we being forced to increase water charges in Wales in this way? Increased charges are being imposed to finance the capital expenditure programme, which I agree is necessary in Wales. I understand that the capital expenditure programme next year will include about £68 million for the Welsh water authority. A substantial part of the programme will be directed to improving beaches in Wales, and no one would dispute the need to improve their standard. We contend, however, that the cost of undertaking the necessary work should be borne by the taxpayer in general and not only by the ratepayer in Wales. The beaches of Wales are for the benefit of people from all parts of these islands and the cost of improving them should not be incurred only by water rate payers in Wales. The cost of cleaning the beaches of Wales should be met by Treasury grant instead of increasing the return on capital. The order will require a 1·95 per cent. return on capital base, which is higher than the average. I believe that the Minister said that the average is 1·875 per cent. As I have said, charges in Wales are already high.

The proposed increase will realise an additional £7·5 million a year. That is the increased profit that is required to be funded by Welsh water rate payers to finance the Government's back-door taxation. The logic of the Government's position suggests that there is a move towards privatisation. The Welsh water authority has a capital base of £1,600 million and if there were to be a reasonable return in financial terms on that base we would be looking for 10 per cent., which would be £160 million a year. The profit of the authority has been about £24 million a year, and that will increase to about £30 million as a result of the change that the Government propose. That is nothing like the return that will be required if the authority is to be privatised.

If there is to be privatisation, there will have to be a massive increase in the cost of water or the assets of the authority will have to be given away at about a fifth or a quarter of the cost of their construction. That would be a nonsensical public policy. The dogmatic privatisation which the Government insist on pursuing is the reason why Welsh water rate payers are being required to pay 6 per cent., 7 per cent. or 8 per cent. more for their water next year.

As I have said, the extra charge will hit home extremely hard. If the authority is privatised, the increased capital expenditure which is being justified by the Government will not be directed to capital expenditure. It will be given in the form of a dividend to those who have put money in. In other words, it is an excuse to say that we need to fund capital expenditure by increasing the return. The Government want the return to be high enough to be attractive to those who may put money in. There is no way in which privatisation of this basic public service can be justified, as the Government insist, and the poor water rate payer will have to bear the cost.

11.5 pm

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): I rise to congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on the way in which he has presented the Government's case, and to say that I hope that my hon. Friends will vote against the Opposition's prayer.

I very much welcome my hon. Friend's reaffirmation of the Government's commitment to the privatisation of the water industry. That privatisation is long overdue, and I hope that it will be included in one of the first Bills in the next Parliament. When that privatisation has been accomplished, it will no longer be necessary for us to debate such orders late at night. although reference has been made to the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, it is emphatically the case that the water industry is capable of responding to a new impetus and to the fresh ideas which will come from private ownership.

My hon. Friend the Minister is continuing with the Government's sensible economic policy in seeking a proper return on the water authorities' assets. There has been a slight modification of the policy. The return on assets sought in the order is slightly less than was envisaged two years ago. Nevertheless, requiring a higher and more appropriate return on assets moves the water authorities in the right direction.

There is one specific point that I wish to put to my hon. Friend the Minister, and I hope that he has had more success than I had when I held his responsibilities. It was my experience that the nine water authorities in England were extremely reluctant to dispose of land that was not required for operational purposes. There was a misunderstanding, or myth, that it was necessary for the water authority requiring a catchment area to own the freehold.

I hope that my hon. Friend will persevere strenuously and urgently with the policy of requiring the water authorities to dispose of land that is not required for operational purposes. Such a disposal of assets would diminish the cost to the customer and would affect the way in which my hon. Friend presents any further orders, if there are any. I urge on my hon. friend the truth of the proposition that it is possible to safeguard the purity of supply from a catchment area without the water authority owning the land involved.

I congratulate my hon. Friend, and I hope that the Opposition's prayer will be soundly defeated.

11.8 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): We will wholeheartedly support the prayer, because the Government have persisted in the same illogical economic policy and ignored the consumer.

It is illogical to say that over a very short period of time the borrowing necessary for the water industry must be paid off by the consumers of last year, this year and next year. That is not the way that public finance should work, and it is not the way that it works anywhere else. One should add to that, as the hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) said, the completely contradictory statement of Government policy that was adumbrated only hours ago by the Chancellor of the Exchequer when asking the House to approve his autumn statement. In chapter 1, "Economic prospects for 1987", the Chancellor makes it clear that the Government still regard the containment of inflation to about 3 per cent. as one of the cornerstones of their economic policy. Yet the Government persist—the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) started the policy when he was Minister with responsibility for the water industry — in telling the industry that it must repay money and make such charges as will inevitably cause the consumers to pay substantially more than the rate of inflation, which they regard as unacceptable. It is not acceptable in terms of economic logic or in terms of who should bear the cost burden of the water industry. Above all, it is not acceptable to the consumer.

The Minister referred to many points, some of which we do not disagree with — for example, the need for investment. There is clearly a substantial need for investment and greater efficiency. However, he did not explain that the policy will substantially increase the price of water for people in Tory-held constituencies in the Thames region and elsewhere. The Government must accept the responsibility for that.

The Minister knows that in October the chairman of the Thames water authority wrote to all hon. Members representing constituencies in the Thames water authority region — all 148 Members, the majority of whom are Conservatives, including the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for the water industry—stating that if the policy were pursued there would be an increase of about 10 per cent. in the forthcoming year. One high-ranking Government source—who appears unnamed at the relevant time — made it clear that that was an entirely unacceptable way for the chairman of the Thames water authority to behave and that he would not be reappointed.

It is unacceptable for someone who is appointed by the Government to run a quango to be criticised when he tries this year, for the third year running, to say that the authority does not want or need the increase. The authority does not regard the increase as reasonable or appropriate because it is doing perfectly well and should be left to its own devices.

It is unacceptable that, for the third year in a row, we have an order before us requiring a return on assets that has not been asked for by the authorities. The rate of return is higher than ever before. It increased from 1·4 per cent. three years ago to an average of 1·62 per cent. last year, and the average is 1·88 per cent. this year.

The debate will again reflect anger at the Government's failure to comprehend. They have chosen the wrong criteria for calculating the way in which historical and actual costs should be financed. They have neglected the fact that if they did not require the money to be paid back to the Treasury, it could be invested in infrastructure. They have also neglected the enormous environmental demands and requirements that proper investment could allow to proceed.

The Government have become hooked on an economic policy that is nonsense. They want to make the fatted calf ripe for slaughter when they privatise the industry. I do not believe that they will privatise it. If they put privatisation up front in their election shop window, their natural supporters will claim that privatising the water industry and the environment is unacceptable. In the same way this increase in water charges is unacceptable. It will remain unacceptable every time the Government try this con on the country. They could avoid it if they only had the guts to do so.

11.13 pm

Mr. Tony Speller (Devon, North): The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) made an interesting speech. It appears that the Liberal party has made a good economic case for privatisation. That is not the point that I seek to make. The test must be whether the order fulfils the wishes of the consumers—the users of water, the residents of the area. I must say to the Minister that, frankly, the order does not meet their wishes.

The water authorities are inevitably the least popular authorities of all unpopular bodies. That will always be the case as their responsibilities are so vast and their areas so huge. It is no accident that there is a triangle of colleagues in the Chamber representing constituencies in the South-West water authority region. We all suffer from old mains, over-developed rural areas, low pressure and everything that is costly and where improvement is inevitable. Therefore, anything that we allow our authorities to invest in the mains and the infrastructure must be welcome. I do not go as far as the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey because it is also inevitable that we must turn to the idea of privatisation to give the consumer that which he wishes to have.

I do not put that forward as an argument for voting against the order. My fear is, quite simply, that someone in the Department thought of an acceptable figure — 5 per cent. or 7 per cent.—about which people would not complain. I find that an unacceptable and unreasonable way of conducting matters.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) spoke about one area where the sewage is macerated before being put into the estuary of two most beautiful rivers, the Taw and the Torridge. Someone somewhere has to permit water authorities to spend their money on things that we must have, such as clean, pollution-free water.

I am entirely in favour of privatising what might be called a water company, but there is no way in which we can privatise and put on the meter the cost for coastal protection, prevention of urban and rural pollution and the riparian interests. We must think a great deal harder and a great deal further ahead before we bring any water body to the marketplace. I am not against the marketplace. I believe in it, and I was fascinated to hear the argument in favour of a market operation. However, I could never support an operation that meant saying to the business man or the farmer with a meter, "It is your

[Mr. Tony Speller]

job to pay for every bit of water pollution, recreation and coastal defence." That would be illogical, and we must not follow that road.

Having said that, I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister, who has given long and hard consideration, under some very hard pounding——

Mr. John Patten: And long pounding.

Mr. Speller: Indeed, and especially from the west country. That pounding will continue. It will be as the water breaking on the breakwater, until the ministerial breakwater gives way.

11.17 pm

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): The old-age pensioners and the low-paid workers who come to my surgery clutching their water bills from the Welsh water authority despair when those bills arrive in their post because they know that they will not obtain any help towards payment. That means a fall in their already poor standard of living. They live in an area of low income, high unemployment and rotten housing. The incredibly high water bills are yet another injustice perpetuated by this Government.

There is an abundance of water in Wales. Water charges and standards of service have been emotive and keenly debated issues in Wales for a long time. Customers of the water services in Wales have many reasons for feeling that they are at a disadvantage compared with people in many areas of England. The average water rates bill in Wales of £110 is the third highest in the country and £34 higher than in the Severn-Trent area, where much of the water comes from Welsh reservoirs. Indeed, more than 20,000 Welsh ratepayers have withheld payment of their water bills in protest at what they see as discrimination in water charges.

Two years ago, the Welsh Affairs Select Committee put forward important proposals to deal with water rates. The two key proposals—that there should be a system of partial equalisation of water rates and a water rates rebate system to ease the burden on Welsh water ratepayers—were rejected, of course, by this Government. The Secretary of State for Wales derided the idea of an equalisation system, saying that it could be achieved only if a national water authority for the United Kingdom was created with

"all the penalties in terms of inefficiency and lack of local sensitivity, which would probably be the price of such a large organisation."—[*Official Report, Welsh Grand Committee*, 21 March 1984; c. 11.]

What could be more insensitive to local feelings than the imposition of these higher water charges on the people of Wales which the Government are trying to enforce tonight?

The Government are proposing to hit the people of Wales again. They are ignoring the sense of grievance over the water issue. Since 1979 the overall increase in Welsh water rates has been 132 per cent. in cash and 40 per cent. in real terms. That is wholly unacceptable to the people of Wales. I assure the Government that they will make their displeasure known in no uncertain terms.

11.19 pm

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): The order lays down the return on assets for water authorities in England and Wales. The figures look modest, but with the arcane system of accountancy they constitute a considerable burden, as my hon. Friend the Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) made clear. The figure for Wales has risen from 1·45 per cent. in 1985-86 to 1·7 per cent. in 1986-87 and will rise to 1·95 per cent. in 1987-88.

The Government's policy towards the water industry has been spawned over a number of years. What was essentially a local government service has been taken over. By 1981 our water authorities were committed to current cost accounting, a system most unsuitable for that industry. Reservoirs and sewage installations are built to last a hundred years. Why should people living today bear the whole cost of installations that will serve people not yet born? These are essentially long-term investments and should be financed accordingly.

We know of the Government's obsession with the public sector borrowing requirement, but the fundamental reason for their approach is the pursuit of privatisation. Juicy profits make water installations a rosier prospect for the market place. Water is big business today. The 10 water authorities of England and Wales spend more than £2,000 million per year and employ more than 50,000 people. A great sell-off of those undertakings would certainly enrich the Government's coffers.

Meanwhile, consumers suffer. In Wales we have become accustomed to a standard seasonal announcement. The columns of our newspapers regularly blurt out the message, "Water to cost more next year", but many of the increases are entirely unnecessary. As my hon. Friend the Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) pointed out, there is a contradiction in the Government's policy. Water charges are based on rateable value. The Government are leaning on local authorities to keep rates down, but they are actively striving to drive water charges up. Water is a basic and essential commodity, and in Wales we have an abundant supply, yet further increases of up to 10 per cent. are expected in the new year. That is more than double the rate of inflation. It will increase the average Welsh water bill to £124 and make Welsh water the most expensive in the country. It is no wonder that water in Wales is an emotive subject.

The Government are responsible for that preposterous situation. The price of water is being driven up to absurd levels because of their policies. The Secretary of State for Wales sits in the Cabinet and allows these things to happen. A couple of days ago he announced that he would not be standing at the next general election, so he will be little more than a lame duck until then. His staying on is understandable, given the paucity of talent on the Tory Benches.

Yesterday, that most authoritative journal, the *Financial Times*, in an article by Peter Riddell, considered who would be the next Welsh Secretary.

Mr. John Patten: My hon. Friend the Member for Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones).

Mr. Hughes: The caption to the photograph said that the Secretary of State was "leaving the bridge uncrossed". The headline proclaimed:

"Tories scour Wales in the search for Edwards' successor."

The article ran in the form of an advertisement and said:

"WANTED: A Welsh-born Tory MP with some administrative and political talent and potential to become a Cabinet minister."

The article said that the existing Under-Secretaries of State were inadequate and that

"The other 10 MPs consist mainly of a mixture of those nearing the end of their careers, perpetual undistinguished backbenchers, the unpromotable and the inexperienced."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that we can get back to the prayer.

Mr. Hughes: What a party claiming to represent Wales! All I can say is that there is no problem for the Tory party, because after the next general election the Secretary of State for Wales will be my hon. Friend the Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones).

11.26 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Mark Robinson): It is a great pity that the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) chose the opportunity of what has otherwise been a serious debate to indulge in a personal attack on my right hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Edwards), and to have the discourtesy to do it when my right hon. Friend is not in the chamber to defend himself.

Mr. Roy Hughes: It was not an attack.

Mr. Robinson: My right hon. Friend has done a superb job as Secretary of State for Wales and will continue to do so as long as he is in this House.

Many Opposition Members, while extolling the virtues of increased investment in the water industry, failed to acknowledge that that can be achieved only in the context of authorities being efficient and effective. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) about the benefits that will be derived from water privatisation. I assure my hon. Friend that it remains our policy that water authorities should sell off land that is surplus to their requirements.

Privatisation will give the water industry freedom to operate in the capital markets and render the need for a debate such as this completely unnecessary. We have heard some alarmist and fictional figures for the likely rise in water charges, including charges in Wales. I am assured that Yorkshire Water charges will go up by only about 5·5 per cent., which I am sure is welcome news to the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien).

Mr. Boyes: Does that include inflation?

Mr. Robinson: Yes.

We expect charges to rise in a band of between 4·5 per cent. and 7 per cent. On the basis of my conversation with the chairman of the Welsh water authority, I expect its rise to be within that band rather than the alarmist 10 per cent. which the hon. Member for Newport, East mentioned. I do not know where he got that figure from. He is clearly not living in the real world.

Contrary to what the hon. Member for Newport, East said, we have improved the efficiency with which the water industry is run and provided the basis on which we have been able to improve the infrastructure through which water is provided. We have also set out, through such investment, to improve water quality.

The success of the Government's financial policy for the water authorities is clear. Investment has increased by more than 55 per cent., or about 35 per cent. in volume terms, after taking account of inflation in construction prices. At the same time, the Government have taken a grip on the legacy of water authority borrowing. Water authorities' operating costs have also been substantially reduced. There can be no turning back on this policy. Therefore, I commend the order to the House and urge hon. Members to vote against the prayer.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 110, Noes 160.

Division No. 46] **[11.30 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Foster, Derek
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Robertson, George
Rooker, J. W.
Rowlands, Ted
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
Wigley, Dafydd
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
Mr. Sean Hughes.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Benyon, William
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Cope, John
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dunn, Robert
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus

Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Hickmet, Richard
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Jackson, Robert
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Carol
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thurnham, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Francis Maude and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.

Private Bill Procedure

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That, in accordance with the resolution of 16th June in the last Session of Parliament, a Select Committee of seven Members be appointed to join with a Committee to be appointed by the Lords to examine the process of enacting Private Legislation and to consider whether:

(a) there are any matters of a kind at present dealt with by Private Bill which could more appropriately be dealt with some other way, taking account of the interests both of Promoters and other affected parties;

(b) any changes are desirable in Private Bill procedure; and

(c) any amendments are desirable to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1936 and the procedure thereunder;

and to consider whether any amendments are desirable to the Statutory Orders (Special Procedure) Act 1945.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records.

That three be the Quorum of the Committee.

That Mrs. Ann Clwyd, Mr. Terry Davis, Sir Anthony Grant, Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson, Mr. Albert McQuarrie, Mr. Roger Moate and Sir John Stradling Thomas be members of the Committee.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): This is debatable, is it not, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): No, it is after 10 o'clock. It is not debatable.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is a debatable motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: But it has not been exempted.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: No; therefore, I understand that it cannot proceed if hon. Members wish to debate it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is correct.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: I wish to debate it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is an objection. Further consideration what day? No day named.

SCOTTISH GRAND COMMITTEE

Ordered,

That, in the course of its consideration of the matter of Agriculture and Fishing in Scotland, the Scottish Grand Committee may meet in Edinburgh on Monday, 19th January 1987, at half-past Ten o'clock.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.),

That the draft Employment Protection (Variation of Limits) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 2nd December, be approved.

That the draft Unfair Dismissal (Increase of Limits of Basic and Special Awards) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 2nd December, be approved.

That the draft Unfair Dismissal (Increase of Compensation Limit) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 2nd December, be approved.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

Question agreed to

PUBLIC SUPPLY CONTRACTS

Ordered,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8034/86 on public supply contracts, and the Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum from Her

Majesty's Treasury dated 5th December; endorses the view that revisions to the earlier supplies Directives 77/62 and 80/767 are necessary in order to improve public purchasing opportunities throughout the Community; and welcomes the Government's endeavours to amend the proposals so as to reduce the administrative burden on purchasers and suppliers. —*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

Prisoners (Northern Ireland)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

11.42 pm

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): I very much welcome the opportunity to debate briefly the problem of those, especially young people, who are sentenced under the pleasure of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and those who are serving life sentences. This is an opportune time to consider the matter, because the nature of the problem is emphasised at this time of year. It is also important to discuss the matter because, in many ways, we are reviewing many of the provisions and terms of justice in the north of Ireland.

One cannot properly discuss the problem without considering the position of young people in Northern Ireland. They have lived their young lives against a background of unrest and violence. Indeed, an entire generation of young people in the north of Ireland have never known normality, have never known anything but violence and have been unable to adjust to the unrest. They are caught in the spiral of violence and they have lived through some very emotional periods.

Youngsters from both sections of the community—Nationalist and Unionist—whatever political opinions they have, have all lived through emotional and emotive times. They include the period after bloody Sunday, when 13 people were killed in Derry, when the Stormont Parliament was prorogued, after the deaths on hunger strike in the prisons. It has also happened because of the catharsis in the Unionist community. Young people have become the pawns in this spiral of violence. They have become the victims of the godfathers of violence, the hate-mongers, those who wish to incite people to violence. It is for that reason that I ask for a review of the procedure under which their sentences are reviewed, and that should be done in a spirit of compassion and humanity.

I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for the way in which he has approached the problem. I am not sure of the figures, but I believe that about 50 have been released under the review system since 1983, and 12 have been released this year. I ask him, at this time of the year, to take the opportunity substantially to increase that figure, because it is the key to many problems that we are not solving.

We are dealing with legislation that was framed in 1969, when this period of violence, lasting four times as long as the last war, could not have been foreseen. It is inadequate because it was not intended to cope with the problems with which it has to cope. Section 73(1) of the Children and Young Persons Act simply cannot deal adequately with the problems that face it. The period of conflict was not foreseen, and the Act was not drafted to cope with it. It was drafted to ensure two things. The first was that young people did not receive the same sentences as adults, who were in a position to make concious judgments about their decisions. Secondly, it was framed to try to ensure that young people did not serve life imprisonment.

Unfortunately, it has done the opposite. It has ensured that the young person receives the same sentence as the adult prisoner, and is reviewed under the same procedure, with one minor change. It ensures that young people are serving life sentences. I know that it is difficult to define a life sentence, but the same norm is being applied to

[Mr. Seamus Mallon]

young people as is applied to adults in the review of sentences. The same procedure and time scale are used, with one small difference of eight instead of 10 years. They are getting roughly the same lengths of sentence, with the added factor that in the case of a young person's sentence under the Secretary of State's pleasure, the sentence is indeterminate. That in itself creates problems that do not exist for the adult person who has been sentenced to life imprisonment.

I ask the Secretary of State to examine the basis of the legislation and the review procedure. We are reviewing the Emergency Provisions (Northern Ireland) Act, and we shall soon review the police complaints procedure. We shall be reviewing the legislation on public order. Why do we not have a review of this crucial legislation and procedure? I ask the Minister to consider not just adopting a piecemeal approach but repealing the legislation and replacing it with adequate, updated legislation that is capable of dealing humanely and compassionately with the problems as it is now, and not as it was envisaged in 1969. The fact that the term "the death penalty" was used in that legislation shows how outmoded it is.

I ask the Minister to reconsider the indeterminate length of the young offender's sentence. It has a tremendous psychological effect, not just on the prisoner but on his family and the community from which he comes. The Baker report drew attention to this problem. It referred to the

"case for compassion and the giving of hope of release at however distant a date."

However distant that date may be, it gives the prisoner, his family and everybody else who is concerned something to hang on to. Indeterminate sentences have a tremendous effect on prisoners. One of the saddest duties is to visit young people in prison who were caught up in violence at a very early age and swept along on an emotional tide, prompted by those who had lost not one minute of their own freedom. They say consistently, "If only I knew when I might be getting out."

There are other consequences. People, especially young people, become institutionalised very quickly. It centres on the despair of not knowing when they may once again experience freedom. They become alienated from the outside world and locked into a very introverted society, where they do not benefit from the good influences that they would experience outside prison. They see no future for themselves. They become disoriented from other influences and displaced in time—like something out of a Kafka novel. That is not a humane way in which to deal with young people who were sentenced before they reached the legal age for sentencing.

I know that the Minister of State is aware of the effect on the family and the community. Parents fear that they may not live to see the release of their son or their daughter. That nagging fear is with them day after day. They become bitter against society and against the process of law. Their bitterness starts to translate itself into what can be a very dangerous factor in the community. They look upon their sons and daughters as the forgotten tools of the manipulators of violence and believe that they are carrying the can for them. Their cases should be considered much more seriously. I do not suggest that the Minister is not considering them seriously. I know that he is, but he ought to be provided with the power to deal properly with them.

I do not think that there is a simple answer to the question, but I ask the Minister to consider two options. The legislation ought to be repealed, and the Government ought to consider replacing it with a maximum sentence for young people. I realise the dangers. There are obvious dangers connected with maximum sentences, but they would mean that young people had a date in mind from the beginning of their sentence. It would have to be accompanied by a review half way through the maximum sentence. Or perhaps there could be new guidelines—perhaps a judicial review, when evidence could be given. The details would have to be teased out, because dangers and problems accompany each of those lines of approach.

At present, the prisoner does not appear at any of the review board hearings, nor can he be represented at those hearings, when a competent person might put forward his case. He is unaware of the information that is presented to the board, he is provided with no details of it, and he is not advised of the reason for the refusal, if and when his case is reviewed. That is serious, because if the prisoner knew why there was a refusal, when the final review came he could re-examine his position with a lot more efficiency and accuracy. These review boards are held in camera and there is no accountability. That is surely wrong in a place where there is a crisis of confidence in the process of law. We must have accountability, and at present there is no accountability to the prisoner or to any body.

Those especially interested in the cases of young people should be given some role on behalf of the prisoner. As it is, the only role open to such people is to make representations. Beyond that they cannot go. As I said yesterday in relation to the judicial system, the greater the number of minds working on a problem, the better the chance of a proper resolution of that problem.

One of the conditions of a review, an obvious renunciation of association with paramilitary organisations or political organisations which are associated with paramilitary organisations, is an almost impossible condition for people in prison. It is a closed society and pressures are very strong. People feel isolated if they cannot cling to the one bulwark that they know. I know of the need to protect society and to ensure that people will not return to violence, but this condition should be re-examined, because the weight of pressure, especially on young people, during a long prison sentence is quite enormous. Indeed, the pressure is enormous for the ordinary life prisoner. We must seek for and find some way around that.

I am also worried about the dependability of the lower ranks of prison officers. Many of them are not properly trained and do not have the experience to make the type of judgment that is expected of them. I do not rule out the possibility of prejudice. In prison where people live closely together, there is almost a hothouse atmosphere and ordinary likes or dislikes start to come into play. A way must be found of getting round the problem of people who do not have basic training or expertise and a way must also be found to assess the attitudes of people employed in the prison system.

I conclude by making a plea to the Minister. As we approach the season of peace, and as the bells start to ring in a new year, I ask him to be generous and humane in his provision for parole and for the release of prisoners,

especially young people sentenced at the pleasure of the Secretary of State and people who have spent a long time in prison under a life sentence. I suggest to the Minister that the greatest enemy of peace in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere, is despair. He has an opportunity to foster hope by taking the type of action that I suggest, not as a gesture, but in the sure knowledge that such releases in themselves release a new spirit in the family and in the small community areas. That new spirit will expand and will have a tremendous influence.

I know that the most potent weapon against hatred and violence is compassion and benevolence. I have seen the effect of those things on communities that are regarded as very hardline. I know that substantial releases would be reciprocated 100-fold and would help us to continue with the task of creating peace in Northern Ireland, a peace based on humanity and compassion.

11.59 pm

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. Nicholas Scott): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) for raising this matter. As I respond to the points that he has made it will become clear that there is not a lot of difference between us. This Christmas, the home leave that we give to prisoners in Northern Ireland will be as generous as possible. We have a scheme that is unique within the United Kingdom, and, in organising that Christmas home leave scheme, we shall seek to be as responsive to the special role of the family, particularly in Northern Ireland, and the need to show that prisoners who fulfil the criteria for home leave are treated as generously as possible.

The hon. Gentleman has analysed the pressures on young people who were caught up in the troubles at the beginning of the 1970s. Many of them, either because they felt their community was under threat or because they were under physical or other threat to respond to the godfathers to perform on behalf of their community, now find themselves in prison while others have gone free and have not been made amenable to the law.

I want to see a prison administration, and an attitude towards those who are in prison for indeterminate sentences in particular, that is as liberal and humane as we can make it, as long as, at the back of our minds, we always have the importance of the safety of the public and, in so far as it is humanly possible, we are sure that those who are released from prison do not embark on a campaign of violence again and threaten the lives or safety of individuals outside.

The hon. Gentleman rightly set this matter against the background of other measures that we are taking, such as those relating to public order, the police complaints reforms and the emergency provisions legislation. I know that in a number of those areas he would have wanted us to go further and faster than the Government have felt able to do, but we are moving on those matters and the way in which we approach life sentence and the Secretary of State's pleasure cases is part of a process of seeking a balance between the safety of the public, on the one hand, and a proper treatment of those who are in prison, on the other.

The hon. Gentleman talked about the effect of indeterminate sentences on young people. He said—and I am sure that it is true in some cases—that some of them become institutionalised and suffer because of that. I must set against that, because it is an area that I take seriously, the considerable opportunities that exist for education in prison. Anybody who listened to the radio programme "Out of the Maze" a couple of weeks ago on the education system in Northern Ireland will remember that one young prisoner said that prison was the best thing that ever happened to him because he had been able to avail himself of the opportunity that it gave him to widen his horizons and educate himself about life in general. I am sure that he will not be involved in any violence when he is released.

I am not diminishing the impact of the indeterminate sentence on young prisoners; I am just saying that some may be institutionalised and some may suffer unduly because of it, but others will seize the opportunity that it offers and come out better able to cope with life outside.

It is worth while reminding ourselves why we have the sentence of detention during the Secretary of State's pleasure. It originates, as the hon. Gentleman said, from a time when capital punishment existed, to which young people were not subject. There are equivalent forms of that sentence in other parts of the United Kingdom and elsewhere. We in Northern Ireland cannot consider it alone, and I doubt whether we could move away from an indeterminate to a determinate sentence for somebody who has taken another person's life or been part of an operation that cost somebody his life.

The decision that has to be taken is not a judicial but an executive one. Could an individual, who has cost an innocent person his life, be freed unless one was sure that he would not embark on the same course again? That could not easily be put to a court, certainly not a court of first instance. I would be reluctant to go down the road, suggested by the hon. Gentleman, of judicial review, with a prisoner being present and legally represented, and with reasons being given for refusal. I take this procedure seriously.

I take the closest possible personal interest and try to be as liberal and humane as I can be without imposing any extra risk on the community. I have read carefully the document produced by the party of the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh and listened carefully to what he said tonight. However, I would take a lot of persuading to believe that we should move back into a judicial or executive area, in this difficult and sensitive territory. I believe that the Government's record is good in this area. I have tried to strike the best balance between the interests of prisoners and those of society outside.

The hon. Member asked about the numbers who have been involved in the procedure. Since the board was set up we have considered 360 cases. Some cases have been considered more than once, and I think that the figures that have appeared as a result of the process show that we have made positive progress. A total of 51 prisoners—22 life sentence prisoners and 29 young persons, Secretary of State's pleasure cases—have been given dates since the process started. As a matter of interest, 23 were Republican, 25 were Loyalist, and three did not fit easily into either category.

The prisoners are usually given a date about a year in advance of their release. I do not take a firm view whether a year should be absolute. In a recent case where a prisoner had an opportunity for employment immediately available to him, we took the view that he could be released in advance of a year. We may consider in future whether a

[Mr. Nicholas Scott]

prisoner would need as long as a year to prepare himself for re-entry into the wider world, especially when he has a clear entry into outside life.

In addition to the numbers I have mentioned — 51 with dates, 23 released — following the two most recent meetings of the Life Sentence Review Board — we have to consult the judges about these cases — another 15 prisoners are in the pipeline; that is, we are consulting the judiciary about their situation. Subject to the views of the judiciary, we may be able to give them dates. I believe that the figures show clear evidence of our desire to have a positive approach to the problem.

I know that there are some who say that we should go further and faster. I am particularly aware of the views of Father Faul, who believes that if we went much faster the impact of the releases on the community would be so dramatic that we could swiftly bring to an end the campaign of violence in Northern Ireland. I wish that I could go along with Father Faul, but I have some reservations about going that fast. However, I am aware of the impact that individual releases can have in the community. I have to try to get the balance right between the risk to the community, the benefits that can flow to individual prisoners and the community, and the climate for peace that we can get by a systematic consideration of the cases and by trying to treat them as liberally and sensibly as possible.

We have to be sure that a person who is sentenced to prison serves a period that is sufficient to meet the gravity of the offence that he or she has committed. We have to be sure that the prisoner will not repeat his offence or commit some other crime of violence if he is let out. We do not ask any prisoner to renounce his political beliefs. We have announced dates and released prisoners from inside the compounds and from segregated wings inside the Maze prison. We do not regard that as a total bar to setting a date for release. As I have said, a prisoner does not have to renounce his political views, but, where an indeterminate sentence is being served, we need to be satisfied that he will not repeat his offence outside.

In coming to a conclusion as to whether a prisoner will or will not commit another offence outside, factors that must be taken into account are the organisation to which he or she has some allegiance and the level of violence outside the prison. These factors must be weighed in the balance when considering the likelihood of an offence being committed. If the organisations that are committed to violence in the north of Ireland were to renounce violence as a way of achieving their political ends, that would obviously affect the judgment that I and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State have to make about the release of prisoners. If the threat of violence were removed, that would affect our judgment of the likelihood of prisoners being caught up again in a campaign of violence.

Mr. Mallon: I ask the Minister to consider the other side of the coin. I believe that many paramilitary organisations wish certain prisoners to remain in prison and do not want to see them out. They want to use them as a propaganda weapon. They have always used imprisonment as a propaganda weapon. The more that a possible increase in violence is made a factor, the more we play into the hands of those who want to keep prisoners in prison rather than see them released. They are a propaganda weapon when they are in prison — much more so than if they were released into society.

Mr. Scott: I take that point. We have embarked on the process that is under discussion because we want to be fair and responsive to the needs of those who are in prison and the way that they were caught up in the violence. I am not unaware that if we behave sensibly and responsively we could undermine the pressures that the paramilitary organisations put on those outside prison.

We consider especially carefully the cases of young prisoners who were young and vulnerable when they became involved in terrorist-type crimes. We shall always view their cases with considerable sympathy. I assure the House, and especially the hon. Gentleman, that I consider every individual's case, as does the Life Sentence Review Board, as carefully as possible at the appropriate interval in the light of all the information that is available. I know that often shadowy figures — they are called the godfathers — have not been made amenable to the law while many young prisoners have——

The Question have been proposed after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at twelve minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 18 December 1986

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Royal Assent

Mr. Speaker: I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified Her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Act 1986
2. Advance Petroleum Revenue Tax Act 1986
3. London Docklands Railway (City Extension) Act 1986
4. River Humber (Burcom Outfall) Act 1986
5. Mersey Docks and Harbour Act 1986
6. British Railways (No. 2) Act 1986

PRIVATE BUSINESS

COUNTY OF CLEVELAND BILL *[Lords]*
Read a Second time, and committed.

CITY OF LONDON (VARIOUS POWERS) *(By Order)*
Order for Third Reading read.
To be read the Third time upon Thursday 15 January 1987 at Seven o'clock.

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Thursday 15 January 1987.

Oral Answers to Questions

HOME DEPARTMENT

Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis

1. **Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis; and what was discussed.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): I met the Commissioner yesterday, when we discussed his strategy for next year.

Mr. Smith: Did the Home Secretary take the opportunity to commend the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on his commitment to include the issue of domestic violence—assault against women in their own homes—as one of the principal force goals for 1987? However, at the same time, did he take the opportunity to express his disappointment at the apparent lack of urgency that the Metropolitan police seem to have in following up the recommendations of their own working party on this issue, particularly the pilot project to establish police prosecutions as a third party in an area such as Hounslow? If not, will he do so and stress the urgency and importance of this issue?

Mr. Hurd: We discussed this issue. I welcome what the Commissioner has done to insert this in his strategy. It is a difficult matter for the police, as the hon. Gentleman will recognise. That is why, sometimes in the past, police forces have been hesitant about getting involved in it. We all understand the need for the police to be sensitive and active in dealing with this matter. When we discuss the strategy, and when the hon. Gentleman as a London Member discusses it, he can press home his points.

Mr. Wheeler: Does my right hon. Friend support the Commissioner in his 1987 theme of safety and the citizen? In thinking about that theme, does he congratulate the Commissioner on his determination to reduce racial attacks in London, to improve the prevention and detection of burglary, particularly through the neighbourhood watch schemes, and to concentrate on reducing the number of robberies in certain parts of London, where the problem is of great concern to the citizen?

Mr. Hurd: I agree with my hon. Friend on all those points. I hope that the Metropolitan police will be able successfully to recruit up to the increased establishments that I have given them so that they can meet those tasks. My hon. Friend will have noticed the increased emphasis that the Metropolitan police are giving to dealing with the problem of racial attacks, as I saw for myself in Tower Hamlets last week.

Mr. Tony Banks: Is the Home Secretary aware that the great majority of Londoners want to see the police dealing more effectively with street crime, with the theft of vehicles, with house burglary, with enforcing bus lanes——

Mr. Robert Atkins: Stealing silver.

Mr. Banks: The hon. Gentleman should watch what he is saying. He has a very loose tongue and a wild and silly mind.

Will the Home Secretary realise that such matters as the enforcement of bus lanes and illegal parking on yellow lines are of great concern to Londoners? They would much rather see the police looking after those aspects of law enforcement than being out at Wapping, making sure that scabs get through picket lines and that Murdoch's filthy newspapers get on to the streets of London.

Mr. Hurd: I am not sure about bus lanes, but the hon. Gentleman's point about the futility of tying down so many police at Wapping is right, as I saw for myself last week. I hope that the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends will use their influence to ensure that, whatever course this dispute between Mr. Murdoch and his employees takes, it does not continue to force the deployment of so many hundreds of policemen at Wapping.

Mr. Dykes: Will my right hon. Friend during those discussions with the Commissioner talk also about the growing menace of violence in shops?

Mr. Hurd: Yes. That is important. It is one of the themes of our standing conference on crime prevention and one on which I keep in close touch with Baroness Phillips and all those concerned.

Mr. Dubs: Is the Home Secretary aware that the annual crime rate in London is now 200,000 above the 1978 rate when Labour was in office, that that represents an increase of 35 per cent., and that, on average, two London families in five will have among their numbers a victim of crime during the present year? Does the right hon. Gentleman not realise, therefore, that Londoners are contemptuous of the Government's claims that they are doing something about law and order in the capital?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends make no mileage with that kind of point, and I shall tell them why. They try occasionally to clamber aboard our policies—for example, on crime prevention and victim support—but, on the whole, people in London associate them with those boroughs in London the Labour leaders of which concentrate on undermining and abusing the police.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Will my right hon. Friend consider with the Commissioner the policing of Waltham Abbey, where regular fights between youthful gangs now aflict that formerly peaceful town? Is it not the case that there are no more police on the streets now than there were in the 1920s? Is my right hon. Friend satisfied with the strength and the establishment of the Metropolitan police?

Mr. Hurd: I am not satisfied with the Metropolitan police strength, because they are 600 below the establishment which I have authorised. One of their main tasks in the coming year is to recruit and keep the officers necessary to reach the increased establishment which I have set. They are going all out to do that. The more the Metropolitan police can do that, the more police officers there will be, particularly in the outer London boroughs, which I readily recognise suffer from the inevitable, and right, concentration which the Commissioner has decided to deal with some other problems in the more acute areas.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

2. **Miss Maynard** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has anything to add to his Department's earlier statements regarding the formula used for the Griess test carried out by Dr. Frank Skuse in the case of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings; and if he will make a statement.

3. **Mr. Corbyn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) of 20 November, *Official Report*, column *288*, what information he has regarding evidence dating from 1975 that the strength of the caustic soda solution used by Dr. Frank Skuse to test the men subsequently convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings for nitro-glycerine was 1 per cent.; and if he will make a statement.

4. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedure is used by his Department's forensic scientists to record details of tests carried out in criminal cases.

6. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what meetings *(a)* he, and *(b)* his officials have had with Dr. Frank Skuse since his retirement, to discuss Dr. Skuse's role in the case of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

11. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions the director of his Department's laboratory at Chorley has had on the case of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): As part of our review of this case we arranged for a re-appraisal of the Griess test to be undertaken by the Aldermaston forensic science laboratory. It was not clear from the papers what strength of caustic soda solution Dr. Skuse used and whether or not he used ethanol. I understand that the practice is for observations, tests, results and conclusions to be recorded, but that there was no reference to these two points in the notes which Dr. Skuse made in this case.

We have sought written and oral clarification from Dr. Skuse about his method. In two telephone conservations in January 1986, with the controller of the forensic science service and the present director of the Chorley laboratory, Dr. Skuse said that he had used a 0·1 per cent. strength solution of caustic soda and that he thought that he had not used ethanol. The belief that he had used a 0·1 per cent. solution was supported by a guidance note which Dr. Skuse had written, which referred to the use of a solution of this strength, and which he circulated in January or February 1975.

It appeared therefore that the then director of the Chorley forensic science laboratory had been in error in informing Mr. Baldock in May 1985 that Dr. Skuse had used a 1 per cent. solution.

However, Dr. Black, who gave evidence at the trial, has recently said that his recollection is that Dr. Skuse indicated to him in May 1975 that the solution strength was 1 per cent. The then director of the Chorley forensic science laboratory has also said that the information that he gave to Mr. Baldock was based on information given to him by Dr. Skuse.

The Aldermaston re-appraisal of the Griess test made allowance for these uncertainties by conducting tests using differing strengths of caustic soda solution with and without the use of ethanol.

My right hon. Friend is continuing to consider the various representations made to him, including the material submitted by my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) following the "World in Action" programme on 1 December. He intends to reach a decision shortly.

Miss Maynard: Will the Minister confirm that the retirement of Dr. Skuse at the age of 50 was far from voluntary and that he was sacked on the grounds of "limited effectiveness"? Is not this matter being hushed up to avoid a scandal?

Mr. Mellor: No. I utterly reject any suggestion that this matter has been hushed up. Full disclosures have been made of such facts as we are able to make prior to my right hon. Friend reaching his decision. In relation to the position of Dr. Skuse, it is right—and we have always made this clear—that he was retired on grounds of limited efficiency. However, it must be said that that was limited efficiency at the time that he was retired, not limited efficiency in 1975.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the Minister confirm that in May 1985, his office believed that the records at Chorley were accurate, but in September 1986, in a letter to the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), the

Minister said that there was some doubt about the accuracy of those records? Does he believe that that warrants an inquiry into what is happening in the Chorley laboratory? Does he think that someone in the laboratory is being "economical with the truth" about the evidence of those tests?

Mr. Mellor: The full investigations that have been made at the laboratory have certainly revealed matters that are a cause for concern about the record keeping in this case. The adequacy of those records and the consistency or otherwise of some of the matters set out therein, is a prime point that my right hon. Friend is considering in the context of further action to be taken in this case. Many changes have taken place since 1975 in the forensic science service in the manner in which these tests are carried out and recorded. We are satisfied with the efficiency of the forensic science service in those respects at present.

Ms. Clare Short: While we are pleased that the Minister will review the procedures at Chorley—it is shocking that written records were not kept in such a crucial case—does he accept that the major concern is the six men involved, who received 21 life sentences for an offence which they probably did not commit? Will the Minister give us an assurance today that if there is any doubt he will take the percentage that is most beneficial to those men, particularly given that Dr. Black's records from the time—the one man who had a record—show that it was a 1 per cent. solution?

Mr. Mellor: Of course, I give the hon. Lady the assurance that these matters are being considered seriously. Anything that tends to suggest that there is new evidence or new considerations of substance that were not before the court in 1975, and which cast doubt on the safety of the conviction, would provide a basis for my right hon. Friend to refer the matter back to the Court of Appeal. My right hon. Friend has a difficult decision to make. Information is still coming in and, indeed, earlier this week we received a full statement of an interview that the police had with Mr. Clarke. My right hon. Friend will consider the papers carefully and personally over the next few weeks and he intends and hopes to announce his conclusions early in the new year.

Mr. Madden: Will the Minister confirm that the trial judge placed great emphasis and importance on the forensic evidence and the confessions? Will he further confirm that the forensic evidence and confessions have been found to be fundamentally flawed? In the name of humanity and justice, as those men now face their 12th Christmas and new year in prison, will he take this opportunity to say that the Government have decided to refer the case to the Court of Appeal so that all the matters can be looked at afresh?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Gentleman has plainly reached his own conclusions about the matter. It is not for me to join him in a rush to judgment on these issues. It is for us to determine, as I have already said, whether there is new evidence or considerations that entitle others, whose task it is within the criminal justice system, to consider whether matters have proceeded properly and to re-examine those matters. That is what we are doing. I must tell the hon. Gentleman, as I told other hon. Members last month, that is not the least bit reassuring that some hon. Members seem to believe that we in this House, and not the court, should reach conclusions about guilt or innocence. It is a matter for the courts.

Mr. Skinner: The Government's representatives are not much good when they come under cross-examination of one kind or another, are they? Is it not a fact that Dr. Frank Skuse, who represented the Government, was about as convincing as Sir Robert Armstrong was in Australia? Does the Minister recall another forensic scientist, Dr. Clift, whose name was bandied about this building for about three years, until eventually a Tory Minister had to recognise that the campaign against Dr. Clift's forensic evidence would result in some people being released from gaol? Why does the Minister not acknowledge that fact now instead of engaging in a cover-up?

Mr. Mellor: As usual, the hon. Gentleman throws allegations around. I regret that he feels it necessary to turn every issue into a partisan one. In so far as Dr. Skuse was representing any Government when he gave evidence at the trial, it was a Labour Government.

Mr. Richard Shepherd: Why is it that since the resignation of Dr. Skuse the Home Office has not questioned him directly on his methodology? He says that he wants to make available all the information that he has, that the case notes are full, that as recently as January they were in the possession of Chorley and that they would show the methods and detail he used in the application on that night in November 1974.

Mr. Mellor: Repeated attempts have been made to get full explanations from Dr. Skuse, but they have not been successful. I can give my hon. Friend chapter and verse about that.

Mr. Robert Atkins: Whatever the rights and wrongs of the case, does my hon. Friend agree that it would be invidious for all the staff who work at the forensic laboratory at Chorley, where some of my constituents are employed, to be tarred with the brush, as the Opposition seem to be doing, that somehow everything is wrong at Chorley and the staff do not do a remarkably good job on behalf of those who need their advice?

Mr. Mellor: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The willingness of some Opposition Members to traduce a whole group of people because of the alleged inadequacies of one is hardly reassuring for their reputation on maintaining law and order.

Mr. Alton: Given the Minister's admission about the lack of co-operation, why has he not taken steps to have the notebooks and case records impounded and made available to the lawyers representing those who are in gaol? How is it possible for a scientist to be almost certain about the formula that he used?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Gentleman is labouring under a misapprehension. The notebooks and other articles are available and are forming part of the re-examination that is taking place.

Mr. Alton: Will the Minister make the papers available now?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Gentleman should listen to my answer instead of asking further questions from a sedentary position. If my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary decides to refer the matter to the Court of

Appeal, any material relevant to the appeal and its proper prosecution will be made available. That is the situation and that is how it has always been.

Crime Prevention

5. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further proposals he has to reduce the incidence of crime.

Mr. Hurd: The latest figure for police strengths in England and Wales is a record of 121,841. Spending on the police in real terms has increased by about 50 per cent. since 1978-79. Further expansion is under way. Crime is best reduced by involving all those who can help in its prevention. At the standing conference on crime prevention last month we gave new impetus to our plans, which include, strengthening crime prevention as an element within the policies of all Government Departments, stimulating further practical local activities, such as the five local projects already in place, encouraging the private sector to join more fully in crime prevention, and developing measures to prevent crime among children and young people.

Mr. Boyes: Is the Home Secretary aware that businesses and householders in my constituency are becoming increasingly insecure because of the ever-growing incidence of theft and robbery? Because of the lack of Government action my constituents are becoming increasingly worried and frightened. If the Home Secretary does not understand that, I invite him to come to my constituency and meet representatives of the many groups who have been to see me over the past few weeks. My constituents think that the Government do not care.

Mr. Hurd: Obviously, there is anxiety about the growing crime figures, as there has been for many years. As people understand the depth and width of our policies and the greatly increased resources that we are providing, whether for crime prevention, victim support, the police or the criminal justice system, they will see that our record compares admirably with anything that has gone before.

Mr. Hind: During the course of his busy day, will my right hon. Friend take the opportunity to consider the reports about the case of Michael Hicks, an official of SOGAT '82, who was convicted at Southwark Crown court last week of an offence of actual bodily harm at the Wapping printing plant? Will my right hon. Friend also note that Mr. Hicks was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment? Yesterday, however, the national executive of the Labour party voted, unanimously, to call for his release. Will my right hon. Friend give us an undertaking that, during the course of his administration, those who commit offences of violence, whether for political or other reasons, will be treated in exactly the same way?

Mr. Hurd: I was amazed to see the report about the Labour party that my hon. Friend mentions, and I hope that the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) will throw some light on it. Is it that the Labour party has evidence that suggests that this conviction of Mr. Hicks was unsafe, or is it that it believes that, as an office bearer in a trade union, he is entitled to assault police officers and get away with it?

Mr. Kaufman: With regard to the incidence of crime, is the Home Secretary aware——

Mr. Peter Bruinvels: Crime? The hon. Gentleman does not condemn it.

Mr. Kaufman: Yes, crime which Conservative Members do not care about.

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, in Britain, in the week between now and Christmas there will be 640 robberies, 2,500 crimes of violence against the person, 2,700 frauds, 12,000 acts of criminal damage, 19,000 burglaries, 42,500 thefts and 80,000 crimes of all kinds. Is it surprising that 83 per cent. [HON. MEMBERS: "Too long."] Yes, the Government's criminal record is too long. Is it surprising that, in the latest opinion polls, 83 per cent. of the electorate say that the Government have broken their promises on law and order?

Mr. Hurd: Every opinion poll on this matter that I have seen gives the public verdict that our policies on this matter are, by a long stretch, more credible than those of the Labour party. This afternoon, we can understand why the right hon. Gentleman produces his familiar litany and why, as a spokesman of a party that claims to be interested in law and order, he has completely failed to comment on or repudiate the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind). Until he does so, he loses all credibility.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: Will my right hon. Friend not allow the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) to get away from the point about the NEC's condemnation of a judge and jury when they found guilty a man who had violently assaulted a member of the Metropolitan police? Will my right hon. Friend say how it helps in the fight against crime, which ought to concern all parties, when the Leader of the Opposition lends his name to an attack on a court of law because it has found guilty a man who violently attacked a police officer of the Metropolitan police?

Mr. Hurd: It is not a matter of letting the right hon. Gentleman to get away from the point; he has not got on to it yet, though it is absolutely relevant to his pretensions and to his questions on this matter. As my hon. Friend says, the pursuit and prevention of crime must be a matter for the whole community and all political parties. The Labour party cannot be allowed to pick and choose between offences it condemns and those from which it thinks its friends should be exempt.

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

8. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for stimulating the further development of neighbourhood watch schemes.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): There are already some 17,500 neighbourhood watch schemes in England and Wales. This clearly demonstrates the public's willingness to be involved in positive crime prevention activity. The first national neighbourhood watch conference took place on 8 December, which was also the day on which we launched a new quarterly magazine *Good Neighbour*. Together, these will help to disseminate ideas, good practice and projects to encourage further development of neighbourhood watch.

Mr. Thompson: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply and for the support that his Department is giving to home

watch schemes in Norfolk, especially in my constituency, where good progress is being made. This must be one of the good, practical ways in which to deal with crime, especially where elderly people who feel under threat are concerned. Can my hon. Friend find ways in which to increase further liaison between police officers and the community and to publicise these matters further, especially in East Anglia, through the Magpies programme?

Mr. Hogg: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his support. During the past six months, 10 new schemes became operational in his area and five more are setting up. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend about communication. That is why we held the standing conference and why we have the new magazine.

Mr. Janner: Although I welcome neighbourhood watch schemes, does the Minister recognise that they are no substitute whatever for having enough policemen on the beat, and that people in my constituency are afraid to go out at night because of what can happen to them on the street and because they do not want to leave their homes empty? When will the Minister provide enough policemen on the beat and stop refusing the Leicestershire police force the policemen it requires and has asked for so that it can be properly staffed?

Mr. Hogg: That is a singularly unattractive question from a member of the Labour party.

Mr. Janner: It is just that the Minister does not like it.

Mr. Hogg: Since 1979, manpower available to the police service has increased by about 15,000. Since 1979, we have spent more than 38 per cent. more in real terms on the police. I remind the House that when the Labour party was in power the police were grossly underpaid and left the force in droves.

Mr. Watts: Is my hon. Friend aware that the recent increase in the approved establishment of the Thames Valley police is extremely welcome as it provides an opportunity for the further development of community watch schemes and other measures to combat crime? Is my hon. Friend further aware that the antics at Greenham Common, supported by the Labour party to the hilt, are a serious drain on the manpower available to the force and divert its efforts away from the detection of crime and the arrest of criminals?

Mr. Hogg: I welcome what my hon. Friend has said. I am grateful to him and other Conservative colleagues for the way in which they have put the arguments in support of the Thames Valley application for an increase in establishment, which we have been able to meet. My hon. Friend has suggested that the demands of Greenham Common undermine the capacity of the Thames Valley police to respond. Who supports the people who are demonstrating at Greenham Common? I will tell you, Mr. Speaker. The Labour party supports Greenham Common demonstrators.

Mr. Soley: I wonder whether the Minister would like to co-operate with me in setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme in the House to find out how many times the Secretary of State for the Environment has broken the law. What will he do, that is effective, about crime prevention, over and above the cheap option of neighbourhood watch? We all know that it is the cuts in caretaker provision and other forms of crime prevention that have pushed the crime rate up and that it is the Government who have done that with the full co-operation of the Secretary of State for the Environment, who has a lot to answer for, besides his breaches of the law.

Mr. Hogg: I shall be very pleased to set up a neighbourhood watch scheme in the House, because we would then begin to identify which Labour Members supported the demonstrations at Grunwick, which Labour Members stand on the Wapping picket lines and which Labour Members persistently encourage those who riot and abuse the police. We should certainly have a neighbourhood watch scheme, and we know who will be found out.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Major Hugh Thornburn of Alderley Edge in my constituency has been in the forefront of the development of neighbourhood watch schemes. Does my hon. Friend, who clearly supports neighbourhood watch schemes, accept that an additional modest resource is necessary if the co-operation of the police with the development of neighbourhood watch is to exploit the maximum co-operation of ordinary lay men and women in society in combating crime?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend makes a valuable point, but I re-emphasise to the House that, since 1979, this Government have increased spending on the police service by more than 38 per cent. in real terms. It is for chief constables to determine how they allocate their expenditure within their budgets.

Crime (Costs)

9. **Mr. Norman Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department has ever attempted to estimate the total economic cost of crime; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: No, Sir. We know the cost of the criminal justice system and the value of goods stolen in the course of certain types of crimes, but an estimate of the total costs of crime could not readily be made.

Mr. Atkinson: Does the Minister agree that many authorities, and some in the Home Office, subscribe to the view that crime costs about £16 billion to £17 billion a year? That being the case, does the Minister agree that the majority of preventable crime takes place during the hours of darkness? If so, will he agree to the funding of a limited number of experimental control schemes using artificial lighting for the purpose of demonstrating that lighting engineers have part of the remedy for preventable crime during the hours of darkness?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Gentleman has made a good point. We are considering ways of tackling crime by trying to prevent it. He knows that a range of initiatives are going forward in different parts of the country, drawing on money under the urban programme, and on manpower from the MSC, which seek to engage many different groups. I shall certainly take the hon. Gentleman's point seriously.

Mr. Corbett: May I invite the Minister to think again about this issue, because, clearly, if some sort of sensible estimate could be made, it would bring home to all the importance of this matter? Will the Minister think about the cost of fear? As my hon. and learned Friend the

Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) mentioned, the fear that keeps people locked in their homes influences jobs and revenue-generating activities. Will the Minister think again about that?

Mr. Mellor: If I may say so again, the points that the hon. Gentleman has made are important and do not need to be used as a prop to argue in favour of getting some sort of inevitable guesstimate. The points made about the fear of crime are particularly significant because, unquestionably, as the British crime survey discovered, the fear of crime is an evil in itself and needs to be tackled. As has been said, many people allow themselves to be locked up in their homes when there is no good reason for that. Part of the reason why we are returning so many police officers to the beat is to try to stimulate confidence in neighbourhoods where that is entirely appropriate.

Justices' Clerks

10. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about his decision not to propose changes in the qualifications provided for by the Justices Clerks (Qualifications of Assistants) Rules 1979.

Mr. Mellor: Representations have been made orally on behalf of the Justices' Clerks Society. No others have been received.

Mr. Maclennan: Why has the Minister set his face against the requirement that all court clerks in the magistrates' courts should have professional qualifications? In view of the increasing complexity of the law, the volume of work in the magistrates' courts and the extension of legal aid, is not the quality of advice offered of very high importance? Is the Minister aware that the Law Society, the Bar Council and the Magistrates Association support this reform? Why is he against it?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Gentleman is right. The quality of advice tendered to justices in magistrates' courts is important. Indeed, as the hon. Gentleman would, in all fairness, wish to admit, a number of those who may not be qualified as barristers or solicitors but who hold diplomas in magisterial law have been offering extremely good advice to magistrates' courts up and down the country for many years. Indeed, the magistrates' court system in this country runs with more than two thirds of the clerks so qualified. Only one third are legally qualified. We do not believe that the tremendous efforts and the large resources that would be needed to move to a fully professional justices clerks' profession could be justified at this time against so many competing priorities.

Local Government Reform (Voluntary Groups)

12. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from voluntary groups concerning problems encountered following the abolition of the metropolitan local authorities.

Mr. Mellor: None, but we are keeping in touch with developments as they may affect the funding of voluntary groups in the areas concerned.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Minister realise that there is increasing concern among voluntary bodies in the six former metropolitan counties and in London, which are partly funded by the Department, and which are at risk of having their buildings transferred over their heads in a way that will substantially increase their rents, rates and other running costs? At the end of the day, there is no net advantage to the Exchequer. Will the Minister hold discussions with the relevant residuary bodies in order to protect worthwhile voluntary organisations from the unnecessary and unjustified increases that are believed to be in the pipeline?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Gentleman has made a cogent case, as I would expect of him, and I shall look carefully at what he has said.

Mr. Favell: Given the furore when the metropolitan counties were abolished, what conclusion does my hon. Friend draw from the fact that he has received no representations whatever from voluntary bodies expressing concern about what has happened since?

Mr. Mellor: I can only speak from a Greater London perspective, but the entirely spurious ratepayer-funded GLC campaign, which tried to instil in Londoners the belief that civilised life in London would come to an end with the GLC's demise, has been shown to have been totally and utterly without merit.

Mr. Ashley: Is the Minister aware that there is abundant evidence that many voluntary organisations will be badly hit unless he takes action very quickly?

Mr. Mellor: Action is being taken. The Government have made substantial sums of money available in order to allow transitional support for such bodies, but it was always anticipated that some voluntary bodies that were funded by organisations such as the GLC on an entirely reckless basis, right at the end of their mandate, and in a way calculated to try to embarrass successor authorities, would not continue to be so funded. That was inevitable and is not necessarily at all undesirable.

Subversion

13. **Dr. McDonald** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to amend the law so as to provide for a statutory definition of subversion.

Mr. Hurd: No, Sir.

Dr. McDonald: If the Home Secretary does not intend to amend the law, will he at least confirm that subversion means unlawful activity that is directed at the overthrow of a parliamentary Government and does not mean views that are unacceptable to a particular Government?

Mr. Hurd: The definition was given for the first time by the Minister of State in the previous Labour Government, Lord Harris, on 26 February 1975. That definition of subversion is

"activities . . . which threaten the safety or wellbeing of the State, and which are intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means." — [*Official Report, House of Lords*, 26 February 1975; Vol. 357, c. *947*.]

Mr. Soames: Does subversion include the undermining of the Crown's case in a court overseas?

Mr. Hurd: I think that I had better rely on the text that I have read out, which has held since 1975.

Mr. Heffer: Has the right hon. Gentleman yet had a chance to read Mr. Hugo Young's comments in *The*

Guardian today, suggesting that people in the Conservative party, including the Prime Minister and just about every member of the Cabinet, believe that members of the Labour party are subversive—*[Interruption.]*—agents for the Soviet Union and traitors? Why do Conservative Members not cheer, as that is exactly what they think? Is it not about time that they recognised what every organisation in Europe recognises, which is that the Socialist movement in Britain is rooted in the British people and is less subversive than are Conservative Members, because they want to sell our country and our people to the United States of America?

Mr. Hurd: I have read the article, and I thought it was a wild article by a usually reasonable journalist. I am not surprised that it has inflamed the hon. Gentleman.

Dangerous Weapons

14. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will take steps to seek to ban or further restrict the sale of dangerous weapons.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Firearms Act 1968 already lays down strict controls on the possession and use of firearms and we have no plans at present to amend it. With regard to other weapons, we announced on 3 December that we intend to issue guidelines to traders urging that crossbows should not be sold to persons under 17. We are in favour of a statutory prohibition of this kind and the Bill which my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) has introduced will seek to do this. We keep the whole subject under active review.

Mr. Canavan: Is it not obscene that some unscrupulous traders sell to children, as Christmas presents, dangerous, illegal weapons such as flick knives, spiked gloves and Chinese death stars? Is it not about time that the Government took firm action to outlaw such a barbaric practice, which is exploiting children and encouraging violence in the streets?

Mr. Hogg: I imagine that the hon. Gentleman will be supporting the Bill on crossbows, and I hope that he will be applauding the guidance that the Government have given about the sale of martial arts equipment and crossbows to young people.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Bennett: Will the Prime Minister join me in congratulating Henry Simon Ltd. of Stockport on winning a contract for a new flour mill in China, worth £1·8 million? Is it not distressing that city slickers have now set up a company, Valuedale, to asset-strip the Simon group? Is she not ashamed of the fact that she has created the greed society, and will she apologise to the British people?

The Prime Minister: I am always willing to congratulate firms which have gained export contracts and wish them well. If the hon. Gentleman has any comment about any particular firm, he must make it to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Could my right hon. Friend find a moment today to reflect on the problem of public finance and Opposition parties, and in particular on the fact that the Liberal party, in criticising the way that hon. Members have voted in certain Divisions, appears unable to discover the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Conwy (Mr. Roberts) is a member of the Government, so it would be normal for him to vote with the Government?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend made his point well, and grafted it on to a suitable question.

Q2. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Ashley: Is the Prime Minister aware that many hon. Members will welcome the decision by the Secretary of State for Defence to repeal section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act, thus giving the disabled service men of today and tomorrow the right to sue for adequate compensation? Is she further aware that there can be no justification for the Secretary of State's mean-minded attempts to deny the same righs to the disabled service men who served in the atom tests of yesterday? Will the Prime Minister please intervene?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful for what the right hon. Gentleman said in the first part of his question. With regard to the latter part, it is either the subject of a case or under consideration.

Mr. Cormack: Will my right hon. Friend take a little time this afternoon to invite the Leader of the Opposition to her room for a bit of Christmas cheer? Will she then, on Privy Council terms, explain to him that there is no point in spending money on an early warning system unless we are prepared for the warning?

The Prime Minister: Once again, my hon. Friend makes his own point very effectively in his question.

Mr. Merlyn Rees: Despite the humour in the House when my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) asked a question, will the Prime Minister read carefully the article by Hugo Young that appeared today in *The Guardian*? He states that a former Tory Cabinet Minister told him that he was provided with documents that contained security information about prominent members of the Labour party and that he was told by the same Cabinet Minister that he hoped that "Denis Healey"—my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East, whom I first met on the beaches at Anzio—*[Interruption.]* That is not a laughing matter. He said he was told that the Minister hoped my right hon. Friend would be found dead on the pavement in the morning, killed by an unauthorised group. Fantastic as it sounds, because of what we have learnt about the man Wright, whom I dislike as much as the Prime Minister—and I hope that he does badly in Australia—when the case is over, Wright ought to be brought to account, with others,

so that we can find out whether there is anything in this article, or whether it is pure moonshine. Is it pure moonshine?

The Prime Minister: As the right hon. Gentleman knows, I am not responsible for what is written in press articles. He knows full well that I can make no comment with regard to the conduct of the Wright case.

Mr. Sims: Will my right hon. Friend find time today to congratulate the Post Office on the efficient manner in which, at the busiest time of the year, it handled and delivered 5 million letters of acceptance to British Gas shareholders? Will she also take the opportunity to remind those 5 million shareholders and their relatives of what would happen to their shareholdings if Labour came to power?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I gladly join my hon. Friend in congratulating the Post Office on the efficiency with which it dealt with those 5 million letters. I remind the shareholders, or potential shareholders, that if the Labour party came to power they would never have the opportunity they have now and that they might be deprived of their right to equity shareholding.

Q3. **Mr. Rogers** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Rogers: I am sure the Prime Minister is aware that in my constituency and in the constituency of every hon. Member there are memorials to those who have given their lives for this country. I am also sure the right hon. Lady agrees that it is appropriate that at this time we should remember them and their families. Does the right hon. Lady also agree that patriotism and loyalty do not belong to any particular group or class or to any particular party?

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware, the hon. Gentleman has said nothing with which I disagree.

Mr. Churchill: Will my right hon. Friend explain to the CND fanatics on the Opposition Benches, in particular to the Leader of the Opposition, that in the nuclear age there is no such thing as a secure, non-nuclear defence? Is it not clear that, although they may try to conceal the fact from the British electorate, their only response, in the event of a nuclear threat or nuclear attack, would be the capitulation of this island to the gaolers of the nations of eastern Europe and to the butchers of the Afghans?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I believe that an effective defence needs an effective nuclear deterrent. Without it we could not fight the potential aggressor who had a nuclear deterrent. I note what my hon. Friend said about Afghanistan, which has been occupied for just about seven years—for longer than the whole of the last war.

Q4. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Maclennan: Has the Prime Minister read the latest criminal statistics, which show that, despite the determined efforts of the police to clear up crime, the number of crimes not being cleared up is increasing at a greater rate than before? Has she noticed that the offence of robbery and serious offences of violence against the person increased last year by more than 10 per cent? Because the Criminal Justice Bill will do nothing to reverse these alarming trends, what proposals has the Prime Minister in mind to halt this inexorable rise in crime?

The Prime Minister: Unfortunately, crime has been rising steadily for a number of years. The hon. Gentleman must be pleased that the Government have put more and more into the police service in personnel and in equipment. He will also be pleased that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has a vigorous campaign for crime prevention. The hon. Gentleman must be aware that we cannot tackle and beat crime without the wholehearted support, not only of hon. Members, but of everybody in society.

Mr. Budgen: In the light of the recent epic and historic reform of the common agricultural policy, will my right hon. Friend confirm that there will now be no need for any additional payments to the EEC?

The Prime Minister: I am glad that my hon. Friend is pleased with the work done by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, who has been quite outstanding in his skilful piloting of the latest Agriculture Council and the Fisheries Council. I hope that what my hon. Friend says is true. I have not looked at all the details of the financial arrangements, but they are clearly designed substantially to reduce the cost of the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Kinnock: Does the Prime Minister recall that at the time of her first Christmas in office 3½ million adults were on supplementary benefit and 1 million children were in families dependent on supplementary benefit? This Christmas over 5 million adults are in that position and over 2 million children are in families dependent on supplementary benefit. By any measure that is a huge increase in poverty. Is the Prime Minister not absolutely ashamed of her record?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is aware that supplementary benefit is meant to provide for those who are in need. Not only does it do so, but it does so on a more generous scale than under previous Governments. As he is aware, when supplementary benefit rises the number of people in poverty goes up—if that is his definition of poverty.

Mr. Kinnock: I wish that the right hon. Lady's reference to the rate of supplementary benefit was true, but unfortunately it is not. There are now more people in deeper poverty in Britain, and the rate of benefit has not kept pace with the cost of living for poor people. As a mother, what would the Prime Minister say to the mother of two who asked in the "Christmas on the Breadline" report:

"How can you explain to a child who thinks that mum and dad can work miracles, that he cannot have something because there aren't enough pennies, or that Father Christmas has run out of toys?"

The right hon. Lady is usually generous with advice. What is her advice to that woman?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is wrong about supplementary benefit. Supplementary benefit has gone up—[HON. MEMBERS: "Scrooge".]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: Supplementary benefit is up by 6 per cent. over and above the rate of inflation and supplementary benefit scale rates for children under five years old have gone up by 29 per cent. over and above the rate of inflation. May I also remind—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: May I also remind the right hon. Gentleman that 10 years ago this Christmas under Labour the old-age pensioners did not have a Christmas bonus?

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister has run away from giving advice to that poor family, but she has misled the House in her references. The facts are that the retail prices index has risen by 62·9 per cent., the cost of living for pensioners has risen five percentage points—3 per cent. in real terms—more than that, and for poor families, nine percentage points—5 per cent. in real terms—more than that. Will the right hon. Lady apologise not only to the poor but to the House as well?

The Prime Minister: No, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary benefit is up about 6 per cent. in real terms at the July uprating and the rates for children under five and aged 11 to 12 increased by about 29 per cent. in real terms. Whatever the right hon. Gentleman says, we have done infinitely better than his Government in looking after those on supplementary benefit and infinitely better in letting all old-age pensioners have a Christmas bonus.

Airborne Early Warning Aircraft

3.30 pm

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on airborne early warning aircraft for the Royal Air Force. I apologise in advance for its length.

The House will recall that in March 1977 the then Government announced their decision to proceed with the Nimrod system to replace the Shackleton in the airborne early warning role. Contracts were placed with what is now British Aerospace plc for the necessary work on the Nimrod airframe, and with GEC Avionics Ltd for the development and production of its mission system avionics. At that time, it was envisaged that the aircraft would be available to the RAF in a training role in May 1982 and for operational service in April 1984.

British Aerospace has delivered the airframes in accordance with its contract. But, as the House knows, serious difficulties have arisen in the development of the avionics system for the aircraft, and these have led to very serious time and cost overruns.

On 26 February last, my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State for Defence Procurement informed the House that the Government had decided to consider all of the available options, both from this country and from overseas, for meeting the RAF's needs before taking a final decision on the way forward. He also announced that for Nimrod itself we had negotiated with GEC revised contractual arrangements involving a sharing of financial risk with the company and giving them adequate incentives for completion.

The intention was that, by the end of an interim period of six months, GEC would provide us with a firm price proposal against a technical specification aimed at fulfilling the needs of the RAF, and would also demonstrate to us the progress it had achieved on the development of the project. Meanwhile, we would explore alternative solutions. On 25 September my noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement announced that best and final offers were being invited from GEC Avionics for the Nimrod and from the Boeing Aerospace Company for the E3A aircraft. Those offers have now been received and assessed.

GEC's offer for Nimrod has been judged against a cardinal point specification based on the air staff requirement endorsed in 1977, with the addition only of an air-to-air refuelling capability. Since 1977 the air threat against the United Kingdom has increased. But we have not, as they say, moved the 1977 goalposts so far as the Nimrod system is concerned.

GEC's offer covers three levels of attainment. In ascending order, and cumulatively, it has offered three aircraft in the second half of 1987 to the standard of the present trials aircraft; six aircraft between mid-1989 and mid-1990 which would approach the final standard subject to certain exclusions, of which the most important is a vital secure data link to and from the aircraft; and 11 to the final standard between October 1991 and September 1993.

The first of those offers is not of any value, as the system is not now of a standard that could be used for training. The question that I have had to consider is whether, taking account of the work GEC has done since February, and in particular of recent flight trials, together with our knowledge of the results it has achieved during the last nine years, I can have confidence that it could deliver aircraft with the second and third levels of performance in the time scales that it has offered. This is an assessment of the Nimrod programme against the objective standard of the air staff requirement and not against the E3A.

I am sorry to say that the conclusion that I have reached after the most careful consideration is that I cannot have that confidence. GEC has certainly made technical progress in some areas since February, and has also accepted contractual terms which would give it the strongest incentive to achieve success. I pay tribute to it for that.

Nevertheless, there have been technical disappointments as well as progress. The recent flight trials which have been attempted have not produced a consistent and reliable pattern of results. Such results as have been achieved fall well short of the air staff requirement. The company has therefore made proposals for a new programme of work which would improve the system's performance over the next few years. I have considered the proposals very carefully, but the unanimous view of my scientific and military experts is that the required performance is unlikely to be achieved before the mid-1990s at the earliest, if then.

This is a question of scientific and engineering judgment; the likelihood of success does not lend itself to absolute proof one way or the other. I must judge the prospects on the basis of the scientific and service advice available to me. That advice is clear and unanimous.

As I have said, Nimrod AEW should have entered RAF service for training in 1982 and for operations in 1984. Airborne early warning is a vital air defence capability and multiplies the value of other forces. The existing Shackletons, which entered service in this role in 1972, are obsolescent and would be of limited value in hostilities.

Very reluctantly, I have decided that the time has now come to cancel the Nimrod AEW programme, notwithstanding the expenditure of £660 million so far, just over half of which has been spent on the avionics. All existing contracts are therefore being terminated. Subject to satisfactory completion of contractual negotiations, we shall instead be ordering six E3A aircraft from Boeing now, with the option of adding a further two within the next six months. The E3A is already in service with the NATO AEW force as well as with the United States air force. The RAF version will meet or come close to the 1977 operational standard we have set and will, in several respects, significantly exceed it, thus improving the RAF's capability against the military threat. There is plenty of potential for stretching the system to match further developments in the threat. I am confident that the E3A will give excellent service with the RAF.

Allowing for termination costs on the Nimrod contracts, the cost of acquiring the six E3A's with initial support will be £860 million at 1986-87 prices, which is £200 million more than the remaining cost of acquiring 11 Nimrods. Those prices are based on sterling quotations from Boeing. The difference represents value for money given our total confidence in the E3A's ability to perform the operational task in an acceptable time scale. On a through-life cost basis including running costs over 20 years, the difference between the two is marginal. These comparisons are confined to future expenditure and take no account of past expenditure on the Nimrod system. The

cost of this purchase will be contained within the planned defence expenditure totals published in my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's autumn statement.

Nevertheless, this is a sad decision to have to take, but I have no doubt that it is the right one. There are lessons for all of us in this outcome, and I do not seek to evade my Department's share of responsibility. Our experience with Nimrod has reminded us of the importance of establishing agreed contractual terms at the earliest possible stage, with clear specifications and agreed acceptance criteria, which place the contractor under an effective discipline. My fellow Defence Ministers and I will be ensuring that these and other lessons are fully absorbed and acted on in our future handling of major projects.

While this must inevitably be a sad day for GEC and its work force, this decision must be seen in its proper context. GEC will remain one of the MOD's biggest equipment suppliers; we spent over £700 million — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a statement of great importance that the entire House is anxious to hear.

Mr. Younger: GEC will remain one of the MOD's biggest equipment suppliers; we spent over £700 million with it last year, even excluding expenditure on Nimrod. It and other British firms will continue to design and manufacture airborne radars despite the present decision. The loss to British defence technology will be solely in this highly specialised field of large and advanced AEW systems, and it is not strategically vital for this capability to be retained in British industry. In any case, Britain will continue to be involved in this technology through the participation of Racal, Plessey and Ferranti in the E3A order for the RAF.

Furthermore, Boeing's proposals for the E3A include a contractual commitment on its part to an extremely high level of offset, amounting to £130 to be spent on work for British companies for every £100 which we spend on the E3A. This commitment has been welcomed by British firms which will be participating in the E3A project. Boeing is publicly committed to placing high technology work with British companies and has an excellent record for honouring undertakings of this kind. Our assessment is that job losses resulting from the cancellation of Nimrod will be equalled if not exceeded by job gains in firms all over the country resulting from Boeing's offset proposals.

As I have said, the decision that I have announced has not been an easy one. I wish very much that it could have been otherwise. However, if the RAF is to have the equipment it urgently needs to defend this country, this is the only decision that can be right. I commend it to the House.

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): The Secretary of State's decision is not only sad; it is a bad one. It is a bad decision for Britain's defence interests because ultimately a country can defend itself only on the basis of the strength of its industrial and technological base. The Secretary of State and the Government have dealt a heavy blow to that industrial base in an area of high technology.

The decision will be bad for the economy because jobs will be lost and Britain, yet again, will cease to be a prime contractor producing systems and will become a sub-contractor producing components for industries and factories of other countries. It is a bad decision financially because upwards of £900 million in the end will have been wasted completely. Apparently, another £860 million will have to be found from within the defence budget.

I shall seek to catch your eye later, Mr. Speaker, to apply for an emergency debate under Standing Order No. 20, but I wish briefly to ask the Secretary of State the following questions. Will he tell the House why, on 5 December, he stated publicly that both systems work? Is that still his view? Can he tell us—his statement did not say this—when the first Boeing aircraft will come into operation with the Royal Air Force? Are there any plans for hiring from the Pentagon in the meantime other Boeing aircraft, and was that offer available to GEC as well as to Boeing?

Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that jobs will be lost? What will be the penalties if Boeing fails to meet the contractual obligation of, apparently, £130 for every £100 spent? Does the right hon. Gentleman agree also that the Government have handed Boeing a world wide monopoly in early warning systems and dealt a severe blow to GEC's hopes of teaming up with Lockheed and selling their system in other parts of the world?

Since the Secretary of State has said that both systems work, since some of his officials have behaved disgracefully over the past few weeks, and since the right hon. Gentleman now says that it is merely a matter of technical judgment, will he agree to an independent technical evaluation of the two systems before contracts are signed?

Mr. Younger: I am surprised at the right hon. Gentleman's reaction. Of course this decision wil be a great disappointment to GEC and to all those who work for it; I recognise that. To say that this decision has an effect across the whole of the British defence industry is to fly in the face of all the facts and the present outstanding export record of the British defence industry. I said, and I stand by it, that both systems work. I did not spend three hours flying over the North sea fiddling with a system in Nimrod that did not work. The question is how well it works against the stark demand of air staff requirement 400. The answer was given in my statement, which is that, at present, it is agreed by all that it does not work anywhere near that standard. I have had to judge whether the company will successfully make the system work within three years. Regretfully, I decided that that is not credible.

The first aircraft will be delivered by Boeing in 1991. No offer has been made to lease aircraft in the meantime. If an offer is made, of course I shall consider it.

Penalties for non-performance will be in the contract signed with Boeing. Boeing has a good offset record in this country. Indeed, when we purchased Chinook helicopters a considerable time ago, Boeing exceeded the undertakings it had given to provide offsets.

I repudiate absolutely what the right hon. Gentleman said about my officials. My officials have been involved throughout this project. Their whole interest in this matter has been to see a successful conclusion to the planning of the Nimrod aircraft with which they were involved in the early days. None of them would be so foolish as to put into service with the RAF a product that will not do the job that it is required to do.

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): Since, as my right hon. Friend knows technical assessments are

[Sir Ian Gilmour]

seldom just that, but very often much tendentious argument disguised in technical uniform, what steps did the Government take to check the apparently nebulous assessments that were made before this damaging decision was taken?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate my right hon. Friend's point. One of the great difficulties in making assessments is that they are matters of judgment. I disagree with my right hon. Friend that we in any way took a nebulous set of calculations. We have been checking the performance of the Nimrod and, indeed, the other aircraft, the E3A, against the specified requirements of ASR400. It is against that particular requirement that we carefully assessed the performance of the aircraft, and in that respect it was found wanting.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): It is no secret that members of the alliance would much rather that the Secretary of State had been able to award the contract to GEC. We have made no bones about it. Defence considerations were paramount. The right hon. Gentleman has given some information about the comparative performance of the two systems. Is he in a position to give the House more information on this matter! There is obvious concern about the jobs that are put at risk and about the offset. What guarantees has the Secretary of State had from Boeing that these offset jobs will be of high tech quality? Is he able to state that the United States will not be able to make a spurious claim of extra-territoriality with regard to the contract terms?

The Secretary of State has said that his Department must accept its share of the responsibility. What is that share of the responsibility? The taxpayer will demand a full explanation of why more than £600 million has gone down the drain on this project.

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman is right in saying that defence requirements are extremely important, although they are not the only considerations, as he will recognise. I stress that, in making this decision, I have not compared the Nimrod with the E3A. I have compared each of them against air staff requirements 400, which is a very different thing. There are, of course, respects in which the E3A exceeds the requirement by quite a long way, because it is an older system. I have not taken that into account in making this decision.

Of course, there are no guarantees about the offset, except for Boeing's very good record in offsets. I suggest that the hon. Gentleman asks some of the firms concerned about the quality of the offsets. He will then find that they are extremely pleased with the quality of the jobs that they will be offered in this work and consider that it will bring them into major international work on a high technology project which will be to the advantage.

As for technology transfers, in spite of the article in one of the newspapers this morning, it is not correct to say that my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General has ruled that United States requirements must not be accepted by British companies. Where company-to-company transfers are concerned, it is a matter of commercial judgment for the United Kingdom company to decide whether to accept United States terms. However, it is not generally the Government's policy for Government officials to give similar undertakings to the United States Government.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): Will my right hon. Friend accept that, because this is a sad decision for a major British company and our economy's industrial base, it is a particularly courageous decision by my right hon. Friend? Will he stress to the House that, if he has secured the unanimous support of the Army and the Navy, the budgets of which will be adversely affected by this decision, it is a far more effective check on the rectitude of the decision than any attempt to double guess it by the House?

Mr. Younger: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his comments. He will appreciate more than most people how difficult it is to take these decisions and the many considerations that must be taken into account. I agree with him entirely that the support and the unanimous advice of the service people and scientists involved are difficult to overturn. I assure my right hon. Friend that those in the services who are concerned with this matter acted entirely objectively and disinterestedly in the way in which they gave that advice, having solely in their minds the best interests of the RAF's procurement policy.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): Is the Secretary of State aware that for a prime domestic bid for a major weapons system—with all the jobs, exports and high tech involved — to be overlooked in favour of a foreign supplier at this late stage is without precedent in the history of defence procurement? Can the right hon. Gentleman imagine either the French or the United States putting themselves in this subservient role? Is he aware that this is a black day not only for British industry and for GEC Avionics—because the Government have let us down — but for his Department? Why try the House with the right hon. Gentleman's description of the checks that his Department is now to introduce? Why did he not introduce them sooner and achieve a better cost-effective relationship with GEC Avionics?

Mr. Younger: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that one's first reaction is one of extreme disappointment that the British bid was not successful. I think that hon. Members on both sides of the House would have very much hoped that it could be successful. But the hon. Gentleman's memory is extremely selective. It is not in any way unprecedented, unfortunately, for a Government to cancel a large project from a domestic supplier.

Mr. Duffy: Which one?

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman may remember the cancellation of the TSR2, which was also a project which had an aircraft already flying. According to *Hansard* of 13 April 1965, the Government cancelled it because they felt that further expenditure on the aircraft was not justified militarily. We, too, have conducted an honest review, as I believe did the then Government, to make up our mind on a difficult technological matter. I hope, therefore, that the hon. Gentleman will not say that this decision is unprecedented.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating the airborne display division of GEC Avionics on its recent success in gaining a $70 million export order for the world's first holographic head-up display unit to be supplied to the USAF? Will he acknowledge that today's sad decision, which I am sure has been taken with the greatest reluctance by Cabinet and which I am sure the House will have to endorse in view of

the evidence, will be a severe blow to Marconi's prestige in high technology and may prejudice future export orders? Will he therefore take urgent steps to re-establish the Government's confidence in one of our leading avionics firms by considering giving the RAF the same piece of equipment in which the USAF places such confidence?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate my hon. Friend's comments. However, while this project and all that accompanies it has had an unhappy history and those involved in it must feel sad about today's decision, that does not mean that GEC as a whole is not a high quality company producing good technology.

My hon. Friend particularly referred to the selling of the head-up displays to the United States armed services. I understand that some £127 million worth of equipment has been sold by GEC for installation in four aircraft types —the F16, the A7 Corsair, the A4 Skyhawk, and the Viggen. That is a great tribute to the company and something that I hope will be noted.

Mr. Robert C. Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): Is the Secretary of State aware that of the many dismal statements made from the Dispatch Box in the past few years, this is the worst of all? Does he realise that in 1977 the present Lord Mulley announced the letting of contracts for an AEW system that the RAF was intended to have in service within five years? After four more years, the Secretary of State has today made this deplorable statement. The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) is laughing. He should hang his head in shame because he, along with the present Secretary of State, fiddled for four years allowing the RAF, at a time of much greater threat to this country, to go without the AEW system that we thought in 1977 was essential for 1982.

The Secretary of State is selling the pass of British industry by selling out to a foreign supplier. Bearing in mind that the Boeing does not meet the full criteria of the RAF, why not give GEC and the British electronics industry a few more months to get their act right?

Mr. Younger: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman, who is an ex-Defence Minister, would have been the first to recognise that the requirements of the RAF in the vital matter of air defence must have high priority. The hon. Gentleman should have thought back a little further and recalled the form of the contract that he and his right hon. Friend placed. As I have made clear, I do not consider that we are devoid of blame in this matter, but the hon. Gentleman might have been wiser to admit that he and his right hon. and hon. Friends are probably not devoid of blame either. This is not a happy position.

With respect to the conclusion of this matter, I very much doubt whether the hon. Gentleman would have supported us if we had cancelled the project five years ago any more than he has supported us today. We would be taking the wrong decision if we allowed the RAF to receive equipment that did not work properly.

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): What would the Russians have thought of our determination to defend ourselves if we had chosen second best?

Mr. Younger: My right hon. Friend has made a valid point. The Russians would be extremely surprised if, in view of the threats that we face, we did not pick the piece of equipment that could be reliably expected to do the job.

Mr. John Cartwright (Woolwich): Is the Secretary of State aware of the widespread support for the view that Britain must have the most effective AEW system? If the technical assessments are as clear cut as he suggests, why was the decision delayed so long? Since he accepts that the decision rests on a judgment of technical and engineering factors, will he consider publishing a declassified assessment of those factors so that we can see that justice has been done?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate the tone and common sense of the hon. Gentleman's remarks. On earlier cancellation, I hope that all hon. Members will bear in mind that it is extremely easy to be wise after the event. I cannot think of any applause which would have been forthcoming if the project had been cancelled when the firm concerned could have reliably said that it had not been given a chance to demonstrate how the equipment would work in an aeroplane in real conditions. We have given the firm that chance. That was only fair to those embarked on the project.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must take account of the fact that the rest of today's business is under a timetable motion which was passed by the House last Friday. I shall allow three more questions from either side.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden): I recognise the practical common sense and courage demonstrated by my right hon. Friend, but will he take an early opportunity to inform the House of the technological opportunities available to the British firms participating in the Boeing E3A project?

Mr. Younger: I shall certainly gladly take an early opportunity to spell out those details further. I am absolutely confident that Boeing is genuine in its determination to provide in full the offset undertakings which it has given. As I have said, its past record gives every confidence that it will again do that.

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): Will the Secretary of State take it from me that when I flew Nimrod a fortnight ago the question of clutter was resolved and met air staff requirements? Will he tell the House whether on his flight the interceptions also met the requirements? Will he clarify those two points?

Mr. Younger: We have been testing the equipment against all the requirements of ASR400, one of which is to eliminate the clutter and another is the ability to take up and track targets. In both cases the system at present falls short of ASR400. That is not disputed between the Government and the company. On occasions the equipment meets some of the criteria. The hon. Gentleman is a well-known expert in aviation matters and he will appreciate that if one is in an AEW aircraft at a time of war and liable to be shot down by an enemy, one requires the equipment to work all the time not just occasionally.

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): Does my right hon. Friend accept that over the past nine years there has been appalling mismanagement in the procurement executive of the Ministry of Defence on this project? Therefore, will he assure the House that there will be an inquiry into that and that those responsible, whether officers or officials, will be disciplined or discharged?

Mr. Younger: I certainly agree with my hon. Friend that all concerned would be well advised to try to learn as many lessons as possible from this sorry affair. I agree that we must look into our procedures, both for contracting and the way in which we deal with large contracts, to ensure that such cost and time overruns do not happen in future. In that way at least some good can come out of this business.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): Will the compensation formula include or exclude orders already won by British industry? Will the Secretary of State give the House a yes or no answer?

Mr. Younger: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's point. Boeing will give orders in addition to existing contracts. They will certainly be additional to existing contracts, so I hope that they will be 130 per cent. of the value of the E3A order.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): With the sad failure of GEC Avionics, is it not good news for the Royal Air Force which will now receive the aircraft and equipment that it wants and feels is absolutely essential for the air defence of the United Kingdom?

Mr. Younger: I agree with my hon. Friend. With his long experience of aviation matters, he will know that the RAF, on the one hand, will want the best equipment and, on the other hand, will feel sad that it was not possible in this case even for it to recommend the British alternative. It has good equipment which will enable it to do its job effectively.

Mr. David Young (Bolton, South-East): Is not the real tragedy of the decision that British forces will be technically dependent on the United States not only now, but for the foreseeable future? Will the Secretary of State assure us that the RAF assessment was not settling old scores of those who never wanted the Nimrod defence system in the first place?

Mr. Younger: I absolutely reject the hon. Gentleman's assertion that the future of the RAF will depend on the United States. These aircraft will be purchased by the Ministry of Defence and become our property, and we shall operate them in the normal way. If his theory were turned on its head, it would mean that the United States was dependent on us because it buys Harriers. That would not be realistic. I absolutely reject the suggestion of the RAF settling old scores. Many people in the RAF will regret that we could not have the British alternative, but at least they are sure that they have good equipment.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall bear in mind those hon. Members whom I have not been able to call when the matter is discussed in future.

Business of the House

4.5 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the business for the first week after the Christmas Adjournment, which will be as follows:

MONDAY 12 JANUARY—Second Reading of the Local Government Finance Bill.

TUESDAY 13 JANUARY—There will be a debate on the Army on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY — Opposition Day (4th Allotted Day). There will be a debate on a motion in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, the subject for debate to be announced.

Motion on the Industrial Training Levy (Construction Board) Order 1987.

THURSDAY 15 JANUARY—Remaining stages of the Coal Industry Bill.

Motions on the Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Mauritius) Order and the Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (France) Order.

The Chairman of Ways and Means has named opposed private business for consideration at seven o'clock.

FRIDAY 16 JANUARY—Private Members' Bills.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): I am grateful to the Leader of the House for his statement.

On 12 January the Secretary of State for the Environment will introduce legislation. To prevent a further lapse by this recidivist Secretary of State, can the Leader of the House give an assurance that his right hon. Friend will consult with Greenwich council whose impending legal challenge brought the Government's lawlessness of the past six years to light?

In the debate on the Army, can the Leader of the House ensure that the Secretary of State for Defence comes to the House with an adequate response to the problems encountered by tank workers at the former ROF factory in Leeds which is now owned by Vickers? It has laid off between 400 and 500 tank workers as a consequence of the MOD changing its system of ordering?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the recent Shelter report that more than 500,000 pensioners live in accommodation which is officially unfit for habitation and that more than 100,000 households are likely to have been declared officially homeless by the end of the year? In recognition of the urgent need to combat that increase in misery, will the right hon. Gentleman agree to provide time for a debate on homelessness shortly after we return in the new year?

There is great concern on both sides of the House about the appalling decline in the merchant shipping fleet. That was recently highlighted by the right hon. Member for Taunton, (Sir E. du Cann), among others. Since that continuing decline has serious trade and defence implications, will the Leader of the House give Government time for a debate as soon as possible?

I understand that later today the Government are likely to announce as part of the campaign against the spread of AIDS that clean needles will be made available to registered drug addicts. While I accept the need for that measure, may we expect in common justice that similar

provision will be made for free disposable syringes for the 200,000 or so diabetics in Britain who at present must pay the full price for them?

Will the Leader of the House confirm that the Department of Trade and Industry has commenced an investigation into alleged insider trading activities in the Department of Trade and Industry, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission or the Office of Fair Trading? Will he undertake investigations into that and ensure that a full statement is made to the House today so that we may be fully acquainted with the facts as they are hitherto known?

Finally, may I wish the Leader of the House a happy Christmas. I ask him to confirm, as he said to the Select Committee on Procedure on Tuesday, that we are—I use his words — "in the last few months of this Parliament". May I ask the Leader of the House in his usual candid fashion, to be a little more specific about dates since he obviously knows something that not even the Prime Minister knows?

Mr. Biffen: If I may, I will take those almost limitless number of points that the right hon. Gentleman has just raised in reverse order and start with perhaps the most attractive of all concerning the timing of the general election. I have nothing to add to the right hon. Gentleman's general education on this matter, except to assure him that it is an election to which I look forward with much greater relish than he does.

I now refer to the point about alleged insider activities within the Department of trade and Industry in the context of takeover bids. This matter was raised last week, and I do not think I have anything further to add to what I said then, but, of course, I will refer his comments to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The right hon. Gentleman was correct in assuming that there will be a statement concerning the provision of clean needles in various restricted circumstances as part of the campaign against AIDS. I take note of what he said about diabetics and, of course, I will refer that argument to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services. The right hon. Gentleman will appreciate that the statement is strictly and clearly in respect of AIDS.

With regard to the merchant fleet, I have no plans for an immediate debate upon it, though doubtless it could arise, at least with the permission of the Chair, as part of the debate that we have on the Royal Navy. I will, of course, refer the right hon. Gentleman's comments to the usual channels. I will also refer his request for a debate on the homeless.

I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence will be fully apprised of the importance of the royal ordnance factories and that they will feature in the debate that takes place in the first week after the recess.

I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, who always carries his burdens with good nature and with a concern for cutting through the difficulties, will be only too well aware of the point about the Greenwich council. But, just by some chance that it is in a Christmas spirit that the right hon. Gentleman has raised this point, fearing that there might have been an oversight, I shall see that it is corrected.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has said that there will be an Opposition day on Wednesday January 14. If he finds that the Opposition have been unable to come up with an appropriate subject, will he suggest that the texts of early-day motions Nos. 1 to 38 entitled "Conduct of the Leader of the Opposition" may well give the House an opportunity, long overdue, to debate the important matter of the role of the Leader of the Opposition and his relationship with the gentleman in Australia, Mr. Turnbull, and quite what the Leader of the Opposition thought he was up to; what has been his relationship with Mr. Turnbull, and what instructions he has taken from Mr. Turnbull? Will my right hon. Friend consider suggesting that, if the Opposition do not take this up, he will provide official time to debate the texts of early-day motion Nos. 1 to 38?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend has said that he is anxious about the recent brisk level of controversy and that it should be continued into the new year. Certainly, the course he recommends would sustain it, but I do not think I can answer for what will be the topic chosen by the Leader of the Opposition. We shall all watch with interest.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Will the Leader of the House take note of the considerable concern and surprise on this Bench that there has been no ministerial statement yet on the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate report on Sellafield? It was a critical report which caused considerable alarm. Can the Leader of the House say whether an Environment Minister will be coming to the Dispatch Box before or immediately after the recess to make a statement on that report?

I thank the Leader of the House for the informal indications that he has given that he will not be proceeding, until January, with the motion under his name on short speeches. Will he take account of the fact that some of the concern relates to the timing of the period of short speeches? Before the right hon. Gentleman proceeds with the motion, will he give an indication that the usual channels will discuss the interests of minority parties in this matter?

Mr. Biffen: Perhaps I should have extended it to short questions, but I take note of what the hon. Gentleman says. With regard to his first point, which I think is of greater substance, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will appreciate that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is not yet in possession of the full report. Therefore, there can be no question of any statement being made this side of the recess.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that hon. Members with agricultural constituencies will be looking to him to provide shortly a day for a debate on agriculture following the important statement made yesterday by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food? Will he ensure that agriculture gets urgent priority in the new year?

Mr. Biffen: I will bear in mind my hon. Friend's request. I realise that agricultural interests are widely represented in this House, particular on the Conservative Benches. I appreciate that there is a general anxiety to have an occasion on which formally to praise my right hon. Friend for his recent achievements.

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): Is the Leader of the House aware that unemployment in Scotland is steadily going up whereas in the rest of the United Kingdom, it is

[Mr. Gordon Wilson]

going down? In my constituency, we are to lose another 500 jobs after an announcement yesterday. Will the right hon. Gentleman take an early opportunity to initiate a debate on the problems facing the Scottish economy because it seems to be facing problems that no longer affect other parts of the United Kingdom?

Mr. Biffen: I bear in mind that the hon. Gentleman makes a point about unemployment in the Scottish context that he believes makes it separate from the more general considerations of unemployment. Therefore, I take heart from that and think that it might be suitable for debate in the Scottish Grand Committee.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: May I remind the House that business is subject to a timetable motion today. I will allow questions to go on until 4.25 and then we must move on.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Does my right hon. Friend accept that it would be quite wrong for any announcement about free needles for drug addicts not to be coupled with an announcement of free needles for diabetics?

Mr. Biffen: I will pass on my hon. Friend's observation to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): When will the right hon. Gentleman provide the House with the opportunity to debate a number of very important issues in the heritage, specifically the gutting of the interior of the Royal Mint which the Tower of London wanted for its own purposes and the refusal of the Government to sponsor the purchase of the Royal Dental hospital to provide the National Portrait gallery with more exhibition space for its collections?

Mr. Biffen: I thank the hon. Gentleman for drawing attention to those two points. I will of course refer them to my hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts.

Mr. Robert Atkins (South Ribble): Has my right hon. Friend seen page 2 of *The Times* on which reference is made to a Liberal and SDP attempt to draw attention to many of the seats of my right hon. and hon. Friends in terms of the voting record and their behaviour therein? Will my right hon. Friend comment on the fact that in one constituency, that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. St. John-Stevas), recent opinion polls showed a 9 per cent. reduction in the potential Liberal vote and an increase of 5,000 in the possible Tory majority? Perhaps the combined voting records of my hon. Friends in this matter would be more than 10 times the voting record of many Members of the alliance.

Mr. Biffen: I am sure that when it comes to any comparisons of voting performance, quality of speeches, conciseness of questions and general political awareness, the alliance would be at a major detriment. The more good customer guides we can have on what is on offer politically, the better it will be for us.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Has the Leader of the House seen early-day motion No. 85?

[That this House condemns the Government's intention to privatise Rolls-Royce and would utterly refute the Under Secretary of State for Defence Procurement's recent statement that Rolls-Royce employees 'relish the idea of privatisation'; fully agrees, on the contrary, with the concern of most employees that their jobs, wages and working conditions would be at risk; reminds the Government that it was a previous Conservative administration which originally brought the company into state ownership, in order to prevent it from going out of business; commends the dedication and skills of the workforce, which has been responsible for revitalising the company since 1971; contends that private ownership is totally unsuitable for an industry which requires large amounts of advance investment for product research and development; re-affirms its belief that the future for Rolls-Royce and the workforce is best guaranteed by it remaining fully in the public sector and not subject to short-term yearly profit analyses; and looks forward to a Labour Government that is prepared to safeguard jobs by investing in manufacturing industry.]

It concerns Rolls-Royce and is supported by 115 Labour Members. It is against the threatened privatisation of that company. When will the Leader of the House arrange for a debate on the Government giving away that company after cancelling £370 million of the company's debts? Apart from giving those 115 Labour MPs the chance of a major debate to oppose the privatisation of companies like Rolls-Royce, we may like to draw the comparison between the fact that the Tories can cancel debts prior to privatisation for companies like Rolls-Royce but cannot do it for city councils.

Mr. Biffen: As the hon. Gentleman uses the pretext of a question to make a speech, I begin to wonder whether there is any legitimacy in having a debate. He raises an important point about any proposals on privatisation for Rolls-Royce and I shall consider carefully what he said about a debate, but I could not accept one in the terms in which he recommended it.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): May I associate myself with my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) who called for free needles for diabetics? May we have an early debate on the terrifying treatment that my constituent Mrs. Maureen McGoldrick has received at the hands of the evil Brent council?

Mr. Biffen: My hon. Friend's point about Mrs. McGoldrick might be suitable for an Adjournment debate, not least because she is a distinguished constituent of my hon. Friend. I cannot say more than I already have in regard to my hon. Friend's first point.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The Leader of the House will be aware that there has been a redetermination of the funding of local passenger transport authorities. Will he draw the Secretary of State for Transport's attention to the anxiety that the Bill that we are to consider when we reassemble after Christmas will mean that the redetermination no longer takes account of local factors but is a common uplifting, which would be unacceptable to passenger transport authorities?

Mr. Biffen: I shall pass that comment on to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will have perceived that he will be able to make his arguments when the legislation is before the House.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): As Chairman of the Services Committee, my right hon. Friend will know that

that Committee has decided, although hon. Members have not been formally notified, that a restriction should be put on the number of bookings that hon. Members can make for sponsoring functions in the banqueting room. I appreciate that the reason for that is that a few hon. Members have abused their privilege of being able to sponsor lunches and dinners. Does my right hon. Friend appreciate that a number of his colleagues are finding considerable difficulty in arranging routine parliamentary constituency functions? Will he review the arrangement as a matter of urgency?

Mr. Biffen: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for informing me that he would raise this matter. I shall most certainly look into it. I realise that it is of general concern to the House, and I shall be in touch with my hon. Friend.

Mr. Laurie Pavitt (Brent, South): Will the Leader of the House ask the Minister for Health if he will make a statement early in the new year about the increasing problems which face people who are dying from cancer? A person who has an inoperable cancer goes home to die, and it may take three or four months before that happens. During that time, that person may need five or six medications every three weeks at a cost of £12 or £14·50. Surely it would be possible for the Government to arrange, in what I submit is a special case, for charges to be remitted as we know that the people concerned have only a short time to live.

Mr. Biffen: I take account of what the hon. Gentleman says, and of course I shall refer it to my hon. Friend as he requests. Meanwhile, he may wish to try to alert the Department through the offices of Question Time as the Department will be first for questions on Tuesday 13 January.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): In view of the Government's deeply regrettable decision in respect of the airborne early warning system purchased by the Ministry of Defence, will my right hon. Friend arrange for a debate as soon as possible on the future of manufacturing industry in this country, bearing in mind the fact that manufacturing industry is our only source of genuine wealth creation?

Mr. Biffen: I cannot in any sense accept the strictures that my hon. Friend puts on the Governent, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence or the announcement that he made earlier this afternoon. I take account of the importance that my hon. Friend attaches to manufacturing industry. I hope that he extends the same feelings to agriculture, services and all of the other wealth-creating elements in the country. They will always be uppermost in the mind of the Government and, I believe, the House when we debate the economy.

Mr. Ron Lewis (Carlisle): Now that the transport users consultative committee has recommended that the Settle to Carlisle railway line must be kept open, will the right hon. Gentleman arrange for the Secretary of State for Transport to make a statement early in the new year about the Government's intention to abide by that committee's decision?

Mr. Biffen: I shall of course refer that request to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will be here for questions on Monday 12 January when Transport comes top. He may then have a chance to put his question in his own way.

Airborne Early Warning System

4.25 pm

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the need for an independent and urgent inquiry into the purchase of a new airborne early warning system for the Royal Air Force."

The matter is self-evidently specific. It is important because vital issues of national defence, British industry and public finance are involved. It is certainly urgent because since the Government have taken a decision in principle, there must be a debate before contracts are signed with Boeing.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the need for an independent and urgent inquiry into the purchase of a new airborne early warning system for the Royal Air Force".

I am satisfied that the matter raised by the right hon. Member is a proper one to be discussed under Standing Order No. 20. Does the right hon. Gentleman have the leave of the House?

The leave of the House having been given, the motion stood over, under Standing Order No. 20, until Seven o'clock this evening.

Telephone Facilities

4.26 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You very courteously wrote a letter to my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) and me concerning telephone tapping. In the light of new information that I have submitted to your office about a tapping unit — LCS 9 AES — which is outlined on the front page of *Labour Weekly*, could you possibly give a ruling, when we come back, on a matter which affects hon. Members on both sides of the House?

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I should be grateful if you could let the House know, Sir, when you think you may be able to let the House have news as to your response to my request that the installation of equipment which provides the facility for eavesdropping on Members' telephone calls should be referred to the Privileges Committee, and whether you would agree to that.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman knows the form on this. I have written to him about it. I hope that he has had my letter.

Mr. Faulds: Not yet.

Mr. Speaker: I think that he should read it first.

BILLS PRESENTED

Local Government Finance

Mr. Secretary Ridley, supported by Mr. Secretary Hurd, Mr. Secretary Edwards, Mr. Secretary Baker, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. Secretary Rifkind, Mr. Secretary Moore and Dr. Rhodes Boyson, presented a Bill to validate things done by the Secretary of State in connection with, and to make further provision as to, rate support grants and the limitation or reduction of rates and precepts of local authorities; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First Time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 41.]

Gypsies (Control of Unauthorised Encampments)

Mr. Christopher Murphy presented a Bill to amend section 10(1) of the Caravan Sites Act 1968: And the same was read the First Time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 6 February and to be printed. [Bill 42.]

Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments)

4.28 pm

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 1961), dated 17th November 1986, a copy of which was laid before this House on 20th November, be annulled.

The issue in regard to these regulations is simple. It is that no civilised society with caring values should allow thousands of its elderly people to die of hypothermia or cold-related conditions brought on by extreme cold during the winter. That is what happened last year and it must not be allowed to happen again this year.

Last year, it is said, 1,060 persons died of hypothermia. That is almost certainly an underestimate because some doctors are known to be reluctant to use the term on death certificates. Of course the Minister can intervene if he wishes. I am quoting his figures but they are the figures for the whole year. I accept that they are not just the figures for the winter, although that figure is high enough at 630. I must make it clear that the real killer is not hypothermia as such but the winter cold which increases the number of deaths among the elderly from heart attacks, strokes and bronchial pneumonia by tens of thousands. In one week earlier this year, in March, during a particularly bitter spell, the death toll shot up to no fewer than 16,000.

It is our contention that the level of benefits proposed by the Government and the quality of housing among elderly people is such that the same catalogue of preventable deaths is likely to recur this winter, yet there is no question that the toll of preventable mortality could be greatly reduced. Other countries have managed it, including those with much colder winters than ours. In France and in Sweden, where it is much colder in winter than Britain, the increase in deaths in February was 6 per cent. In the United States it was 8 per cent. In Scotland it was 19 per cent., and in England and Wales it was 24 per cent. If other countries can safeguard the lives of their frail citizens, why cannot we? The truth is that we can. The two main reasons for lethal chill among elderly people are clearly known to be low incomes and poor housing.

Only about 40 per cent. of pensioners live in centrally heated homes and about 2·5 million live on or even below the official poverty line.

It is now widely understood in geriatric medicine that the danger of pneumonia in the elderly increases at temperatures below 61 deg F. At temperatures below 54 deg F the blood thickens and its pressure rises, increasing the risk of strokes and heart attacks. What makes this so alarming is that we also know from the latest national survey conducted on the subject that more than half of pensioners — 54 per cent. — have living room temperatures of below 61 deg F, the point at which the risk of fatal breakdown begins to rise significantly.

Clearly the present level of benefits designed to help pensioners with heating bills massively fails to keep all pensioners warm. The Government implicitly recognised that, and that is why they felt obliged to introduce severe weather payments as an extra in the first place. Our central objection to the regulations is that the Government's objective is completely invalidated by the pathetically trivial nature of the payments.

I asked the Minister about total expenditure but he would not give me an exact figure, so he can correct me

if I am wrong. Total expenditure is likely to amount to only about £2 million to £3 million which, spread over 10 million pensioners throughout an entire winter, is almost an insult.

Our main protest is that the Government, having acknowledged as they do that top-up payments were necessary, then rigged the system to ensure that virtually no one would get them. The minus 1·5 deg C threshold for triggering these payments has not been picked by the Government by chance. The Government deliberately and carefully calculated it as the level which, on past experience, would ensure that only about one in eight pensioners would get a single payment of £5 once every five years. That is so minuscule as to be almost offensive.

Most pensioners will not be entitled to the payment at all. Let us consider the 64 weather areas. I admit that the fact that there are now 64, and not the 16 that I think that there were before, is an improvement. If we take those 64 weather areas into which the Government now divide the country for the purposes of this payment, and use the Government's table, we can see that in two of the winters since the Government came to office not one pensioner anywhere in the country would have got a penny. In two of the remaining winters only pensioners in one of the 64 areas would have got anything, and last winter, which witnessed arctic conditions and was certainly the coldest in living memory, or at least for 40 years, pensioners in more than half of the country would still have been excluded from getting anything. To pretend that such a massively restricted system is an adequate compensation against the bitter winter cold is an insult to pensioners and a reneging of the Government from their social responsibility to the frailest and most vulnerable of our citizens.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Is my hon. Friend aware that my constituency is on the north-west coast and that a strong cold breeze comes in from the Solway?

In many homes in my constituency elderly people simply cannot keep warm. Is he aware that many agencies in Cumbria now express anxiety over what will happen this Christmas? They cannot understand why the Government have to be so hard-faced about these matters, in refusing to spend the few additional million pounds that would ensure that those homes are kept warm. What can we do when Governments simply do not want to understand?

Mr. Meacher: The electorate will have an opportunity soon to do something decisive about it. The Government's record on the welfare state, and especially their incredibly shabby treatment of elderly people, will be an issue at the next election.I shall towards the end of my speech make some comparisons along the lines suggested by my hon. Friend but I will repeat the point that was made by the hon. Member for Newark (Mr. Alexander), who is about to leave the Chamber. He made the good point that on this very day the Government are contemplating spending many tens, if not hundreds, of millions of pounds on an airborne early warning system when they are not prepared to spend more than £2 million to £3 million, which is a fleabite, to keep elderly people warm.

I accept the Minister's point that the main thrust of Government assistance for heating bills lies primarily with heating additions and with one-off payments for draught-proofing. There are two powerul objections to his case. First, under the Fowler Social Security Act, all these extras are set to go in 1988. Certainly the money will be put back into the pool for what the Government call "client group premiums" which includes the elderly but it will mean that help will be targeted less on those with the highest heating costs and needs.

Secondly, the Government claim that the heating additions, which have improved since 1979, are now worth £140 million more in real terms than when the Conservative party came to office. I say unequivocally that that is welcome, but the Government do not go on to say that for every extra pound that pensioners have gained under the Government from higher heating additions, they have lost 30 times as much from the break of the link with earnings at each uprating. If the formula that the Labour Government used had been continued, single pensioners today would receive £8 a week more in pension and married couples would receive nearly £13 a week more.

It is welcome that pensioners are getting £140 million more in heating additions this year, but it is surely thoroughly deplorable that pensioners are getting £4,250 million less this year as a result of the Tory cut in the pension formula. That is the amount by which pensioners have been cheated by this Government, and it is growing every year. If pensioners now received what they were entitled to receive under a Labour Government, the House would not have to bother tonight with this pathetic little measure, which is footling by comparison, and there can be no doubt that many fewer pensioners would die this winter.

Mr. Pat Nicholls (Teignbridge): The hon. Gentleman speaks about the Government cheating pensioners, but I am not sure which Government he has in mind. The Government who cheated the pensioners by reneging on that particular agreement were the one in which he served as an Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security. That Government proposed that there should be an earnings rather than a prices link, and avoided their own legislation. When the then Labour Secretary of State for Social Services was attacked by pensioners for ratting on his own legislation, he said, with a fair degree of cynicism as I recall, that he had only to take those matters into account and did not have to get them right. Should not the hon. Gentleman be directing his strictures towards that Labour Government?

Mr. Meacher: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will bear in mind, as pensioners no doubt will, that in that five-year period of office, the pension increased by 20 per cent. in real terms, which is an increase of one fifth over and above prices. In the seven years that the Conservative party has been in government, the pension has increased by, I believe, between 3 and 4 per cent. The difference in the level of pension is enormous.

Everything depends on the Government's priorities. This Government are increasing public expenditure this year by £4·5 billion, but all that they can find for pensioners who are facing another bitter winter is the fleabite of £2 million to £3 million in severe weather payments. The previous Labour Government made their priorities clear when they increased the real value of pensions by one fifth. Moreover, we now propose, as a priority for the next Labour Government, a £5 a week increase in the pension for single pensioners and an £8 a week increase for married couples. That is on top of

[Mr. Meacher]

normal upratings in line with earnings to ensure that pensioners keep pace with living standards. That will be paid for by withdrawing the tax concessions that have been handed out to the richest 5 per cent. in our society since 1979.

In addition, we propose a £5 a week winter premium, payable automatically for each week of winter to the 1·5 million pensioners on supplementary benefit and to the further 1 million or so who live on the margins of poverty. That is the only way to guarantee that necessary help at the level required reaches those who need it most when it is required. We believe that our programme of commitments would significantly reduce the scourge of hypothermia and cold-related deaths in our society, and we are proud of that claim.

I am sure that the Minister will ask where all the money is to come from. The answer is that it is all a matter of the Government's priorities. This Government showed their sense of priorities when they spent £800 million in abolishing the investment income surcharge: a tax to which the only people liable are those with more than £100,000 of investments on the stock exchange. By contrast, our priority is to spend £150 million on trying to ensure that the frailest and poorest in our society are enabled to keep warm in winter.

Money alone is not enough. Many pensioners live in appallingly cold homes, because the accommodation is poor, badly maintained, draughty and damp, with virtually no insulation. We believe that weather-proofing and insulating homes, and installing central heating, would not only protect elderly people—which is reason enough—but would create jobs largely for the unskilled, and thereby help all low-income groups, as well as ensuring energy efficiency.

For all those reasons, we deplore the Government's decision under the Fowler Social Security Act to end single payments for draught-proofing materials in 1988. It will also put a stop to the excellent work done by Neighbourhood Energy Action, which in our view should be strongly supported for having draught-proofed the homes of nearly 250,000 pensioners and others, and providing work for 5,000 people on the community programme. I very much hope that the Government will reconsider that extremely wretched and unfortunate decision.

These miserable little regulations—that is what they are—will do little or nothing to remedy the appalling but preventable scandal of hypothermia and cold-related deaths among the elderly. If the Government cannot bring themselves to accept the unanswerable case for bringing together greater warmth for the elderly, weather-proofing, insulation of the nation's houses, and increasing energy efficiency, the next Labour Government very soon will.

4.45 pm

The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled (Mr. John Major): The hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) opened the debate in a more restrained fashion than has often been the case when he and I have discussed matters across the Dispatch Boxes, and I am grateful to him for that. It may mean that we can examine the details of the regulations more carefully instead of simply exchanging statistics with which the House has become familiar.

I shall begin on a point of shared concern. There is no dispute between us or within the House about the concern that everyone feels for the traditionally high level of excess winter deaths in this country when compared with the level in several other countries. The hon. Gentleman will know that during the past 35 years there has been a steady reduction in the number of those deaths. That reduction has been continuous since 1959 with the exception of the period between 1976 and 1980, when a slight increase took place due to a variety of factors. However, I make no party point about that.

As the hon. Member for Oldham, West acknowledged, the problem is deep-rooted. However, the situation seems to be improving for a variety of reasons, and we hope that that trend will continue. Within that broad figure for excess winter deaths lies the smaller, but equally important, figure for hypothermia, to which the hon. Gentleman addressed some of his remarks. He acknowledged that the number of death certificates showing hypothermia as either a primary or secondary cause of death had stood at about the 1,000 mark for the past year.

The interesting point is that hypothermia is often shown not as a primary but as a secondary factor, which is attributable to reasons quite other than the insulation of the house or the amount of heating available. One of the interesting factors to emerge from the hon. Gentleman's speech was that, of those 1,000 deaths, about 640 were winter deaths, while the other 350 occurred in the summer, spring or autumn when hypothermia, which projects the image of people literally freezing, would be an unlikely proposition. That illustrates the point that hypothermia often appears as a contributory cause of death. For example, someone may have a stroke and be left immobile so that hypothermia becomes a secondary factor, which is unrelated to any action that any Government, however benevolent, could take. The hon. Gentleman's remarks put the hypothermia element into perspective, and I am grateful to him for that.

The excess winter mortality figures are startling. Between 1951 and 1955, the percentage of excess winter mortality was 68·2. By 1981 to 1985, the last period for which we have figures, as they are calculated broadly on a five-year trend, the figure had fallen to 29·3 per cent. The figure is still higher than I or the hon. Member for Oldham, West would like, but it represents a noticeable improvement which we hope and believe will continue.

Mr. Gordon Wilson (Dundee, East): Does the Minister accept that the comparison should be made with other advanced countries in western Europe, and that in those countries the figures for excess winter mortality have dropped considerably over the years? By comparison, the United Kingdom's performance is utterly scandalous. Will he look at the files of his predecessors relating to meetings that I had with Ministers on the question of hypothermia? They refused to authorise research into the medical and hospital records of the Scottish Home and Health Department, which showed that many more people were hospitalised during the winter. A proper processing of those records would show that cold and the absence of heat contribute substantially to the discomfort and ill health experienced by the elderly.

Mr. Major: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point, but he bases his supposition on a premise that may not necessarily be true. His underlying premise is that the

cause of excess winter deaths may be a lack of heating or poor insulation, or a combination of the two. They may be contributory factors, but the research by Professor Keating and others has shown that a variety of outher factors, many of them not within the control of Government, may play a significant part. The reality is, as we said when we last debated fuel poverty a few weeks ago, that we do not know the true, underlying causes of excess winter mortality. We can see the trend going in the right direction and wish that to continue, but neither the hon. Gentleman, Professor Keating nor I can be entirely sure why the figures are as they are or why they are improving. We can simply observe that they are improving and continue to take action while hoping that the trend continues.

Mr. Wilson: The hon. Gentleman is a reasonable man, and there are many factors, not all of which can be affected by his Department. Will he take it into account that we do not know why the excess winter mortality rate in the United Kingdom is so much higher than in other European countries, because then there is a case for his Department authorising expenditure to cover research into those reasons rather than complacently accepting that the fall is occurring? I hope that we all accept that the fall is insufficient in view of the numbers who die.

Mr. Major: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's point, and he will be aware that when we last debated this matter I said that the Department was looking at the underlying reasons. That will continue, but there is nothing further that I can say this afternoon.

Mr. Meacher: I can see that we shall have considered and careful debate and I welcome that. I accept what the Minister said about the slight decline in the differential deaths between winter and summer. However, the figures for deaths in which hypothermia is a factor over the past seven years show no decline. The figures for each of those years are 596, 939, 860, 717, 731, with the latest at 1,060.

Mr. Major: I think that in those figures the hon. Gentleman is again merging winter and summer, with the special factors that I mentioned. Winter deaths, which are the point of special political controversy underlying the debate, show no trend upwards or, alas, downwards in the broad measure of hypothermia-related winter deaths. A particularly high year was 1978-79. Taking the figures from memory, the average is 640 a year, and that has not materially altered over the past eight or nine years.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Does the Minister not understand that he is playing with figures? One cannot measure the pain felt by those who do not die, but are discomfited. Does he not understand that there are hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people who want to keep their homes warm but cannot afford it? The Government give money away in tax cuts to the better off, but they fail to address themselves to this specific problem. All these figures are meaningless to such people, and the small amounts of money that the Department makes available are not relevant to the measure of their needs.

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman introduces a note of controversy so I shall make points that I would have left till later. The hon. Member for Oldham, West was gracious enough to concede the substantial increase in heating additions, specifically targeted at the most vulnerable. The hon. Gentleman will be aware of that, and of the fact that primary help with heating is now, as it was when his party was in Government, through the supplementary benefit scale rates. These have increased materially in purchasing power since 1979. The third factor is so relevant that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) should bear it in mind. We now have not entirely, but nearly, stable fuel prices, which is a novel and welcome innovation that was not at all the position five or 10 years ago. All those three factors are material and helpful factors of considerable assistance to the people about whom both the hon. Gentleman and I are concerned. He might usefully bear them in mind.

The exceptionally cold weather payments are the trigger for the debate. They came into effect on 11 December and provide for a single payment of £5 for fixed weeks, in any area where the average temperature falls to minus 1·5 deg C or less. Those eligible will be supplementary benefit households containing someone who is 65 or over, under two or chronically sick or disabled. This is because they are the most vulnerable groups and it is upon them that we wish to target the available assistance.

The arrangements that we are discussing are to do with extra help in times of exceptional winter weather. I stress the word "exceptional" as I fear it is often taken to mean a regular occurrence rather than an exception. In considering the proposals, I hope that hon. Members and those outside will bear in mind the fact that these provisions have always played only a restricted part in the total help available for claimants. That is largely targeted in the way that I have just outlined. It is also relevant, when considering the present position, to bear in mind the short but turbulent history of the exceptional severe weather payments.

Some of the comments made recently suggest that many people have short memories about the controversial nature of those payments. Before 1980, all the indications are that extra help with fuel costs in periods of cold weather was seldom given. The hon. Member for Oldham, West will recall that, for there was a Labour Government at that time, and he was a Minister. However, there was no statutory entitlement, and the hon. Gentleman and his colleagues did not introduce one. Perhaps the winters were less cold, or perhaps their comments are more related to expediency than principle. Discretionary payments were made only on occasion, and there is little evidence that occasional payments were made, and no record of the frequency and amount of those payments, at least none available to me.

Mr. Meacher: The Minister said that he wanted to avoid party controversy, and I hope that he means that. It is true that there were not the equivalent of exceptional weather payments before 1979, but they were not needed because the pension was significantly higher as a proportion of average earnings than it is now. It is much better for pensioners to have higher pensions than to have a fleabite of exceptionally severe weather payments on a lower pension.

Mr. Wilson: They still died of hypothermia-related diseases.

Mr. Major: The hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. Wilson) has made the point crisply. People died of hypothermia-related diseases in the 1970s, and there was a high level of excess winter deaths in the 1970s. We have

[Mr. Major]

just trawled over the statistics and they do not show the Labour Government in an escpecially favourable light compared with before or later. That is not greatly productive ground for us to go over again, although it is a covenient territory for both of us.

Regulation 26 of the Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Regulations was the first regulatory entitlement to assistance. That regulation, now replaced, was couched in fairly general terms. It referred to

"a period of exceptionally severe weather"

but it did not define it. It suggested a comparison of fuel consumption in bad and normal weather, again not clearly or properly defined, to decide payment. The regulation has proved to be all but impossible to operate. Every time it has been applied, it has been severely and, in my judgment, justifiably, criticised. Each time the criticism has led to a review of the advice to adjudication officers, with a completely new set of guidance then being issued. It has not been satisfactory, and it is worth setting out briefly the chequered history of this regulation, because it will put the present proposals in proper context.

The first time that the regulation was used, in 1981-82, the chief supplementary benefit officer issued guidance that it applied across the country. Single payments were made to cover the difference in consumption between that winter and the previous one. Where possible, this was calculated by comparing actual fuel bills, and where this was not possible a special formula was used.

Those arrangements were criticised on two main grounds that are relevant to the present regulations: first, the difficulty in defining a period of exceptionally severe weather and, second, determining the extent to which extra fuel consumption was caused by that severe weather. Those criticisms prompted a review of the guidance, to devise a more objective method of applying regulation 26. That result, too, was criticised in turn, since the mechanism devised meant that in order to qualify for help it had to be colder, in absolute terms, in those parts of the country where it was normally coldest than in milder parts of the country. I am glad that I carry the hon. Member for Oldham, West with me on that point.

That was absurd. It meant that in the winter of 1984-85 help was given in parts of England and Wales but not in Scotland, which was actually colder. Understandably, that led to considerable resentment, and it is not difficult to see why. If I had been a Scot, I should have resented it, too. The formula for calculating entitlement was also extremely complex. Very few claimants understood it, and I am not at all surprised.

The strength of feeling was such that the adjudicating authorities asked the social security commissioners to determine whether the guidance then in operation was or was not a correct interpretation of the regulations. Their response was no. That prompted yet further guidance in November 1985. This advised that decisions on whether the weather had been exceptionally severe should be made by adjudication officers in each local office and should be based on locally available information. Once a period of exceptionally severe weather had been declared, claims for single payments were to be assessed on the basis of the individual claimant's increased fuel consumption as a result of the severe weather.

This guidance was followed last winter and payments were made in respect of the prolonged cold spell last February, but once again the guidance was severely criticised. As in 1982, one of the main criticisms centred around uncertainty as to whether the weather was exceptionally severe. Now that the decision was to be taken at local level, it was alleged that it would be determined by an adjudication officer

"sticking his head out of the window."

In practice, there was great uncertainty as to what exactly constituted a period of exceptionally severe weather. That was resolved only when yet further guidance was issued, following which, adjudication officers throughout mainland Britain declared that the weather in February 1986 was exceptionally severe.

I set out that tangled tale simply to demonstrate beyond doubt the unsatisfactory nature of past provision and to illustrate the principal problems that need to be solved — *[Interruption.]* It is hardly a question of the Government having finally conceded that point. My hon. Friend the Minister for Health said a considerable time ago that these regulations were weird and wonderful. There has never been any dispute about their unsatisfactory nature. We have now produced precisely what many people, including Opposition Members, asked for when they criticised the regulations.

It was clear from the criticisms last winter that the old regulation 26 simply had to go. It was not a matter of further guidance; the regulation itself needed revision. What was needed was a system with clear rules for determining whether the weather had been exceptionally severe, who should be entitled to extra help and how much they should receive. We believe that the new scheme, which came into operation a week ago, achieves those objectives. It provides for a single payment of £5 for each and every week of exceptionally cold weather. That means that there is now no need to compare fuel bills for different years. There is no need to attempt to guess how much of a fuel bill is related to illness or to the use of additional appliances in the home. Moreover, there is no need to produce an unpaid fuel bill at the date of claim, so that claimants who settle their bills promptly, or who purchase fuel in advance, are not penalised.

Mr. Wilson: Does the Minister concede that one of the great faults of the new scheme is that it does not take into account the variations in climate in the United Kingdom, except in so far as an absolute basic temperature of minus 1·5 deg C has been chosen? Does the Minister not agree that hardship is caused to tens of thousands of elderly people because there is a uniform level of benefit throughout the United Kingdom, although it costs 20 per cent. more to heat a house in Glasgow than it does to heat a house in Bristol and 30 per cent. more to heat a house in Aberdeen than it costs to heat a house in Bristol? Therefore, would it not have been better to recognise the diversity of climate in the United Kingdom and to introduce a generous scheme to take those factors into account?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman will concede that the key criterion is temperature. However, temperature is not the only criterion. The cost of heating a home depends upon a variety of other matters: the precise situation of the home, the degree of insulation, the quality of the building and energy efficiency grants, which are the responsibility of the Department of the Environment. It is not simply a matter of temperature; there is a whole series of related factors. It would not be equitable to suggest that a

particular area required a higher level of weekly payment for that particular reason. I understand the hon. Gentleman's argument for a cold climate allowance, but I fear that I have been unable to accept it.

Payments under our new proposals will be available when a period of exceptionally cold weather is declared for an area. We have sought to ensure that the new rules are much simpler and clear-cut. Each local office is linked to one of 63 weather stations around the country. If the average weekly temperature recorded at that weather station over a seven-day period, from Monday to Sunday, is minus 1·5 deg C or less, a period of exceptionally cold weather will be declared in the linked local office areas. A declaration will be made speedily at the end of the relevant seven-day period. The weather stations have been carefully chosen to ensure that, among other things, they are able to provide that information quickly.

Those who will be eligible for these payments will be supplementary benefit households containing someone who is 65 or over, or under two years old, or chronically sick or disabled. They are the people who are most at risk from cold weather.

I must briefly remind the House of the general welcome that the Social Security Advisory Committee gave to our proposals. It said that the proposals represented a significant improvement on previous schemes, that they were simpler and easier to understand and that they would lead to more certainty of payment. All those are relevant factors, which the House should bear in mind.

The committee agreed also that simplicity and ease of operation should be major requirements of the new scheme and it welcomed the proposal to introduce a standard amount of payment and to eliminate the need to compare previous fuel bills, which it considered to be a particularly welcome simplification. It agreed, too, that an absolute standard of coldness, rather than a comparative basis, should be a fundamental requirement of the new scheme.

Finally, the committee showed that it understood clearly the meaning of the word "exceptional". It said that a system which allowed for a period of exceptionally severe weather to be declared on average every two years, for example, could hardly be described as catering for exceptional weather conditions. In its detailed comments, therefore, the Social Security Advisory Committee gave significant support to the main elements of our proposals. I am bound to say that those who occasionally quote the committee when it is critical of the Government have been silent on this occasion.

Mr. Meacher: The Minister is preening himself on having the support of the Social Security Advisory Committee, but he is taking amiss the thrust of its comments. According to my reading of the SSAC's comments, it seems to be saying that it does not regard this scheme as ideal. However, given that the Government have insisted that it should be an "exceptionally" severe weather payment, the committee accepts that the payments should not be reviewed every two years. However, the committee does not accept that it is desirable. The committee does not believe that the scheme is adequate and it would be wrong to construe its remarks in that way.

Mr. Major: I do not recall using the word "ideal", and I am sure that *Hansard* will record the fact that I did not use that word. I set out the material advantages of this scheme compared with its predecessors, whose disadvantages are understood and which I outlined to the House.

We made two specific changes in the light of the committee's more detailed comments. Firstly, the time limit for making a claim was extended from four to 13 weeks. Secondly, we have provided for one claim to be treated as a claim for consecutive weeks of exceptionally cold weather. Some concern was expressed about whether the effect of regulation of the single payments regulations, which refers to there being a need for the item in question, might prevent payment when the fuel bill had been paid. The regulations now in force specifically cover the concern expressed and ensure that payment is permissible in such circumstances. That will be generally welcomed.

The Committee also spoke about the importance of publicity arrangements and I agree with it about that. Since the new system will give help in the local areas that are coldest, the main thrust of publicity must necessarily be local and must alert people to help. Revised instructions which give detailed guidance on action to be taken are being issued to local offices. Local offices are to be instructed to place advertisements, which include a claim form, in the local press. In addition, leaflets, again incorporating a claim form, and posters will be distributed to as many local advice and information centres as possible. These will include social services departments, housing benefit offices, jobcentres, health centres, general practitioners' surgeries, gas and electricity showrooms, advice bureaux, libraries and other centres of information. Our local offices will also be instructed to display the leaflets and posters in their reception areas, and information will be available on the DHSS Freephone service.

Regional information officers will be briefed and available to appear on local radio and television programmes to publicise the availability of payments. Therefore, we have arrangements in hand to provide proper publicity whenever necessary. I do not rule out measures in addition to those that I have mentioned if these prove necessary.

The new arrangements will provide for a better system. There will be certainty through the objective criteria for deciding when an exceptionally cold period has occurred. The way that we seek to collect and disseminate information will enable it to be made known quickly that help is available, and there are now clear rules on who will be entitled to extra help. Finally, there will be a known, clear flat rate payment of £5 for each week of very cold weather without the need to worry about comparing past and current fuel bills. I am confident that the new arrangements in force provide a fairer basis for help in what is and always has been a limited part of assistance with heating for vulnerable groups. I ask the House to endorse that proposition and reject the prayer.

5.12 pm

Mrs. Elizabeth Shields (Ryedale): Severe weather payments have rightly been debated in this House in recent weeks. The correlation between very low temperatures and the deaths of elderly people has been well documented since the 1960s. Following the particularly hard winter of 1985-86, the new system of payments for exceptionally cold weather announced by the DHSS last month and now in force are a step in the right direction.

[Mrs. Elizabeth Shields]

The number of deaths between January and March this year rose considerably compared to 1985. In February, there were about 7,000 more deaths than expected and in a very cold spell of weather in March in one week nearly 16,000 people died. Many elderly people survived that cold weather, but suffered extreme hardship. It is estimated that about 578 hypothermia related deaths occurred during the period, and that is an average of about six a day. Disturbing as they are, those figures probably underestimate the true number of deaths resulting from this disease. Many cases go undiagnosed and death certificates are not necessarily a perfect guide to the number of people who have died from the cold.

As hon. Members have already said, not all deaths are attributable to hypothermia because intense cold tends to thicken the blood and causes heart attacks, strokes and respiratory diseases. Even long waiting times at bus stops can mean that old people literally catch their death of cold. Professor Keating, who has already been mentioned, said that the main exposure to cold outside the home was encountered in waiting for a bus. However, many deaths from cold in the home are avoidable, as is shown by international comparisons. Many countries, such as Finland and other Scandinavian countries, have colder temperatures than those in Britain, but they manage to safeguard the lives of their frail citizens rather better than we do.

I welcome the new exceptionally cold weather payments, but there are still too many restrictions which, taken to their logical conclusion, could prove difficult to put into practice and may even be somewhat ridiculous. One must remember that the problems and complexities associated with the claiming of this benefit may well prevent those people genuinely entitled to claim the benefit from so doing. Many old people do not want the hassle of form filling and sometimes further means testing.

As has been said, under the new scheme a payment of £5 is to be made to households of which one member is aged 65 or over or, at the other end of the scale, is under the age of two years. When a child becomes two in mid-winter, does it mean that the child has suddenly become hardened overnight because of a second birthday? I hope that in such cases the allowance will be carried through at least to the end of March.

The payments will also be made on a basis of extremely cold weather — that is to say, weekly cold weather measured from Monday to Sunday. Does that mean that if a cold spell begins and ends on a Wednesday, claimants will not be entitled to the £5? Surely we all appreciate that in Britain we do not enjoy climate but have to endure weather that is unpredictable and no respecter of the days of the week.

There is another disadvantage. It is that any pensioner who has savings of £500 will not qualify for the allowance. Some 40 or 50 years ago £500 was a real nest egg, but half a century on it is a small capital sum and far too low an amount for the elderly to risk. In order to protect such savings, many old age pensioners will turn down the heating and hope to get by on less warmth.

The heart of the problem is that only about 43 per cent. of our elderly people have central heating and many old-age pensioners still live in substandard and often badly insulated houses. The Government have certainly encouraged schemes for the insulation of lofts, and currently provide 66 per cent. of the cost or £95, whichever is the lesser, and give a 90 per cent. grant to households in which there are pensioners or disabled people on supplementary or housing benefit. As many hon. Members may have found, those grants tend to be taken up by those who are somewhat better off rather than by pensioners who are living solely on a state pension and have no other private source of income.

The long-term key to this problem lies in sufficient, adequate housing for people of all ages, but with priority for the elderly, the disabled and the very young. There is a shortage of rented accommodation in my constituency and, indeed, all over Britain. Some 2,000 applicants are on the waiting list of Ryedale district council. I know one elderly lady living in a small terraced cottage who urgently needs a supply of hot water, a proper kitchen and bathroom, and central heating. She is 79 and very frail, but still has to fetch and carry coal for a fire which by no means heats her small living room. There is a centrally heated vacant flat in a block of fairly new council properties, but there are at least a dozen hopefuls for that flat, so her chances are small.

District councils should be allowed to make greater use of their capital receipts for new build, central heating and proper insulation, especially for the elderly, so that the councils can help to reduce the cost of special payments which the lack of proper housing necessitates.

One good scheme to help protect its senior citizens from hypothermia this winter is being run by Adur council in West Sussex. The council is inviting members of the local community to match pound for pound every public donation to what is called the Adur Warm Campaign. It aims to provide a £20 fuel gift voucher to its 1,500 elderly residents most at risk in cold weather. Gas and electricity boards have agreed to accept the vouchers as payment for heating bills, and the Solid Fuel Advisory Service has said that local businesses supplying other fuels such as oil, coal and paraffin will also accept the vouchers. Adur businesses, community groups and organisations are being asked to help, and Age Concern and Warm Aid are working closely with the council in this venture. I am sure that the Minister and hon. Members will agree that this is an excellent venture which could be copied. I am also pleased to mention that, because Adur is a Liberal-led council.

Perhaps the best outcome of the debate will be to publicise once again, nationally, the very real dangers of extreme cold weather to elderly people in particular, and to motivate local councils, groups and individuals in their own areas to keep a special watch out for their elderly neighbours and acquaintances so that no unnecessary deaths occur this winter.

5.20 pm

Mr. Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge): I hope that the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mrs. Shields) will not take it amiss if I do not follow her sequence of points because, in what will be a short debate, I want to make one or two points of my own. However, I assure the hon. Lady that I shall make one or two remarks about what pensioners may expect from an alliance Government, should such a bizarre event ever come to pass.

I start by finding a fair measure of agreement between myself and the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher). I am sure that there is a fair amount of

agreement between us, which, even if it went no further, would centre on the fact that with the most vulnerable members of society — those pensioners who are dependent on a retirement pension, topped up, no doubt, with supplementary benefit — Government have an obligation to ensure that they get it right. I am certain that that is the common ground between the hon. Gentleman and myself, and even if our agreement went no further than that, it would be something. The difficulty is that those words are easy enough to say. However, people outside the Chamber, namely pensioners, have to ask themselves, "What gives us the best prospect of seeing that rhetoric carried into reality?"

When the hon. Gentleman broadened his arguments on heating additions and exceptional weather payments to discuss the retirement pension he made a point that was dangerous for him, but which was nevertheless significant. I am sure that he would like to discuss that and it is again probably common ground between us. However, I shall not embarrass him by finding too much common ground.

Nobody would ever try to suggest that the energy requirements of elderly people should be met entirely by a payment here and a payment there, and by the use of a thermometer in certain circumstances to provide a little bit more. That is not how we look after pensioners. We do so by providing a proper rate of retirement pension.

It would be pie in the sky to suggest that we shall ever reach the position where a person who is on a retirement pension receives pretty much the same amount of money as anybody else. That will not happen and I doubt — though we shall see — whether Opposition Members would say that. The state must make a judgment about how much it can afford to give pensioners. Pensioners are right to ask themselves, "What is on offer? What are the promises?" In trying to assess the worth of those promises, it is worth looking at what has happened before.

The last thing that I want to do is to be unfair to the hon. Gentleman about his opening remarks. It was sad that they lacked a certain amount of the usual rant, but they did include those familiar noughts. I shall not attribute to the hon. Gentleman how many hundreds of millions of pounds he will spend on pensioners because, give or take a few noughts, it will be a great deal. We have heard it all before, we heard more than a hint of it today and we shall hear more about it during the election campaign. If that is what is on offer, the reality is slightly different.

History can sometimes be very unkind and it has been unkind tonight in bringing the hon. Gentleman here because he is in an almost unique position. The hon. Gentleman is the Opposition's main spokesman on social security matters — hoping, no doubt, that when the impossible happens he will be the Secretary of State for Social Services in a Labour Government. The problem is that at the back of his mind he is aware of a terrible embarrassment. Once upon a time — it seems so long ago now — he was a Minister responsible for social security in a Labour Government.

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman understands pensioners' needs and the way in which hypothermia can affect us all. Nothing has changed; pensioners' needs today are exactly the same as they have always been. When the hon. Gentleman sets out his prospectus for the future of pensioners he knows that nothing has changed. Cold is cold and old age is old age. Perhaps, because of his ministerial experience, the hon. Gentleman knows better than most. Will the promises that the hon. Gentleman has made tonight and the assurances that he has given pensioners that, when he achieves office, everything will be as in the land of milk and honey, become reality? The hon. Gentleman talks about how high pensions were in real terms under the previous Labour Government — that is what he says — but he was not a pensioner.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): When does the hon. Gentleman ever listen to pensioners?

Mr. Nicholls: The hon. Gentleman rambles on from a sedentary position, I am sure that we all look forward to hearing his speech in due course, and that we shall follow every word of it with rapt attention. For the time being, the attention he is giving my speech has reminded me of what will be the next point in my speech.

It is worth bearing in mind what pensioners thought of their pensions at the time. I detect some blushing and misgiving on the face of the hon. Member for Oldham, West. I wonder why? I may be able to help the hon. Gentleman by asking him to cast his mind back to February 1975. The hon. Gentleman will remember that fairly well and I am sure that his press cuttings will remind him of that time. In February 1975 the hon. Gentleman addressed a meeting, not in this House where the standards of decency, decorum and good will to all men on each side of the House are by the by and are taken as understood, but a few hundred yards away in central hall, Westminster. There was not the amity and friendship there that I extend to the hon. Gentleman on this festive occasion. He was speaking, not to people who were talking about pensions as I am and not about people promising what they would do in the future. He was talking to people living on old age pensions. Were they pleased to see him?

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): No.

Mr. Nicholls: No, they were not. I cannot imagine that my hon. Friend was there in a professional capacity, because he seems too young and charming.

The hon. Gentleman was addressing a meeting of pensioners. At that time — the hon. Gentleman will correct my chronology if he wants to — the hon. Gentleman had not anncounced to the House that he was yet again abolishing the Christmas bonus to help pensioners with their fuel bills.

Mr. Soames: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Nicholls: Not now, although I shall in a moment.

The record shows — my hon. Friend may be able to confirm it — that pensioners were so outraged by what the hon. Member for Oldham, West had done that he had to be rescued from the hall because the warlike pensioners wanted, to use a phrase, to take him outside.

Mr. Soames: Does my hon. Friend remember what reasons the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) gave for stealing the Christmas bonus from the pensioners?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. We are getting rather a long way from cold weather payments, and I wish that we could return to that subject.

Mr. Nicholls: Without straying beyond the bounds of what may be in order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it may be that one of the things that the pensioners were saying was that

[Mr. Nicholls]

when they had to consider budgeting for the extremely expensive cost of energy at that time, they were not greatly aided in that endeavour by the loss of their bonus.

The hon. Member for Oldham, West tries to pretend that he is the pensioners' friend. He need not take my word for it, but the fact is that when he was in office he had to be rescued from pensioners because they knew the reality.

We have heard a great deal from the hon. Gentleman about how the Government have cheated the pensioners by reneging on the arrangement which Labour had. The Conservative party and the Government have never thought that one serves the interests of pensioners well by promising them the moon and giving them something rather less. The fact is that, when the hon. Gentleman's party was in government and dealing with elderly people with the ailments to which the flesh is heir, it said that it would give them a pension increase that was based on earnings. It did for a time but of course, the trouble is that it did not last. Christmas does not last for 365 days of the year.

The Labour party might have served its electoral purposes at the time, but the reality is very different. Having gone to those poor, grey-haired people in the twilight of their years and said, "Vote for us. There will be an earnings link", what happened? In 1976 pensions were raised by less than the increase in prices or earnings. In November 1978 the Labour Government gave a pension increase of 11·4 per cent., although earnings rose by 13 per cent. In March 1979 the Labour Government proposed a pension increase of 12·8 per cent., when earnings were rsing by about 15 per cent.

That was reality for a pensioner then. First of all there was a Father Christmas Government which promised that one's pension would keep up with earnings; then, suddenly, at a stroke, the Minister responsible for implementing the legislation that he had passed would not enforce it. When a publication called *Pensioners Voice*—its voice must have been frail and muted by then — approached the then Secretary of State for Social Services in a Labour Government it asked, "What about it? What about your legislation? Remember, you passed it. You gave us this legislation which would give us an earnings link." What did the Secretary of State say? He said:

"There is a statutory obligation to take these figures (i.e., earnings) into account, which was done, but no statutory obligation to get it right."

That really is marvellous. That is really something that pensioners can look forward to.

Although statements so blatant and cynical as that will excite a degree of derision bordering on humour, the reality is that there was a Government who, I do not doubt, were compassionate — we all know about the hon. Gentleman's compassion; he sprays it around by the bucketful — and cared, but the reality was that they passed legislation that they were simply unable to implement. Then they had the brass nerve to turn round to pensioners and say, "Right, we have taken it into account, but we were not able to get it right."

Mr. Meacher: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Nicholls: Yes, gladly I am pleased that I have been able to prick the hon. Gentleman's memory.

Mr. Meacher: In the comic and childish interlude that passes for a speech, will the hon. Gentleman acknowledge that, despite all his remarks, the net effect was that at the end of five years the value of the pension in real terms, after taking account of inflation, had risen by 20 per cent., and that is after taking account of all the factors that he has mentioned? Whereas after seven years of Tory Government, it has increased by only a paltry 3 per cent.

Mr. Nicholls: I am greatly saddened that the hon. Gentleman should feel obliged to reply in those terms when I gave way hoping that he would deny that the Labour party had ratted on its own arrangements. I wondered whether I had that quotation wrong and the Secretary of State had said something else.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I welcomed the hon. Gentleman's intervention in the hope that he was going to lead us back to cold weather payments. I hope that we can get back to them.

Mr. Nicholls: I am sure that we can, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I apologise for the fact that I was led astray.

The point that, I am making is that when Labour Members talk about the ability of pensioners to manage their money so that they can pay for their energy needs, that, as the hon. Gentleman rightly conceded, has to be looked at in relation to the pension. I have pointed out only the worst of the fiddles. It may well be that the hon. Gentleman, or whichever of his colleagues applies to the debate, will be able to tell pensioners how the necessity to care for themselves in cold weather was helped by switching the method of calculation of the old age pension from the historic to the forecasting method. If the hon. Gentleman is wondering why that was done, he need look no further than Barbara Castle's diaries to see that it was not to help pensioners, but to save money.

When pensioners are trying to meet their energy costs it is not just the pension or special payments which are relevant; it is also their savings. Many pensioners do have savings put by. The hon. Member for Ryedale said that £500 was not much of a nest egg. I do not know how attractive that would be to many old age pensioners who do not have £500 as a nest egg, but be that as it may. But under the previous Labour Government pensioners' savings were wrecked. The hon. Gentleman has said nothing to us about that.

When the hon. Gentleman was talking about severe weather payments, another thing that he failed to mention was the cost of energy. It is fairly understandable why we did not hear too much about that. Again, under the previous Labour Government the price of energy rose massively. Let me help the hon. Gentleman by reminding him of the figures. Since the previous election, domestic gas and electricity prices have fallen in real terms—gas by 7 per cent. and electricity by 10 per cent. In cash terms since the previous election, the price of gas has increased by about 3 per cent. a year. By contrast, under the previous Labour Government it increased about four times as fast. Electricity prices have increased by about 2 per cent. a year under this Government. Under the previous Labour Government it rose 11 times as fast, or as much in six months as at the moment we have had in about three and a half years.

That is the reality for pensioners or those on a fixed income. More than anything else, they need a Government who can make a commitment which they keep. This

Government have kept to their commitments. They need to know that energy prices will be stable and that their savings will not be wrecked by inflation.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Does the hon. Gentleman not understand that people on fixed incomes are so concerned about these matters that they have become a group of people who favour higher interest rates? We now have a group of people in society who are saddened when the minimum lending rate falls because they believe that it is a loss of income to them. Is it not an indictment when we build into our structures a group——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We are debating cold weather payments and I hope that we shall eventually do that.

Mr. Nicholls: Again, without going down the byroads along which the hon. Gentleman was seeking to lead me, I can say that we have created a body of people who know that they will be dependent—some of them soon, some of them rather later—on a state retirement pension for the rest of their lives. One of the things that they will be concerned about is that the older they get the more their energy costs will matter to them. They will know that and they will—to be blunt—ask themselves who will give them the best deal and on whom can they rely.

It is not good enough for the hon. Gentleman to ignore and forget, and hope that the rest of us do the same, what his party did in office. It is not sufficient for him to hope that we shall forget why the calculation of the pension was switched from an historic method to a forecasting method. It is not sufficient for him to hope that we shall forget that the Labour Government implemented legislation and then spent the next few years wriggling out of it. We must concern ourselves with the fact that the Labour party may yet be able to get away with it, because the pensioners upon whom those tricks were performed have now, for the most part, been called to glory. The people who may be pensioners by the time we come to the next election are the sort of people who have no cause to remember what the 1970s were like because at the time they thought they were a long way from pensionable age.

I realise that in making these few remarks I have for a moment been unfair to the hon. Member for Rydedale because I promised that I would say something about the points that she raised that we might have to look forward to from a Liberal or alliance Government. The marvellous thing about severe weather payments, and many other matters, for the alliance, is that it usually tries to say that it has no record to be judged by. It can be sweetness and light to everybody — a problem which would not normally confront Opposition Members.

In this case, however, the alliance does have a record and we do not just have to look at what is happening in one or two obscure local authorities. When the Labour Government were performing such deceptions and trickeries, not as a result of any lack of compassion on the Opposition Benches but because of sheer fiscal ineptitude and the inability to generate the money that would take care of severe weather payments and such matters, they were kept in office, not by the Conservative party but by the Liberal party of that day. If the Opposition Benches swell and other Members come in to join the hon. Lady in her splendid isolation and try to dissociate themselves from the Labour party's record on this, they must be reminded that when they had the ability to choose they supported a Labour Government in such tricks and deceptions.

I started by saying that I saw common ground between myself and the hon. Gentleman. I hope that in terms of what we try to do, I can. But there is another common ground that will not go away. It is the record of past promises, recklessly made to win general elections, blatantly disregarded when the Labour party took power. The hon. Gentleman thinks that history has come full circle in putting him where he sits today. I respectfully suggest to the hon. Gentleman that it will not take him one jot further.

5.39 pm

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): After enduring that pathetic episode from the hon. Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) — a display of what my mother would have described as a most accomplished blatherskite—I prefer to return to the main subject of our debate this evening — exceptionally cold weather payments. My hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) has outlined most capably the reasoned case for the annulment of this instrument.

The Minister commenced most graciously by welcoming the tone of my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West. However, the sugar soon fell from his words as he went about his business in his customary caustic fashion. However, he did invite us to "examine the details" for once. I am plesed that he has now returned to the Chamber because I would welcome his listening with some care to what I have to say. I would like nothing better than to examine the details with the Minister around a table together with representatives of the voluntary organisations that are saddled with the consequences of the circumstances we are discussing, representatives from the Department of Health and Social Security and perhaps one or two members of my own organisation, the Teesside Pensioners Association. I am sure that representatives from that association, in discussing exceptionally cold weather payments, would give the Minister an exceptionally warm reception. In fact, they may take issue with him on his period of exceptionally cold weather which is characterised as

"a period of 7 days beginning on a Monday and ending on the following Sunday".

That is stated as if it is some charitable giveaway. One does not have to be a great mathematician to point out that that definition could well refer to an exceptionally cold weather period lasting 19 days and that, effectively, it is a way of denying a week's payment to any pensioner who may qualify for it.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Lyell) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Cook: I see the Minister shake his head. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this in greater detail, either now or later.

I wish to raise with the Minister a much more specific reference related to my own constituency of Stockton, North. I have scoured the document for mention of my constituency, but all my best efforts are to no avail for there is no such mention. Those more readily satisfied with a little learning and who can stay awake for a moment would counsel no cause for alarm by quoting section 4*(b)* of new regulation 26A which states:

"where the home of the assessment unit"—

[Mr. Cook]

I hope the Minister is listening.

"where the home of the assessment unit is not situated within an area described in column (2) of Schedule 2A, it shall be treated as situated within the area described in that column which is nearest to it."

Would that it were quite so simple.

The crucial phrase is:

"shall be treated as situated within the area described in that column which is nearest to it."

The obvious solution would seem to be the issue of ordnance survey maps and scale rules to enable adjudication officers to determine which is the nearest point on the district boundary and which area is the neighbour to that point. Even that would be relatively straightforward.

However, thoroughly to understand the problem I am trying to present one needs to know that Stockton is bounded to the north-east by the borough of Hartlepool, whose district officers must make reference to the national climatological message station at Whitby coastguard, whereas the northern, western and southern boundaries of my constituency have as their neighbours the part district of Sedgefield and the districts of Hambleton, Richmondshire and Middlesbrough, all of which are required to use the inland station of Leeming.

One does not need the skills or expertise of an interstellar cartographer to realise that such predetermined circumstances can give rise to a situation that would be not only ridiculous but reprehensible. I refer, of course, to the prospect of close neighbours in the same geophysical location and suffering similar socio-economic deprivation being subject to evaluation on statistics that are quite different.

Mr. Soames: This is lunacy.

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman may well express his boredom. I suggest that he should return to the bar that he left only five minutes ago before inflicting his presence upon us.

Under the original regulations, the Stockton office of the DHSS came wholly under the Leeming criteria so this anomaly did not apply then. Hon. Members may think that it is small beer my raising the question now. Hon. Members following my line of argument may be tempted to consider that the points are nit-picking — *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) is trying to interject again and saying that my statement is "bloody stupid". I am sure that the Teesside Pensioners Association——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Plain language is one thing, coarse language is another. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would prefer not to use that expression.

Mr. Cook: I am grateful for your guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am simply repeating the statement made by the hon. Member for Crawley. If he seeks to withdraw it I shall gladly accept his withdrawal. I am sure that the pensioners of Stockton, North, whom I represent, will note his remark with great interest and I am sure that the pensioners of his own constituency will also take note.

However, as I have said, hon. Members making the effort to follow my argument may be tempted to consider these points as nit-picking. In case that is so I offer some simple facts to illustrate the stupidity. Since 1981 the Leeming station has had seven periods of exceptionally cold weather. In the same period the Whitby coastguard has recorded only two. Therefore, added to the administrative chaos caused by the proliferation of scale rules and survey maps, we will have, if the measure remains in force, the gross inequity of one constituent qualifying for exceptionally cold weather payment while his next-door neighbour may not. As the hon. Member for Crawley said, it is stupid. In truth, it is even more ludicrous although most certainly not laughable.

One constituent in the north of my constituency will be assessed on the same basis as someone in Humberside while his fellow elector from the south side of the same Stockton street will be subject to the same data as are applied to a claimant from Castle Morpeth in Northumberland. That is a geographical difference approaching 140 miles. It is sheer madness.

The situation I bring to the attention of the House is only the latest in a long line of instances where the Government seek to pinch pennies from the poor and deprived. This week alone we have seen several instances of that sort of mentality, and this is the week before Christmas. If Christmas means anything, it should last 366 days not 365, as the hon. Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) said. There are 365¼ days in a year. If Christmas means anything, this regulation should be annulled tonight and Christians on the Conservative Benches should vote for that annulment.

5.48 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): I want to make an unashamedly simple speech because these matters are very simple and the public outside are concerned about the way in which the Government hide behind complicated indices to prove their statistical case when, indeed, they know the truth.

Last weekend I visited the house of one of my constituents in the town of Maryport. When I walked in the door the first thing that struck me—many might say that we are not even in the cold part of the year—was how cold the house was. As I invariably do, because I love heat, I asked how they managed live in that way. I was told quite simply that they could not afford to heat their home.

In that house both the parents were out of work and there were two children. I went there to discuss a case totally unrelated to this matter. It was to do with another affair where the Government have responsibility. I sat listening to them wondering to myself, how it was possible in these times for people to live in these conditions? I hear Government Back Benchers say things such as, "You should compare your pension with our pension," and various other arguments. All such comparisons are irrelevant. What matters is that the march of progress demands that we set different criteria.

The march of progress required that in 10 years we moved from mechanical systems to chip systems, perhaps by way of the transistor, and the state should set higher standards in what it believes is necessary for people, including the conditions in which they live. Unfortunately, we still set and use criteria that have existed for decades. We must look forward and not make comparisons with the past. An analysis that is based on the past is irrelevant and invalid. We should be thinking of how we intend to raise the living standards of millions, and especially the heating of their homes. Clearly the heating of homes is a living standard. For many people heat is as important as food. There are those in my constituency——

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: No, I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman because I am conscious that the Minister wishes to reply. The Minister will reply at the conclusion of my speech.

Mr. Cash *rose*——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: There are those who fail very often—this happens in my constituency—to feed their children properly——

Mr. Cash *rose*——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: —and for many reasons they are failing similarly to heat their homes.

Mr. Cash: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I put a simple proposition to the Minister——

Mr. Cash: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Does the Minister accept that £5 per house over a five-year period——

Mr. Cash *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) must not persist in that fashion.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Does the Minister accept that £5 perhaps once every five years for my constituents, as set out in annex B of the very good report that deals with the proposals for exceptionally severe weather payments—the facts are set out in the report and the truth is that my constituents receive a fiver once in five years — is insufficient to resolve the problem that confronts many people?

Mr. Cash *rose*——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman. I intend to allow the Minister to reply in a few minutes and I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman. The Minister wishes to reply to the debate.

There are many organisations in my constituency that are demanding higher standards. Many of Age Concern's voluntary workers report that they are concerned about people living in cold conditions in the winter months. There is an unemployment centre in my constituency and those who work there make representations to me repeatedly that those who use the centre daily, perhaps to fill their time during their unemployment, are complaining constantly that they cannot afford to heat their homes. There are social workers in my constituency who ask me privately, "Dale, what is going to happen? Why don't the Government understand that standards are changing in the 1980s and that what was perhaps good enough in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s is no longer good enough?" Those who cannot afford to heat their homes know that down the road or in the next town there are those who can. They cannot understand why the great gulf or division has been allowed to open between those who can afford to heat their homes and those who cannot.

There is a responsibility upon the Government to bridge the gap that has opened but they refuse to do so. All that they are prepared to do is cut taxes for the better-off in our society. All Members of this place have received tax cuts over the past seven years of Conservative government, but we know that there are many outside the House who cannot afford to live and are faced day by day, week on week and year by year with additional, niggling little Government measures that only depress further their living standards.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North) *rose*——

5.54 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Lyell): There have been some distinguished speeches in this debate and, if I may say so, the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has asked a serious question which I shall seek to answer.

We are debating a scheme which is designed to give help to the most vulnerable in our society at a time when it is exceptionally cold. There will be common ground in the House that a reasonable scheme should fulfil the following criteria. First, it should operate when it is exceptionally cold, and in areas where it is exceptionally cold. Secondly, it must have clear standards. Thirdly, it must provide help in parts of the country where it is most needed and is very cold, and that takes up what the hon. Member for Workington was saying. Fourthly, it must be easy to understand. Fifthly, it must provide a definite amount of benefit. Sixthly and finally, it must be quick and easy to claim. No scheme is perfect, but the present one passes all the tests that I have set out and has won the approval and support of the Social Security Advisory Committee, which is the Government's independent adviser in these matters.

Mr. Meacher: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lyell: I shall do so in a moment.

As I have said, no scheme is perfect, but it is against the six tests to which I have referred that any scheme should be judged.

The House will remember that we are discussing a scheme for exceptionally cold weather. It is based on a crude average of once in five years' coldness. It is not the basic means of support, which is the current levels of weekly benefits, including additions. These sums will be put into the basic scale rates and the special premiums in 1988.

The basic support—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Workington made a thoughtful speech and I know that he will wish to listen to what I have to say. The basic support comes from weekly benefits, added to which are heating additions. As the House will recall, and as the hon. Member for Oldham West (Mr. Meacher) has rightly acknowledged, the heating additions have been a great deal more generous under this Government than they were under the previous Labour Government. They are up to £400 million per annum in money terms and £140 million more per annum in real terms, and these may be underestimates. It is against that background that I shall answer the questions that have been raised in the debate, but first I shall give way to the hon. Member for Oldham West.

Mr. Meacher: What is the figure within overall public expenditure that the Government have budgeted for the scheme for next winter?

Mr. Lyell: The hon. Gentleman will appreciate from his own experience that no one can forecast whether the coming winter is likely to be exceptionally severe. We shall find out in the next two months. The benefits are

[Mr. Lyell]

demand-led, and over recent years the amounts paid out have varied from nothing to quite small figures, up to about £12 million. The overall budgeting figures, which are demand-led, are well capable of taking any likely figure into account.

I take up the remarks of the hon. Member for Workington. The House should remember that the scheme is based on a standard of coldness which is a crude average. One of the benefits of the scheme, as recognised by the Social Security Advisory Committee, is that it provides more help to the parts of the country that are the coldest. I realise that the charts show that the constituency of the hon. Member for Workington would receive help about once every five years. Other parts of the country that are not exceptionally cold—some city areas are much warmer than other areas—would receive help much less frequently. The tables show that some areas have received help for many weeks over recent years. One of the benefits of the scheme is that it helps areas that are especially cold.

I shall refer later and briefly to the comments made by the hon. Members for Ryedale (Mrs. Shields) and for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook). Most of the points made by the hon. Member for Oldham, West were rightly disposed of by the effective speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls), who put the hon. Gentleman on notice as to the weakness of his arguments. If I had longer, I should like to put him on notice rather more clearly still.

Mr. Corbyn *rose*——

Mr. Lyell: I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman because he has not been in the Chamber for very long and he has not participated in the debate, as is true of most Opposition Members.

The hon. Member for Ryedale suggested that the dangers of extremely cold weather should be publicised. That is a good point. Professor Keatings, to whom the hon. Lady referred, has said that old people can look after themselves if they stay indoors and do not expose themselves to cold weather more than is necessary.

The new arrangements will provide for a better system. There will be certainty, through the objective criteria, in deciding when an exceptionally cold period occurs. The way in which we are collecting and disseminating information will enable it to be known quickly when help is available. I commend the system to the House.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 171, Noes 265.

Division No. 47] **[6 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Barnett, Guy
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Cleiland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Dr Mark *(Durham)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Penhaligon, David
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Cgmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Sean Hughes and
Mr. Ron Davies.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony

Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Fry, Peter
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Portillo and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

Social Security

6.11 pm

The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled (Mr. John Major): I beg to move,

That the draft Social Security Benefits Up-rating (No. 2) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 1st December, be approved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I remind the House that the Question on motions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and motion No. 8, the prayer on housing, if moved, will be put together at the conclusion of the debate. Therefore, it may be for the convenience of the House if the following motions are taken with motion No. 2:

That the draft Supplementary Benefit Up-rating (No. 2) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 28th November, be approved.

That the draft Family Income Supplements (Computation) (No. 2) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 24th November, be approved.

That the draft Statutory Sick Pay (Rate of Payment) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 1st December, be approved.

That the draft Social Security (Contributions, Up-rating) (No. 2) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 24th November, be approved.

That the draft Social Security (Treasury Supplement to and Allocation of Contributions) (Re-rating) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 24th November, be approved.

That an Humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Housing Benefits Amendment (No. 5) Regulations 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 2183), dated 11th December 1986, a copy of which was laid before this House on 11th December, be annulled.

Mr. Major: The House will know that the Social Security Act 1986 and the Social Security Act 1975 require the draft uprating and contributions re-rating orders to be accompanied by a report from the Government Actuary on the effects of our proposals on the national insurance fund. That report has been laid today.

These statutory instruments, together with the regulations against which the prayer is made, put into force the proposed uprating of social security benefits announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in the House on 22 October. They will take effect from 6 April 1987 and will complete the process of transition to annual increases of benefit in April. In future, benefit changes will take place at the same time as other major financial changes, such as the changes in national insurance contribution rates also provided for here. I believe that this innovation will be generally welcomed. The instruments also provide for the changes in the statutory sick pay scheme which I announced on 6 November.

This is the first time—certainly in recent years—that it has been possible for the House to debate together both a benefit uprating and the changes in contributions which pay for more than half of all benefits. I hope that, if nothing else, debating these instruments together will remind those tempted to forget it that social security benefits, and their upratings, all have to be paid for by the country's working population. There is no fairy gold even for good causes. This uprating adds over £700 million, in addition to the £420 million extra provided in July, to the substantial sums already devoted to those who need support from our social security system. The total cost of the benefit system from the Consolidated Fund and the national insurance fund together will amount to a staggering £46 billion in 1987-88. This represents over 30 per cent. of public expenditure and it is an excellent discipline to consider together both acquisition and expenditure of this enormous sum.

I should like to remind hon. Members briefly of the main features of the proposed upratings. Most benefits, including retirement pension, widows' benefit and unemployment benefit, will rise by 2·1 per cent. to reflect the increase in prices between January and September 1986, the relevant period for this uprating. This means, for example, that a married couple's retirement pension rises from £61·95 to £63·25 and that for a single person from £38·70 to £39·50. Housing benefit needs allowances will rise by the same cash amount as the relevant contributory benefit, thus minimising administrative difficulties for local authorities. This is particularly important at a time when they are preparing for the introduction of the reformed housing benefit scheme in April 1988. Supplementary benefit scale rates are to be increased by 2 per cent.—the amount of increase in the retail prices index minus housing—which, as the House will know, is the normal index used for this benefit. Child benefit and family income supplement will both be increased in line with inflation to sustain our support for families with children.

This will be the third increase in social security benefits within 16 months. The House last debated an uprating as recently as June. The increase this time, which because of the transition to an April uprating date covers eight months only, cannot be directly compared with upratings over the usual 12-month period, or with annual figures of inflation. A truer perspective perhaps is to point out that pensioners, for example, have received increases of £5·95 for a married couple and £3·70 for a single person since November 1985. These are substantial and welcome rises and no less valuable for having come in three tranches. I stress this point to forestall the predictable observations that may litter the speeches of those hon. Members who may care to join us in the debate later.

I stress also that the uprating is in line with the rise in prices as measured by the retail prices index, which, as the Retail Prices Index Advisory Committee continues to advise, is the best measurement available. The difference between these increases and the big cash increases given during the late 1970s is that inflation has now been dramatically reduced and smaller increases can now keep pace with the changing cost of living. Not only do benefits hold their value better between upratings but pensioners in particular will no longer see their savings destroyed by unrestrained inflation.

It is worth illustrating the relevance of that point. A pensioner who put his savings into a building society would have found that, between 1974 and 1979, their value had declined by as much as one third, even taking account of the interest received on the deposit. The same pensioner would find today that his savings are increasing in real value because of the reductions in inflation which have been achieved. This considerable achievement needs to be borne in mind when people sometimes criticise the levels of uprating, perhaps with something of a one-eyed stance.

The increases in this uprating are fully consistent with our undertaking to protect pensions and other long-term benefits against price rises. I make the point, too, because it is important, that over the past eight years there has been an increase of almost 1 million pensioners who deserve and

will have our support in their retirement. We are determined to continue to maintain the purchasing power of their retirement pension, and I am pleased to reiterate that pledge.

By the time the increases take effect, we will have completed the move to an April timetable for upratings. Beneficiaries have been protected against inflation at each stage of the transition and from next year will see, I think, the advantage of this more sensible timing of increases. Apart from getting higher benefits at the time when other financial changes take place, no longer will pensioners, widows and disabled people find their tax codes readjusted in the middle of the year following their pension increase. As all hon. Members will know, for many that has been a cause of frustration, which, happily will be removed. Moreover, because the uprating coincides with the general increases in rent and rates in April, local authorities will also find that they need to assess a claimant's right to benefit only once a year instead of twice as in the past, thus reducing the burden on them. This is a welcome improvement, too, for local authorities and those who seek rent and rate rebates.

The changes in the uprating timetable are further evidence of the determination that we have shown in a variety of ways to reduce the undesirable complexity of the present social security system. Changes resulting from the Social Security Act 1986 are an important part of this policy, and the Statutory Sick Pay (Rate of Payment) Regulations 1986 that are before the House today continue this move towards greater simplicity.

There are at present three separate rates of benefit under the statutory sick pay scheme, but 85 per cent. of spells of sickness qualify for the top rate. Every indication is that that percentage continues to rise. The remaining 15 per cent. have to be divided between two lower rates. We have decided therefore to merge the middle and lower rates to produce a simple two-band system. We believe that that more logically reflects the current position as well as reducing the burden on employers who administer the scheme. I hope that hon. Members will agree that administratively that is a sensible improvement.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): I am sure that before the Minister finishes this part of his speech he will refer to the burden on claimants who will lose out. Has he had pressure from employers for this change, or has it been thought up by the Government?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman will know that the Government are under repeated pressure from the large and small business lobby about the burdens on business. That is a matter of repeated pressure over the whole gamut of burdens that businesses feel have been placed on them by the Government. Undoubtedly within that the statutory sick pay scheme would have been one of the matters that employers had in mind.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the merging of the three rates and clearly has in mind the fact that the merging is effectively an abolition of the lower rate. He must bear in mind that the increase of the lower rate under the proposed abolition has a beneficial knock-through to statutory maternity pay. Many women will consider that a welcome change.

On the hon. Gentleman's specific point, those receiving the middle rate at the time of the change will, of course, be protected. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising that point. In future we will increase statutory sick pay levels in the uprating order, although a separate instrument is necessary on this occasion precisely because of the reduction in the number of rates from three to two.

As well as increasing housing benefits needs allowances, the Housing Benefits Amendment (No. 5) Regulations 1986 also provide for an increase in the rent taper, by which benefit is reduced for those with incomes above the needs allowance level, from 29 per cent. to 33 per cent. Housing benefit now goes to one household in three in Britain, at an anticipated cost of some £5 billion this year. We have made it perfectly clear beyond doubt in the past that this level of spending, and the rate at which it is accelerating, is difficult to sustain. What we have sought to do by increasing the taper in this fashion is to restrain expenditure without causing hardship to those less well off who rely on housing benefit.

These changes will not, therefore, affect anyone who is on supplementary benefit or whose income is slightly above that level. Indeed, no pensioners with an income up to £10 above supplementary benefit level will lose benefit and the average loss for this group will be only about 47p. The expected saving from this change is about £28 million in a full year. In addition, the changed method of uprating the needs allowances, to which I referred earlier, means that spending will be some £40 million less than it would have been. Moreover, the Alice-in-Wonderland nature of this benefit is such that most people on housing benefit, including pensioners, will actually experience cash increases next April because rent and rate increases will trigger higher benefit payments.

In view of the demands for increased expenditure on benefits which I anticipate hearing about later from the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett), I should like to remind the House of a point of principle upon which I touched earlier—that of the balance which must always be struck between providing for those who need our help and support—the elderly, the disabled, lower-income families with children—and the need to provide for a healthy economy which allows us to accept and meet those commitments. Our record shows that we have given serious attention to the needs of social security beneficiaries and have provided for substantial improvements to the system through which help is made available to them. At the same time, we have sought to ensure that a stable and expanding economy which benefits everyone, perhaps especially those beneficiaries, continues to be encouraged.

This brings me naturally to the second main element in these instruments — the means by which national insurance benefits such as pensions, unemployment benefit, invalidity benefit and others are actually financed. The Government's proposals for national insurance contributions were announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 6 November. I hope that the House will acknowledge the Government's considerable achievement in keeping the rate of class 1 contributions unchanged for the fourth successive year. I cannot recall when that previously happened. As required by statute, the lower earnings limit for class 1 contributions will be £39 per week from next April. As the House will know, this is linked to the basic retirement pension rate rounded down to the nearest pound. The upper earnings limit, which may be between 6½ and 7½ times the basic retirement pension, will be £295 per week from next April, nearly 7½ times the basic pension level.

[Mr. Major]

Right hon. and hon. Members may well have noted that the regulations bringing these proposals into effect have not yet been laid. The fact is that they cannot be until the draft benefits uprating order has been approved by Parliament because of the statutory link between the lower and upper earnings limits and the basic retirement pension. The regulations implementing the earnings limits will be laid as soon as Parliament has approved the benefits uprating order.

With reference to the instruments before us today, I want first to comment on the proposals contained in the draft Social Security (Contributions, Re-rating) (No. 2) Order 1986. The House will recall that in 1985, in order to help lower-paid workers and to reduce employment costs, we introduced graduated class 1 contribution rates, which came into effect in October 1985. The reduced contribution rates change significantly the impact of national insurance contributions on those receiving lower earnings, but did not in any way affect their benefit entitlement. The net annual cost of this change, reflected in lower receipts from national insurance contributions, is expected to be £500 million in the current year, which is its first full year of operation.

We propose to maintain the value of the earnings brackets at which lower contribution rates are paid by uprating their earnings limits. The lowest earnings bracket, on which contributions will be payable at the 5 per cent. rate, will run from £39—the new lower earnings limit—to £64·99 per week. The 7 per cent. bracket will run from £65 to £99·99 per week, and the 9 per cent. bracket will start from £100 per week and end at £149·99 per week for employers, and £295 per week for employees. Employers will pay contributions at the 10·45 per cent. rate where a person's earnings are at or above £150 per week. The proposed increases in the earnings brackets are greater than strict inflation indexing would have required.

Our proposals for class 1 contributions will thus further ease the contributions burden of some lower paid workers and their employers, where they are affected by the changed earnings brackets. Most other employed earners, and their employers, will be affected only slightly. People earning £295 per week or more will have to pay a maximum of 90p per week extra, if they are not contracted out from the state earnings-related pension scheme.

These perhaps are the proposals of most interest to most workers, but a growing number are self-employed and I wish to mention specifically our proposals for them. We attach great importance to the self-employed and their contribution to the economy. We welcome their growth in numbers and we are delighted that our steps to encourage this have been successful — particularly our earlier changes to their national insurance liability. The House will be aware that self-employed people pay their national insurance contributions in two parts—the flat rate class 2 contribution and the profits-related class 4 contributions. We do not propose to change the class 4 rate, which will remain at 6·3 per cent. from next April. The profits limits for class 4 contributions rise automatically each year broadly in line with the earnings limits for class 1 contributions. The annual profits limits proposed for 1987-88 are £4,590 and £15,340 respectively. The upper profits limit is exactly 52 times the proposed class 1 upper earnings limit.

We also propose to continue the abatement to the self-employed class 2 rate, which was introduced in 1985. Accordingly, we propose to increase the class 2 contribution rate by only 10p to £3·85 per week from next April. The small earnings exception from class 2 will also rise automatically by £50 to £2,125. The effects of our proposals are that class 2 contributors will pay £5·20 per year extra in 1987-88. For those self-employed people with profits at or above the proposed upper profits limit to £15,340, class 4 contributions will be £23·94 per year higher in 1987-88.

The proposed voluntary class 3 rate, which protects those who have breaks in their contributions record—for example, students or those who have worked abroad, —is being set at 10p less than the class 2 rate—that is, a rate of £3·75 per week from next April. The difference between the class 2 and class 3 rates, therefore, has been kept unchanged.

I mentioned earlier that national insurance contributions pay for only a proportion of benefits. The changing balance between the cost of contributory benefit and the cost of non-contributory and income-related benefit leads to the proposals in the Social Security (Treasury Supplement to and Allocation of Contributions) (Re-rating) Order, which is before the House. We propose to reduce the Treasury supplement to the national insurance fund by two percentage points to 7 per cent. from April 1987. Social security expenditure is financed by contributors, including employers, and by taxpayers who pay for non-contributory benefits, whether income related or not.

It is relevant that between 1981-82 and the current year, expenditure on contributory benefits as a share of total social security expenditure, has fallen from 60 per cent. to 54 per cent. for a variety of reasons. By contrast, the share of social security expenditure devoted to income-related benefits has increased from 19 per cent. to 26 per cent. over the same period. We have to strike a balance between revenue from taxation and contributions, and we decided that the taxpayer should pay less to the national insurance fund, in recognition specifically of the increasing costs of non-contributory benefit expenditure which are met wholly by taxpayers.

This draft order also increases the proportion of contributions which are allocated to meeting the costs of the National Health Service. Many people believe, mistakenly, that the whole cost of the NHS is met by contributions. That is far from true, but because of the great increases in expenditure on the NHS over recent years, we think it is right that those who pay national insurance contributions should meet a slightly higher percentage of the cost than at present. In 1987-88, expenditure on the NHS in Great Britain is planned to rise by no less than £1·1 billion to reach a total of £19·9 billion. So much for cuts, one might say, but I have no wish to be combative this evening. Our proposals for the employment protection allocation enable us to achieve a higher contribution allocation to the NHS to meet this extra cost without increasing overall contribution rates. Therefore, we propose to increase from April 1987 the employees' NHS allocation to 0·85 per cent. and the employers' NHS allocation to 0·7 per cent. of earnings, in respect of which class 1 contributions are paid. Corresponding changes in the NHS allocation are proposed for the other classes of contributions.

I wish to turn briefly to the employment protection allocation itself. The House will be aware that a small allocation is paid to the redundancy fund, and a still smaller allocation is paid, from employers' contributions only, to the maternity pay fund. Since August 1986 the redundancy rebate has ceased to be paid from the redundancy fund to employers with more than nine employees. The level of redundancy rebates had already fallen to levels lower than in the early 1980s. As a result, there are lower demands on the resources of the redundancy fund. In addition, the introduction of statutory maternity pay has led to the maternity pay fund being wound up from April 1987. We therefore propose to abolish the allocation of employers contributions to the maternity pay fund, and to cut the allocation that is paid to the redundancy fund.

As I mentioned earlier, a report by the Government Actuary on our proposals has been laid before the House. Total income received by the national insurance fund is estimated to be £26·3 billion in 1987-88 and total expenditure is estimated to be £25·6 billion, giving an expected surplus of £742 million for the year. At this stage, about four months before the start of the financial year and about 16 months before its end, it is difficult to be certain that the estimated surplus will be realised. The balance in the national insurance fund at the end of the next financial year is expected to be £6,359 million, equivalent to nearly 13¼ weeks benefit expenditure. We regard this balance at this stage as a prudent objective which exceeds the Government Actuary's minimum working balance of one sixth of the year's estimated benefit expenditure.

In one way or another these orders will affect the lives of almost everyone and, although they are technical, they deserve serious attention. However, I want to make again the point that social security benefits must be met by tax and national insurance payers and cannot be paid for in magic gold. Their costs, and the costs of increases in them, always come out of the pockets of those in work, their employers and national insurance contribution payers. Many people are both beneficiaries and contributors. We believe that the instruments before the house tonight strike a fair and reasonable balance between protecting the beneficiaries against the rise in the cost of living and protecting the workers and employers who generate the resources needed, not only for contributions, but also for the tax revenue which finances the rest of the social security programme.

Therefore, I invite the House to endorse these motions and to reject the prayer in the name of the Opposition against the Housing Benefits Amendment (No. 5) Regulations.

6.36 pm

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): Since this is the time when we are all urged to think of those less fortunate than ourselves, it is particularly appropriate that this is when we debate this year's package of what the Government decide can be spared for the poorest members of our community.

Three characteristics of the package, sadly, are shared with packages proposed in previous years. First, the package will ensure a continuation of the steady decline in the standard of living of those unable to work compared with those in work, as has happened every year since 1979. Secondly, the package is full of little titbits of ingenuity —little changes here and there which all happen to produce savings for the Government. They produce a few tens of millions here and there by picking away, bit by bit, at incomes which are already too low. Thirdly, the package shows how shamelessly the Government shift their ground, denying now what they stalwartly affirmed a few months ago because any old justification will do and will be supported by Tory Members, so long as it saves public expenditure.

Two days ago the Government told us how worried they were about the low paid, but in these regulations 400,000 of the low paid will lose when the middle rate of statutory sick pay is abolished at a saving of £19 million. As the Minister said in a written answer in column *602* of *Hansard* on 6 November, it "overcomplicates the administration" of statutory sick pay to have the middle rate. We were surprised to hear that because last year when the Government decided to extend statutory sick pay to cover illnesses of 28 rather than eight weeks, the Minister assured us that the scheme was working superbly. He said:

> "There is growing evidence . . . that the scheme is working in general very well . . . there is substantial evidence that it is working satisfactorily." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 17 and 22 January 1985; c. 254-270.]

The Secretary of State gave similar assurances on the Floor of the House.

On 24 November 1986 I asked the Under-Secretary of State how many representations he had had about the administrative difficulties which have been given as a reason for the change that the Government are making this evening. He answered that there had been no complaints specifically about the structure of the re-rating, although some employers' representatives have mentioned them when pressing generally for a simplification of the scheme. Once simplification was mentioned the Government, always anxious to please, found a way not only of simplifying the scheme, but of saving money at the same time. That is what always seems to happen when the Government simplify matters.

An even more blatant piece of chicanery involves the housing benefit changes. Once again, the Government have increased the rate at which benefit is lost. As a result of that change alone, they have saved £28 million at the expense of nearly a million households — 620,000 of them pensioner households, of whom 60,000 will lose all entitlement—and 120,000 of them families with children, of whom 20,000 will lose all entitlement to benefit.

In addition, the Government are saving £23 million on rents and £17 million on rates by increasing the housing benefit needs allowances by less than the rate of inflation and by using a formula which appears to break an undertaking given by the Minister. Again, it is simplicity that is called in aid.

At the last uprating, the Secretary of State announced that the needs allowance would be increased, not by the usual formula but by linking it to the then cash increase in pensions. It was pointed out that this would mean a smaller increase in the allowances but the Minister wrote to my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) saying that the actual rate of increase would be taken into account at this uprating. Instead, once again, the link is with the cash increase in the pensions—which is not exactly generous at 80p for a single pensioner—and as a result of this change some 3·5 million households will be losers.

[Mrs. Margaret Beckett]

On 6 November I asked the Under-Secretary to estimate the loss of benefit for pensioner households, single person households, couples and couples with children. Although he told me that the reply would be made available as soon as possible, so far that has not proved to be the case. I should be grateful, if those figures are available, if he would give them to the House tonight. The total savings from the housing benefit package are some £68 million.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Is my hon. Friend aware that there are many problems for households in receipt of housing benefits when the Department of Health and Social Security is inefficient in passing on the payments to the local authorities concerned? Tenants are often accused of being in rent arrears when that is not the case.

Mrs. Beckett: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There are difficulties caused at both ends of the chain. In a case concerning a constituent of mine, the DHSS did notify the local authority of changes in the housing benefit allowances but no action was taken for some weeks. Arrears of some £90 built up through no fault of my constituent.

At the last uprating, housing benefit needs allowances were uprated, as I mentioned, in line with cash pension increases. The same principle was used for supplementary benefit increases. By that change the Government made a saving on supplementary benefit of £11 million in a full year. This time, again for simplicity and despite the contradiction of the Minister's statement, the same approach has been used as last year for housing benefit. The Government have also returned to the previous formula for supplementary benefit, which, surprise surprise, gives a lower increase than would have been paid if, again, housing benefit and supplementary benefit had been treated alike. When the Minister replies, perhaps he will tell us what the saving will be this time.

In our earlier debate this evening, a great deal was said about the Government's record on heating allowances. My hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) quite properly pointed out that what pensioners might gain on the swings of heating allowances they have lost tenfold on the roundabouts of lower pensions.

In this year's uprating, heating allowances are not being touched because the Government say that fuel prices are stable. However, today's heating allowances reflect the fuel prices of May 1985 to January 1986 — they are already nearly a year out of date. They will thus be payable at current levels until April 1988, by which time they will be over two years out of date. We seek an assurance from the Under-Secretary that if there is a substantial movement of fuel prices over that period — perhaps because the Government put a special tax on fuel, they have done it twice before — these allowances will be reviewed.

With regard to the general level of increases to be applied, we welcome, of course, the 15p increase in child benefit. That does not make good the cuts that the Government made in 1985, for which the increase would have to be 50p. Since it is generally accepted that child benefit is the best way of helping family poverty it is especially worrying that there are rumours of a further potential threat to the strength of this means of support. It is because child benefit is a universal benefit that it is of such value. It is now suggested that, when the universal maternity grant is abolished, mothers will have to make a special application for child benefit.

I have written to the Minister to ask for an assurance that new ways will be found of issuing forms automatically, perhaps through the general practitioner or a hospital maternity unit. I would welcome that reassurance tonight. Child benefit is now worth £2·70 less for the second and subsequent children than the equivalent allowances were in 1955. That is a sad commentary on the current state of affairs, when some 4 million children now live in families in poverty.

Whatever the questions and criticisms we raise about the details of particular benefit increases, our major concern is that, once again, the standard of living of those dependent on pensions and benefits is falling compared to those in work. In his remarks, the Minister said—I do not recall the exact phrase—that the Government had given assurances that they would protect the value of pensions and that those assurances hve been maintained. That is not the assurance that the Government gave—it is an assurance which has been more convenient for the Government to make in recent years. The assurance given when the link between pensions and earnings was broken was that

"pensioners and other long term beneficiaries can confidently look forward to sharing in the increased standards of living in the country as a whole". — [*Official Report*, 13 June 1979; Vol. 968, c. 439.]

That has not happened in any year since 1979. In this year alone the gap is widening by £1 for a single pensioner and £2 for a married couple. That is on top of the gap that has already been established.

In 1978 the pension was worth 20·4 per cent. of average male earnings. In 1986 it is estimated to have fallen to 18·4 per cent. In 1978 supplementary benefit for a couple with two children aged four and six was 46·9 per cent. of average net incomes. In 1986 it is estimated to be 43·1 per cent. This year alone, supplementary benefit would have to rise by over £2 for such a family to match the rise in earnings. If earnings continue to rise so much faster than prices, as they are doing this year, the basic state pension will steadily fall over the next 10 to 20 years until it falls to half of what it would be if it were linked to earnings. That is a steady and accelerating increase in pensioner poverty.

The Minister referred to the balance in the way in which money is raised for these benefits between taxes and through national insurance contributions. The Minister made an extraordinary point when he said that the level of contributory benefits paid for from the fund was falling as a proportion of those pensions and benefits raised. We do not disagree, as that is unquestionably accurate. However, as the level of contributory benefits is falling, the level of income to pay for those benefits raised from contributions rises. In other words, the benefits are being paid for, disproportionately, by contributors although their share of benefits is falling. How the Minister makes that a justification for the change the Government are making is frankly beyond me, as it seems to point in exactly the opposite direction.

The money that is raised to pay for pensions and benefits will continue to be raised, disproportionately, from the less well off. The Minister referred to beneficial changes made to national insurance contributions and we

do not dispute the figures he gave. Such contributions remain a heavier burden on the poor than the rich. The further reduction in the contribution to pensions and benefits made from general taxation, but cutting the Treasury supplements — now standing at 7 per cent. compared to the 18 per cent. at which it stood in 1979 — means that in the future, as in the past, the cost of pensions and benefits will fall more and more heavily on the poor rather than on the rich.

Today, the Child Poverty Action Group published a document called "Christmas on the Breadline". It quotes the comments of those striving to give their children a decent Christmas on the inadequate level of benefits that these upratings perpetuate. It draws a contrast, among others, to the availability at Harrods of some rather bizarre items such as bridal outfits for one's dog at only £100 and a mere £20 for a track suit for a cat, with a quotation from a letter of a single mother who wrote to the Child Poverty Action Group following publicity in the *Daily Star*. It was one of many touching and alarming quotations but a simple one. It reads:

"For us it is a worry just to pay for food and heating over the holidays."

There is no mention there of anything which makes Christmas special.

As unemployment continues to rise and as the standard of living of the unemployed, pensioners, the sick and the disabled continues to fall, as it will under these upratings, exhortations about the spirit of Christmas ring ever more hollow in our ears.

6.49 pm

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): The hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) made a good point when she referred to Christmas. It is right that the House should bear in mind what my hon. Friend the Minister said when he opened the debate — many millions of people are affected by what the House is proposing to do by passing these orders.

This is not just a matter of benefits for a fringe element in the population — it affects many millions of people. At Christmas time I hope that we will remember that, because we have not yet got our system for the redistribution of income right, our society is divided into those in work and those in need. The very large number of people who, in one way or another, are dependent on means-tested benefits now constitute about one quarter of our population.

I hope that the remaining three quarters of the population who are able to enjoy their Christmas with the rising living standards of the nation as a whole will not be unmindful of the needs of the one quarter of the population whose income has to be supplemented by some means or another because their own resources are not enough.

It is right that the House should take some time to look at what is happening in these orders, not just because millions of people are affected but also because very large sums of money are involved. In general, I think that we can congratulate ourselves that we are living in a civilised society which provides a basic income guarantee.

Speaking broadly, we can say that nobody has to drop into total destitution in Britain today. I am one of the hon. Members who are old enough to remember what the distressed areas, as they were called in those days, were like before the war, because I was brought up in Glamorgan. I remember very well the look of the streets, the look of the shops and the look of the people where there had been long-term unemployment and people were living on very small incomes with very little shred of hope that they would be able to get back into work and recreate the family circumstances which they had enjoyed at the height of the incomes that they earned when coal was at its best.

In Britain today we do not see the sort of harrowing scenes which were commonplace in large parts of the country before the war. So much has been achieved that we can be proud of and I am not entirely a critic of what the present Government are doing because I think the Minister is right to point out that we are raising benefits — national insurance benefits and supplementary benefits — at a rate which is faster than the rise in the cost of living. So, to some extent, we are taking with us the people in this unhappy subculture — people who are not able to rely on their own resources.

There is, as the Child Poverty Action Group has pointed out, a widening gap between those in work and those in need. I quote the figures that it has given to hon. Members in its briefing. I must say that I would like to pay tribute to the quality of the briefings that we get from the Child Poverty Action Group, which get better and better and are really quite important contributions to our thinking on these subjects. It points out that there is a widening gap for people on supplementary benefit. A couple with two young children in 1978 had 46 per cent. of the average wage. Now, in 1986, as it calculates, they get only 43 per cent. Matters are not improving where the building of one nation is concerned.

I have very often drawn attention to the fact that we are still in a muddle as to the reasons why we pay benefits to people whose income we wish to support. We have never clarified our thinking in this House on the grounds of entitlement and I think it really is worth going over this ground briefly again.

We have one system of universal benefits of which the principal example is child benefit — the only benefit of which is that there is virtually 100 per cent. take-up. Then we have the national insurance system which has slowly evolved during the 20th century and has many merits because people are able to draw their benefits without feeling that they are insulting their self-respect by doing so. National insurance provides pensions, unemployment benefit, invalidity and certain other benefits which people are not ashamed to draw. National insurance benefits, unfortunately, are not enough to cater for the needs of very many people and therefore we have to introduce a casework system based on proof of need — what we used to call the means test.

Mr. Corbyn: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the growth in the number of supplementary benefit claims during the past 20 years is indicative of the absurdly low level of basic benefit entitlement and that the real problem is that poverty has increased despite there being a social security system because the benefit levels are inadequate to solve the problems of poverty?

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: The hon. Gentleman has just drawn attention to a point that I was coming to and I think it shows that there is an identity of thinking among students of this subject on both sides of the House.

Mr. Major: I suspect that what the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) has in mind is an

[Mr. Major]

interpretation of the low income figures which have featured from time to time during the past few months. Such is the weird manner in which those figures are constructed that, whenever the Government increase the real purchasing power of supplementary benefit, more people become entitled to it and the figures grow. It is an inaccurate and malicious interpretation of people who are in severe difficulty. I hope that my hon. Friend will not be tempted into agreeing with what I suspect underlay the hon. Gentleman's intervention.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I may have misunderstood what the hon. Gentleman said, so it may be better to make my own points in my own way.

We have three grounds of entitlement — universal benefits, national insurance benefits and benefits based on casework and proof of need. In my view, the experiment with relying increasingly on casework in order to make certain that we do provide a basic income guarantee has failed. Selectivity has failed for many reasons and I should like to come to them briefly if time allows.

The big social developments, which are irreversible and which have taken place in the 20th century are the coming of universal suffrage, which means that we are no longer prepared to accept that our society is divided into two classes of people, and, of course, female emancipation.

I believe that, within the time span that we can contemplate, these major 20th-century changes are irreversible but we have not adapted our benefit systems to accord with those developments. We are still operating a redistribution of income in such a way that it does not take note of the fact that Britain has to be a united and equal society and it has to be a society in which women are treated on the same footing as men and are not left often in the condition in which they were in the middle ages.

Another reason why I am saying selectivity has failed is not only because it is out of tune with modern thinking, but because it is totally out of tune with the thinking of the Government. The Government quite rightly place emphasis on incentives to work and the value of thrift and the importance of saving and self-reliance. Well, we now have 14 million people in this country at any one time who are dependent on one form or other of means-tested benefit. That is, of course, taking into account people who need to rely on housing income support. But even if we eliminated that number, we have got, I believe, about 8 million people who are reliant on supplementary benefit.

Those are people who know by instinct, even if they have not actually made the calculations, that there is not too much point in having savings because if one has savings, when one falls into need, one has to run them down before one is entitled to benefit; and there is not too much point in working because, for all too many of them, the sort of work which is available yields only about the same income after they have paid for their travelling expenses and their clothing and the rest as they can get if they remain out of work and simply rely on means-tested benefit.

We have about 14 million people on the large calculation and at least 8 million on the minor calculation, if we are dealing only with supplementary benefit. People who know that what the Government are preaching, and which it is right that the Government should preach, does not somehow apply to them. I urge my right hon. and hon. Friends who are responsible for the various aspects of the redistribution of income, please to think again before bringing to the House once more upratings of the existing system which do not introduce some completely new elements.

If time allows, Mr. Speaker, I am hoping to deal briefly with ways in which I recommend that we should reduce the numbers drastically of people who are reliant on supplementary benefit. It is not enough to aim to reduce the figures by——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I call the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) to move the Adjournment motion, perhaps I should make it clear that the business postponed as a result of the debate under Standing Order No. 20 may be resumed and continued for a period equal to the amount of the time lost. That is, of course, if the House does not agree to the right hon. Gentleman's motion.

It being Seven o'clock, and leave having been given to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), further Proceeding stood postponed.

Airborne Early Warning System

7 pm

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): I beg to move, That this House do now adjourn.

Leave having been given this day under Standing Order No. 20 to discuss:

the need for an independent and urgent inquiry into the purchase of a new airborne early warning system for the Royal Air Force.

Several questions arise out of the statement of the Secretary of State for Defence. It was a long and detailed statement and I may come to it in my speech. However, I have no doubt that the Secretary of State for Defence or the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement will attempt to deal with it in their respective speeches.

Most hon. Members including the Secretary of State would agree on at least one thing—that decisions on defence procurement are seldom easy. They are seldom easy, obviously, because there are so many considerations that must be taken into account. Those considerations often appear to be in conflict with each other. First, there are the military considerations, then the industrial considerations and then the financial consequences for public finance and public expenditure.

The industrial considerations cannot and should not be separated from the defence considerations. A country's ability to defend itself and, indeed, to wage war if necessary in its own defence, is invariably and obviously bound up with its defence industries and industrial base. A country that does not have a strong industrial and technological base cannot, in the modern world, wage war for very long. Recently there have been many examples of countries with strong industrial bases being able to wage war against seemingly larger and more powerful countries. We won the last war partly because of the strength at that time of our industry and, of course, of our technical expertise and innovation.

I agree with the Prime Minister that defence interests are paramount, but defence interests include military and industrial interests. It is no coincidence that President Eisenhower spoke of the military-industrial complex, because without an industry and without that base it would not be possible to provide the wherewithal to wage war and to defend one's country.

No other major nation in the West would have taken the decision that this Government have taken today. I do not believe that the French, the Germans, and certainly not the Americans, would have given the sort of kick in the teeth to their own industry which this Government have done. It is no good the Secretary of State or Conservative Members saying, "Well, it is all right, you know. There is a sub-contract here for Plessey and a bit there for Racal, and Ferranti comes in with another sub-contract." That does not show an understanding of modern defence procurement. Sub-contracts are all right but the main objective should be to secure the prime system and to ensure that one's industry can compete and carry out the prime system. If we merely produce components under sub-contracts, we shall lose the expertise to carry out the prime system which we need to maintain our base and to remain a viable industrial nation.

I said that these decisions are never easy. Perhaps I should have qualified that remark by saying that they are never easy if they are considered and looked at rationally and objectively. They are, of course, much easier if the person who is taking them is driven by some sort of simple absolutism that is nurtured by half-baked economic theories, personal spleen and a besotted adoration, sometimes, of all things American.

The Government have not considered this problem objectively and rationally. The Secretary of State said in his statement that the decision was a matter of judgment. I am sorry to tell him that we do not have confidence in the Government's judgment on this matter or in their judgment on matters of defence procurement. That is why we say that there should be a second opinion on, and an independent inquiry into, the technical matters involved.

Mr. Robert Atkins (South Ribble): I am exceedingly grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. Will he comment on remarks attributed to the chief Royal Air Force officer responsible for this project, who was reported in *The Times* on Monday as saying, with the blessing of the Chief of the Air Staff:

"I simply cannot accept these allegations"

that there had been some sort of bias in the evaluation.

"There has been the most thorough, far-reaching evaluation of the competing proposals . . . over the last six months.

The suggestion that the assessment is a biased RAF exercise impugns the integrity not only of the RAF but also of all those individuals involved in this difficult task."

Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that?

Mr. Davies: The gentleman concerned is perfectly entitled to express his view. During the past two or three weeks many things have been said in the newpapers on this matter. However, we do not trust the Government's judgment on defence procurement, or on the question of protecting British industry and British technology in general, because their record is not good. It is unnecessary to have a long memory——

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): The right hon. Gentleman suggests that the judgment of the Labour party might be better than the judgment of the Conservative party. If the Labour Government's judgment was so wonderful why was the TSR2 cancelled in favour of the F111, which was then also cancelled? Perhaps he will tell the House about their surfeit of judgment in that regard.

Mr. Davies: We did not order a foreign aircraft.

Let us look briefly at the Government's record on procurement during the past three or four years. It is not necessary to have a long memory to remember what happened the last time the Government became involved in defence procurement. About a year ago there was the question of the purchase of Westland or of a share in it. Perhaps I should remind Conservative Members what happened — *[Interruption.]* We are discussing an important matter of procurement. I am trying to show that the Government's judgment is not particularly good on these matters. What happened? Two Secretaries of State resigned. The Prime Minister was so determined that shareholder power should overrule the national interest and that the Americans should control Westland that she was prepared to subvert many of the conventions of the constitution to get her way. She got herself into such a pickle that she had to call upon Sir Robert Armstrong —that well known linguistic gymnast—to rescue her from her difficulties.

Mr. Robert Atkins: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Davies: The Secretary of State said that it was a matter of judgment, and I am trying to show that the Government's judgment in these matters has not been very good. Let us see how good the Government's judgment has been in respect of defence procurement and the royal ordnance factories. We all know what has happened to them during the past year. Let us see what has happened to the royal dockyards following the hare-brained scheme proposed by the former Secretary of State for Defence, the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). They are being decimated and destroyed by the Government's procurement policy.

Let us look at the general policy of competition within the Department. If the Government continue with some of their competition policies, our defence industrial base will soon go the same way as our civilian manufacturing base has gone. If Conservative Members do not realise that, they should start to think about it. To some extent, our defence industries have always been protected. They have been protected by Governments of both parties in two ways. First, they have been protected by a irtual block on imports, with certain exceptions. That was one form of protection, although it was not an exact import control. Secondly, our defence industries have been protected to some extent over price in order to enable them to carry on. However, the Government are taking that protection away, and opening the industry up to competition from other countries that would never allow us to compete in the way that they compete here. That is what is happening, and if it continues there will be a substantial diminution in our defence industrial base.

Sir Antony Buck (Colchester, North): If what the right hon. Gentleman has just said is true, is it not remarkable that we have managed to export 113 Harriers to the United States?

Mr. Davies: There is obviously a two-way trade, but the danger is that our defence industrial base will be destroyed as a result of the Government's policies.

Let us briefly look at the record on the civilian manufacturing side. Not long ago, the Prime Minister wanted to sell off our last remaining motor manufacturer to the Americans as well as Land-Rover, but she was stopped by opposition from Labour Members and by many other hon. Members. Again, that shows that the Government do not have a very good record on judgment in these matters.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): How does the right hon. Gentleman square his suggestion that we do not support Britain's defence industrial base with the fact that 95 per cent. of procurement is bought through British industry or collaborative projects?

Mr. Davies: That used to be the case, but there is a great danger that that percentage will reduce rapidly as a result of the Secretary of State's policies. Given the mess that the right hon. Member for Henley made of the royal dockyards and the royal ordnance factories, he should be the last person to stand up and say anything.

As the Secretary of State said in his statement, the latest instalment in the long Nimrod saga commenced in March 1986, when the Ministry of Defence announced an open competition for an early warning system for the RAF. As the House well knows, three American companies — Boeing, Lockheed and Grumman — entered the competition, as did GEC. After the preliminary examinations, Lockheed and Grumman dropped out because I understand that their systems were not considered suitable. Thus, the two companies left, GEC and Boeing, were presumably thought to be suitable to go into the final round of the competition.

I think it is fair to say that the competition at least spurred GEC into action. I understand that during the next few months several improvements were made to its system. The transmitter was improved, as was the range and the overland capability. The receiver capacity was enhanced to prevent overloading, the tracking programme was improved, and the central computer was made to work three times as fast. No doubt there were other improvements as well, which were carried out in the fairly short period between March and the competition's final stages.

Indeed, the position had improved sufficiently for the editor of *Flight International*—a respectable publication that is well thought of—to write towards the end of the year:

"The Royal Air Force choice must be for quality. It is becoming evident that the GEC equipment is performing almost impeccably, and is at least equal to the Westinghouse equivalent in the E-3A, if not some years in advance of it."

Confidence in the system was enhanced when Lockheed decided that it would insert the system into its aircraft in order to try to sell the system worldwide. Again, I should have thought that Lockheed would not have done that unless it was satisfied that the system worked. We are talking about an American company that is a very close competitor of Boeing. Hon. Members may say that that is not enough for them, and that they are not prepared to take Lockheed's view, the view expressed by the editor of *Flight International,* and so on. In that case, perhaps they will take it from the horse's mouth, from the Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Robert Atkins: What about Jane's "All the World's Aircraft"?

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): Shut up and listen. You might learn something.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This debate is of great interest and I ask the House to listen quietly to what the Opposition spokesman has to say.

Mr. Davies: On 5 December, two weeks ago, the Secretary of State made a clear statement. He has been challenged about it in the House and he has not denied it, and so I shall repeat it tonight. Quite gratuitously, when asked, he said that "both systems work." He need not have said anything. He did not even qualify that. He went on to qualify the position in terms of cost, but there was no qualification of technical matters. He did not say that in one of those fireside chats that he gives on Radio Ayr, such as the one that he gave before the bombing of Libya. This was prime time stuff, on "News At Ten". He clearly said that the two systems work. I am not sure what the Secretary of State said this afternoon. I think that he said that they did not work. By implication, his statement shows that the two systems — [HON. MEMBERS: "No!"] The Secretary of State is perfectly capable of answering for himself. I can only repeat what he said.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): Does not my right hon. Friend's earlier statement show that he was bending over backwards to be fair to GEC? Surely the purpose of

airborne early warning is to give a better warning than ground radar pictures can do. As the GEC Nimrod gave a worse picture, would it not be better to buy an aircraft that gives a better picture?

Mr. Davies: All I know is that on 5 December, the Secretary of State bent one way, and today he has bent another. Perhaps he will tell us how he squares that statement with what has been said today. Within 48 hours of the Secretary of State's statement on television, there was a barrage of propaganda in the press rubbishing GEC and Nimrod. The two stories from the Sunday newspapers that I shall quote were probably written within 24 hours. I shall quote stories from *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times* of 7 December, stories written on Saturday afternoon. The story in *The Observer* was written by Adam Raphael and Victor Smart. It said, under the headline:

"Cabinet gets set to ditch Nimrod.

The Cabinet's defence committee is expected to decide this week between the rival bids . . . But with Mrs. Thatcher firmly in the Boeing camp"

the Government are likely to go for the AWACS system. James Adams, the defence correspondence of *The Sunday Times* said:

"The project is three years late, more than £600 million has been spent . . . George Younger, the defence secretary, received the report from the equipment policy committee on Friday and is studying it over the weekend."

He had not studied it on the Friday, when he went on television.

We need to be told how the Secretary of State squares his statement that both systems work with the leaks that came from his Department. They could not have come from anywhere else, and there is a quotation from somebody in his Department who is not named. Was the Department trying to get at the right hon. Gentleman? Was it trying to change his mind? Was it a coincidence or a consequence? It is no good the Secretary of State smiling about it—he owes the House an explanation of what went on, especially when the conclusions of committees that are supposed to be secret are found in all the newspapers on the following Sunday. Has he lost control of his Department or is he still in control?

AWACS is not perfect either, and the Secretary of State knows that. It took 16 years to develop and its technology is quite old. As Boeing confirmed, it has had to be substantially updated over the years and those updatings are not done by Boeing for nothing—it charges the United States military. Many would say that AWACS was not designed to work in Europe.

There is then the question of jobs. The Government, and in particular the Secretary of State in his statement today, have tried to say that more jobs would be created. We know that jobs will be lost. We do not know how many—perhaps 2,000 or 2,500. In his statement, the Secretary of State said that Boeing had entered into a contractual obligation to provide £130 worth of work for every £100 of work on the AWACS. When I asked the Secretary of State whether any penalties would be applied if Boeing failed to carry out this obligation, he said that they would not. It is a strange contractual obligation where if one person breaks the contract there are no sanctions.

We know what it is in the contract. Boeing says that it will use its best endeavours to find the jobs and do the offset. The Secretary of State cannot tell me that, if Boeing fails to provide that £130 worth of jobs, there is a procedure for suing the company or getting damages. We have seen this arrangement time and again, as in the case of Trident when few jobs and orders came. We also saw it in the case of star wars. The right hon. Member for Henley rushed off to the Pentagon and signed an agreement to provide £1 billion, but look what has happened. Time and again, when we enter offset agreements with the United States, a mere trickle of jobs results, for the simple reason that the Americans are not as daft and soft as we are and they keep their defence contracting, in the main, to themselves. Perhaps the Secretary of State will confirm that there is no way that he can make Boeing live up to its promise of £130 worth of jobs for every £100 of work.

The Secretary of State said that the money that would be lost as a result of this exercise was about £600 million, and that the cost of AWACS would be £860 million for six. He went on to say that there was an option within six months to acquire another two. Would he explain that option a little more? Do we need six or eight aircraft? Presumably the Secretary of State knows how many we need—or does he need another six months? We should be told how many we need because no doubt the threat has been assessed, and I would have thought that the military conclusion would tell the Secretary of State how many he needs. If he orders another two within six months, how much more will that cost?

The Secretary of State then said that the £860 million was at 1986-87 prices. Perhaps I am being obtuse, but is that the fixed price? I take it that it is the fixed price, irrespective of what happens to inflation, but we should be told whether that is the actual sum in sterling that the British Government will have to pay. We were then told that the money would be found within public expenditure totals. By when does the money have to be found? The public expenditure totals do not go for more than three years, as there is now a three-year public expenditure review. Will the money be found within those three years or will it be paid in 1991, when the Boeing aircraft are delivered? We should be told what the implications for expenditure are, and we should be told whether the Government intend to lease three aircraft between now and 1991. The Secretary of State said that no offer had been made, and he was choosing his words carefully. Perhaps no formal offer has come, but have negotiations been started? Would the aircraft come from Boeing or the US Air Force, and how much would they cost the British taxpayer?

The Government's judgment on this matter is suspect, and the Secretary of State has said that he cannot prove anything and that it is a matter of judgment. In view of that, of the considerable consequences of the Government's decision for Britain's defence interests, British industry, for jobs and the economy, the history of the matter and the statements that have been made, the prudent course is to seek a second opinion by setting up an independent technical inquiry. It need not take too long. It should not take very long. There is no great rush as the contract does not have to be signed immediately.

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Davies: No, I have taken enough time.

The aircraft will not be with us until 1991, so it will be possible for the Government to satisfy everybody,

[Mr. Davies]

including industry, by setting up an independent inquiry to look at the technical matters once and for all. We would all accept the results of such an inquiry.

If the Government do not do this, we must conclude that it is not just scientific and engineering matters that have been decided in this case, but that there is an element of malice towards GEC and perhaps towards some of its leading personnel. If the Government fail to set up an inquiry, we must also conclude that what they have done and what they will do by deciding in this way shows their contempt for British industry, defence interests and technology.

7.29 pm

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger): I am very grateful to the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) for providing us with the opportunity to have a debate so soon after the difficult decision that I had to announce this afternoon. However, with best of goodwill towards the right hon. Gentleman, the kindest description I can give of his speech is that it was a bit of a struggle. I thought that we were going to hear a clear and specific definition of the Opposition's views on the Nimrod decision, what they would have done themselves, and why. Instead, we were given a long tour d'horizon of the right hon. Gentleman's ideas on defence policy generally.

I have to offer my apologies to the right hon. Gentleman. It was somewhat tactless of me to have answered in my statement this afternoon all the questions that he was going to ask. I appreciate that it was difficult for him to recast his speech, so I was interested in some of the thinking on his feet in which the right hon. Gentleman indulged. It showed that he has a flexible attitude towards dealing with policies, if they can be made up as he talks.

He announced that in the past there was a virtual blockage of imports of defence products. If the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) had been here to hear his vast purchases of equipment from other countries, particularly from the United States during his time as a Defence Minister, described as a virtual blockage of imports, I think that he would have derived some wry amusement from it.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): It is plain that the Secretary of State is not very good on percentages. Is 5 per cent. a large amount or a small amount? Will he also give us the answer that he did not give this afternoon? What is the enforceable power in respect of the alleged 130 per cent. contract that he is supposed to be setting up with Boeing?

Mr. Younger: I understand why the Leader of the Opposition feels the need to try to make the speech of his right hon. Friend the Member for Llanelli again. On the 90 or 95 per cent. figure, or whatever it is, the correct figure is over 90 per cent. But that was not my point. It was the point of the right hon. Member for Llanelli. The right hon. Gentleman cannot get away from the fact that he said that there was a virtual blockage of imports, but he moved his stance when he saw he was getting nowhere. A few bars later, if that is the right way to describe it, he said, "No, no, there is a two-way trade between the two sides of the Atlantic. We are buying and selling both ways." He was moving his stance as he went along.

Then he came to his great panacea for our defence industries and exports. *[Interruption.]* I am trying to inform the House of the views on the Labour side, which I am sure the right hon. Member for Llanelli will be most entertained to hear. This great leader on the other side, who is so keen on defence exports and defence industries, has committed himself in a paper, which I read with great interest, which was produced by the national executive committee of the Labour party. It says:

> "There are strong arguments for a policy against the arms trade. Far too many jobs are dependent on other people's wars. There are also strong, less widely publicised economic arguments. We"—

that is a Labour Government, if ever there should be another one—

> "will disband the defence export services organisation."

It is very nice to know that the Labour party has such a high regard for this organisation. I should point out that it is not the sales organisation that it intends to disband, but the defence export services organisation. Those who buy defence equipment, and, by doing so, create jobs in this country, will find that a Labour Government, should there ever again be one, will disband that organisation.

The right hon. Gentleman asked a number of questions which I shall do my best to answer, although I think that I have answered all of them already. First, he asked whether we need six or eight E3A aircraft. To fulfil the full and necessary policy that we want and that NATO wants us to provide, we need eight. In my statement I committed this country to buying six now and I have taken an option, with Boeing, to buy two more within six months at the same price. I wish to keep those two in reserve until I know the outcome of the annual review of our long-term costings. It is most important to see everything in the round so that we can make sensible decisions.

I said this afternoon that the price that had been offered by Boeing had been quoted in sterling. It is a fixed price that contains an allowance for inflation. There will only be an addition for excess costs and inflation if a point above a certain threshold is reached. The rest of the information is confidential, but that is the general line and it is a very full answer to the right hon. Gentleman's question.

Mr. Denzil Davies: The right hon. Gentleman did not say this afternoon that there would be an allowance for inflation. Is that British inflation or American inflation? How is it to be calculated in the contract?

Mr. Younger: The details are part of the contract. The right hon. Gentleman knows that we do not make details of that sort public, for obvious reasons. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] Nor did any of my predecessors in this job.

The right hon. Gentleman also asked where the money would come from. I made it clear this afternoon that the money will come from within the Ministry of Defence's expenditure patterns which have already been published —*[Interruption.]* The right hon. Gentleman would hear a great deal better if he did not talk so much himself. The money has to be found from within the Ministry of Defence's expenditure patterns which have been published by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There is no mystery about that.

Lastly, the right hon. Gentleman asked whether any offer on leasing had been made. I made it clear this afternoon that there has been no offer, but that if there

were such an offer I should consider it, if it were necessary to do so. I repeat that I have not had an offer, but if I receive one I shall consider it carefully.

Mr. Denzil Davies: I asked the right hon. Gentleman when the expenditure would start and when the payments would be made. Will there be payments within the next three years? The public expenditure assessment is for the next three years.

Mr. Younger: That is a perfectly good point. There will be some expenditure in the next three years, but there will be savings in the earlier years, because of the expenditure profile. I have given the totals, but the right hon. Gentleman will have to wait until he sees the breakdown and what, exactly, the cost works out at.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): Will my right hon. Friend clarify the options? Is the issue of whether the option is to be taken up at a later date in any sense contingent upon a potential order by the French air force? Will Royal Air Force aeroplanes have the CFM56 engine — the Franco-American engine — which is certificated for the Saudi Arabian air force?

Mr. Younger: The option is not dependent upon the French taking up an order for AWACS, but I have made it clear that if the French decide to take AWACS, which is not at all unlikely, we shall be willing to co-operate with them over the procurement of AWACS and the support facilities for it. That has been very much welcomed by the French Government.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Younger: No, not for the moment.

As for the rest of the option—*[Interruption.]* I am trying to answer the first part of the question, but the right hon. Member for Llanelli is much more interested in asking the questions than in hearing the answers. However, that is understandable. *[Interruption.]* The right hon. Gentleman is more interested in asking questions than in getting answers. My hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) asked a valid question about the option. It will be exercised entirely at our discretion. If the French buy some AWACS aircraft, it will be a matter for negotiation between us and Boeing about whether that makes a difference. The engine laid on by Boeing is exactly the same as the engine in the existing AWACS aircraft.

Mr. Frank Cook: The French are interested in an airborne early warning system and have already expressed an intense interest in Nimrod. If they pursue that interest and intend to purchase the whole system lock, stock and barrel from GEC Avionics, what will be the Government's attitude? Would they permit such a purchase or would they try to block it?

Mr. Younger: I am always keen to encourage defence exports and should be very pleased if the French want to buy Nimrod. That is an excellent idea. The right hon. Member for Llanelli was somewhat unwise to pour cold water on the value of the offset deals. Whatever else one says about Boeing, it has an extremely good record in delivering what it promises on offset. When we bought Chinook helicopters from Boeing, the company more than fulfilled its undertaking on the offset. What is more, as has been made clear not only by me but by some of the contractors concerned, the offset being offered in this deal is good and of a high quality. If the right hon. Gentleman does not believe that, he should speak to the firms concerned and they will tell him that that is the case.

Mr. Denzil Davies: In his statement the right hon. Gentleman said that there was a contractual obligation. I asked if there were any penalties and he said no, but if Boeing fails to exercise its best efforts the Government have no sanction in law against Boeing. Is that the case?

Mr. Younger: I have already answered that question but I shall answer it again. In the case of the contract to supply the aircraft there are penalty clauses on Boeing if it fails to deliver on time and so on. There are no penalty clauses about the offset but Boeing has an exceptionally good record — *[Interruption.]* Apart from the fertile imagination of the right hon. Gentleman, there is no reason to think that Boeing will not fulfil its obligations. It will probably exceed them.

Mr. Churchill (Davyhulme): Does my right hon. Friend agree that it comes ill from the Leader of the Opposition to impugn the good faith of our American allies on whom he intends to rely for the ultimate nuclear defence of our nation? Is it not rather cheap for the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies), who has no great technical knowledge and expertise, to impugn the integrity and judgment of the scientific and service expert advice tendered to my right hon. Friend?

Mr. Younger: My hon. Friend is correct. However, he is expecting a great deal too much if he expects logic from the Opposition. I urge him to be a little more realistic in what he expects from the Opposition. One cannot expect the right hon. Member for Llanelli to be logical because he made a long speech about how good our defence industry and exports are and yet proposes to abolish the whole organisation if the Labour party come to power.

My statement was rather long and I shall not weary the House by repeating all the points that I have already made, although I seem to have had to do so for the right hon. Member for Llanelli. In the short time available to me I should like to concentrate on the most difficult and controversial issue arising from my decision — my assessment of GEC's prospects of achieving the required performance with the Nimrod system. That is probably what the House will find most useful to hear.

Airborne early warning is a fundamental requirement of modern warfare and our lack of this capability, for instance during the Falklands conflict, had consequences which we all clearly saw. In layman's language, the purpose of AEW is to put radar into the sky so that it can look far beyond the horizon of any radar system on the ground. This should give a clear picture of all flying objects over a long range, including those at low altitudes at which a hostile aircraft could conceal itself beyond the earth's curvature.

The AEW first detects hostile aircraft and then tracks their movement and, if possible, identifies their type. Friendly forces can then be alerted and fighters scrambled to intercept the intruder. The AEW aircraft will then guide them to the target. The AEW ensures that our fighters and aircrew do not wear themselves out on speculative patrols, but are called up when needed and directed straight to their targets. In this way the effectiveness of our fighter force is greatly enhanced. In other words, AEW is a force multipler in the truest sense.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The Secretary of State for Defence stressed the importance of a vital secure data link. Does he agree with the chairman of GEC who said in a broadcast at 5 pm that in three years' time Nimrod will be much better? In the view of the right hon. Gentleman's ministerial experts would GEC have solved the problem of the secure data link within three years? That is a purely factual question but it is important in terms of judgment.

Mr. Younger: The unanimous view of the experts was that with the best will in the world—it is only their judgment—GEC would not have been able to solve all the problems in that time.

Mr. Dalyell: The data link problem?

Mr. Younger: Yes, especially the data link problem, and that problem is also experienced in the AWACS. It is not a matter of dispute between the two companies.

Mr. Dalyell: So Boeing is not better than GEC. On the data link problem, are we being told that Boeing has no great advantage over GEC? These are difficult systems. Is Boeing not much better than GEC?

Mr. Younger: I have made it clear that there is nothing between the two on that point. All hon. Members should know that, but if they do not I make it clear now that those items are still——

Mr. Dalyell: That alters it.

Mr. Younger: This is nothing new and it is perfectly well known by everybody concerned that the data link is still in the development phase. It is not a problem——

Mr. Dalyell: It is the reason given in the right hon. Gentleman's statement. Look at paragraph 5.

Mr. Younger: I know exactly what is in the statement. With respect, the hon. Gentleman has a great talent for making something out of nothing. I was quite open about it and I still say that on that aspect there is no difference between the two. I looked carefully at my statement and if the hon. Gentleman reads the text he will find that that is borne out word for word. This is a short debate and I do not want to take up time by going into a non issue.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am told that I have a talent for making something out of nothing. For 20 years I have been the weekly columnist of the *New Scientist* and I know something about the subject.

Mr. Younger: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not be too sensitive. I am not trying to be disrespectful to him but, as I have said, this is a short debate and many hon. Members wish to speak.

Mr. Dalyell: The right hon. Gentleman has been technically caught out.

Mr. Younger: This early warning system is the essential and demanding role for which Nimrod has been planned for nearly a decade. The recent flight trials were carried out with great care. I flew in one of the sorties, as did my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement. As a result of the trials we have been able to form a clear picture of Nimrod's performance against the air staff requirement.

It must be emphasised that we did not conduct a sudden death play-off between Nimrod and the E3A, as has been represented. Nimrod was tested against the air staff requirement. Neither did we move the goal posts, although perhaps we would have been justified in doing so in view of the increase in the air threat since 1977. We did not specify, as has been suggested, that the AEW system must track aircraft targets over densely populated land. We said that this would be a valuable bonus in the competition, but it was never part of the baseline specifications against which Nimrod and AWACS were measured. I make that clear again.

Mr. George Park (Coventry, North-East): Is the Minister asserting that the specifications were never altered during the life of this contract and that GEC never got altered specifications or amendments during the whole life of the contract? Is that what the Minister is saying, because if so it runs entirely contrary to the evidence that was given to the Public Accounts Committee?

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman must understand that they are two different things. I have never heard of a contract that has gone through without the specifications being altered many times and on many points. Air staff requirement 400, against which this project is measured, has not been altered except in one respect, in that in-flight refuelling was added to it with the agreement of everybody. There is no problem about that because both of the contenders have in-flight refuelling capabilities.

This is a very short debate and I should conclude my speech as soon as possible because many people wish to speak.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West) *rose*——

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport) *rose*——

Mr. Younger: It is most unfair on other people.

Mr. Favell: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. As he is aware, many of my constituents are employed at British Aerospace at Woodford. Will he please assure them and the whole of the north-west that there is no criticism of the way in which they have carried out their work on the 11 airframes? What will happen to the 11 aircraft which have been constructed by British Aerospace?

Mr. Younger: My hon. Friend has made a valid point. I should like to take the opportunity of saying again, as I said in my statement, that British Aerospace carried out its part in the contract excellently and completely to the stage that it had reached. It has done a good job in providing the aircraft and I should like to make that clear.

We shall have to give urgent consideration to the future use of those aircraft. I have begun to identify a number of possible uses for them. Nothing definite has yet been put forward, but, naturally, this is an important matter. The future of that airfield will, of course, also have to be considered. I accept my hon. Friend's great concern about that matter and I assure him that it will be addressed as soon as possible.

The air staff requirement specifies a number of performance characteristics that must be achieved, of which two are of fundamental importance. The first is the detection range which must be long enough to give the fighters time to scramble and intercept. The second is continuity of tracking. That is to say, the signature of the target aircraft must remain in and be displayed by the AEW computer system for as long as the aircraft remains within range. If the life of the track is too short, the signal

may disappear and then reappear apparently as a new signal, thus giving the false impression that there are two aircraft instead of one and confusing not only the operators in the AEW aircraft, but users of the information in the air, on the ground or at sea.

We had hoped that our experts' appraisal of Nimrod and the programme of flight trials would ideally demonstrate that the system was within sight of achieving the required standard, or failing that, that there was at least a good prospect that it would achieve it within an acceptable time scale. Regrettably, my experts were unable to reach that conclusion. The flight trials yielded no consistent or reliable pattern or results. Those results, which GEC was content for us to use, generally showed a detection range significantly below what we had specified. The mean track life of the system was less than half of what we specified.

That is the performance of the system today, which the company would accept falls well below our standards now. However, the company has proposed technical solutions to overcome those various shortcomings. Taking each shortcoming and each proposed solution in isolation, it is possible that the system might approach the required standard, but even so, its performance would be marginal and on GEC's own showing the system would have only 70 per cent. of the reliability that we have specified.

My experts had to judge the system as a whole and not each of its component parts separately. All the individual improvements would have to be integrated into a system which would perform well in all respects. Sadly, our experience in recent months has been that as the firm has made an improvement in one area, that has resulted in the degradation of some other aspect of performance. The experts judged that that pattern was likely to continue and that the required performance was unlikely to be achieved before the mid-1990s at the earliest, if then.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): Is the ceiling of the aircraft relevant to the detection range? In that context, is it important that the Nimrod can attain a ceiling of about 25,000 feet and that the AWACS can attain a ceiling about 10,000 feet higher?

Mr. Younger: My hon. Friend has made a good technical point. The range at which each aircraft is effective is affected by its height because it can see that much further, the higher it can get. However, I stress that all the testing that we have done of the ability of Nimrod to operate is against ASR 400 and not against the AWACS aircraft.

Mr. Kinnock: On the basis of the appraisal that the Secretary of State has rightly offered us as a matter of public record tonight, if Lockheed were to approach him what advice would he offer it about the installation of the GEC system for its aircraft? If the French were to approach him on the subject, what advice would he tender to them about that British product?

Mr. Younger: I am not quite sure what the right hon. Gentleman means by the word "advice".

Mr. Dalyell: That is a very good question and the Secretary of State should answer it.

Mr. Younger: I am endeavouring to do just that. I am not quite sure what the right hon. Gentleman means by the word "advice".

Mr. Kinnock: The right hon. Gentleman is rubbishing British products.

Mr. Younger: I am trying to be open with the House about the sort of considerations that led me to take a very difficult decision. If the right hon. Gentleman is asking me to say nothing about that, I am very surprised. I have made it clear all along, and particularly this afternoon, that I regard GEC as a good company doing much very good work for the Ministry of Defence. I expect it to continue to do that for a long time in the future.

It is a great mistake and a damaging error to make out that because this contract ran into difficulties, anything else that GEC does is also inefficient. That is not the case. The company is a valued contractor and I wish it to remain so.

It is easy for hon. Members to criticise the judgment that we have made, but it is much more difficult to be the person who makes it. The one thing which, sadly, was missing from the speech of the right hon. Member for Llanelli was a balance between the considerations that he would have had to take if he had been in my position. He rightly emphasised the effect of a decision of this sort on the industry concerned, the company concerned and the reputation of British industry. That has been very much in my mind when making this difficult decision.

However, the right hon. Gentleman made no mention of the other criteria—the equipment and the standard of the equipment that the RAF requires to do its job. With respect to the right hon. Gentleman it is no good taking one of the criteria and letting it drive the whole thing because the whole is a balance between the various criteria that have to be taken into account. If I take the right hon. Gentleman's argument at its most literal, he is saying that the overwhelming importance of British industry having the work must take complete precedence over whether, at the end of the day, the equipment has worked.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): The difficulty of my right hon. Friend's decision is appreciated by everybody and there is great sympathy for it. The great tragedy of the post-war period is that again and again we surrender to American technology. That weakens the country and the whole of Europe because we do not develop our own high technology.

Mr. Younger: I thank my hon. Friend for his absolutely valid point with which I totally agree. However, one cannot understand from that that we are in a position to do everything ourselves. It is better to collaborate on some things. To be fair to the Americans, they have taken the same view in reverse and have not attempted, because they could not beat it, to make a competitor to the Harrier. They have bought our Harriers and they are now, under licence and in agreement with us, co-operating and building them for themselves.

This is a very short debate and it is high time that I brought my remarks to a conclusion. I should simply like to say that if this is an effort by the Opposition to paint a picture that shows our decision to have been a wrong one, they have so far not addressed themselves to the principal issues. I cannot take seriously a case which rests on a series of assertions about other matters and which does not get down to the real nub of the issue, which is that the RAF requires aircraft up to a certain standard to do the job. Could GEC's equipment have got up to that standard in three years? I have faced up to the truth, have

[Mr. Younger]

faced the fact that I do not believe that it could, and I have taken the necessary decision. I hope that the House will back me in that decision.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House knows that this is a three-hour debate. A great many right hon. and hon. Members wish to take part, so I plead for short contributions, please.

7.59 pm

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Many hon. Members recognise that decision that the Secretary of State has announced today was a difficult one. We have made it clear that, if it had been possible, we should have liked to see a decision in favour of the GEC option. There are obvious reasons in terms of British jobs, technology and export opportunities why that should have been the case. However, at the end of the day it is the defence considerations that matter. We have said that if only one option met the air staff requirements, that would be the proper decision for the Secretary of State to take.

Mr. Robert C. Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): When the hon. Gentleman says "we", does he mean the Liberals, or the Liberals and the Social Democrats?

Mr. Wallace: I am speaking on behalf of my Liberal and Social Democratic colleagues in this matter.

At the end of the day we are dealing with a matter of judgment, and the House is being asked to accept the Secretary of State's judgment on which of the two options before him met the air staff requirement. He has told the House that on the advice available to him only the Boeing option met those requirements.

Because of the important consequences that that decision has for one of Britain's home-based companies, it is important that as much information as possible is made public. The decision must be seen to be right as well as be right.

In his statement this afternoon the Secretary of State described some of the considerations which led him to that decision. He has expanded on them in a letter which he sent to all right hon. and hon. Members and he has given more this evening. I urge the Secretary of State to place in the Library or to put on public record as much declassified information on this matter as possible because it is important that such information should be before the public. That is particularly important because, in statements made earlier this week, GEC has said that it felt that in some way it had been cheated. The more information that is available the more will GEC be able to challenge the various considerations that led the Secretary of State to his decision, if it feels it necessary to do so.

When the Leader of the Opposition intervened and said that the Secretary of State was rubbishing GEC by explaining to the House what had led him to his decision, he was being disingenuous. If the Secretary of State had tried to withhold from the House his reasons for coming to his decision, the Leader of the Opposition would have been on his feet crying foul again and saying that we were being kept in the dark. It is important that as much information as possible is made available.

Mr. Key: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it is time to give the lie to the idea that no proper assessment has been made and that there should be some so-called independent assessment? As most of the assessment was done at the arms and armaments experimental establishment at Boscombe Down in my constituency, does the hon. Gentleman share with me an understanding of the deep offence caused to the scientific Civil Service by such allegations?

Mr. Wallace: I accept the hon. Gentleman's point. I have no reason to believe that anything other than the best military and technical advice was given to the Secretary of State.

Key points of concern were jobs and the quality of jobs. Boeing has made various promises and claims which it says will accompany the selection of its option. It has talked of a 130 per cent. offset and in one letter it has said that the high-tech involvement will lead to new products with guaranteed new markets and export sales. I think that the House would like to know precisely what those new markets and export sales that have been guaranteed are.

We have been told that British companies will be involved in further development of the AEW system and that there will be E3A sales to other countries in which British industry will have an opportunity to participate. If those guarantees come to pass they will be welcome. My hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross), who has aviation industries within his constituency in which Boeing has had some involvement, has found that Boeing has been good in keeping its word.

On this occasion, however, there has been serious competition, and in those circumstances I should have thought that the Ministry of Defence was in a strong bargaining position. Therefore, I do not understand why the Secretary of State was not able to get a better belt-and-braces clause in the contract to hold Boeing to the 130 per cent. offset. It is all very well to go on good faith and previous performance, but the history of the project has been so marred by what could be called weak contractual arrangements that, as we are taking it forward, one would hope that the Ministry of Defence could be much stricter in the conditions that it sought to impose.

Indeed, the Comptroller and Auditor General, in his report published in July this year with particular reference to this project, said that one of the main lessons to be learnt for project management was

"to establish contractual terms to put the contractor under effective discipline".

There is considerable justifiable anxiety on the Opposition Benches that such an opportunity has not been taken.

A further point on the contract which I raised with the Secretary of State earlier this afternoon relates to extra-territoriality laws. As I understand his reply, it was open to contracting parties to choose which law they wanted and it has been the practice of the Ministry of Defence to seek United Kingdom law. Fears on this matter arise from previous experience with several contracts involving IBM when the United States Government have sought to assert their law over matters which are very much within the United Kingdom regarding whether certain equipment could be moved within the United Kingdom and having a clear say in which countries goods may be exported to from the United Kingdom. Again, we should like some assurance that it is perfectly clear in the contract that the United States will not be able at any subsequent date to claim that its law could apply to this contract.

Mr. Wilkinson: Will the hon. Gentleman clarify one simple point? Is his party, or the alliance that he is representing, in favour of the Royal Air Force having the best aircraft in defence of Britain as regards airborne early warning? That is not clear.

Mr. Wallace: I am working on the basis that the Government have made their decision, and I am trying to make it clear that, having entered into a contract, it is important that we get the best deal. One of my points concerned extra-territoriality. That is an important point that should be covered in the contract.

The Secretary of State said in a statement this afternoon that costs would be contained within the defence budget as outlined by the Chancellor in his autumn statement. However, it has already been confirmed in news reports that the Ministry of Defence states that the defence estimates do not include any additional spending for AWACs. As the Secretary of State said, the greater costs will come in the later stages in the early 1990s. That is the very time when the bulk of expenditure on Trident is expected. Therefore, the House should be told how the Secretary of State sees the defence budget panning out in the late 1980s and early 1990s when those two major projects will have to be funded. What will give? The Secretary of State has said in the past that some hard decisions will have to be made. Can he give the House any idea of the way in which his mind is working on those hard decisions?

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wallace: I have given way a lot and I know that other hon. Members want to speak.

The project is a sorry tale which shows up some serious deficiencies in the Ministry of Defence's procurement policy. With his usual disarming frankness this afternoon the Secretary of State said that he did not seek to evade his Department's share of responsibility. We look forward to a clearer explanation of where he sees his Department having gone wrong. The Comptroller and Auditor General in his report to which I have referred identifies many areas in which it has gone wrong.

Mr. Townsend: Will the hon. Gentleman put the House out of its misery? Is the hon. Gentleman recommending that his hon. Friends should support the bold decision to give the RAF the best possible system or not?

Mr. Wallace: We have supported the Secretary of State's brave decision. I cannot make it any clearer than that. However, many other questions have to be asked, such as how we ever got to this position in the first place. There are serious matters, such as £660 million of taxpayers' money having gone down the drain, that we wish to examine. The Public Accounts Committee is already examining it and I am sure that the Select Committee on Defence will wish to examine it. If local authorities had mismanaged that amount of money, Conservative Members would have been down their throats calling for surcharges.

The Government have a responsibility to the taxpayer for the way in which they manage the public purse and there have been serious shortcomings in that. We will be looking for those shortcomings to be examined and to ensure that lessons are learned and that proper procedures are implemented in the future. However, as I have said, it is a brave decision and we hope that the Secretary of State can give more information to the public to show the full basis and jusfication for his decision.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not appropriate to write into *Hansard* the fact that the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace), representing the alliance, spoke entirely on his own without a single member——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. This is a short debate and we should not waste time. The hon. Gentleman knows that that is not a matter for me.

8.11 pm

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): All my instincts incline me towards supporting the Nimrod project. It is a British project, we have sunk a lot of money into it, there are many jobs at stake and it is a pillar of our defence industries. It would be a popular decision for the Government to take and every consideration would seem to favour it — except one. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State says that it does not do the job that is required. That is a strange and saddening reversal of fortunes.

Long ago, almost before the flood, I was responsible for recommending to the RAF and the Government what sort of aircraft they should have. I produced a programme that included the TSR2, the P1154, and the HS681. Nobody questioned the fact that they were technologically better than anything that could be obtained in the United States, France or anywhere else. The only criticism was based on cost. The Tory Cabinet accepted them. Then Mr. Wilson came into office with the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) as the Minister responsible for aviation. They cancelled all of those on the grounds of cost, not technology. They cancelled them roughly, but I do not want to go into that story now.

It is sad that we appear to be cancelling a project now, not on grounds of cost but because it is technologically not as sound as it should be. If it was technologically good and cost more, I would be in favour of supporting it. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has told us that it is not up to the job, technologically.

It is a difficult assessment for us to make. There are always people in the House who can make technical assessments, but there are not so many of us, I suspect, who can form a judgment on what is the margin between the two projects. I shall give only my own rough and ready measuring rod. When a Tory Government, in an election year on a defence issue, take an unpopular line they must have a damned good reason for doing so. Therefore, while I cannot say what the exact assessment may be, even with my own aviation background, it seems that the gap is pretty big.

If the world was peaceful and there was a general staff assessment that there would be no major conflict in the next 10 years, we could say that we could take second best for the RAF in the hope that it would help the defence industry to produce first best later on. I am afraid that the world is not like that. It is a dangerous world. The re-armament of the West is almost closing the window of opportunity that the Soviets have enjoyed since President Carter's time. That may make them more amenable to a return to detente, but it could precipitate adventures and risks. In that situation it seems to me that the interests of

[Mr. Julian Amery]

the Royal Air Force must be paramount. We cannot take risks with the men who may—I hope that they will not — have to defend our shores, convoys and other interests at home and perhaps beyond the NATO area. They must have the best equipment available.

It is rather striking that the chiefs of staff, as I understand it—those who represent the Navy and the Army—have gone along with the decision made by my right hon. Friend although it is not necessarily the cheapest and may deprive them of some things to which they attach importance. The interests of the fighting services must be paramount in a dangerous time such as this and it is for that reason that, in spite of all my inclinations to buy British whenever we can, I support the Government wholeheartedly.

8.17 pm

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): When my right hon. Friend the Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) began his speech he said something that is true and that cannot be denied. He said that the sort of debate we are having tonight would not happen anywhere else. It certainly would not occur in the United States, France, Germany or Italy, because they would not surrender their technology in the way that ours is being thrown away tonight. We are trying to examine whether the British system, Nimrod, works. Indeed, we have it on the record from the Secretary of State that it does work. However, I should like the Secretary of State to answer the question that was put to him by my right hon. Friend the Member for Llanelli.

There was great play made in the statement by the Secretary of State, of the point that the failing of the British system was that when it comes to the final stage it would require the installation of a secure data link. I want to know whether AWACS has a secure data link. It is not clear from the statement. One would think that only Nimrod does not have a secure data link. If AWACS does not have a secure data link, what is the time scale for it to have one? Many technical questions have been asked but that is a technical question that we do not have an answer to.

Mr. Younger: There is a genuine misunderstanding here. I ask the hon. Gentleman to read the words of the statement very carefully. The reference in paragraph five is specifically to make it clear that GEC was offering to produce

"six aircraft between mid-1989 and mid-1990 which would approach the final standard"—

That is fine so far—

"subject to certain exclusions, of which the most important is a vital secure data link".

That is an exclusion from what it was expecting or expected to provide at that stage. That is because it is still under development. The same is true of the secure data link for AWACS. There is no difference between Nimrod and AWACS on that issue. There are plenty of differences in other ways but the systems are exactly on a par on that issue. I hope that that has clarified the matter.

Mr. Hoyle: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his explanation. It does clarify the matter to some extent. However, it would not be clear from the statement that AWACS does not have a secure data link.

It is history and the role that the Ministry of Defence has had to play that I want to talk about. No one could ever accuse me of being a great friend of GEC. When it came to the Plessey takeover, I was on the side of Plessey. In this instance, however, I think that GEC is more sinned against than sinning. Many of the problems that have arisen are not its fault, and much of the responsibility for the time that has been taken rests with the Ministry of Defence. Many of us spent a great deal of time in 1977 persuading the then Secretary of State for Defence that it would be right to order Nimrod. The order was placed and at the very beginning GEC made it clear—this was done at one of the first meetings to be held—that one of the problems would lie with the computer. The civil servant concerned was a Mr. Geoffrey Stone, who was in charge of the project. Despite GEC stating that there would be problems with the computer—attention was drawn to the inadequacy of the performance of the 480 computer —nothing was done.

In 1978, GEC said that for £10 million—that must be set against the overall cost of the scheme now—it could filter out the misleading signals that were being picked up from cars and other man-made objects. Unfortunately, nothing was done from that time onwards. The Secretary of State has said that the goal posts have not been moved and the specification has not been altered, but it is my understanding that when the Nimrod contract was first arranged the purpose of Nimrod was largely to fly over the seas and the sparsely populated northern region. As recently as 1985 the specification was altered and it was——

Mr. Younger *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Hoyle: The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head. If I am wrong, I stand corrected. In 1985, the MOD specified that Nimrod should be able to operate over large areas of Britain, and that was a different specification. Is it true that the MOD has asked for that change to be made? Has it asked that Nimrod should be able to fly over Britain? When the project started, it was never to be compared with AWACS in that respect. It would seem that the project has been changed.

Mr. Younger: I apologise to the hon. Gentleman for interrupting him again.

Mr. Hoyle: I welcome the right hon. Gentleman's intervention. We want the answers.

Mr. Younger: The hon. Gentleman is making a genuine point but I wish to make it clear yet again that air staff requirement 400, which is what the products are being tested against, did not, does not and, as far as I am concerned, will not, require any competitors to operate over heavily populated land. That was never the position, it is not the position now and it will not be the position. It was said when the product went into competition that such a function was not part of ASR 400, but that if those entering the competition wished to add that capability they could do so. The important decision that I have announced today takes no account of this. It was not a requirement of GEC to produce a system that would work over heavily populated land. That was not the position and it is not the position now, and as far as I am concerned that is the end of the matter.

Mr. Hoyle: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for clarifying some of the issues. He has responded to some

of the questions to which we were trying to get answers earlier on. I thank him for dealing with the technical data. I think he will agree with me, however, that although a caveat was added by saying that if a system could operate over heavily populated land it would be in a more favourable position, I was saying that when the order for Nimrod was placed, that capability was not set out in the specification or requirement.

Dr. Hampson: It would seem that the precise requirements stayed the same and that the RAF's interpretation of them changed. We have experienced enormous expense and delay because the RAF changed its view. It found that as Nimrod flew near land there was a flutter problem caused by low-speed items being picked up, such as motor traffic. AWACS never picks up moving items below 80 knots whereas Nimrod picks them up at 20 knots. The RAF took the view that the flutter with Nimrod was intolerable.

Mr. Hoyle: The hon. Gentleman is correct. I am glad that we are getting down to the nitty-gritty, to the technical specifications that we want to discuss. It is on these issues that we should be making our decision.

I am saying that many of the problems have been caused by the MOD. There have been problems because of the way in which the contract was placed in the first instance. The Ministry was reluctant to see costs increased, but the problems that arose could have been rectified early on if additional moneys had been made available. GEC drew attention to the problems at an early stage in meetings with the MOD and it was only when GEC took over the project in the last nine months and spent £50 million of its own money in doing so that the deficiencies were overcome. It got rid of the original computer and a new computer was installed along with a filtering system that stopped flutter. GEC says that the project is 85 per cent. efficient when set against the specification, which is an enlarged specification, and that is not denied. Indeed, I think that the Secretary of State has acknowledged that that is so. If GEC can fulfil 85 per cent. of the specification and if it has made so much progress in the past nine months, why throw it all away now?

Sir Adam Butler (Bosworth): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hoyle: I do not really wish to give way because many other right hon. Members wish to contribute to the debate, but I shall do so in this instance. We are establishing some facts.

Sir Adam Butler: As an advocate of the GEC case, the hon. Gentleman has made a remarkable statement. He has said that progress in the past nine months has been excellent, and I think that we are agreed about that, but he is implying that GEC knew the answers before that period and did nothing to produce them.

Mr. Hoyle: No. The right hon. Gentleman has it wrong. GEC wanted to produce the answers and wanted to put things right, but it could not obtain the funds to allow it to do so and it was not allowed by the MOD to take that course. The fact is that the Ministry was trying to work to a specification that was unworkable. In the end, however, GEC tried to put things right. That is why I am saying that, once GEC took over responsibility for the contract, great progress began to be made. I repeat my statement that the progress that it has made is remarkable. Bearing that in mind, surely we should be able to give GEC a little more time.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Bearing in mind that the first six units will not be delivered until 1991, does the hon. Gentleman agree that so much progress has been made by GEC that it is insanity to sacrifice a system that is more sophisticated and advanced than AWACS, especially when we consider the public investment that has been made? By 1991 we could have six British Aerospace Nimrod 3s working to the specification of the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Hoyle: I am so pleased to hear a Conservative Member speaking up for Britain.

I recall that when many of us were pressing the Secretary of State for Defence to order the Nimrod project, the RAF was against it. It has never changed its mind. It wanted AWACS originally and it wants AWACS now. As the RAF does not want Nimrod, would it not be better to initiate an independent assessment of the sort that has been pressed for by both sides of the House? Surely such an assessment would reveal the facts. It is wrong that the RAF should be the prosecutor and a witness at the same time, and that is what is wrong with the case which has been built up so far. We would not lose anything by allowing an independent assessment to take place. Indeed, we could gain a great deal.

I remind the right hon. Gentleman that we could save 3,500 jobs in high technology. We could maintain the lead that we built up. Apart from America, this is the only country involved in this work. We could be still there. We could gain valuable export markets. We know that Lockheed of Georgia is prepared to put in the C130. It could be exported to many countries.

I do not wish to take up any more time—I could—because many hon. Members wish to speak in the debate and add their expertise. This is a black day for the country. It is a black day among many recent black days, such as when we had the Westland dispute, when the Government tried to give away Land-Rover and Leyland lorries to General Motors and when we knew that Austin Rover was talking to Ford. Perhaps I am unfair to the Government, but it appears that they cannot give British industry to America fast enough. That is not the way that we should go. All hon. Members should stand up for British technology and maintain our belief in it by saying, "Let us give it a little more time. Let us develop it so that we can get into the world market. Let us develop a project of which we could all be proud." Despite the right hon. Gentleman's statement, I hope that he will go away and, over Christmas and new year, when he has a little time — I know that it is difficult in Scotland during Hogmanay—reflect on what has been said in the House. I hope that he will come back and say to GEC, "I shall give you the independent assessment that has been requested."

8.31 pm

Mr. James Prior (Waveney): I declare a fairly large interest in this debate. I make no bones about it. I do not see why hon. Members who have an interest should not declare it or should not take part in the debate. I think that the House gains something when people who have outside interests are able to play a part in debates.

There was criticism because, on Tuesday, I asked the Prime Minister a question. I gather that the Whips said

[Mr. James Prior]

that they thought that it was unethical that I should do so. I have taken and given a good deal of stick over the years, and I bear no malice. The Government are a good deal better at giving stick than I ever was.

I unreservedly accept that my unpopularity in certain quarters has had nothing to do with this decision. I hope that all hon. Members will accept that I genuinely believe that, even if the national press does not. I regret the decision. It is wrong and it is a setback for Britain. This is an important contract because of its size and, of course, its prestige. It is one large job and it will not materially affect a company as large as GEC. Many lessons are to be learnt from this contract and from what has happened. I hope that there are no more cost-plus contracts, except during the early stages of development. Frankly, this contract has been thoroughly badly handled. GEC must take some of the blame, but the main culprit must be the Ministry of Defence. It was responsible for deciding on the money and the way in which the contract should be operated.

It is common knowledge that, time and again during the course of the contract, there were delays in obtaining equipment that GEC said was necessary. Years ago, it was said that the project would require a much greater capacity computer. I have seen the minutes of the meetings. GEC was not allowed to get the computer.

When it became clear that there was a clutter problem when looking towards land, it was said that there would have to be a traffic correlator, but we were not allowed to put one in. The transmitter is the most important item. Unless the transmitter works effectively and with power, nothing else in the aeroplane can work. The transmitter should have had a complete series of tests on the ground, but they were cut out during the moratorium of 1980-81 because there simply was not the money. The contract was handled on the basis of money, not performance. That is the lesson that we must learn for the future.

Eventually, the contract came to an end. A mistake was made by GEC. It should have stopped work on this contract at least five years ago, but it did not. It is tempting to take the attitude that one is being paid cost plus 4 per cent., so one goes on and hopes that something will turn up. It is a cosy relationship, but it simply does not work.

Since March, we have been operating on an entirely different basis. The right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) was wrong to say that it is £50 million of GEC's money. Since March it has been £25 million of GEC's money and £25 million of the Government's money. Since that time, we have been the main contractor. We told the Ministry of Defence what we would be able to achieve from March to 3 September. During that period, we achieved or exceeded all the items which we set out to improve. Two items in particular were clutter when looking towards land, which required the correlator, and the ability to see targets.

The spirit of the agreement that we entered into was that we would work together. We said that if, at the end of the six-month period, we were not able to make the necessary progress, we would accept that other firms would have to be approached and we would give up the contract. During that period, we made all the progress that we should have made. During that period, five progress reports were sent to the Ministry of Defence. On only the first report was any criticism made to us. I do not believe that anything is now known about the operation of Nimrod as against AWACS that was not known in March or earlier. One of my main contentions is that, quite frankly, from what we have heard today, they should not have gone on working after March. They should have cancelled the project then and gone for AWACS.

That was a difficult time for the Government because it followed the Westland and Rover incidents and there was a lot of anti-Americanism. The Government did not pursue AWACS. They kept on with the contract. There was a case then for cancelling it. The Government should not have taken £25 million of GEC's money in the way that they have since that time. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I do not expect any sympathy for that point, but it is an important ethical one that we should not forget.

I appreciate that the Secretary of State has had a difficult job. I wish to ask him a few relevant questions about the statement. His fifth point was that the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement announced that, for Nimrod, we had negotiated with GEC revised contractual arrangements involving a sharing of financial risk with the company and giving it adequate incentives for completion. I should like to know what were the adequate incentives for completion. To my knowledge, the only incentives for completion were that, if we were successful in the final contract, we would be paid only 50 per cent. during the course of the contract until we had completed it to the final specification laid down by the Minister of Defence. Until that time, we would have been working entirely with our own money, and it could have cost us as much as £200 million which, even for a company the size of GEC, is a considerable amount.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that the ASR 400 has not been changed. That is not what matters. The interpretation that has been put on it is what matters. Since 1979 there have been no fewer than 3,845 modifications. That tells us something not only about the complications of the project but about the interpretation of the ASR 400. The truth is that we could have got on with the ASR 400 if we had not been denied or delayed in the resources required at the right time. If we had been able to test the transmitter and it had worked, many of the problems that occurred when the aircraft was in the air and the radar was being tested could have been overcome more quickly.

Point 5 of the speech by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State refers to the final time scale which is laid down for the provision of these aircraft. My right hon. Friend is right; we would have delivered the aircraft by 1990. The only outstanding problem at that time would be the joint tactical information distribution system. JTIDS is something that the Americans have to produce and that the Ministry of Defence has to buy and something over which GEC would have no control, so please do not let anyone blame us for the delay after 1990. We would deliver the aircraft by 1990. We have said so. If we refused to do so, we would be paid only up to 50 per cent.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) made a remark with which I fully agree. He said that, generally, our technology has been of high quality but our costs have been too high. I talk to our technicians regularly. They are bitterly disappointed because they feel that they have been judged unfairly on their technical performance. During the past few weeks, they have said to me repeatedly, "We would not have

minded if we had been beaten on price, but we mind desperately that we have been judged as being beaten on our technical performance."

There have been technical disappointments, but, as I have said, we set out with limited objectives in March and we have fulfilled them. I shall not go into the problems that remain — I have written to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of state about them—but they can be solved. We have shown not only the improvements which we have made but how further improvements can be made to bring us up to the necessary specifications. I do not think that "technical disappointment" is a fair way of expressing what has happened.

I come to the figures in paragraph 10. Frankly, I simply do not understand them. The total figure put in by GEC Avionics for the whole job on a fixed price, including inflation, was £508 million, which was to provide 11 Nimrods to the specifications laid down in ASR 400. Today we were told that we shall get six AWACS for £860 million—which does not allow for inflation, as we heard from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State—and my right hon. Friend is taking an option on two more. Those eight AWACS are hardly equivalent to 11 Nimrods — in fact, to be on equal grounds, there must be 10 AWACS. But let us say that there are eight AWACS, which is £860 million plus the cost of the two on option, which takes the amount to about £1·1 billion. A little must be added for inflation, because the first aircraft will not be delivered until 1991, so let us say that the amount will be £1·2 billion. That is precisely double the amount that the 11 Nimrods are due to cost, and which we have guaranteed. It is not £200 million more but more than double.

We delude ourselves as a country if we do not get these figures in the right perspective now. I shall not be in the House to complain—I dare say that my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) will be on his feet quickly to complain—in five years' time when the cost has gone up and it is shown that it is double the cost of Nimrod. I am not at all happy about the figures that have been produced.

I can understand that there was not a great argument about the cost by the defence chiefs, because they know that there is not much cost for the next three years. They know that there will probably be less of a cost for the next three years and that the main cost comes later. As we all know from our political experience, we do not really care what happens in four or five years' time because we do not know whether we will be here. It is a problem for someone else to sort out. That is nearly always where we go wrong.

Many subjective judgments have been made, and I do not doubt that I am making a few. It is extraordinary that, in a contract as technically difficult as this, the advice from everyone in the Ministry of Defence has been unanimous. This must be the only time that this has ever happened. It is too good to be true. It leaves me with a sad feeling.

The defence industries are important to this country. It is essential that we do not have this terrible hiatus ever again. The Ministry of Defence must recognise not only that it is a major contractor and customer, which is responsible for a tremendous number of orders, high technology and employment in Britain, but that other countries look at us and see what we are doing. If they see that we are making a mess of this, no matter whose fault it is—we take some of the blame—it has an impact on what happens to other defence contracts. Our competitors abroad will be going around saying to our customers, "Look what they have done. They have left it. They were not satisfied." That is a very dangerous position for this country to get into.

We must co-operate more. There is not enough co-operation between the defence contractors and the Ministry of Defence. In my experience, we talk much more to our other customers than to the Ministry of Defence. We need quickly to look at that aspect. GEC and the Ministry of Defence need to repair a few fences quickly. I say that not necessarily because my making these comments may obtain more orders but because I genuinely believe that, unless there is that good contact and good understanding between the two sides over what is important for Britain, we cannot possibly get it right.

Grave charges are being levelled by GEC employees who have had good relationships with the radar establishment and with the Ministry of Defence for 15 to 20 years and who feel that this time something has gone wrong. They do not know what it is. They have not been told during the past few months what it is.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Nor have we.

Mr. Prior: No one has been told. I should expect that, in a contract of this nature, as with most contracts, when things were going wrong, there would be discussion between the contractor and the customer.

Of course, we have to accept the decision. The RAF has always wanted AWACS and I do not see why it should not want AWACS. It has always wanted it and I do not impugn the RAF for that because it flew me across the Irish sea so many times over a three-year period that I would never say that the RAF was not perfectly entitled to fight hard for what it requires. However, the decision is a setback for Britain. It is a great disappointment, especially for the work force. It is a disappointment for those Conservative Members who, in difficult times, have supported me and the company, and I am grateful to them for that. We owe it to all the people who will lose their jobs over the next few weeks in unpleasant circumstances to ensure that this kind of thing never happens again.

It may not be a very good story from the company's point of view, but I think that the Ministry of Defence has a very heavy responsibility for all that has happened which has led to the decision.

8.50 pm

Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles): I am grateful for the opportunity to make my speech after the right hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior). It is a great pity that this debate did not take place earlier. It would have been better if these matters could have been discussed before. I am sorry that the Secretary of State has left the Chamber, but he has been magnificently honest in response to questions. He has clarified many issues for us tonight.

The statement that the Secretary of State made today was particularly helpful. In that statement, he said that it is most important that there is a "vital secure data link". As an ex-RAF navigator during the war, I can appreciate that it is not very funny sending out signals telling the enemy where you are. My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asked whether that data link applied to Nimrod as well as to Boeing. There was some confusion but eventually we were given a clear answer. We were told that the "vital secure data link" which, in the

[Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones]

statement is said to be a disadvantage to Nimrod, is actually a disadvantage for both aircraft. The Secretary of State was absolutely honest and positive about that. The alleged defect in Nimrod occurs in both aircraft.

Several other points have arisen in the debate that are important. I want to stick briefly, if I may, without romancing too much, to the letter which the Secretary of State produced today and his statement. The Secretary of State has said that the GEC offer covers three levels of attainment. He spells those out. He also referred to the first three aircraft that will be available in 1987 and he said that they will be no good because they are of an unsatisfactory standard for training. I have never heard so much cobblers in my life.

In the RAF, we were trained in what was known as mark 4 AI. We then used mark 8 AI and went operational on mark 10 AI. It is not unusual to be trained in the forces on a piece of equipment that is not completely modern. The Secretary of State and I flew in an aircraft which was perfectly adequate for training purposes. It ought not to have been dismissed in that manner.

Many important points have been raised in connection with phases 2 and 3 regarding the performance of Nimrod. The right hon. Member for Waveney was absolutely correct when he referred to the improvements. I flew on Nimrod and there were GEC boys present who praised Nimrod. Hon. Members have said today that of course they would do that. However, standing behind me at that circuit was a squadron leader radar navigator from the MOD. He said the same so I was not being fed bull; I was being fed the truth.

The GEC boys demonstrated a situation in which there was clutter. My God, there was clutter. It was impossible to pick up anything. They then switched in the computer — which has only recently been fitted — and the performance improvement was remarkable. That factor has not been taken into account.

I have knocked GEC in the past and it is far from blameless in this matter. However, the improvement in the past six months has been demonstrably remarkable. GEC deserves the faith of the Ministry in this matter because it has performed extremely well.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow and my hon. Friend the Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) have managed to discover that the time scale in relation to the "vital secure data link" is not available for either aircraft. That appears in the statement as a criticism of Nimrod, but is not. We must return to the other time scale. In passing, I hope that GEC would not object if the MoD, in its infinite wisdom, decided to invoke and invite other electronics experts in this country to participate to resolve the problem. There would be no harm in that. The main contract remains sacrosanct.

We shall not have a Boeing until 1991, as stated in the fifth point in the statement. The Secretary of State was very honest about that. The implication of that is that he has presented us with a reason why we should persist with the Nimrod project. That is loud and clear.

I hope to God that the House can achieve a deathbed repentance on this occasion and revoke the decision because it is wrong. At the end of the war we had one of the finest air interception facilities in the world called mark 10 AI, but we lost it. That system could have been modern for the next 30 years, but we lost it to the Americans. We have a distinct chance, if we do not proceed with the project, of losing this technology in its entirety. This technology has an advantage outside military use. There is a great problem with clutter at civil airports and with holding people off. The equipment would be extremely useful in civil aviation. There would be that spin-off.

When the Secretary of State referred to cancellation, his hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) asked about the horizon issue. He asked if there was a relationship between the horizon and the height at which the aircraft flies. The Secretary of State said that there was a correlation. He said that as if it was a new discovery. However, we knew 15 to 20 years ago that Nimrod operated at 26,000 feet and Boeing at 29,000 feet. The horizon issue was common knowledge all those years ago. It is not a technical point; it is a matter of fact.

I make this plea. I have no commercial or constituency interest in employment terms in who receives the contract. However, I have an interest in the Royal Air Force. I believe that the RAF has been misled on this occasion. The progress that has been made by GEC, for aircraft that have already been paid for, represents a chance for us to lead the world in this technology. We must not throw that chance away.

The row over Westland and the resignation of two Secretaries of State was a great mischief. The row was about helicopters. There was an air staff target for helicopters. AST 402, and the W30 built by Westland, were built to meet that specification. The Ministry of Defence ratted on it, which is why Westland found itself with a massive cash flow problem. At the end of the day, when all the dust has settled, the row has finished and the quarrelling is over, what is the truth? The truth is that we do not have sufficient helicopters today for the needs of our forces. That is the tragedy.

When one considers the clutter question of ASR400 it seems that GEC has produced equipment higher than the air staff target in urban areas, especially near Sheffield and Edinburgh. I applaud the honesty of the Secretary of State, but I urge right hon. and hon. Members to consider that they are chucking away an important and valuable piece of advanced British technology.

8.59 pm

Mr. Cecil Parkinson (Hertsmere): I am in the rather strange position of probably being as ignorant about technical matters as it is possible to be, yet having in my constituency industries which are working at the edge of the most advanced technology. I suspect that, in common with many hon. Members tonight, I have the disadvantage of being asked to pass judgment on a project, product and system which few of us understand and on which few of us are qualified to pass any technical judgment.

We may agree on more matters than one would have guessed from listening to some of the debate. Indeed, I am glad that it has settled down after its bad-tempered beginning. No hon. Member, including those on the Front Bench, would not prefer to buy a British AEW system. No hon. Member does not agree that there would be nothing patriotic about landing the RAF with a second-rate system. We are talking about developing an airborne system which is a vital part of the nation's defences and it must be common ground that it must be as good as possible.

We all agree that for the target to be running so late and so heavily over cost suggests either hopeless optimism at

an early stage—I suspect there was some of that—or appalling target control or, possibly, a combination of both. Certainly there are many lessons for the Ministry of Defence and the House to learn from the project.

It should be common ground that it cannot be easy for a Government—nor should it be for the House—to decide to write off at the end of a three-hour debate nine years' work of thousands of people and £700 million of taxpayers' money. Tonight we are taking a big decision.

I have one small criticism of the Opposition which is that they were extremely foolish to demand a Standing Order No. 20 debate so soon after such a highly complicated statement. This is probably the last chance that the House will have to debate this subject and we are disposing of it in three hours. The Opposition have nobody but themselves to blame for limiting the time available.

In making his statement, my right hon. Friend, by implication and sometimes directly, acknowledged some of the advantages of Nimrod. He acknowledged the cost and minimised the difference. Indeed, he probably gave a much fairer assessment of the potential savings from buying Nimrod. We should not ignore the fact that the technology, as developed, would have been British and ours to exploit.

Boeing promises to bring jobs here, and I do not doubt its determination to try to honour its word. Nevertheless, it will be bringing us technology for us to work on and we will be surrendering wholly British technology which could have been ours to exploit.

At the end of all this debate, the judgment, which we in this House are barely qualified to make but must do so, is to decide whether the Secretary of State, having taken the best advice he possibly can, and having considered it extremely carefully, is right. I know him personally and I am sure that the House knows that he cannot have found this decision an easy one. I have heard the Secretary of State defend projects in Scotland. We have maintained projects in Scotland when the economic justice for doing so has quite often eluded me. The Secretary of State has strong credentials as a man who likes to back British and would not take a decision like this one easily.

Mr. Dalyell: Scottish or British? GEC in Scotland will be hurt.

Mr. Parkinson: I am including Scotland as part of Britain. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not offended.

We are told that this project is not capable of working.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): It is working now.

Mr. Parkinson: We are told that even in the mid-1990s it is not sure that the system would work. What we are effectively being told is that the system will not work. It is on this important issue that I wish to draw on my experience.

In my constituency I have the factory or the base in which most of the technology is being developed. I know many of the scientists and technologists who work there and I have seen with my own eyes the progress that has been made in recent months. It is here that I must part company with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

I find it impossible to believe that in nine more years—that is the assertion made in the Secretary of State's letter—even by the mid-1990s, we will not have the technologists to crack the problem. I know these people and they are a most impressive group who have made tremendous progress in six months. I find it an incredible statement in the assessment, that in nine more years there is still no certainty that these technologists could crack the problem. The company has made the assertion that it could be done in three years and it has made an offer to back up that assertion with a substantial sum of money.

I started by saying that I was well aware of my lack of qualifications for making what is a technical judgment. What we are saying today is that this House has no confidence in British technologists' ability to crack the Nimrod problem. The Secretary of State believes that he is justified in making that statement. He has considered the matter carefully. I am afraid that I cannot join him in a condemnation of the capabilities of my constituents and those technologists that I know. He may be justified in taking this decision, but I cannot go with him.

9.9 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I am not interested in the party politics of this matter but I say to the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson): "Be fair." The Opposition pleaded to have this debate before the Cabinet decision was taken. My hon. Friend the Member for Warrington (Mr. Hoyle) and many others begged the Government to give time so that the House of Commons could have some input in the decision rather than a post-mortem afterwards. That is what we were begging for.

It all comes down to the treatment of the House of Commons. I do not make too much complaint that the Prime Minister is not here and that the Secretary of State for Defence has gone off for television engagements, but it is high time that the House asserted itself and expressed its views before, rather than after, decisions are taken. Again, we are crying over spilled milk.

I very much welcome the presence of the chairman of one of our great companies. It may be that the House is a bit poorer for not having the Sir Alfred Monds of the day and the major trade union leaders in the House.

I draw the Minister's attention to paragraph 12 of the Secretary of State's statement, which said:

> "The loss to British defence technology will be solely in this highly specialised field of large and advanced AEW systems, and it is not strategically vital for this capability to be retained in British industry."

That is what the Secretary of State said this afternoon, but we should listen to the chairman of GEC who said that our competitors around the world will be making play with what the British Government have done. He is right.

All of us who have industrial concerns in our constituencies and know something about their export difficulties are aware that the decision will be used against us in all sorts of areas. Paragraph 12 of the statement is just not true.

I was a bit shocked because the chairman of GEC said that the decision was not taken in March because of Westland and Leyland. That reveals that the politics of the situation was paramount. I do not want to be cheap about it, but who is playing politics with defence now?

There should be some explanation of the transmitter not being tested on the ground. If the money was not available for such a central and basic issue, what on earth was the reason? I hope that we shall have an answer to that question in the winding-up speech.

[Mr. Tam Dalyell]

I knew that there had been a lot of modifications, but how many hon. Members knew that there had been 3,845? My hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Park) has engineering experience. How can one produce anything with that kind of constant change and nagging? No industrial designer can cope with that, let alone cope with it and keep within cost estimates.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) is a member of the Defence Select Committee and he said to me, "If you are called, for heaven's sake ask them what are the through-life costs." This is a specific question for the Minister's winding-up speech. What are the comparative through-life costs for AWACS and Nimrod? Perhaps the right hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior) has an answer in his notes. GEC must have given some attention to this problem of through-life costs. The rest of us do not know, however, and it is a vital question. I shall give way to the Minister if he knows. Perhaps he will tell us later.

Boeing has a very good record in offsets. I do not think that anybody can deny that. Indeed, Boeing probably has a better record than any other American company, but that was before the Glenn amendment. The atmosphere in the United States is altering. Ever since Senator Glenn of Ohio brought in that amendment, admittedly in a different context, things have been different. We have seen that with the strategic defence initiative.

My constituents at Heriot-Watt university are doing work on optical physics, and, controversially, have taken £1·2 million or thereabouts from the Pentagon to keep the university physics department going. That is a paltry sum compared to the huge sums that were dangled before the House when my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) and others were asking about the industrial aspects of this matter. We live in a post-Glenn time.

The Royal Air Force has air staff requirement 400. Is that some sort of tablet from on high? Like the chairman of GEC, some of us do not believe that the Ministry of Defence was unanimous in its decision. I repeat the question: are we sure that in the next three or four years it will not dribble out that the decision was far from unanimous? I will bet my bottom dollar that, sooner or later, people will crawl out of the woodwork in the Ministry of Defence saying that they never wanted that decision. That will happen, because it has happened before.

The Secretary of State said that the secure data link was now on a par. A secure data link is absolutely crucial. I do not want to vaunt my qualifications, but for 20 years I have been the weekly columnist for *New Scientist*. I have many contacts and people tell me that, without a secure data link in the next generation, it is foolhardy to go ahead with the project. The AWACS project is a bit dated. It has already been going for eight years. It has the virtue of being tried but it has problems. I do not say that the secure data link is vital. The Secretary of State said in his opening statement that it was vital that it was sorted out. Who has the greater chance, GEC or Boeing, of coping with this crucial problem? I am told by people who are in a position to know that if they had to put money on who would first arrive at an answer to the secure data link, that money would go on GEC and not on Boeing. What does the Ministry of Defence say to that?

9.16 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): In the latter half of the debate we have been getting down to the basic facts about this issue. The Secretary of State said that the issue was complex, and we sympathise with him in having to reach a very difficult decision. The number of right hon. and hon. Members who wish to take part in the debate demonstrates clearly that this announcement should never have been kept until the last Thursday before Christmas. It should not have been left to an emergency debate. The Government should have provided the time for the debate, and they should have provided that time before they reached a decision. That would have given the Secretary of State an opportunity to explain many of the matters which are still confusing to the House and certainly to the public.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior) has shown how valuable it is to have someone in the House who holds a pre-eminent position in industry, and who can put the other side of the Government's case. Good government, as we learned above all during the 1930s, depends on having in the House people who have the information themselves, and who can therefore challenge the Government on any big issue. Otherwise the House just becomes a poodle of Government.

There was a time when industrialists and top trade union leaders came to the House in order to make a contribution. They did not seek office, but wanted to give their information and knowledge to the House so that hon. Members could reach better judgments. Those industrialists and trade unionists have all disappeared. We must now wait until a Member of Parliament becomes distinguished in the House. He may then go off to industry and, in some cases, be able to enlighten us.

My view on the decision is that it is sad and regrettable, and I certainly cannot support it. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that the interests of the services and of the Royal Air Force are important. He was absolutely right. I admire very much the work that he is doing as Secretary of State. But I do not accept that the views of the services or of the Royal Air Force, in particular, are paramount. They are not.

I must apologise to my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) if for once in our lives we disagree. The views of the services are not paramount and I suggest that the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies), who opened the debate, has jumped on the bandwagon, just as the Leader of the Opposition jumped on the bandwagon of "paramount" at Question Time today. Those two right hon. Members are in an extremely dangerous position, and they will find themselves tied to it if ever they get into office—which I very much doubt. It is a very unwise position to adopt. Hon. Members should look at the problems to which we are tied now because we were told that the views of the Falkland islanders were paramount. The view of this House is paramount and the view of Parliament as a whole.

The chiefs of staff do not have responsibility for the Budget or for finance. They do not have responsibility for employment and jobs, or for exports and export performance. They do not in the least have that responsibility, and it would be wrong to charge them with it. Therefore, their position is one factor in the overall situation.

It is clear that, from the point of view of the Budget and of finance, of jobs and employment, and of export potential, everything in this case is on the side of GEC, and to a certain extent on the side of Nimrod as a whole. It is only on the argument about technical achievement that there is any difference. Of course, the chiefs of staff and the experts can give their views on that. But it is the Government's responsibility to take the decision and they should not say, "This was the advice that we received from the chiefs of staff." There was a time in the House when no reference was ever made to advice received from chiefs of staff or from any military. It would be a very good thing if we returned to that position. Governments are then prevented from trying to shift the responsibility on to those who are advisers, and no more than that.

I have also been somewhat shocked by the naive simplicity sometimes shown by my right hon. and hon. Friends behind me about the views of experts. The House is not governed by experts. Our task is to take experts' views and to tear them apart as skilfully as we can and as often as necessary. It is only in that way that we shall find the overall solutions that are necessary.

I shall now concentrate on the specific position of GEC, and on some of the confusions surrounding it. I accept that the specification has remained the same except, as we were told, for refueling in the air. But to use a term that is, I believe, now used in fashionable circles, that is an economical use of the truth. It is not only the specification that is important but the steps taken by the Ministry of Defence in order to insist on how that specification should be reached. When there are more than 3,000 alterations, long delays on the part of the Ministry of Defence before it says yes or no to a proposition from the company, and when money is refused for changes that the firm wants in order to reach that specification, we can see a long, sordid history of delay, lack of finance and incompetence by the Ministry of Defence. Nor is it, alas, alone in our post-war history.

For example, we have lost the greater part of our civil aviation industry because the British Overseas Airways Corporation insisted on specifications that prevented the export of aircraft to other countries, because they did not have the same idea of route lengths, and so on. Moreover, there were all the alterations that that company made as the development went along, which led to delays in the production of aircraft. The civil aviation industry tells a sad, sad story.

In this case, the important part is the confusion about specification and about how it is to be implemented, and that is where the Ministry has its say. There is then the question whether the aircraft had to cover overland operations. I do not think that we are talking so much about confusion as about a difference of definition. When dealing with North sea waters, it was found that to a certain extent operations overland were involved. That is quite different from saying that thickly populated areas on the continent of Europe had to be dealt with as well. But those are confusions and an economical use of the truth.

After nearly nine years of delay, obstruction and lack of Ministry finance, the firm managed to make extraordinary progress in nine months once it had taken control of the contract. It is contributing half the finance and is prepared to continue doing so. This is a remarkable change, and I congratulate those who have been responsible for it.

As the firm is now approaching so closely to what is required under ASR 400, my view is that the Government and the Ministry of Defence should work with it to enable it to achieve those financial results. Why should we use our research laboratories and so-called experts only to pull the thing to pieces and engage in this orgy of suicide, from the national point of view, which so many of them want? They should be used to help the firm to overcome the remaining difficulties and solve the problems. That is what they are there for. Why do they not do that?

Where I differ from the judgment of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is in my belief that, having achieved so much in nine months, the firm should be given the opportunity of carrying out the timetable into which it is prepared to put its money as well as Government money. Then we shall have the opportunity of more advanced technology than the Americans will provide through Boeing, and the opportunity of selling it in the world markets. We shall maintain British prestige and advance our own technology in a specific but important sector. What is more, we shall maintain the morale of those in industry who have been striving to achieve the target that we have set them.

9.25 pm

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): The speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) has saddened me. In many ways it was not worthy of the occasion. It was looking backwards and it was not addressing the threat that we face from a greatly enhanced Soviet air force and naval air forces. In the past 10 years, the threat has been growing steadily and it is a threat from such aircraft as the Backfire supersonic bomber and the Fencer fighter bomber. Both these aircraft can strike at these shores, and if they are to be intercepted they have to be intercepted as far away as possible. The Backfire, for example, has a stand-off capability, and that is why interception at long range is so important.

In peacetime, the views of experts, as my right hon. Friend so disdainfully calls them, may not seem important. We can derogate the weight that we attach to the specialist advice of those who may ultimately have to put their lives at risk on our behalf, but I am absolutely certain that if we were to go to war, we should wish for our armed forces the very best. It is most significant that the Army, the Navy and the Air Force are united in their advice to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. Most importantly, the Royal Air Force itself——

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Wilkinson: No, because time is short.

In making its choice, the Royal Air Force is conscious that it is reducing the amount of money for its future programmes and it attaches great weight to airborne early warning. Neither the land battle nor the war at sea can be won without a favourable air environment. Our own population, our families, cannot sleep safely in their beds unless they know that the United Kingdom air defence region will be properly policed and guarded by interceptors that are directed to their targets by the very best airborne early warning system available.

There is no doubt that the contractors have had time enough. The specification, the air staff requirement, was set back in 1976, the Nimrod AEW programme was

[Mr. Wilkinson]

initiated in 1977 and the AWACS for the NATO European countries was initiated one year later, in 1978. Yet AWACS came into service in time, in 1982. That was when the first Nimrod AEW aircraft should have been delivered for training to the Royal Air Force. Since then, our NATO partners have had the benefit of this additional security. It is a classic example of what should have been a collaborative programme from the outset.

With hindsight, we all regret that that decision was not taken. However, it was not, and in a cool, calm and highly rational manner my right hon. Friend has had the courage to grasp a difficult political nettle. I have known, literally for years, about the deficiencies of the Nimrod system for airborne early warning. I have not spoken out. To have done so would, I felt, have been prejudicial to this country's security interests.

However, in the spring of 1986 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was entirely right to say that enough was enough, that good money could not be thrown after bad, that the contract should be thrown open to competition, to make GEC assume leadership of the project, put in its own money and see if it could come up with a solution that would beat the competition within a reasonable time scale. It could not do so. As it could not do so, my right hon. Friend had to make the appropriate decision. I believe that he has, and his courage deserves to be commended. I am sure that the country will be grateful for his courage, because now our countrymen can sleep more safely in their beds.

9.31 pm

Mr. Robert B. Jones (Hertfordshire, West): I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to catch your eye, because the GEC factory at Hemel Hempstead in my constituency is where much of the work on the development of Nimrod has been done. Those who have been involved with the project are dedicated avionics workers. They are fully committed to the defence of Britain, otherwise they would not be there. There has been uncertainty over their future in the last few months, but in the last few days it has turned to anguish. Therefore I want to identify some of those who I think are responsible for that anguish.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence told us today — although we have heard about it for several days in the press — that Nimrod does not fulfil the requirements and that therefore it must be scrapped. I do not doubt that my right hon. Friend reached his decision after a great deal of difficult and careful consideration. No Government, of whatever complexion, would have done other than buy British, if that had been possible. No Government would unnecessarily waste £660 million. My right hon. Friend must surely, therefore, have satisfied himself that Nimrod was unlikely to work properly on any reasonable time scale.

The historic background is important. My constituents have been working on this project since 1977. By March 1986 the consensus was that the system was not satisfactory. Nobody has challenged that assumption. The Royal Air Force says that it laid down clear requirements. As we have heard tonight, there was only one change — the requirement for an air-to-air refuelling capacity. With that one exception, the requirements remained unaltered until GEC was given a lower revised target, called an "interim operating standard". I am sure that that is true. However, it is misleading.

For the first eight and a half years of its life, the Ministry of Defence effectively ran this project. The MOD determined precisely what work should be carried out by GEC, and in many ways how it should be carried out. The civil servants therefore carry an enormous responsibility for the lack of progress. I should welcome a Select Committee inquiry into the management of the programme. It would, I fear, reveal that a profoundly disturbing system was in operation during that time.

Furthermore, although it is true that the specification, the ASR400, was not changed, much of the detailed requirement — filling in the broader terms of those references — was changed. Some change is inevitable. Neither science nor defence stand still. However, the MOD must stand indicted of gross mismanagement, which has now cost my constituents their immediate jobs. My right hon. Friend should now ensure that MOD heads should roll, too. One of the least acceptable facts of British political life is that those civil servants who have been guilty of mismanagement often get off scot-free. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that GEC itself was anything other than a willing partner in this arrangement. The absurd cost-plus basis of defence procurement leads to a cosy relationship which is beneficial at the time but which in the long term is destructive to the interests of both sides.

We reached the crunch point in early 1985 when, I believe, Ministers were starting to think about pulling the plug. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) and his successor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger), decided instead to give GEC a further chance and set about developing a competitive framework and a fixed price basis for payment. It is arguable that at this stage the Ministry of Defence was leading GEC up the garden path.

I shall now turn to a review of progress since the end of March. The new competitive framework has justified itself. GEC was left to its own devices, but with the chill winds of competition blowing, minds at long last became concentrated. By September, progress had certainly been made, but in his statement my right hon. Friend makes it clear that the customer, the RAF, even at that time did not feel that it was good enough. We have learned directly or indirectly that on all major criteria — range, tracking, computer power and filtering — performance was below par. That is not in dispute. GEC argued that the performance was quite close to specification but the RAF argued that it was a long way off. There is some common ground, probably more than appears, because the two sides are measuring things in different ways. It was not the performance that persuaded my right hon. Friend but the expectation, since he had to be mindful of the importance of getting the equipment into use early.

I should now like to turn to my right hon. Friend's comments after the test flight. He and my noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement say that although the system works in the lay sense of the word, it does not work in the sense of being up to scratch. I hope that my right hon. Friend will agree that even with the best will in the world his public comment on television aroused quite false optimism in GEC. Ministers now say that there were frequent breakdowns in the system and that often, equipment which worked on take-off did not work on

landing, and that on that basis they had no confidence in the consistency of the equipment and, therefore, its capacity for early retirement. With hindsight they should surely have sounded a warning note.

A factor in the decision thus faced by the Cabinet appears to be that delay in the supply of the AEW meant that we would not be able to plug our defence gap. AWACS was far from ideal, but it was working and available. Nimrod was crude. All hon. Members will understand that the Cabinet faced a difficult choice and the RAF took the view that enough was enough. I am sure that most of my hon. Friends will agree that one cannot overrule the RAF on a matter of confidence in the equipment that it has to use.

My hon. Friends representing Hertfordshire constituencies are especially disappointed at what happened in the closing days of this tale. Although there is a history of poor project management, enough changes had been made to prompt me vigorously to argue for an extension, at least until March. Unfortunately, quite apart from the growing impatience and scepticism of the RAF, my right hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior) decided to weigh in with an outspoken attack on the evaluation system. That was profoundly unhelpful and caused the die to be cast. Rightly or wrongly, the RAF had made up its mind and the Cabinet backed the unanimous choice of its scientific advisers. Given those facts it would be a mistake to prolong the agony.

Mr. Prior: Why on earth should my hon. Friend think that a statement I made last Sunday had a damaging effect on getting an extension of a few weeks or a couple of months for the assessment? His remarks are not what I would expect from my hon. Friend, and if it is any help to him I can tell him now that GEC offered to pay to the middle of January so that a further assessment could be made.

Mr. Jones: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for that intervention. One of the consequences of the information that came out over the weekend was not only damage to the reputation of this piece of equipment and to the chances of continuing with work on it, but also damage to the credibility of GEC on a number of other fronts in which I have a constituency interest and an interest in another sense.

We have spent a great deal of time squabbling about what caused the problem in the past. Surely now we can at least spare a few words for the future. GEC has a great record in many ways and it has brought a great many other products to fruition which are selling well in the world. I hope that when my hon. Friend the Minister replies he will be able to say something about the alternative forms of radar system which it may be possible to develop over the coming years and that that will give hope to this sector of the economy, because that is what is needed.

9.40 pm

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): We have had a remarkable debate this evening, but the most remarkable speech of all was that which came from the right hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior). Basically, he rubbished the whole of the Government's case. There is a duty upon the Minister when he replies to answer point by point, in detail, the questions that were raised by the right hon. Gentleman on cost, because that is fundamental to the case that was given.

Secondly, there is a real duty upon the Minister to justify why, even at this late stage, we cannot have an independent assessment. An extra few weeks, at GEC's cost, would be nothing to settle that matter. It is not as though independent assessors have not been used before. They were brought in last year by the Minister to work out technical details with the Department at Malvern. There was a suggestion within the Minister's Department that that should be done again this year.

There was a suggestion, as late as October, as reported in *The Guardian* this weekend, that CAP (Scientific), which helped to carry out the inquiry last year, should be brought in again. That was suggested by the risk assessment committee. *The Guardian* reports:

> "The ministry's 'risk assessment' committee—the group charged with assessing Nimrod's ability to meet the RAF's cardinal points specification—had already approached the British computer specialists CAP (Scientific) and two American radar specialists when it was instructed by another section of the ministry, probably the Procurement Executive, to drop the idea."

Therefore, the risk assessment committee wanted that additional support for its judgment, or its criticism for that judgment, and the Government were not prepared to give it or even to think about it.

Dr. Hampson: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. McNamara: No. With the greatest respect to the hon. Gentleman, I have surrendered a lot of my time so that everybody could speak, and if I give way once I shall have to do so again.

If the people who carried out that technical assessment felt that they needed it, one cannot but come to the conclusion that there has been that degree of hostility to Nimrod in the Ministry since 1977 such that it was not prepared at any time or any occasion to think again.

But the decision on the contract, as the right hon. Member for Waveney pointed out, despite his tremendous defence of his company on television earlier this evening, has meant that we have told the world that, in one of the most sensitive areas of high technology and defence, Britain cannot make it. That is what we have said and that is what the Government are doing to British industry. They are saying that Britain cannot make it.

Last year the Government threw away our helicopter technology. Last Christmas there was one present—Westland helicopter technology to the United States. This Christmas there is another—early warning technology to the United States. I wonder, if the Prime Minister delays her election until 1988, what she will give them next year.

The Government say that this is not a strategically vital industry and that Westland was not a strategically vital industry. None of them are strategically vital industries, but if they are all given away together there will be no industry. That is what the Government are doing in our important defence base. There is no way that that can be justified.

The only thing that the Government are prepared to proceed with is the defence of a decision to purchase a nuclear warhead and develop that in Britain. But airborne early warning is far more fundamental to Britain's defence than any Trident system. The problem is that the Government, the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Defence are just a lot of nuclear junkies. They are hooked on Trident and everything else in our conventional defence suffers as a result. Airborne early warning, frigates and the

[Mr. McNamara]

Army all go because of the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State and his right hon. Friends.

We then turn to the argument of offset. The Secretary of State said that Boeing is an honourable company. He promised that it will meet its offset commitments—£130 for every £100. That seems too good to be true until we examine it. The Minister has said that Boeing will be contractually committed, but, in fact, it is committed to nothing by contract, not one job. The Minister did not say whether the non-binding contract is to last beyond the delivery of aircraft or whether it will go on during the life of the aircraft. Can he tell us that? Does it cover spares and replacements or does it end with the delivery?

On top of that, we are told that Boeing always honours its commitments. We should ask the Saudis how they felt when they were promised great things from Boeing. They were promised great offsets for their purchases. They were offered nine tremendous schemes: aerospace maintenance, advanced electronics centres, computer systems, digital telecommunications, a facility for manufacturing Boeing Vertol, a power engineering centre, an applied biotechnology centre and an applied technology centre. Of all those schemes, only two, the cheapest, have got off the ground. That is the truth about Boeing at present and the way in which it honours its commitments. As my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) pointed out, since the Glenn amendment there will be very little chance of those things coming through.

I next want to come to the comments of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). The Prime Minister said in reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) earlier this week that it is the opinion of the RAF, the people who are responsible for the defence of our country, that counts. Does the Minister believe that? Does he believe that it is the opinion of the generals that matter and that it is only they who will press the button? That is what the Government are saying.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth) *rose*——

Mr. McNamara: Are the Government abrogating the whole of their political responsibility? We know that it is not true. We know that the Government have made political decisions time and time again over defence contracts and this is nothing but a political decision on which £50 million was spent to buy time, as the right hon. Member for Waveney said.

The hon. Member for Hertfordshire, West (Mr. Jones) said that it is civil servants who are to blame on this contract. We can all blame civil servants. Nobody loves them, everybody hates them. However, this contract has gone on for nine years. For two of those years there was a Labour Government and we bear our share of the responsibility. However, for seven years we have had a Tory Government in control. It has gone on for seven years under four Secretaries of State — the right hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Pym), Sir John Nott, the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) and now the right hon. Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger). They were all responsible for what is going on. They knew that when Tornado was introduced we would need an airborne early warning system to make it work effectively and properly. In spite of that, they were not prepared to cancel Nimrod or to put the impetus behind it to ensure that it was available when Tornado came on stream. Therefore, when we have our first squadron of Tornado interceptors next year they will be crippled because over the past seven years not one Tory Secretary of State has been prepared to grasp the nettle of airborne early warning and make sure that the RAF has the use of the potential of that system. Now they are doing it at twice the expense — — [*Interruption.*] Yes, Conservative Members do well to cheer. The Government are reacting too late. There has been vulnerability and it will remain for another five or six years. There was no reason why we should not have gone ahead with Nimrod and ironed out the problems that existed.

The Government have announced today the selling out of British jobs, of British technology and of British exports. More importantly, they have left a grave area of vulnerability in our air defences over the past seven years. For that reason rather than all the others, the Opposition will divide the House.

9.50 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton): The Government have been accused of many things tonight, and among the most ludicrous of the accusations is that we are reluctant to buy British. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) said, the British solution would be popular. My hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, West (Mr. Jones) said that he believed that the Government would buy British if that were viable. Most of our equipment budget is spent in the United Kingdom, and the GEC group of companies has about £1·8 billion-worth of MOD business on its books, excluding Nimrod.

The House knows also that the British taxpayer has spent about £660 million in cash—worth £930 million in today's money — on Nimrod. Nothing could demonstrate more clearly the commitment of Ministers, MOD officials and the Royal Air Force to ensure that the GEC AEW succeeded and that we could buy British.

It gave my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State no pleasure, and it gives me none, to have to tell the House that, despite this commitment, and despite the expenditure of these large sums, Nimrod does not at present meet the specification required by the RAF, and we have no confidence that it will do so within the time scale laid down.

I do not need to remind the House that the Soviet threat is ever-present and increasing. My hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood, (Mr. Wilkinson) recognises this as well as anyone. Despite its economic weakness, the Soviet Union has created as fearsome a fighting machine as the world has ever known, and one that far exceeds its legitimate requirements for defence. It used to be said that although the Soviet Union had greatly superior numbers in troops, tanks, aircraft and many other armaments, the West had a commanding superiority in technology. This is becoming less and less true every day. For example, it is highly likely that the Soviet Union will soon be able to deploy a new generation of cruise missiles that will fly faster and be much more difficult — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Many questions have been raised in the debate and the Minister is answering them.

Mr. Hamilton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was saying that the Soviet Union will soon be able to deploy a new generation of cruise missiles that will fly faster and be much more difficult to identify than any that can be deployed by either side today. That is why the need for a new look-down AEW system, which was endorsed by Ministers in 1977, is becoming daily more essential for our defence capability.

As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State told the House earlier today, AWACS meets, or comes close to meeting, the operational standards set in 1977, and the Nimrod AEW, regrettably, does not. Nor is it likely to do so within the required time scale. Indeed, in several respects AWACS significantly exceeds our requirements and so gives us confidence that it will be able to deal with the sort of threat that we anticipate in coming years.

I can assure my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood that we shall fit the CFM56 engine in the E3A. I am confident that the engine will achieve a higher performance.

GEC has made progress in recent months—I fully acknowledge this—in producing a clearer picture, but we found that the system was seeing rather less than 50 per cent. of available targets at any one time. I disagree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath): it has not solved all the problems. In addition, its radar detection range was significantly down. False tracks were still appearing and mean track life was less than half of that required.

Mr. Heath: I did not say that it solved all the problems. I said that it had made remarkable progress in nine months. From the company's point of view and the expert advice it has, it will be able to deal with the rest of the problems, certainly as far as AWACS are concerned, in the time schedule.

Mr. Hamilton: The problem has been that it has made advances in some areas and difficulties have cropped up in others. As the House can readily see, the difference is not marginal. Measured against ASR400, the gap in performance of the two systems is wide. My right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion alluded to that.

GEC says that it never undertook to have a perfect working system at this time and that it has every confidence that it will be able to produce a system that will approach the required standard in three years. That is the company's view, but it is not supported by the judgment of the Ministry of Defence technicians, and their judgment is unanimous. I do not think that the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) will have the satisfaction of seeing these people crawl out from the woodwork in years to come.

I am glad to see the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) represent the alliance all on his own. He was very kind and praised my right hon. Friend for his courage in taking this decision. I thank him for that, but I hope that he will not mind me saying how much I regret that there is a horrible rumour going around that the alliance will show its courage tonight by abstaining.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior) and the hon. Member for Linlithgow referred to the 3,845 modifications that have taken place on the Nimrod programme since 1979. Perhaps I should explain to the House what a modification is. Each and every change that has been proved necessary to make the equipment during its development programme is called a modification. So the figure of 3,845 is a measure of the complexity of the process of trial and error that is inevitably characteristic of the development programme. Needless to say, it is not a sign that the customer's requirement has changed. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made it clear that the only change in the requirement has been the addition of in-flight refuelling.

I now refer to the accusation that we have moved the goalposts, that we have altered the specification and so made GEC's task impossible. That has remained completely unchanged with the exception of in-flight refuelling.

Lessons have been learned. I totally agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Waveney who said that he hoped there will be no more cost-plus contracts. I agree also with the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland who said that there were weak contractual arrangements. That is certainly true.

Mr. McNamara: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hamilton: I have only three minutes left, so I shall not give way.

In general, it is false to ridicule the offset arrangements, as some hon. Members have done. The Americans, and Boeing in particular, have a good record in fulfilling offset commitments of this sort. The offset programme will involve high technology work across a broad range of activities. Past projects have yielded highly successful offsets. The surface and submarine versions of the McDonnell Douglas Harpoon are the most striking. Almost £700 million of contracted work was achieved against a commitment of £300 million. Boeing's agreement for Chinook, negotiated in 1978 with a Labour Government, specified not a binding arrangement, but a "best endeavour" of 30 per cent. It delivered £100 million, and that was well in excess of what was done.

In its recent confused statements on defence policy, the Labour party favoured strong conventional defence. On the first occasion that this new-found commitment is put to the test, when the Government have to take a difficult and expensive decision in the interests of stronger conventional defence, it is found to be as hollow and empty as we have come to expect of every other election promise from the Labour party.

Another extraordinary attitude is the Opposition's hostility to the Royal Air Force. I believe that the RAF's views on defence procurement are very important, but the Opposition carry on like first world war generals regarding it as unnecessary to consult the poor bloody infantry about the conduct of the war. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will join me in voting against this measure.

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker——

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 170, Noes 339.

Division No. 48] **[10 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	**Bell, Stuart**
Anderson, Donald	**Benn, Rt Hon Tony**
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	**Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)***
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	**Bermingham, Gerald**
Ashton, Joe	**Bidwell, Sydney**
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*	**Blair, Anthony**
Barnett, Guy	**Boothroyd, Miss Betty**
Barron, Kevin	**Boyes, Roland**
Beckett, Mrs Margaret	**Bray, Dr Jeremy**

Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dover, Den
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Edwards, Bob *(W'h'mpt'n SE)*
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heddle, John
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Ron *(Carlisle)*
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKelvey, William
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Chris Smith.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Rt Hon Sir Frederic
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bigge-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Anthony
Fletcher, Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Staml'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Pym, Rt Hon Francis
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sheraby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'lch N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Social Security

Postponed proceedings on Question,

That the draft Social Security Benefits Up-rating (No. 2) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 1st December, be approved.

resumed.

Question again proposed.

10.14 pm

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to resume my speech — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will hon. Members who are not remaining for this debate please leave quietly?

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: Before the House moved on to other business, I was explaining why, in my opinion, our reliance on selectivity has ended in failure. I gave three reasons. The first is because it goes against the spirit of the age: it is wrong that we should divide the nation into first class and second class citizens. Secondly, it is contrary to the Government's central precepts by which we try to encourage our citizens to work and save. If we have some 14 million people dependent on means-tested benefits, they are people who have no particular reason to save and not too much reason to work. Finally, it has ended in failure because the system is leading rapidly to administrative breakdown.

This week the London Citizens Advice Bureaux have produced a report which is comprehensive and extremely compelling reading. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Department of Health and Social Security will look extremely carefully at its findings. I think it would be true to say that hon. Members who represent London know that what is written in the report is unfortunately all too true.

What the report describes is the chaos of the administrative system under which we handle the supplementary benefits and the case work and personal interviews involved. I have often brought the attention of the House to the fact that in the administration of supplementary benefit and national insurance the staff of the departments are required to make more than 90 million manual entries every week.

The report of the bureaux, with telling photographs, shows the type of premises in which the face-to-face interviews must take place. It draws attention to the staff shortages and the difficulty of giving people adequate training to handle the enormously complex system upon which we rely to make selectivity work. It draws attention to the number of mistakes that are made, inevitably, in interpreting the rules. It shows the tragic amount of waiting time and the inhuman conditions in which people are obliged to take their turn for an interview in order to make their claim.

One of the compelling reasons why we must hasten to abandon our reliance on selectivity is the enormous adminstrative cost and the amount of time which dedicated officials have to give to produce the results, which can give no satisfaction to them or to the claimants.

The system is intended to relieve need in a human way, but in fact it is creating intense hardship, bitterness, uncertainty and delay. No wonder that we find that a rapidly growing area of crime is crimes of violence against staff in the offices of the DHSS.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Surely one of the most important skills that has to be developed is that of interviewing the clients. This is where training is not as good as it ought to be. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will agree that it is essential that these interviewing skills are of the highest order.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I might be disposed to accept the hon. Gentleman's opinion if it were not for the fact that, from my observation, the system has to be changed radically. We cannot continue to run the welfare state to provide a basic income guarantee founded on face-to-face interviews for millions of claimants.

However much effort we divert into training of staff, the system has proved itself to be unacceptable and unworkable. We must move away from the reliance on selectivity that is dividing the nation and producing, as I have said before, a sub-culture of people in our society —a large element of the nation—for whom the impulse to save and work is being rapidly undermined.

When looking at what the House is trying to do when uprating these orders and keeping the machinery going while it slowly sinks into the mud, we should ask ourselves, "Could we place more reliance on the insurance principle, and could national insurance be revived?" In an earlier intervention, it was pointed out that national insurance benefits are not enough. That is one of the reasons why we have such a large number of claimants who need to apply for supplementary benefit. Their national insurance contributions have not procured them a benefit which is enough for them to rely on; so they have to apply for additional benefits.

National insurance was from its inception under the difficulty that it needed a Government subsidy, and the Government subsidy appears once again in these orders, although it is being reduced quite arbitrarily from one percentage figure to another. I do not think that there is any rational explanation for why the Treasury contribution to the national insurance fund was what it was last year or is what it will be next year. The whole conception of national insurance has cracked, because the money that can be produced by flat rate contributions is not large enough. When, some 10 years ago, we went over to earnings-related contributions, we said goodbye to the insurance principle in any actuarial sense.

We have produced a system in which the yield of the income tax has to subsidise the welfare state. For some reason best known to the Treasury, it insists on clinging to the idea that people's national insurance contribution and their income tax contribution are completely separate and that what one pays in income tax goes into one fund and what one pays in national insurance contributions and what the employer pays in national insurance contributions goes into a completely different fund. I suggest that that administrative nonsense should end.

National insurance has become a sham. It would be far better to recognise that we are running a system which, in effect, is taking from each according to his capacity and giving to each according to his need. It might be said that that is a growing-up of the whole conception of national insurance and putting in its place gradually, and perhaps half consciously, a life-cycle system of obligation and entitlement. People draw benefit at the beginning of their lives when they are not able to make a contribution; they make their contributions while they are of working age; and they revert to the status of claimants on retirement

and take their money back. I am attracted by the idea of the life-cycle of contribution and entitlement, and I believe that we want to build on it.

Looking at it from the administrative point of view, one of the axioms that my right hon. and hon. Friends must obey is the need to eliminate personal casework in very large quantities and quickly. If they do not accept that, let them consult the offices of the DHSS which are facing the problem of the monumental volumes of casework which they have to do at the moment. I consider that we should find large categories of claimants who can be handled by computer, week in, week out, without their situations being deemed to be continuously changing and needing to be reassessed. Child benefit is an example that we ought to follow when dealing with pensioners and other large categories of people.

I hope that, before next year when we consider orders such as these yet again, the Government will commit themselves to a wholly new approach. I think that we want simultaneous reform of income tax payments and allowances; national insurance contributions and benefits; housing allowances, subsidies and reliefs of every kind; and supplementary benefit. The whole system of redistribution of income in this country needs to be put on to a modern footing which is socially sound and administratively effective.

I should like to make this recommendation. We should move to a computer-based basic income guarantee which is as simple as it can possibly be, based on universal benefits and a universal requirement to contribute from income. It should be introduced in the first instance on a revenue-neutral basis. I would like to increase child benefit substantially, at least for the under-fives.

Apart from that, I am not suggesting major changes in the amount of the individual family's spending power from what they have at the moment. If we were to introduce a system of the kind I am recommending, it would constitute something which every family would be able to rely upon, whether in work or not—about half the equivalent of supplementary benefit rates at the present time.

This, I suggest, would be an extremely liberating process because it would then be up to the claimants themselves to select whether they really needed supplementary benefit or whether they could manage without. Those who had the spirit and the independence to take part-time work or to manage for a time on their savings or to make other arrangements to carry on from week to week would not need to go through the humiliation and the misery of claiming supplementary benefit. They would be people who could rely on their own resources and initiative, and would be free to act like other first class citizens to maintain themselves as best they could be their earnings or by whatever means they chose. There would be no hardship to the people who felt it necessary to apply for supplementary benefit because they would be perfectly entitled, as they are now, to say that they needed the other half of their benefit, which would be reliant on individual case work. I do not know how many people, if they were offered half supplementary benefit without any means test or question, would opt to claim the balance and how many of them would be content with the half benefit. But of course there would be a substantial saving if one is looking at it purely from the point of view of Exchequer outgoings. If there were 100,000 or 500,000 claimants who decided to opt not to insist on claiming the balance, it would allow us to improve their benefits as time went by, or to make other dispositions in the balance of obligation and entitlement that I have spoken of.

I beg my right hon. and hon. Friends to realise that we cannot go on as we are. There has got to be fresh thinking, and this is the type of approach which is in line with public expectations.

It is also practical in terms of computer technology. I hope that this idea will be considered. It is a way of restoring to people an incentive, an encouragement to work and to save, giving them back their self-reliance and taking the terrible burden of casework off the staff of the DHSS.

10.27 pm

Mrs. Elizabeth Shields (Ryedale): I shall refer briefly to two of the instruments in particular. First, I shall mention child benefit. The alliance certainly welcomes the increase of 15p in child benefit, but there is no real reason to congratulate the Government because that sum fails to make good the 1985 cut. That would require a 15p increase.

Such an increase has been supported by many different people inside and outside Parliament since the child poverty figures issued by the Child Poverty Action Group show how the fiscal system has during the past 25 years tended to move against families with children.

It is a fact that DHSS figures show that in 1983 400,000 children lived below supplementary benefit level and nearly 4 million lived on an income of up to only 40 per cent. above the supplementary benefit level. Yet child benefit is a much more cost effective way of helping those families where the head of the family is in work than making cuts in direct taxes, especially for the 250,000 working families with children whose incomes are below the tax threshold. It is also more effective than family income supplement which reaches only half of those eligible and which aggravates the poverty trap.

The Secretary of State said earlier this autumn that child benefit is a

"good, sensible way of bringing help to families."

I agree with that, but the Minister does not really demonstrate his fondness for child benefit. Action, as we all know, speaks louder than words. Child benefit is worth less today than the combined value of family allowances and child tax allowances were in 1955. In the case of the second and subsequent children it is £2·70 less.

Secondly, £200 million has been cut from the housing benefit scheme since its introduction and the present housing benefit uprating marks two further cuts amounting to a total of £68 million. The rent rebate taper which is the difference between the needs allowance and the income of a family has been increased from about 17 per cent. or 21 per cent. to 29 per cent. and now stands at 33 per cent. There could be even higher tapers under the 1986 Act, thus decreasing the housing benefit yet again.

The Secretary of State for Social Services says that the average losses will be small, but averages must conceal much greater losses for some people. The Child Poverty Action Group has calculated that a couple with two children earning £110 gross, in receipt of family income supplement and housing benefit, and paying average rent and rates will lose £1·47 a week. The Minister knows that people claiming housing benefit can ill afford to lose this money, or any similar sum.

[Mrs. Elizabeth Shields]

There are allied problems, such as those concerning students, with the cuts in housing benefit. Because of the shortage of accommodation in the areas around a university or college campus, students are frequently asked to pay rent during the long summer vacation to retain a specific flat or room in the following year. Only discretionary housing benefit is payable under these circumstances, and the burden then falls on parents, many of whom are simply unable to cope with the amounts demanded for the 10 or 12 weeks of the long vacation. When the provisions of the Social Security Act 1986 come into effect, even this discretionary allowance will no longer be available. Lack of support for students in this position could result in the abandonment of courses, and the loss of talent to the community.

The hon. Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) is no longer here, but he earlier made some remarks about alliance policies. We believe that the Government, any Government, have a basic duty to care for the weakest and most vulnerable in our society. Pensioners, the unemployed and those on a fixed income come into this category. As the alliance is fully aware of the fiscal implications of policy, we would look at the needs of the hardest hit today before giving away tax cuts that mainly benefit those in employment or in a sound financial position. We would prefer to see an improvement in both child and housing benefits instead.

10.31 pm

Mr. Nick Raynsford (Fulham) I shall address simply the housing benefit uprating and concentrate on the changes in regulations, which come at the end of a long, sad story of cuts in housing benefit over the past four years since the DHSS took over responsibility for the benefit from the Department of the Environment. The story bears repeating briefly.

In 1981, the Government published a consultation paper, called "Assistance with Housing Costs", and proposed a new reform of the system for helping people to meet their housing costs. They proposed the amalgamation of assistance under supplementary benefit and the old rent rebate and allowance and rate rebate schemes. The argument advanced by the Government was that this would create a more fair and simple system that would be better for claimants and easier to administrate.

The reality — although Conservative Members will not like this—was described in a newspaper not known to be sympathetic towards the Labour party as the greatest administrative fiasco in the history of the welfare state. When the Government tried to introduce a reform supposedly making benefits fairer to claimants and simpler to understand and administer, there were vast, long delays and people waited days, weeks, months for benefit. People were evicted from their homes because they had not got the benefit, there were massive complications and failure to calculate benefit entitlement because it was hugely complex, very unsatisfactory and entirely deserved the epithet given to it by the newspaper that I have quoted.

One might think that a Government who were responsible for such disgraceful bungling, which caused a great deal of hardship to poor people, might adopt a little humility in their approach towards the administration of this benefit system. They might have accepted that they have failed rather dramatically to deliver a decent, fair service to people in need, and accept a case for reform based on the principles that they were advised at the time they should have adopted in 1981, but did not. Those principles were a genuinely simpler system without cuts penalising claimants, ensuring that the people were given an adequate level of support to enable them to meet their housing costs.

The Government might also ponder the fact that the housing benefit scheme became more important, and therefore more expensive, partly because the Department of the Environment was pursuing a policy that deliberately increased the rents that were paid by both council tenants and private tenants. The withdrawal of subsidy forced up rents in the public sector and also encouraged rent officers to fix higher rents in the private sector. Therefore, tenants were paying higher rents. Government Ministers and the Department of the Environment justified the increase on the grounds that means-tested benefits would be available for poorer people so that they did not suffer loss.

What was the response of the Department of Health and Social Security? Again and again Ministers have said that the expenditure on housing benefit has been increasing too fast and that it must be cut. That is gross hypocrisy. The Government have deliberately cut the Department of the Environment's expenditure by forcing up rents and have justified it on the ground that there will be means-tested benefits to protect poorer people, but when those means-tested benefits begin to involve extra cost Ministers say that they do not like it and that they will cut the cost.

Since the introduction of housing benefit in 1983, the Government have not had enough humility to admit that they have made a mistake and that they ought to tread more carefully in future. Instead, insensitively and arrogantly, this Government have sought on six occasions since 1983 to cut benefits to those who are dependent upon housing benefit. What a record for this Government. The proposals that we are debating tonight represent the sixth successive cut in housing benefit in the last three years.

The result has been an increase in the tapers for those whose incomes are above the needs allowance. They were 17 per cent. on rent and 6 per cent. on rates in 1982 when the DHSS inherited the scheme. The tapers had run at that level for the previous 10 years while the Department of the Environment administered the scheme. In the last four years those tapers of 17 per cent. and 6 per cent.—a total of 23 per cent.—have been increased, and by next April they will be 33 per cent. on rent and 13 per cent. on rates—a total of 46 per cent. That is exactly twice the level that applied just four years ago.

Benefit is being withdrawn from households at twice the rate at which it was withdrawn previously. It is intensifying the poverty trap. It means that for many families on low incomes every additional pound that they earn will be almost completely swallowed up through the withdrawal of tax, national insurance and housing benefit.

The poverty trap problem is clearly illustrated by the comparison with 1979, the last year of the previous Labour Government. A household paying tax and national insurance and getting housing benefit, rent and rate rebates lost 65p of every pound that was earned. The rate of withdrawal now being introduced by a Government who had the temerity and the extraordinary insensitivity in their social security Green Paper and White Paper to claim that they were reducing the poverty trap means that next April that same household will lose 84p in every additional pound that it earns. Although the rate of tax has been reduced, the loss of benefit for every additional pound that is earned will be so steep that 84p of it will be lost. What a deplorable poverty trap. What a deplorable lack of incentive to poorer people to earn more income.

If that applied to wealthy people, Conservative Members would be clamouring about the appalling rate of taxation that was discouraging initiative and entrepreneurs, but when it applies to poor people they say nothing. They go along with it and accept it. It is a classic case of double standards. What is acceptable for poor people they would deplore if it applied to rich people. That is disgraceful hypocrisy on the part of the Government.

We heard another form of hypocrisy two nights ago during the debate on mortgage support when we were told that the Government had to make cuts in supplementary benefit for poor people getting help with their mortgages because the assistance was too generous in comparison with poorer households in work. Now, two nights later, we see exactly what the Government believe in doing to poorer households in work getting means-tested housing benefit. They will face a faster rate of withdrawal of their housing benefit because the tapers have been increased. That is from the same Government that pleaded the case for greater equity between those in work and those who are unemployed. These regulations will penalise poor families in work. That is gross hypocrisy.

[Mr. Nick Raynsford]

The cuts adopted by the Government over the last four years have weighed heavily on many poorer households. To date, those cuts have come purely through adjustments in the formula by which housing benefit is assessed—the tapers and the non-dependent deductions and so on. But now we are discussing a further change in the assessment, a further cut by the Government. Not content with making the taper steeper and reducing people's benefit by that route, they are also fiddling the formula by which housing benefit is assessed.

That formula is the needs allowance which has been in use for many years. That is a traditional formula designed to reflect the needs of low-income families in work—the group of people about whom, supposedly, the Government are concerned. That needs allowance formula will be adjusted this time, according to the Government. They are no longer prepared to uprate that formula in accordance with the time-honoured tradition. They will no longer take into account people's housing costs, which have always been taken into account in the assessment of the needs allowance.

The formula is an arcane one and I do not propose to go into it. Its key point is that housing costs have always been taken into account, because that was the fair way to reflect the needs of households on low incomes, in work and receiving housing benefit. That has now been dropped and the Government will no longer take account of housing costs. Why is that? Have they put forward an intellectually cogent argument for doing that? Have they said that they have looked at the indexes and have decided that they are no longer valid and need to be reappraised? Not at all. They have simply decided that here there is scope for more cuts, for taking more money away from poor people so that they can satisfy the Treasury that their budget is being cut.

This crude, underhand measure breaks the time honoured tradition of uprating housing benefit. That tradition goes back to a former Conservative Government who, in 1972, introduced the rent rebate scheme. That formula stood the test of time through the 1970s, and the 1980s, but it is now to be ditched by this Government in a crude and underhand way in an attempt to make cuts. What is most disgraceful about it is that when we debated the interim uprating in July the Minister did not take housing costs into account. I wrote to him privately about that and said I was worried that it had not been done.

I am quite open about my correspondence with the Minister and he is free to reply to me. In his reply the Minister said that the Government did not feel it was appropriate to take housing costs into account because this was an uprating in an interim period during which it was impossible to make projections of how housing costs would arise during that period. He said that clearly—the word he used was clearly—the Government would take into account the increase in rent and rates when assessing the following April's uprating. Did they take them into account? The Minister will say that they did, but they simply ignored them and uprated by other factors.

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman has put that in writing and I noticed that he fed it to his hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) for her speech. From our exchange of correspondence he knows the position well, and I am surprised that he keeps reiterating precisely the same point. The hon. Gentleman lectures the House about the administrative difficulties of local authorities at the time of the 1983 reforms and thereafter. Does the hon. Gentleman think that it is administratively easier for local authorities to take into account what he calls an arcane formula for needs allowance or the cash changes that we made in July and now? Does he not recall that in July the local authorities were more than content for us to use the formula that we used then and subsequently on this occasion?

Mr. Raynsford: I am pleased to be able to reply to the Minister. On the first point, I shall continue to repeat what I said, because it is true. It is true that in his letter to me in July the Minister said that clearly the Government would take rent and rate increases into account when they came to fix the appropriate needs allowance for next April. Now we come to the reality and the Government have made no allowance for rent and rate increases in fixing that allowance. I am sorry that the Minister led me to believe that one thing was going to happen last July but has now done something very different. He will have to face that fact.

Secondly, on administration, the Minister knows, I hope, having been responsible for the administration of the scheme for some time, that local authorities expect good advance notice from the Government of the precise figures — the appropriate needs allowances. They are then fed into their computers, because the vast majority are computerised. Most local authorities will not delve into the formula that is adopted in the administration of the scheme. I am not talking about their assessment of what is fair to their claimants. They will await the statutory instrument from the Government and put it into practice if they have good advance notice.

The Government's record is shabby. They have frequently given late notice indeed about adjustments in the needs allowance, in the tapers, in the non-dependant deductions—all made to make cuts. Local authorities have had great difficulty in putting the Government's wishes into effect because of the lack of advance notice.

The Minister's pretence that there is any administrative complication in applying a figure set by a Government in a statutory instrument which the local authority then applies as a basis for assessing housing benefit calculations suggests that the Minister has less practical experience about the implications of administering the housing benefit scheme than he should have.

The Government's record on housing benefit is a sad, shabby and shameful one. It is one of which any Government should be ashamed and they should seek to improve the benefit system to claimants rather than make further cuts. Labour Members can only deplore the Government's abominable failure over the past four years to honour the pledges that were set out in the consultation paper, "Assistance with housing costs". We look forward next year to the election of a Government who will care and will administer a proper housing benefit scheme in the interests of poorer people.

10.46 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): It is a curious method of governing that on the day of the royal wedding free school meals were taken away from 500,000 children in Britain and on the penultimate day before the House rises for the Christmas recess the Government are showing

their deep concern for the poor of this country by making them considerably poorer by the measures that they are seeking to push through the House tonight.

If the Government were seriously concerned about eliminating poverty in Britain they would not be putting these measures before us tonight but would be putting forward measures considerably to increase child benefit, not just by the small amount by which it is being increased tonight, and to dramatically improve the housing benefit and statutory sick pay arrangements in Britain.

Quite honestly, the position of Britain's poor is a disgrace and it has become considerably worse in the past seven years. If Conservative Members, who seem anxious to leave this place to go home to their beds, thought about it, they could walk from this House and in 10 minutes they would find several hundred people with no homes to go to, sleeping by Waterloo station and the National theatre. That is the disgrace and that is the issue which the orders do not address one bit. The degree of total homelessness in London now is greater than it has been for many decades.

As hon. Members go home — some of them in chauffeur-driven cars—they will go past people having to sleep on the streets tonight, and it is not very warm out there. Ministers might decide that the simplest thing in the world is to attack local authorities who are attempting to do something about the problems, but the answer lies in their hands. They have chosen to do nothing about it.

I want to raise a couple of issues and I hope that the Minister will have the courtesy to listen to what I have to say and possibly, just possibly, answer some of the points that my hon. Friends the Members for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) and for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) have tried to put to him during the debate. They are serious matters and we bring them to the House because they have been brought to us by our constituents and people in other parts of the country.

The hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) was talking about poverty levels and the way in which the social security system has not solved poverty in this country. Indeed, the poverty trap is perpetuated by some of the measures before us tonight. Any examination of social security legislation since it was introduced after the war will show that supplementary benefit, which was meant to be a safety net, has now become the staple existence of millions of people in this country. Nine million people in Britain are living below supplementary benefit level, and, if one takes the EEC poverty level, which is 140 per cent. of supplementary benefit, one is talking about several million more in what is, after all, supposed to be the seventh richest country in the world. Matters will get worse when the Social Security Act 1986 is finally put into operation bit by bit rather than get any better.

We should examine the measures we are being asked to agree tonight. Obviously I welcome any increase in child benefit. Who would not? However the number of children living in serious poverty at present is very large. DHSS figures alone admit to 400,000 children living below supplementary benefit level in 1983. Several hundred thousand, if not millions more, live below EEC recommended poverty levels. In all conscience I ask the Minister whether the increase in child benefit does any more than go some way towards redressing the cuts that have already been made in the past few years? Is he not aware that child benefit is the most effective way of getting real benefit to the poorest families. It is more effective than cuts in taxation or any other method. I think that the Minister probably agrees with that, but whether he is prepared to say so is another matter.

My hon. Friend the Member for Fulham knows far more about housing benefit and understands the housing benefit system better than I do and, I suspect, better than the Minister. In fact, I wish that my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham was the Minister instead of the present incumbent. We will have to wait for an election for that to happen. It is important for the House to understand that the housing benefit system has continually reduced the amount of real benefit available to people living in very great poverty by the changing of the tapers that has gone on continuously. The other side of that, which is of great concern to many people, is that when they are in receipt of housing benefit and there is a direct payment through to the local authority for that benefit from their supplementary benefit problems occur. Due to staff shortages and inefficiency within the DHSS there are frequent problems about payments getting through. That results in the local authority concerned believing those people are in rent arrears. I have tried many times to get an accurate assessment of the figures involved. However, I suspect that the Government's continual attacks on mainly Labour controlled local authorities for the level of rent arrears has something to do with non-payment of moneys owed to local authorities by the DHSS in respect of rent through housing benefit. Will the Minister look into that problem because he has not done so up to now?

While he is doing that, will he look into the future a little bit. Under the Social Security Act 1986 that he so avidly supports and that will come into operation, those people on housing benefit will have to pay a proportion of their rates. In areas such as that which I represent the rates are high. I am not proud of that and nor is the local authority—*[Interruption.]* Nobody is proud of the fact that the rates are high. The rates are high because of the amount of rate support grant that has been cut from my local authority in the seven years since the Government came to power. Conservative Members well know and understand that, and if they bothered to examine the books of inner urban local authorities they would begin to see some of the problems that those local authorities and the people within them suffer.

Mr. Raynsford: I respect my hon. Friend's suggestion that Conservative Members should study local authorities' books, but would it not be more appropriate if they urged their colleagues in the Department of the Environment to ensure that they act legally in future in setting the rate support grant?

Mr. Corbyn: My hon. Friend is correct. It ill becomes the Conservatives, who lecture the Opposition on law and order, to have to admit that they have been breaking the law for years. Far be it from me to want anyone to be punished with the full force of the law, but if its full force can be used against miners and printers, why should it not be used against Tory Ministers?

The third area——

Mrs. Beckett: Perhaps my hon. Friend did not hear the rather ill-mannered interjections of the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) about jobs for the boys. Perhaps my hon. Friend would like to comment on the money that has been given to the City, the jobs for the City boys and

[Mrs. Beckett]

the finance for the boys who support the Conservative party and the Government, who are the most corrupt Administration that we have known for 20 years.

Mr. Corbyn: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her intervention. I had not heard the interjection from a sedentary position of the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell). If the hon. Gentleman is making allegations or accusations about the way in which local authorities employ people, he should examine the recruitment method of authorities, especially in inner London. They are trying to ensure that racial and sexual discrimination are not practised. They are trying to ensure that genuine, real jobs are created by meeting the needs of inner urban areas. It ill becomes a Government who have poured out so much in tax handouts to the super rich and poured so much money into the City to lecture local authorities about efficiency and jobs for the boys. If the hon. Gentleman reflects, he might regret having made such remarks.

The abolition of the middle rate of statutory sick pay will affect about 400,000 payments per year. Statutory sick pay exists because recipients need to maintain some standard of living while they are sick. The Government are punishing individuals for being sick and off work as a result of it. Does the Minister realise the fear that increasingly is with many about the lack of sick pay from their employment, including those who have not completed a certain amount of service? I have met constituents who have pleaded with their doctors, who have wanted to sign them off work, to allow them to remain at work by not signing them off. They have done so because they knew that their sick pay would be insufficient or because they knew that no sick pay would be paid. They have not wanted to see their family in poverty or fall behind with rent, mortgage, and hire-purchase payments. If we are to live in a caring society, the order relating to statutory sick pay must be rejected emphatically.

When the Social Security Bill, as it then was, was being considered in Committee, we discussed briefly the efficiency or otherwise of the delivery of benefits and the effect of various uprating orders. It is interesting that the Greater London citizens advice bureau has conducted a survey on the performance of DHSS offices. I hope that the results of the survey have been sent to all hon. Members, including the Minister, and that the Minister has read it and will respond. The survey says:

"that nearly three-quarters (74%) of all offices failed 'very frequently or frequently' in their statutory responsibility to assess and pay benefit in 14 days. There were also alarmingly high figures for frequent or very frequent incidences of the following problems: errors in claimants benefits (62%), mislaid papers causing delays (91%), delays in visiting claimants (85%), claimants having to wait more than an hour to be seen (94%)".

The CAB report recommends that action should be taken in improving contact with the DHSS and improving reception areas, improving methods used in providing emergency services and assessment and in dealing with instances of urgent need, improving specialist services, improving the system that is used to clear up backlogs and improving the retrieval system.

At the heart of these problems is the level of staffing in DHSS offices and the inadequate training that many staff receive. I have taken the trouble to visit DHSS offices to discuss these matters with staffs. Many recruits enter the DHSS with a determination to do something to implement the existing system. They may not be very happy with the system, but they recognise that it does something for those in their area and they feel a natural sympathy for claimants. They find after a few months that they feel brutalised because of staff shortages and other problems. The result is quite serious incidents of violence in DHSS offices. I totally deplore that violence. The real culprits are not those who sit on either side of the glass partitions but those who sit on the Government Front Bench and in the DHSS offices. I hope that the Minister will look seriously at the CAB's report, discuss it with the CAB and make improvements in those offices.

I asked a question about the number of social claims that have been referred to out of town offices from London. I asked it because staff in the DHSS offices in my constituency had raised these matters. Two weeks ago, there was a dispute at Archway Tower. I attended the picket line and discussed the issues with the staff in dispute. On 17 December, I received the Minister's answer to my question, which stated:

"arrears of claims for single payments in some London offices"

will be

"dealt with by outstationed units in Chatham and Broadstairs."

I was told that a number of those claims had been dealt with. It is unsatisfactory for the DHSS to be dealing with a backlog of cases from inner urban offices—in this case London; no doubt, it happens elsewhere — in out of town offices as a way to save money, because London weighting is not paid. The Department is removing cases from the local offices which should deal with them. Ministers should understand the trauma that people suffer in trying to get single payments and have their cases dealt with and the people who turn up absolutely penniless in my office and at that of my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham because of lost papers, misplaced files, and so on. That is not usually the fault of DHSS staff. It is the fault of decisions deliberately to understaff those offices and make them such appalling places. I hope that the Minister will seriously and sensitively approach the problem.

We are being asked to approve these uprating orders. They in no way meet the problems of poverty that are the lot of so many people as we approach Christmas. They in no way meet the real needs of people. We need a Government who will be concerned about eliminating poverty rather than about marginalising, managing and condemning poverty, which is what the Government have done.

11.2 pm

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Lyell): On the whole, this has been a good-natured and thoughtful debate. I hope that the Opposition will listen thoughtfully to some of the points that I make in reply as I argue the Government's case and express more of an overview than the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) has in any of his recent speeches. May I respectfully say that he gets somewhat on tram lines in his argument. I suggest that he applies his very able brain to the yawning gap in the Labour party's case, which I hope briefly to expose.

I reject the general criticism made by the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett). It is not true to say that, since 1979, there has been a decline in the standard of

living of those out of work. The hon. Lady rightly qualified her position with what are not perhaps weasel words but are at least curious words. She qualified it by saying that, of course, this was in comparison with those in work. That is why there is such a yawning gap in the Opposition's argument.

Before answering the specific points raised by hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams), I shall consider our overall social security spending. When we are criticised for spending too little, it is right that the House and the country should remember that there has been a massive 35 per cent. increase in spending on pensions and benefits by the Government since 1978-79 — £11 billion in real terms. Most of that expenditure relates not to unemployment but to increases in the number of payments to the elderly, the long-term sick and the disabled and to the £4·5 billion real increases in the average overall benefit paid, particularly to low-income families in work and those categories to which I have referred.

Britain's position should be compared with that of other European countries. The proportion of gross domestic product spent on support of the elderly is the third highest in Europe. The only countries that do more are France and Denmark. Indeed, the latest figures that we have from France relate to 1983, the height of the French Government's Socialist experiment from which they had to renege so rapidly in more recent years. Those countries exceed our provision only by exacting far higher taxes and contributions from those who have to pay for the benefits.

Mr. Corbyn: I am interested in the Minister's comments. Can he compare the levels of pension payments in all European contries? If he did that, he would find that the British level of standard old age pension is among the lowest of all the EEC countries. The level of poverty among British pensioners is one of the highest.

Mr. Lyell: If the hon. Gentleman were to make a study of that, he would realise that the narrow way in which he has asked his question ignores many aspects of the benefits and other measures of support received by the elderly in this country. He is mistaken if he believes the point that underlies his question.

We must balance what we spend with what we expect the working population to pay — the amount that we expect them to meet in the costs of that expenditure. For example, a married man with gross earnings of £150 a week—that is not far short of three quarters of average earnings and fairly close to the average earnings of a manual worker — pays at present £13·50 a week in national insurance contributions and more than £23 a week in tax if his wife does not work. That is five times the amount that the same man would receive in child benefit if he has one child and is close to the total of the current rate of basic retirement pension for a single person.

The large increases in benefits argued for so vehemently by some hon. Members and especially by the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) and picked up, by implication, by the hon. Member for Derby, South would mean increases in that man's contributions and taxes as well as in those of better-off workers.

We believe that it is fairest to all to limit the burdens that we place on those in work and on employers while still protecting those dependent on social security benefits against rises in the cost of living as we have done. The proposals achieve that balance.

The hon. Members for Fulham and for Derby, South should examine the fundamental weakness of the Opposition's case. It is curious that we have heard nothing from the hon. Member for Oldham, West about uprating, but I will pick up the points that he made in our earlier debate this evening, which underlie the comments made by the hon. Member for Derby, South. The Opposition's proposals — the £3·5 billion or £3·6 billion, all to be taken from the rich — do absolutely nothing for the poor.

Mr. Raynsford *rose*——

Mr. Lyell: I will give way in a moment when the hon. Gentleman has had a chance to listen to what I have to say. We heard a great deal about the promised £5 and £8 increase in basic pension, the £3 that is to be added to child benefit and the extension of the long-term rate of supplementary benefits for the long-term unemployed and we heard earlier the claim that Labour can finance that by taxing £3·6 billion from the supposedly very rich. However, we have yet to hear, despite the repeated demands from myself and my hon. Friend the Minister, a clear explanation of the details—or perhaps I should say the major aspects of that proposition. Does the hon. Member for Oldham, West intend to raise supplementary pensions in line with retirement pensions? I would assume that he does and that is the only way to ensure that the poorest pensioners gain least from the increase. I would assume that he would also want to increase the children's scale rates in supplementary benefit in line with child benefit for the same reason and housing benefit in line with both. If so, and the hon. Member for Fulham may realise this——

Mr. Raynsford: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Lyell: Not just yet. The hon. Gentleman must accept that the costs of the proposals would not be £3·6 billion but £4·6 billion. Many pensioners on supplementary benefit and families on low incomes will be interested to learn that Labour's much-vaunted generosity consists of giving with one hand and taking away with the other.

Perhaps after Christmas the hon. Gentleman would also like to explain, for the benefit of widows and the long-term sick and disabled, what he intends to do about the benefits that they receive which are at present linked to the rate of retirement pension. His response and the hon. Lady's speech have demonstrated that a grasp of the realities of public expenditure are not their strong point. If they were given the chance to put their plans into action, they would cost, not £3·6 billion, but £5·6 billion. I am interested to hear what the hon. Gentleman is so keen to tell me.

Mr. Raynsford: I am happy that the Minister should give way. It ill becomes a Minister who is once again justifying fiddling the uprating formulas to make £40 million from cuts in benefits to poor people to attack the Opposition for the implications of putting their formula for helping poor people into practice. Earlier, the Minister took great credit for the additional expenditure that the Government have provided—I grant that they have—on social security. That is because the number of people in poverty and dependent on social security has increased. If he takes so much credit for that, why do the Government use the increase in expenditure on housing benefit and single payments repeatedly as an excuse for cutting them?

Mr. Lyell: It is noticeable to the whole House that the hon. Gentleman did not answer my question.

Mrs. Beckett: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Lyell: Yes, in a moment. Perhaps the hon. Lady will listen for a second.

Mrs. Beckett: I have been listening for quite a long time.

Mr. Lyell: If the hon. Lady knows the answer, perhaps I shall let her speak.

Mrs. Beckett: I have listened with great care to what the Minister has said. He seems to be under a misapprehension. We are debating the uprating under this Government, not the uprating that the next Labour Government propose to introduce. *[Interruption.]* The Minister for Health should have a little patience. He attends these debates rarely and, perhaps, does not understand. If the Minister cares to read the record he will see that we have frequently given the answers to the questions he asks. Perhaps he would now like to answer the question that we have asked him consistently——

Mr. Colin Moynihan (Lewisham, East): Give us the answer.

Mrs. Beckett: Wait a minute. If, as the Minister argues, the sum of £3,600 million is inadequate to meet the cost of the £5 and £8 increase for pensioners, what size of an increase would it meet? Will he now tell the House why the Government gave them 80p instead of whatever they think £3,600 million from the wealthiest taxpayers could afford?

Mr. Lyell: It is interesting that the hon. Lady was so keen to dodge answering the question. That is how the Opposition deal throughout.

Mr. Raynsford: These are the Government's regulations.

Mr. Lyell: I refer the House and anybody who may be listening to the article,

"How Labour will pay the bill."

Mr. Raynsford: Answer the question.

Mr. Lyell: I shall answer my question in a moment. *The Guardian* on 24 October carried an article on how Labour would pay the bill. This is a classic example from the hon. Member for Oldham, West. The answer is that Labour will not pay the bill. The article states:

"we are adamant that beyond our two central overriding pledges, no other commitments can be guaranteed until the books are opened on coming into office."

[HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."] The fact is that £3·6 billion will do nothing for the poor. The fundamental argument of the hon. Lady's case that a Labour Government will uprate the pension——

Mrs. Beckett: £1, £2, £3, £4? How much money will it give them?

Mr. Lyell: I do not think that the hon. Lady understands the point.

Mrs. Beckett: Yes I do.

Mr Lyell: Everything in ordinary child benefit or ordinary pension is clawed back unless the supplementary pension, child scale rates and so on are increased. I invite the hon. Lady to read my speech and to invite her hon. Friends, including the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), to study it. They will find that the money is all clawed back. It means nothing. That is the yawning gap in the Opposition's case.

Now I shall answer the points made in greater detail by hon. Members and my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington.

With regard to statutory sick pay a point was made concerning losses. However, no acknowledgement was made by the hon. Lady or others of the transitional protection for all those who are currently at the middle rate. Even when there are those who theoretically have losses, it does not necessarily mean that employees will get less. We have encouraged occupational sick pay schemes, and statutory sick pay has stimulated such schemes. If we go back to 1977, 80 per cent. of people were in such schemes and we know that the figures have significantly increased.

Mrs. Beckett: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Lyell: In a moment.

With regard to housing benefit, the fact is, as we have said often, that it does go too far up the income scale. It is nonsense that 7 million households, something like a third, should receive housing benefit. I know that this is delightful for the hon. Member for Fulham, as he has spent his entire professional life in this work and he certainly understands it. Figures like 44p or 84p roll off his tongue. I respect him, but I would respect him more if he examined the weaknesses in his case instead of nitpicking around the details.

Mr. Raynsford: Will the Minister give way.

Mr. Lyell: In a moment, but let me just finish my point.

Most losers lose less than 25p. Those who lose more are generally those who are at the upper end. All those who lose are on incomes that are above supplementary benefit level. I am sure that that would be acknowledged by the hon. Member for Fulham.

Mr. Raynsford: The Minister has said that housing benefit goes to too many people. Does the same logic apply to mortgage interest tax relief? That also is a housing benefit that goes to rather more people on higher incomes. If it is appropriate to make cuts, would it not be more appropriate to make them from that benefit, which goes to higher income groups, rather than from poor people who depend on housing benefit to meet their housing costs.

Mr. Lyell: I am glad to acknowledge one thing and that is that the hon. Gentleman has made clear time and time again his anxiety to get his hands on mortgage interest tax relief. He is anxious to get hold of that money.

Mrs. Beckett *rose*——

Mr. Lyell: I will give way.

Mrs. Beckett: May I take the Minister back to something a little less exciting to his hon. Friends? Did I hear the Minister correctly? I think that he said that statutory sick pay had stimulated the development of occupational sick pay schemes. That cannot possibly be true and I would like to know what evidence he has for that. As far as I can recall, the last data available on occupational sick pay schemes were published in 1977 and relates to 1974. That was, in any case, before the statutory sick pay scheme was introduced. There is no new evidence

about occupational sick pay schemes unless the Minister has some new fund of evidence that he has not made available?

Mr. Lyell: The point that I was making—obviously I have not made it sufficiently clear for the hon. Lady—is that although we do not have a complete survey—80 per cent. of people had schemes going back to the 1977 figures which go back to 1974. We are aware that there have been substantial increases since then and we believe that statutory sick pay has been a significant influence on that growth.

Mrs. Beckett: Will the Minister give way again?

Mr. Lyell: No I must move one.

Mrs. Beckett: Be fair, give way.

Mr. Lyell: Very well.

Mrs. Beckett: How can the Minister possibly say that there has been a substantial improvement if the last evidence that we have is from 1977? He must justify such a statement being made to the House.

Mr. Lyell: If the hon. Lady goes on intervening too much she will find that I get armed with fresh material. Without going into too much detail I refer the hon. Lady to a study completed by Income Data Services published in June 1984 which considered the matter. I am very surprised that the hon. Lady was not aware of it. I advise the hon. Lady, once again, to look, rather more carefully at the yawning gap in her own case rather than spend time on the kind of minute detail that has been the substance of her speech.

The hon. Lady was again wrong to suggest that heating allowances had been uprated on the basis of a stale and outdated measurement period. Far from being outdated and stale, it is the most recent possible—from January to September 1986, during which time fuel prices fell by 0·1 per cent. One can hardly get more stable than that. The higher rate heating additions increased in July, and the money is now in pensioners' hands. I should have thought that she would have noticed and applauded that.

On child benefit, the hon. Lady quite reasonably asked how people would get a form when maternity grant ends. The Government are anxious that people should know about and understand the benefits that they should get, and we are taking a great deal of trouble to improve our forms. Six of them have now won plain English awards. There will be a tear-off coupon on the leaflet entitled, "Babies and Benefits", which all mothers can pick up at antenatal clinics. I suggest that that will be an extremely helpful method.

Mr. Corbyn: The translation of information and forms was mentioned in the then Social Security Bill Committee. What progress has been made with a multilingual approach to giving benefit information and advice?

Mr. Lyell: I am not omniscient. While I know that we are giving that matter careful thought, I cannot say how many languages are involved.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington, and later the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), asked about the London citizens advice bureau report. I was in King's Cross and Camden seeing the citizens advice bureaux only last week, when I discussed the very topics that are dealt with in the report.

It is simply not right to describe the overall position as chaos. Weekly benefits, which are the fundamental income support—to use the new term—of millions of people, are being paid efficiently, week in, week out in the overwhelming majority of cases. I do not deny that there have been pressure points. There have been take-up campaigns. We are not opposed to take-up campaigns as long as they are properly liaised and dealt with. Our objective is to deliver benefits as swiftly, efficiently, carefully and effectively as possible.

There have been pressure points, but we have been acting on them—not since we received the report, which was only yesterday, but since the beginning of the year. Moreover, the interim staff complement increases have been taking effect since May. They have helped significantly to overcome backlogs. Almost all of the 5,175 extra staff are in place. There are still one or two offices in which we are trying to build up to the complement, but most are in post.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington will approve of the fact that we are in the process of major social security reforms in the shape of simplification, common methods between benefits, which will be of great help, and computerisation. We have local office microcomputer projects, which help people to deal with cases more quickly and trace papers, and—which is even more significant in the long term—computerisation in the local office project. The system is wholly suitable for computerisation. It is the largest computerisation in western Europe. It is much larger than the NASA computerisation and should be completed between now and 1992. It is an important and valuable advance.

The hon. Member for Islington, North should not criticise outstationing. At Chatham and Broadstairs only the backlog in some cases of single payment schemes have been outstationed, and that has been done simply to help the staff to get through the work more efficiently and to get benefits delivered to those entitled to them in the inner cities. I say in all sincerity that it is a sensible policy, and competent staff in the inner cities have nothing to fear for their jobs.

Mr. Corbyn: While my question about outstationing related to the office in my constituency, there are wider implications. Is the Minister aware that the trade unions representing the civil servants who work in the DHSS have made representations continuously about staff shortages and the problems they face over the backlog under the single payment scheme? Is he further aware that the outstationing of that work merely deals with an immediate crisis whereas there is a long-term problem involving levels of understaffing in many inner city offices?

Mr. Lyell: I repeat that outstationing is helpful and that staff have nothing to fear. I should be happy to talk to the hon. Gentleman about the matter, and I hope we shall get his encouragement because the policy is designed to help his constituents.

The growth of personal pensions, occupational pensions and the overall benefits for the elderly that are likely to result from our schemes will be helpful.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: Will my hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Lyell: Yes, but after this intervention I must conclude.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I wish to pay tribute to the staff, particularly of inner London offices. They do a stupendous job and perhaps only British civil servants can make the system that we are now using work as well as it does. But like Galileo, I have to say, "Eppur si muove." The fact is that the system is breaking down. My hon. and learned Friend can say what he likes, but we cannot go on as we are.

Mr. Lyell: My hon. Friend is not giving credit for the great efforts that are being made, though I appreciate that he speaks with sincerity on this subject.

The provisions of the orders and regulations strike a fair balance. The value of the main long-term benefits is being protected without major increases in the contribution burden on the working population and the structure and administration of the social security system is being progressively simplified and improved.

To those such as the hon. Member for Derby, South who demand higher benefit increases I must point out that social security spending has, as I said, increased since 1978-79 by over 35 per cent. in real terms. I ask the House to reflect on that and on the Government's achievements in the sphere of social security and to support the orders and regulations.

Question put and agreed to

Resolved,

That the draft Social Security Benefits Up-rating (No. 2) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 1st December, be approved.—[*Mr. Major.*]

SOCIAL SECURITY

Resolved,

That the draft Supplementary Benefit Uprating (No. 2) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 28th November, be approved.

That the draft Family Income Supplements (Computation) (No. 2) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 24th November, be approved.—[*Mr. Major.*]

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Resolved,

That the draft Statutory Sick Pay (Rate of Payment) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 1st December, be approved.—[*Mr. Major.*]

SOCIAL SECURITY

Resolved,

That the draft Social Security (Contributions, Re-rating) (No. 2) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 24th November, be approved.

That the draft Social Security (Treasury Supplement to and Allocation of Contributions) (Re-rating) Order 1986, which was laid before this House on 24th November, be approved.—[*Mr. Major.*]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.)

ANIMALS

That the draft Welfare of Livestock (Prohibited Operations) (Amendment) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 4th December, be approved.—[*Mr. Garel-Jones.*]

Question agreed to.

Third World Debt

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr. Garel-Jones.*]

11.28 pm

Mr. Colin Moynihan (Lewisham, East): It is fitting that one of the last debates in this House this year provides us with an opportunity to be forward looking—a chance to draw together opportunities which present themselves for a rare synthesis of altruism and self-interest in the exercise of the power of Government.

To responsible Third World Governments their new task in the coming year must appear daunting indeed. There is an overhang of debt initially increased by over-enthusiastic lenders who too frequently over-extended their lending programmes without adequate project preparation and evaluation. Additionally, many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have severely limited manpower resources on which the donor community places an enormous burden on a relentless roller coaster moving from donor meeting to donor meeting while political pressures at home continue to build up in their absence.

Nor can Third World Governments find much solace in the patchwork quilt of rescheduling measures they are forced to adopt, including conditionality which too frequently appears to sacrifice the painful social policy implications at the altar of severe austerity programmes. Such programmes do little more than buy time— time during which agricultural prices are often forced down by excessive subsidisation and protection from the very Governments whose representatives in long and hard negotiations with developing countries pontificate over the evils of protectionism.

Compound the constraints to development by adding high real interest rates, the prospect of increasing protectionist pressures and the lack of implemented new initiatives to resolve the debt crisis and the prospects of a serious collapse in the international banking community remains a reality. However, there are opportunities to tackle these challenges, but they will require far more political will by donor Governments and the banking sector than has been revealed to date. Among initiatives I hope to see are more debt-equity swaps and interest capping and, where appropriate, the subsidisation of spreads. However, to achieve growth and particularly private sector-led growth, not only will the appropriate macroeconomic framework be required, but new initiatives to permit dramatic reductions in debt will be essential.

I shall outline to the House tonight the predicament of a model Third World Government — one that has followed every international policy prescription issued to it, that is democratic, steadfast of purpose and dramatically successful in the achievement of its principal objectives, yet is still unable to lift its people from the doldrums of poverty and deprivation in which they have languished for several decades because of the overhang of international debt incurred by earlier less democratic and less sanguine regimes. I shall ask Members to stifle the yawn which precedes the anticipated profferment of the Third World begging bowl while I update them on another crisis, related, but this time closer to home, and perhaps closer to their hearts.

A few years ago, cocaine was an obscure drug, used by the rich and the exotic. It is no longer. Cocaine abuse is now the fastest-growing narcotic problem in Britain and other Western countries. Use of the drug has spread from the penthouse to the street. The explosion of cocaine use in Europe and north America has been mirrored by the growth in illict coca cultivation in Bolivia—from a few hundred million dollars worth in 1980 to $2,500 million worth in 1986, with Bolivia currently providing 30 per cent. of the cocaine entering Western Europe. The combination of a strong Government in Bolivia, the vulnerability of that Government to the debt crisis and Bolivia's key role as a supplier of cocaine paste to the international narcotics industry provides a unique window of opportunity for action by the Western powers, hopefully, under the leadership of Great Britain.

I am personally convinced that the opportunity now presented allows a bold new initiative which will tackle a pressing social problem in Britain and other Western European countries, while producing entirely desirable development effects in a deserving Third world country.

Allow me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to set the scene for the benefit of those hon. Members who are unfamiliar with the details of the Bolivian situation. As recently as July 1985, inflation in Bolivia was running at the almost unprecedented level of 23,000 per cent. per annum. Remember the chaos caused here not long ago by just 23 per cent. inflation and begin to imagine the paralysis induced by 23,000 per cent. Think for a moment of the totalitarian solutions that historically have been imposed as a result of far less severe inflations and marvel then at the achievement of a democratically elected Government in Bolivia in reducing this inflation in six months to a manageable 39 per cent. per annum. The Paz Estennsoro Government have had a remarkable term of office to date, with an economic programme brilliantly conceived by Ministers Juan Carriaga and Gonzales Sanchez de Lozada.

Of course, this stupendous achievement has not been without cost in terms of domestic hardship, and the Bolivian Government must be acutely aware of the need to deliver on their promise to reactivate the economy, and to alleviate the deprivation caused by the economic adjustment programme which has led to thousands being made redundant, while reducing the real income of tens of thousands more whose jobs have survived.

Bolivia is a country blessed with an abundance of natural resources, but the debt-service burden, and the country's pariah status in international financial markets as a result of repayment arrears, have prevented it from raising the capital to exploit its natural wealth. Bolivia's international debt is minuscule by comparison with Latin America's over-borrowed giants. Its $2·5 billion debt, of which $800 million is commercial, pales into insignificance alongside the $300 billion combined total of Brazil, Mexico and Argentina. Yet Bolivia's prospects of being able to redeem its debt are non-existent by comparison with its more indebted but much richer and bigger neighbours. The international financial community has long since discounted its Bolivian debt, which currently trades in the London secondary market at 8 to 10 cents to the dollar, yet has lacked the initiative to find a way out of the impasse without creating the banker's nightmare —a precedent. International bankers frown upon the repurchase of debt at a discount by the debtor, but are benevolent towards the same exercise by third parties, such as the Governments of Western countries.

The Government of Bolivia have prepared a bold programme for the elimination of the non-traditional, or cocaine-oriented, coca crop, and are determined to push this through despite the economic impact of the eradication of by far the most important industry in a country which is, Haiti aside, the poorest in the western hemisphere.

The Government's programme, recently presented to special meetings of the United Nations and the World Bank, calls for about $200 million over three years in international aid to finance an imaginative and soundly based programme of drug traffic interdiction, crop eradication and alternative development. The Governments of Western countries, if their anti-narcotics policies are to mean anything, will have to participate in, and largely finance, this progamme. There thus arises an opportunity to link debt to drug eradication and to solve two problems at once.

My proposal is essentially this. Rather than donate the money needed to finance the Government of Bolivia's drug eradication and alternative development programme outright, let the Western Governments most affected by the cocaine problem buy Bolivia's commercial debt at a deep discount from the commercial banks which now hold it. Let the Bolivian Government buy back their debt from the Western Governments in Bolivian pesos, which the recipients would agree immediately to re-deposit in the narcotics action fund to underwrite the Bolivian Government's three-year action programme. Relieved of the burden of debt service and amortisation, the Bolivian Government could find the funds to finance the drug eradication programme in this way.

The programme can be non-inflationary if, relieved of the need to service debt, or buy in paper from the secondary market, which the Bolivian Government are preparing to do anyway, the Government of Bolivia can find the peso funds over a three-year period for the drug eradication programme. In this case, they hand over the cash for the outstanding debt, knowing that they will get pesos straight back for the narcotics programme. Moreover, and possibly more important in this case, with capital flight from the cocaine trade estimated at 85 per cent. of the street value of cocaine, approximately $300 million per annum is currently being illegally reinvested into the economy, the larger proportion of which generates domestic demand in essential purchases for the campesino farmers. During the three-year period of an eradication campaign, this income will more than offset the cost of the programme and arguably have a deflationary impact on the economy in the medium term if the programme succeeds.

I have discussed this programme at length with senior economists at the World Bank, where, during part of the summer recess, I worked as a consultant on the Bolivian medium-term economic strategy, and with leading figures in the Bolivian Government. Furthermore, I have acted as an adviser to the private sector in the preparation of a reactivation programme, a Confederation de Empresarios Privadeos, energetically and inspiringly led by Carlos Itturalde. However, most important, I have had the pleasure and privilege of discussing this proposal with five Treasury officials, and as yet have heard no substantial argument against it. It offers a solution to the impasse of

[Mr. Colin Moynihan]

the Bolivian debt — a way out of the precedent trap which the bankers so fear, for the conditionality which Western Governments would attach to their purchase and resale of the Bolivian debt would be unacceptable to any other Latin American Government except Bolivia's political gravity-defying regime. It offers at the same time a way of funding a relatively cheap and critically important Third world development programme with profound implications for the social cohesion of the developed Western economies.

The resolution of the commercial debt crisis will give Bolivia renewed access to international capital markets and the ability to fund the development of its huge natural reserves. The elimination of its narcotics industry will re-establish its sense of national morality and purpose, and will make a major contribution to the elimination of the cocaine menace in the developed western economies. Alternative and comparable schemes can be developed using export credits or swapping debt for private sector participateion in deregulated and overvalued loss-making parastatals which could benefit from short-term international management contracts.

As recognised at the Williamsburg, summit, new and workable arrangements for servicing and tackling debt are required. Constant piecemeal rescheduling will severely restrict the capacity of recipient Governments to invest for development and growth and the corresponding lack of political stability will reduce confidence for the much needed private sector reactivation. There can be no doubt in this Chamber that there is little chance of bridging the north-south divide, or of avoiding a repetition of the appaling famine and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa unless we are prepared to act and substantially reduce the transfer of the meagre financial resources of the developing countries to the West.

My main thrust has been on debt development swaps, perhaps better understood as a debt-drug initiative or as a mechanism for financing development programmes.

In this respect, the current political and economic climate in Bolivia offers us a window of opportunity. This happy coincidence of interest between one of the poorest and most deserving of Third World countries and the developed economies must not be allowed to pass.

I seek an assurance from my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary that the Government will investigate with all speed this proposal for debt-development swaps for Bolivia, and will ensure that our Government will play a leading role in seizing imaginative, original and mutually beneficial solutions to the twin problems of debt and drugs.

11.43 pm

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ian Stewart): I begin by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) on obtaining this debate and on his speech. Before I respond to his interesting proposal, I shall say something more generally about the crucial problem of world debt, the subject with which he opened his remarks.

There is no doubt that the debt problem remains severe, although developments over the past year have had mixed effects on individual debtor countries. For instance, the fall in the US dollar helped those with a high proportion of debt denominated in dollars. Falls in the oil price have caused severe problems for some oil exporters including Mexico, Nigeria and Egypt while having a beneficial effect on most countries, but falls in other commodity prices have been a problem for nearly all debtors. The key action that we in developed countries can take in response is to pursue policies which will bring long-term sustainable growth in the world economy. We need to keep inflation down, and we need to take steps to keep markets open in the face of increasingly protectionist pressures, particularly in the United States.

I am glad to say that major countries are increasingly co-ordinating their policies to bring about growth. For instance, at the Tokyo summit the seven leaders of the industrialised nations agreed new arrangements for closer policy co-ordination, while in October the United States and Japan were able to announce agreement on a set of joint actions designed to provide Japanese growth and reduce internal imbalances.

On trade liberalisation, we are also seeing progress. The GATT agreement in Punta del Este represented a real breakthrough. We have placed particular emphasis on the need for a reduction of subsidies and protectionism in agriculture. And I might add that at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting in September I found a warm welcome for the part Britain had played, through our presidency of the European Community, in bringing this into the GATT agenda. The potential gains to developing countries from liberalisation of agricultural policies are far larger than any possible increase in direct aid.

But within this context we also need specific policies on debt. At the IMF meeting in Seoul last year I strongly welcomed the initiative put forward by Mr. Baker and we have continued to give this our support. The Baker initiative calls for developed and developing countries, international financial institutions and commercial banks to work together. Efforts by the developing countries towards structural adjustment in their economies are matched by appropriate associated financing. Such changes in their economies are essential if these countries are to become creditworthy again and so attract voluntary lending. The policy changes and the financing package are designed on a case by case basis to match the varying debt burdens, economic structures and readiness to implement reform of the debtor countries.

There have been some suggestions that the Baker initiative has "failed" and that an alternative strategy is needed, but this is to misunderstand the nature of the initiative, which provides a framework rather than a specific model. The scheme was never intended to be an instant solution, and the progress so far is encouraging. The IMF and the World Bank have taken on the important role of working with the debtor countries to put together the packages of structural reform and new money. With only a few exceptions, the major debtors are co-operating with this approach. In return the World Bank has negotiated $3·7 billion in new policy based loans with 10 of the 15 major debtors and has discussions under way with other countries for a further $5 billion in lending. The developed countries can therefore also do their part by giving wholehearted support to these institutions.

I was very pleased to learn of the agreement reached on Monday this week on the eighth replenishment of the International Development Agency of $12·4 billion — a sum in excess of the $12 billion that we had hoped for. This will enable the International Development Agency to contribute further to resolving the problems of the poorest

of the debtor countries, including Bolivia. I am particularly glad that the United Kingdom was able to increase its contribution by $15 million.

The Paris club, where Government creditors meet to reschedule official debts, is making a major contribution in resolving the financing gap problems of debtor countries. The Paris club has shown its willingness to reschedule on generous terms, including up to 100 per cent. of principal and interest over 10 years. Between 1983 and the beginning of this year the Paris club had rescheduled over $32 billion for 32 countries, and in July of this year agreement was reached to reschedule Bolivia's debts.

Commercial banks are also moving in to support comprehensive policy reform programmes in the debtor countries. The essential point about the Baker Initiative is that it brings together all those with a stake in the debt problem and asks them to play a role which reflects their involvement. Therefore, debtor countries are asked to reform their policies rather than continue with those which contributed to their problems. Creditors — official, multilateral and private—are asked to provide financing in order to help the process of recovery in those economies in which they have a share.

We should be wary of new global solutions or solutions for individual countries which allow any of these participants to evade their responsibilities. All too many suggested schemes involve Governments taking on the risks of the commercial banks, or allow debtor countries to take financial help without the essential associated adjustment. Our ultimate aim must be to see international financial markets move towards operating, without Governmental or institutional intervention. Schemes for alleviating the debt problem must not lose sight of this.

What does all this mean for my hon. Friend's scheme for Bolivia? First, we do not underestimate the challenge presented by the Bolivian economy. As my hon. Friend has said, since August 1985, President Paz Estenssoro has initiated wide-ranging and courageous economic reforms to tackle the formidable problems that he inherited when he came to power. In particular, the fall in tin and hydrocarbon prices has exacerbated the long-standing balance of payments problem. In the face of these reversals the Government have demonstrated a firm and admirable commitment to adjustment. They have collaborated closely with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank which have assisted in the formulation of an economic recovery programme which the United Kingdom Government have supported.

Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America and is the largest recipient of United Kingdom technical co-operation in the region. An official mission from the United Kingdom visited Bolivia in October to identify with the Bolivian authorities key areas of the economy where we could assist Bolivia. We are considering proposals to make available a grant of up to £5 million in balance of payments support in the form of British goods and equipment. The primary requirement for the success of the economic recovery programme is the continued determination of the Bolivian Government to apply sensible and consistent economic policies.

There can no doubt that the present drugs problem in Bolivia is a threat to its viability as a nation. Bolivia is now the world's leading exporter of illicit cocaine and its Government's pledge to take the country out of the drug export business shows great courage. We applaud this step and we are contributing £600,000 to the United Nations fund for drug abuse control in support of law enforcement programmes there, but the scale of the problem should not be underestimated.

The proposal put forward by my hon. Friend for dealing with the present burden of Bolivia's debt servicing difficulties is an interesting idea. As I understand it, the proposal envisages commercial banks selling to Governments at a very deep discount external loans which they extended to Bolivia in the past and which are now not being fully serviced. To this end discussions are taking place, I understand from what my hon. Friend has said, between the commercial banks and the Bolivian Government.

My hon. Friend's proposal goes on to assume that developed country Governments will somehow be persuaded to provide the necessary finance with which to pay off the commercial banks, and that the commercial banks will be prepared to take the balance sheet losses involved. It would replace substantial debts previously owed to commercial banks with an investment or loan —however one wishes to describe it—for a considerably smaller amount owed to these Governments. The Bolivian Government would then repay developed country Governments this smaller amount in pesos. The pesos would then be used as part of developed countries' help with the Bolivian drug eradication programme.

My hon. Friend is putting this proposal to me rather than to any of my colleagues at the Home Office or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office because of my responsibility for policy on debt. Therefore, it is as a solution to the debt problem that I must assess it, and not in terms of development aid or as a solution to the drugs problem. We therefore need to decide whether it provides a better use of developed countries' funds than our current approach to debt, both generally and in Bolivia.

First, as I have said, the Bolivian Government have made good progress so far in making key structural changes in their economy. We should encourage them further by providing finance in support of further such reforms. Secondly, to the extent that the commercial banks are unwilling to sell the debt back to Bolivia but are prepared to sell it to other Governments, it must be the case that they perceive a risk and a cost in selling to Bolivia which they do not want to bear.

If developed country Governments buy the debt, the banks would be passing that cost and risk on. That would go against the principle that all those with a stake in a particular debtor country should share proportionately in helping alleviate the debt. To go against that principle would be to set a dangerous precedent. The commercial banks would be even less likely to carry their share of the risk in future debt packages in other countries, and we would disrupt the process of returning international financial markets to working without Government intervention.

Therefore, if we are talking solely about a solution to Bolivia's debt problem, I am not convinced that my hon. Friend's scheme is a better use of developed country resources than the provision of new money within the policy framework that I have described earlier. I am not in a position to say whether my Home Office or Foreign Office colleagues would view this as a more effective use of their funds for drugs eradication or aid than the direct funding that they already provide. I also suspect that the

[The Economic Secretary to the Treasury]

United Kingdom will not be alone among the developed country Governments in having some difficulty with the scheme.

Nevertheless, we shall be looking further at the proposal that my hon. Friend has put forward tonight and we shall consider it carefully. I would not want to rule it out completely at this stage. Certainly we would not want to stand in the way of such a scheme if the commercial banks were prepared to come to an arrangement directly with the Bolivian Government. We should not forget that the exposure of the United Kingdom banks to Bolivia commercial debt is only a small proportion of the whole. We would have to work in very close co-operation with developed countries if any proposal along those lines were to be taken forward.

I would not want to leave the House tonight in any doubt about our commitment to helping eradicate drugs or to alleviating the debt problem. My hon. Friend's proposal shows great ingenuity in trying to bring those two areas together. I congratulate him on putting it forward for consideration both here and internationally, and I shall reflect upon what he has said.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at three minutes to Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 19 December 1986

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

BILL PRESENTED

DOG FIGHTING (PENALTIES)

Mr. Harry Greenway, supported by Sir Hugh Rossi, Sir Marcus Fox, Mr. Roy Galley, Mr. Frank Field, Mr. John Hannam, Mr. Allan Rogers, Mr. Tim Smith and Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth, presented a Bill to amend the Protection of Animals Act 1911 to increase the penalties for offences against animals under section 1(1): And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 23 January and to be printed. [Bill 43.]

Christie Hospital, Manchester

Motion made and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr. Lennox-Boyd.*]

9.35 am

Mr. Fred Silvester (Manchester, Withington): The outstanding feature of Adjournment debates is that the answers are always written before the questions are heard, but perhaps today will be an exception. Debates on specific hospitals and problems in the Health Service are usually answered the easy way and we all have on our files interesting letters from the predecessors of my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, including my right hon and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke) and my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten), which take the straightforward line.

There are three lines of defence in such matters. The first is to quote the global sums spent on the NHS, which are remarkable but not always relevant. The second is to refer to living within our means, about which we have several letters on file. The third is to suggest that Ministers have no power to intervene in regional decisions. The case of ministerial detachment is unsatisfactory because, although Ministers cannot intervene in every local decision, they cannot escape from the casual connection between policies devised at the Elephant and Castle and their effect in the field.

Not everything can be answered by generalities. We have got into the procrastinating habit of assuming that general principles worked out by the Department must be applicable to each local circumstance and if we have to stretch the hospital or chop off its legs to make them fit, we shall do that. Until my right hon. Friend the Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Mr. Hayhoe) came to the Ministry, the central problem facing us was not being tackled. General principles do not apply in every case.

Today I want to talk specifically about the Christie hospital. It is no ordinary hospital, but is the largest single cancer-treating hospital in Europe and is linked with one of the leading cancer research institutes. Its origins go back to 1893 when the first of the two elements was founded, and it was brought together on its present site as a combined hospital known as the Christie in 1932. Cancer research has been pioneered there since the mid-1940s when Dr. Edith Paterson, an expert in radiation biology, was at work. The Paterson institute is almost entirely sustained by public subscription and has carried on the work of cancer research in conjunction with the hospital. The hospital undertakes many drugs trials and there is a regular interchange of personnel with centres overseas. For those reasons the Christie is a national asset and an undisputed centre of excellence.

I decided to bring the questions arising from the hospital to the House today because I wanted to summarise what we were able to tell the Prime Minister on her visit last Friday and to ensure that her words found a place on my hon. Friend's agenda and were not forgotten. We were delighted to welcome the Prime Minister and she saw the hospital, which is working well, its several new facilities, enormous dedication and considerable efficiency. The Prime Minister was told of some of the things that I will the House. She told us how important it was for the country to preserve and encourage centres of excellence. I emphasise that my comments are

[Mr. Fred Silvester]

not a begging letter or a bellyache. To suggest that the Christie is going downhill and depriving people of treatment is a travesty of the truth. It depresses and sickens me when hospitals are used as pawns of political propaganda.

First, as an aside, I draw my hon. Friend's attention to a card which is going around which was published by the Labour party in support of its "Save our health service" campaign. The card shows a child's drawing. It says:

"My grandad is the fittest person I know. 2 years ago he was very poorly and when he went into Christie's Hospital they cured him."

The card is from a child aged eight called Ruth. That card, which was made in London and made its way to Manchester, has caused great offence to some in the hospital because it implies that the Labour party gives official backing and credence to the proposition that the sort of help available to Ruth's grandad would not be available unless a particular political party was elected. I find that offensive, as do some others.

I do not want to fall into the same trap of making political mileage one way or another about the Christie. We must deal with an important point of principle and fact if we are to get it right. In the past six years, the Christie has had much new building and it treats more people than ever. The Christie has a problem of success, because its success is paid for despite rather than because of the NHS system of resource allocation. In brief, the Christie's excellence continues to attract patients for whom there is no allocation. The Christie copes. It raises huge sums through voluntary effort. The Christie is the most efficient cancer hospital bar none. It has squeezed a quart, even a gallon, into a pint pot. All those qualities—excellence, voluntary effort, efficiency and hard work—are precisely the virtues which the Government seek to promote, but the reward has not followed the endeavour.

The Pat Seed scanner was provided by a fund in honour of the brave lady who fought cancer and gave so much encouragement to others. The fund raised £1 million for the scanner and the building. The Jubilee out-patients suite and the day ward were provided by voluntary subscriptions which raised £1·5 million. The adult leukaemia unit was subscribed by the Leukaemia Research Fund, the Cancer Research Campaign and the Women's Trust Fund at a cost of £800,000. The Pat Seed appeal committee has agreed to provide a developmental linear accelerator at a cost of a further £1·2 million. The Kay Kendall Foundation will provide a new laboratory in experimental haematology costing £900,000 and the Women's Trust Fund is providing £100,000 for the medical oncology department's research laboratories. I am sure that my hon. Friend is a mathematician. If she adds all that up, she will find that during the past six years about £5·6 million has been raised by voluntary effort. Not a penny of that has come from public sources.

The Christie is the most efficient cancer hospital bar none. If one considers the cost comparisons available for hospitals providing a similar service in the United Kingdom and the summary tables one finds, for example, that the cost per in-patient case at the Christie is £678. Those are the 1984-85 figures. The hospital with the nearest total is in the Trent area. Its cost per in-patient case is £738. The royal Marsden in London has a cost per in-patient case of more than £1,000. The nursing cost per in-patient case in the Christie is £88. The next nearest figure per in-patient case is twice as expensive and the royal Marsden is four times as expensive. Those comparisons may be carried out in the domestic service, too, and in catering and building maintenance. Whichever yardstick one applies, one finds that the Christie is in the most efficient section.

Secondly, I shall dwell briefly on the comparison with the royal Marsden hospitals in the Fulham road and Surrey. I shall try to avoid paranoia in this matter, because I know that my hon. Friend the Minister is not altogether sympathetic about some comparisons between the north and the south. But these comparisons are extraordinary and they cause raised eyebrows, if nothing else. The basic figures which I have already given to my hon. Friend show that the average cost per patient is four times as great at the royal Marsden in London. If one considers the expenditure tables for 1985-86, one finds that the royal Marsden in Surrey gets approximately £10 million a year from public funds for a case load of 5,895. The royal Marsden in London gets another £10 million for a case load of roughly 5,989. The Christie gets approximately £11 million, some of which is earmarked, for a case load of more than 10,000. Similar sums of public money are being spent on double the number of patients.

Whichever way one looks at it, the figures are highly unsatisfactory. The cost per in-patient day at the royal Marsden on medical and surgical equipment is £6·50 and is £1·37 at the Christie. In pharmacy, the figure is £13·95 at the royal Marsden and £8·27 at the Christie. In radiology, it is £2·33 at the royal Marsden and £1·31 at the Christie. The drugs bill at the royal Marsden is £1·5 million. At the Christie it is £900,000. The staffing facilities are much better at the royal Marsden, not only in numbers but also because the royal Marsden appears to have no nursing auxiliaries and many senior nurses, while much work is done at the Christie with nursing auxiliaries.

If there were only one or two discrepancies one would not make much of it, but the fact is that the cumulative evidence of the difference of treatment at the royal Marsden and at the Christie provides continuous aggravation and no one has yet given a satisfactory explanation. We have investigated whether the type of case treated at the two hospitals is different, but apart from a certain amount of highly intensive neck surgery there is little difference between the two provisions.

Thirdly, I said that the Christie gets a quart into a pint pot. It serves a region, as my hon. Friend the Minister knows, which has the third highest cancer incidence in the country and a population with many elderly people who are coming up to the age when cancer is likely to develop. But if one considers the figures from 1980-85, one sees that the number of patients is up by 15 per cent. The throughput per bed is up by 28 per cent. The day cases are up by 43 per cent. The number of days that people spend in the hospital is down from 10·1 to 8·5. The hospital is squeezing more and more people through. That is not uncommon, of course, in the Health Service, but the record of the Christie in that respect is superlative. One can continue to do that for so long, but after that the cracks begin to show. The Christie has achieved all that with the cards stacked against it. There has been no major capital expenditure on X-ray by the region since it bought a piece

of ultra-sound machinery in 1979 for £40,000. As a regional specialty, the Christie can bid for traditional funds for development, but little is forthcoming.

The needs are clearly apparent. In the case of radiotherapy, the present complement of treatment machines is six plus a cobalt 60 unit. The calculation of requirements over the next seven years is that nine linear accelerators will be needed. Even if that is achieved, the hospital will have only half the number of machines in relation to population served compared with the national average. In the case of diagnositic radiology, it has relied entirely upon Pat Seed money. There is an urgent need for a second scanner and the movement into nuclear magnetic resonance imaging will impose further requirements on the hospital. None of this has come from regional funds. It is all very well to rely on voluntary funds, and we approve of it, but there has been no matching provision from the regions.

It is not only capital, but running costs. The Christie takes in patients from all over. Five per cent. come from Wales. The cost of that to the hospital is estimated at £300,000 because there is no provision for the transfer of resources from one region to another. No fewer than 16 per cent. of the patients come from outside the north-west area. If one calculates that on the same basis, it costs roughly £1 million. I do not say that that is an accurate figure, but it is not far off. There is also a problem of calculating the number of patients, which is done two years in arrears and which is worth perhaps another £300,000.

This is all done within South Manchester district, which is suffering from similar pressure. In 1984, it is estimated that the district alone had a net inflow of 34,000 patients from other districts and the cost is valued at £27 million. The district wants to help the Christie, but it is under extreme pressure and it cannot sustain the burden which the Christie imposes upon its general finances.

One can see that in the drugs bill. We have been trying to cut the bill by negotiating prices, but that is limited by what the DHSS will permit. I do not argue about that. There are reasons for it, but it means that the hospital has a limited ability to act alone in this respect. In 1980-81, the Christie's drugs bill was £586,000. In 1985-86, it was £1·1 million. My hon. Friend will know that the reason is that, in cancer treatment, the joint use of chemotherapy and surgery as well as the use of chemotherapy alone has developed dramatically. Some of the drugs are very expensive. Indeed, taking account of inflation, the drugs bill is an increase of £350,000 in real terms over that five-year period. We calculate that, of that sum, £100,000 has come from the region and £250,000 has had to be found from the resources of the district. The position is neither tolerable nor reasonable.

Most dramatic has been the effect upon nurses. It is now accepted that the hospital is 50 nurses short of what it needs to maintain the service at this level of patient throughput. The region has just said that it will allow 20 more nurses, but that is for 1987-88 and will not begin until April 1988——

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): April 1987.

Mr. Silvester: I am pleased to hear that. My information was that they would arrive in April 1988. We have sent people to examine the nursing problems in the hospital and the strain is intolerable. Everything that we can do to speed the provision of additional nurses is essential.

Finally, because I wish to give my hon. Friend time to give a sympathetic reply, I refer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Brentford and Isleworth, the former Minister for Health, who in 1985 set up the review of the RAWP formula. It covers several of the matters that I mentioned, such as cross-boundary costing, the time lag, teaching and research and development. But I was a bit put off by a letter from Victor Paige, the former manager of the Health Service, who said:

"The review will not cover sub-regional resource allocation to districts."

Such a limitation would be absurd because some of the most acute problems arise in sub-regional allocation. But I took comfort from the fact that he went on to say:

"Information on sub-regional experience . . . would be welcomed."

Too right it would. Unless we tackle the problem of dealing with centres of excellence such as the Christie within the overall funding of the Health Service, we shall get nowhere. But it will take time. The Department has asked for answers from that study by the end of this year, and it will have to chunter through the system, so it will be some time before anything is done.

May I end by explaining the present needs of the Christie? As I said, these are not moaning complaints but expressions of the urgent needs of people who are doing a fantastic job and meeting demands which are made upon them. They are not going out touting for business. They need 20 nurses immediately, and I shall be glad to hear more about that. They need a revaluaton of the drugs bill, especially the regional contribution. Why does the royal Marsden have a drugs bill twice the size of the drugs bill at the Christie? We also need some matching help on capital expenditure. After all, if the hospital raises £5·6 million and gets nothing but a smile, it is a bit depressing.

If my hon. Friend will make some helpful remarks on those three points this Christmas time, she will have made a good start in helping the Christie hospital.

9.56 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Silvester) on being successful in Mr. Speaker's ballot and on giving us the opportunity to discuss the Christie hospital. He began his remarks with four hints to Ministers: that we should not prepare all our answers before hearing the questions; that we should not quote global sums for health services nationally, which he thought were irrelevant; that we should not blather on about living within our means; and that we should not say that we have no powers to intervene locally. I would dispute all those points, but perhaps not on this occasion. May I offer him one hint; that he listens carefully this morning because my voice will not last until the end of the sitting unless I can speak more or less in a whisper. I apologise to him for that.

My hon. Friend has been a staunch advocate of health services in the region, and, indeed, in the district. Recently, he brought some members of South Manchester health authority to meet Ministers and to share with them his concern about funding. The Christie hospital is run by South Manchester health authority which, in turn, receives

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

its funding from the regional health authority. I hope that my hon. Friend accepts that it is relevant to consider, almost as an end-of-term report, the north-west region from which the Christie draws many of its patients.

During the past month or so, considerable progress has been made. On 1 December, approval was given for a £21·5 million development at Chorley general hospital. On 12 December, approval was given for a £14·7 million development at the royal Lancaster infirmary. My hon. Friend the Minister for Health laid the foundation stone for the £30 million development at Manchester royal infirmary on 12 December, the day when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister visited Christie hospital. In that sense, the north-west region has made considerable progress recently.

It is worth pointing out that, during the years of this Government, considerable change has taken place. In 1978-79, the North-West regional health authority received just under £380 million a year in revenue. This year, it has received £904 million in revenue. In addition, this year, it is receiving about £72 million in capital moneys, which is the second largest allocation in the country, the largest being to the West Midlands regional health authority. My hon. Friend's academic skills will enable him to do the calculation for himself, but he will see that there has been a considerable allocation of extra money to that part of the country—well above the extra money that has been allocated to regions in the London area, which have remained much closer to their targets for much longer.

The results can be seen in the numbers of patients treated and in the number of direct care staff. in December 1978, the north-west region was looking after 512,000 in-patients. Last year, that had risen to 614,000. The number of people attending out-patient clinics had gone up from 3·1 million to 3·6 million, and the number attending as day cases had gone up from 68,000 to 116,000. The number of direct care staff employed by the North-West regional health authority has gone up from just under 40,000 to 48,000. It is worth pointing out that some patients who might once have been treated at the Christie may now be treated in other centres simply because the first class work of cancer researchers has shown that some treatment can be delivered in more ordinary surroundings, and the same standards achieved.

There has been the £72 million provided this year for the north-west region, and 58 major capital schemes, costing over £1 million each, have been completed since 1978. Some 14 schemes are under construction, including the Manchester royal infirmary, and 18 are approved to start. This represents a total investment in hospitals in Manchester and Lancashire of more than £320 million since 1978. Whatever the local Labour party may be claiming, it could not begin to claim that any Labour Government had put that kind of money into any part of the Health Service, north or south, and that is an acknowledged record.

The South Manchester health authority, which manages the Christie hospital, is a teaching district and its hospitals are linked with Manchester university. The main hospitals are the Withington, the Wythenshawe and the Christie, which is the smallest, with 347 beds. The total funding of the health authority in 1982-83, the first year of its establishment as a district health authority—we cannot go back any further because it did not exist in that form before—was £68,757,000 and in 1985-86 it had gone up to £80 million, which is an improvement in real terms, despite the fact that one of the aims of the regional health authority is to shift money, as far as possible, to match population growth. That growth has tended to be outside Manchester rather than within it. Other districts, such as Bolton, have seen an increase in population and have a reasonable claim on the moneys of the north-west region. Nevertheless, south Manchester has still had a small increase in real terms.

The number of patients treated in south Manchester has gone up from 513,000 in 1982 to 550,000 in 1985. My hon. Friend may call that an irrelevant generality, but it refers to real patients and is worth putting on record.

Mr. Silvester: Does my hon. Friend understand that the regional plan wants the Christie to treat fewer people? It is getting more patients because doctors will not send them somewhere else, but it is not getting the funding for them.

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend will realise that there is the dilemma of the hump, which is that good doctors will not send their patients somewhere else until good facilities are provided somewhere else. At the moment, we spend large sums of capital money while we are not yet able to open the facilities in places such as Bolton. I have no doubt that that is broadly the right way of going about things. It is always good to be able to point out that the number of patients treated is rising and is, I suspect, adequate.

The Christie hospital and Holt Radium Institute, with the separately administered Paterson Laboratories on the same site, serve a large part of the United Kingdom. They serve the north-west region, south Cumbria, which is in the northern region, Cheshire which is in the Mersey region and, as my hon. Friend has said, north Wales. There is an out-patients clinic in Wrexham. As my hon. Friend said, the Christie was founded in 1893 and moved on to the present site in 1932. I understand that it is one of the largest specialist cancer hospitals in Europe, but my hon. Friend has said that it is the largest, and I defer to his local knowledge. I take my hon. Friend's point about matching capital offers from the voluntary sector, but it is worth pointing out that £10·5 million comes from the Health Service, and that is a substantial contribution.

There are some 850 staff, measured in whole-time equivalents, and the number of patients treated, both discharges and deaths, in 1985, at 10,735, was 22 per cent. higher than in 1979, when fewer than 9,000 patients were treated. The waiting list is 327, but I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that we do not mind what the number on the waiting list is as long as waiting lists have the same sort of waiting times as they do at the Christie. It takes the hospital only 12 to 14 days to clear the waiting list, which is highly commendable.

My hon. Friend mentioned recent capital developments, which are both voluntary and NHS-funded, such as the new aseptic suite, which was completed in March 1986 at a total cost of £142,000 and the new radiotherapy linear accelerator, which was also provided in March, at a cost of £450,000 and the adult leukaemia unit, which was completed in October at a cost of £817,000.

My hon. Friend's words give me the opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all those who have raised such enormous sums of money. The Health Service is, and always has been, a partnership.

Voluntary funding and effort were there long before the Health Service was even thought of. It is good to see it functioning well in a hospital such as Christie, where voluntary funding can be put to such good use. I am sure that my hon. Friend will join me in giving our warm thanks to all concerned and in encouraging them to continue. He may know that I was involved in a small way in helping to set up the leukaemia research fund activity in south Birmingham when I was a councillor there, and I was involved with it for 10 years. I have always felt that we should tap into people's willing generosity in that way and encourage them to help. It would be a sad day for all of us if voluntary activity disappeared, and we were totally reliant on state funding.

The Christie has one or two activities to which we should draw attention. I was particularly interested to notice that it is treating over 350 cases of cervical cancer a year and is at the heart of the region's preventive effort on this detectable and curable cancer. It is worth noting that, by March 1988, every one of the 19 north-west districts will have a cervical cancer call and recall system. We hope that the day will come when the death toll from cervical cancer will drop sharply.

My hon. Friend raised a number of other issues. In particular, he went into detail in his comparison with the royal Marsden hospital in London. The consultants at the Christie are arguing that the hospital is underfunded and draw unfavourable comparisons with the major national hospital in London. My hon. Friend said that he felt that the Marsden was several times more expensive in its treatment of patients, and was good enough to provide some detailed examples of that. However, he will know from an answer to his parliamentary question on 26 February this year that the Marsden's costs per patient day are not several times higher but 80 per cent. higher. My predecessor was able to tell my hon. Friend that the cost per in-patient day at Christie was £76 and that for the royal Marsden £138, while the cost per in-patient case at Christie was £657 and that at the royal Marsden £1,181. Those are the figures on which we should rely.

My hon. Friend knows that these matters are under careful consideration, and broadly there are three reasons why the royal Marsden appears to be more expensive than the Christie. The first is that the royal Marsden is the national centre and receive patients from all over the country. Although the description of the work may be similar, at least some of its cases may be more complex, and may prove to be more expensive, wherever they might be treated.

The second reason is that London is more expensive. Neither my hon. Friend, who represents a northern seat, nor I probably like that, but it is a fact, and we are keen to investigate why London costs should be higher and how they can be reduced to more average levels.

The third reason seems to be that, whatever one might say about the royal Marsden, the Christie is highly efficient in its use of resources. At 89 per cent., the average occupancy rate at the Christie is very high. As I have said, the waiting list clears rapidly, the throughput of patients seems to be good, and so on. Two things come out of the comparison. First, whenever we review what is happening in London, we push hard on the question of the royal Marsden's costs and compare them with those of the Christie. We ask the royal Marsden why, if the Christie can operate at that sort of cost, the royal Marsden cannot. That is not an easy challenge for a good hospital to meet, but it is nevertheless an appropriate challenge. Secondly, as my hon. Friend will know, the north-west region has been investigating the Christie's fears about funding. In other words, these matters are taken seriously and, indeed, it has been looking at the funding of all the regional specialties.

I understand from Sir John Page, the regional health authority chairman, that the regional medical officer, Dr. Stephen Horsley, has been having discussions with the consultants at the Christie and that that should lead to an agreed workload so that the work that can be devolved to districts is so devolved, and the same high standards can be maintained while ensuring that the Christie's special qualities and talents are effectively used for more serious or difficult patients.

It has been mentioned that on Wednesday, even while the review is going on, the region agreed to provide an extra £170,000 in order to fund 20 extra nurses in the year beginning April 1987-88. That means that those nurses can be taken into consideration from April. In the intervening three months advertisements must be placed, applications will be received and interviews will be carried out, if appropriate. The staff involved may have to give notice somewhere else and so the beginning of April is probably just about as close to "at once" as one can get. That would seem to be satisfactory.

The other points raised by my hon. Friend are being taken on board in the region's broad review of what is going on. I include in that the Christie's complaint that the number of beds that it has for radiotherapy is well below national guidelines. However, I should point out that the excellent work done at the Christie may help us to revise those national guidelines and to see whether we can provide our cancer patients with a service which is both effective and efficient.

My hon. Friend mentioned charging for patients from other regions and from Wales. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to another regional Member of Parliament on this issue on 28 November 1986, and I should be glad to make a copy of that letter available. He broadly said that we were prepared to look at any system of cross-charging. However, we bear in mind that those patient flows are taken into account in the resource allocation working party programme and have been looked at again recently. We are also extremely wary of setting up yet more bureaucracy, as that may well mean that money is absorbed into administration instead of going into patient services. However, in principle we are prepared to look at any system.

I do not have time to deal with the valuation of the drugs bill or with some of the questions that my hon. Friend posed. But the very fact that those issues have been raised today will no doubt mean that they are taken into account. I am glad to have had the opportunity to join in my hon. Friend's praise for this first-class, outstanding hospital which serves the north-west and local people so very well. With my hon. Friend, I thank those local people who have raised voluntary funds. We are ensuring that the hospital has the right resources, and we are investing more in the north-west region. I hope that my hon. Friend will continue to help us in spreading that good news.

Homelessness

10.13 am

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): I wish to raise the issue of homelessness this winter. It is particularly relevant to our series of Christmas Adjournment debates, as the rigours of winter are now upon us, as we felt last night, and the exclusion of people from the security of a home and from family ties is particularly poignant at this time of the year. Indeed, the story of Christmas is in part about homelessness, and an expectant mother in Bethlehem who had no roof over her head.

That plight and that lack of shelter will affect thousands of people at the turn of the year. Later today, Shelter will hold a candlelight vigil at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and will protest and plead for permanent, affordable and decent housing for rent. This morning, I plead for that, and for the flocks of people who do not have roofs over their heads or secure and affordable homes this winter. The number of people has shamefully increased since 1979, just as the number of those unemployed has.

Ten days ago, in a written answer, the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment gave us the figures in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher). They can be found in column *30* of *Hansard* for 8 December 1986. In 1979, 57,000 households — I emphasise households — were accepted as being homeless. In 1982, 75,000 households were accepted as homeless, and in 1985, 94,000 households were so accepted. In the first six months of 1986, 51,000 households had been accepted as being homeless and without shelter. Thus the figure is running at a rate of well over 100,000 a year, which is about double the level accepted as homeless in 1979.

Of course, if one includes the number of households that are homeless but are not accepted as being in a vulnerable category, the figure stands at over 200,000 a year. I have laid stress on the term households as an even greater number of people are really affected. The figure for the number of those rendered homeless each year is probably equivalent to at least the entire population of Croydon. Moreover, if one takes the slightly higher figure, it is probably equivalent to the whole population of Bristol being made homeless during the course of 12 months.

Many more people could be added to those statistics. I am talking about single people who may be too desperate or hopeless to figure in the statistics. They may sleep rough or in wholly unsatisfactory accommodation. They are commonly called down and outs, because they are down the social and economic scale, and out of the statistics. They seek temporary refuge, even at the entrances to our tube stations, in order to have the benefit of some of the warm air that comes up, or they may sleep on the embankment because they prefer that to staying at common lodging houses. Of course, that is the extreme, and it is not the plight of many of those who become homeless, and who are accepted as such by the local authorities. However, those people still tell us something about the nature of the problem that we face.

Some of those at the extreme of homelessness, who are single and rootless , would prefer at this time of year to go to prison for a month for committing a petty offence than to endure the rigours of the open air or the problems of a common lodging house. It is not unknown for such people to plead in the magistrates' court that they should be put in prison. That is what they want when faced with the choice of going behind bars or sleeping under the stars. It is extraordinary that people should have to end up preferring the consequences of petty crime to the alternatives facing them.

Even in the mainstream of homelessness, there have been recent cases of ordinary, respectable families who have never been involved in any kind of petty crime—I do not wish to give the impression for one moment that all single homeless people are involved in crime—having to be accommodated overnight in police stations and police cells because no other shelter was available for them. Many of those who are accepted as being homeless are not immediately and quickly allocated a home. They are put up in bed and breakfast accommodation. But bed and breakfast accommodation is a continuing form of homelessness. It is often overcrowded and insanitary and has insufficient cooking facilities. It removes people from their natural ties with the community. A minority of bed and breakfast accommodation, which is the lot of many who are accepted as being homeless, is a death trap.

I have received a note from the Home Office adjusting the figures that were given to me in a parliamentary answer on 23 June 1986. I am now told that 90 people died in fires in bed and breakfast hotels, hostels and multiple occupied properly in 1984, which is the latest year for which figures are available.

This Christmas, in Hounslow 1,000 homeless people will spend Christmas in a hotel that has been classified by environmental health officers as below minimum standards. Nevertheless, it is used by some local authorities for the placement of the homeless. In Greater London alone, on the latest available statistics for September 1986, supplied by the Association of London Authorities, 13,000 homeless households were living in temporary accommodation. Of those, 1,773 households were living in hostels, 4,128 were living in short-life accommodation, and an amazing 6,142 households were living in bed and breakfast accommodation. The total number of people would fill an empty Wembley arena three times, yet, over these winter months, they will live in another form of homelessness, in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Not all these statistics are for the hard-pressed London boroughs. Recently, I went to a Labour party meeting in Carshalton. Carshalton and affluence almost seem to go together. I discovered that, in the London borough of Sutton, about 90 families were living in bed and breakfast accommodation or temporary accommodation. Incidentally, that number is about three times higher than the number of starts of rental housing accommodation in that London borough which certainly is not deprived.

I found that, in many other parts of the country, bed and breakfast homelessness would have been unthought of a few years ago. Now, for the first time, because of the policy of cuts in housing allocations, against their better judgment, and certainly against their will, local authorities have to place homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation. Bed and breakfast homelessness destroys, sometimes literally when children die in accidents on stairs or when people die in fires. It also destroys in another sense. It destroys the personality of the people involved. The absence of possessions brings about a different attitude towards society. There is resentment.

Recently the magazine, "Roof" quoted two examples of the effect of homelessness on children. One research worker said:

"Hotel children were often late walkers, late talkers and slow in keeping themselves clean. You often see children still walking around in nappies at three years old."

Another research worker found that there was a link between speech delays and the lack of play experience. She said:

"When children begin to get mobile they develop their motor skills. Lack of play opportunities plus a depressed mother leads to an understimulated child who is slow to develop."

Homelessness also destroys in that manner. One sees the consequences of it sometimes only 10 or 15 years later. In Bayswater, there is a hotel in which 100 people are reported to share five cooking rings and one oven, and in which a 13-year-old child, instead of eating food cooked in the hotel, has taken to eating the cockroaches off the floor. In Streatham, in my constituency, there are 35 homeless people in the Gleneldon hotel. That hotel has no toilet seats, the wash basins are cracked, and bannister struts are nissing, causing danger. In another hotel, two or three people share rooms as a result of the depressed rates of payment made by the DHSS. The Campaign for the Homeless and Rootless has informed me of a hotel in Lambeth which is now sleeping four people to a room. They are the only three hotels in Lambeth known to the Threshold Advice Service with accommodation within the new board and lodging limits.

Bed and breakfast homelessness is exploding. It is not a static figure. It is as expensive as it is debilitating. Of course, the costs paid by local authorities vary from one place to another. The Department of Health and Social Security estimates the cost of keeping families in bed and breakfast accommodation at £136 a week. That is an extraordinarily high amount being spent on the consequences of homelessness. I was provided with figures on the net revenue expenditure on bed and breakfast hotels for the homeless in London. One can get some idea of how these figures are escalating. In 1981, in Greater London, the cost of this phenomenon was £4·3 million. By 1984-85, the latest date for which I was able to obtain figures for the whole of London, that expense had risen to £12·4 million. This winter, bed and breakfast homelessness will make a bonfire of public funds, while some people will freeze because of the lack of shelter.

The 16 members of the Association of London Authorities maintain that that experience is enormously expensive and a scandalalous waste of public money, when one could engage on a programme of home purchasingve and repairs. They calculate that such a programme would bring about a cumulative saving of £45 million of public money by the financial year 1988-89. They estimate that that amount would cumulatively be saved by providing the homeless, who now go to bed and breakfast accomodation, with permanent secure homes.

This winter, the lack of shelter that will engulf so many people mainly in London, but also in other parts of the country, is a direct result of the cuts in funds that were made available for local authorities to invest in their housing programmes. That is an overall cut of about 70 per cent. in housing investment since the Government came to office. A comparison for Greater London between the cuts that took place between 1979-80 and 1984-85, adjusted for inflation, show in real terms a reduction of expenditure on housing that was permitted by the Government in Greater London of £1·48 billion in 1978-79 to £58 million in 1984-85. That is a considerable cut.

That is not a natural disaster or something beyond our control. It is a disaster manufactured by the policies of 10 and 11 Downing street, abetted by the Department of the Environment. The cuts will be continued next year. It is no good the Government telling us there will be an increase in housing expenditure next year. The basic housing investment programme will suffer a further cut. The Government are only dressing up the figures with the increased receipts that will be available to some authorities to spend on housing, but only 20 per cent. of the capital receipts will be from the sale of homes. This does not help the homeless, first, because big capital receipts do not arise in the hardest-pressed boroughs; secondly, because even if receipts became available for those boroughs—such as Lambeth, Southwark and Camden—little land can be used to provide additional homes; and, thirdly, because there is generally an overall loss on rented accomodation because of the exercise of the right to buy in London where the housing is not being replaced.

The Government recently announced two initiatives which have been concentrated on London and the homeless. I shall not quibble or be resentful about those programmes. One involves the Housing Corporation—in the jargon, the 30 per cent. HAG scheme—and a combination of public and private money. That will not be enough. It will provide 500 temporary—I emphasise the word temporary—dwellings by 1987-88. The homes will not be of the right type. Permanent homes are needed for people to rent.

The other initiative is the urban renewal housing unit scheme — the estate action unit — which will be concentrated on London boroughs. But, in most of the London boroughs where there have not been acceptances of the scheme, there has been a history of indecision and refusal. I believe that only Greenwich has been able to take advantage of the scheme.

If the Government are not keen on these measures, why do they not give a direction to the London Docklands development corporation to provide homes to rent? The one large vacant space in London is being disgracefully misused in housing terms by inadequate provision of homes to rent which could deal with some of central London's problems. We demand a reversal of the escalating pattern of homelessness. The difficulties will be only slightly ameliorated by the present crumbs from the Treasury table. We demand a programme of affordable homes to rent — some by new building, some by modernisation and some by repair. We must set local authorities with these problems free with the resources and the powers to provide the homes needed to cope with the enormous and rising tide of homelessness.

We must give new rights to bring empty properties into use, whether public or private. I hold no brief for any home that can be adapted for living which is unnecessarily left vacant. That is why, during consideration of the recent Housing and Planning Bill, the Opposition proposed a form of right to rent even of public dwellings left empty for more than six months. The Government resisted that proposal. We need an initiative that is applied in empty homes, whether in the public or the private sectors.

It is an obscenity day after day as I drive through London to see homes that have been empty not just for a few months, because of a change of hands, but for years.

[Mr. John Fraser]

There should be power of requisition to make those homes available to a local authority, to a private individual or to a housing association to provide housing to rent. We need new rights that will make more homes available for renting.

We need a strategy for London and the other conurbations. It is no good expecting each London borough or each hard-pressed district outside London to cope entirely with its problems. If we did, the problem of dealing with homelessness would be like a number of people trying to chip their way out of their prison cells without a concerted effort to bring them liberty. The greatest contribution would be for the Government to give way to those who have the political will to deal with the appalling problem of homelessness. That is what counts and what will bring results.

This might be an appropriate time at the turn of the year for the Government at least to resolve that they will allow the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless to embrace Britain. The Government talk about that year as though, somehow, homelessness and lack of shelter were matters unknown in Britain but simply matters to be dealt with beyond this country's shores. I hope that the Government will take seriously in the forthcoming year their responsibilities to their citizens, because the numbers of homeless are growing rapidly. They deserve at least the token of Government care and compassion. However, we want not just tokens, but a new effort to provide decent, affordable housing for rent which will eliminate the problem and enormous cost of homelessness.

What is so wrong with housing for people at the extremes? It is not as though we lack the people to work on homes or the money. The building societies, the City and some local authorities are awash with funds. Sometimes, the funds of local authorities are in the wrong place, but, in the aggregate, there is not a shortage of resources and materials. With some training we can find the necessary skills. What is lacking is the political will. The Opposition resolve that the political will will be translated to deal with homelessness. It is a pity that that vigour and commitment are lacking from the Government.

10.37 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Richard Tracey): The hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) has given me a good opportunity to spell out the Government's deep and detailed concern for the homeless. At this time of the year, homelessness is a subject that is particularly on our minds, although it is on the Government's mind at all times. The details will become apparent as I continue my speech. Topically, outside we have the activities of Crisis at Christmas and a candlelight vigil outside St. Martin-in-the-Fields this afternoon, as the hon. Gentleman said. The vigil will attract press, television and radio attention and will focus the attention of the public as well as hon. Members on homelessness. It is natural that those with roofs over their heads should think particularly of those less fortunate during this festive season.

The cold is another reason why we should be particularly concerned about people sleeping out in the winter months. But some people evidently prefer the freedom of sleeping out to the restrictions which have often in the past been imposed in emergency accommodation—dislike of available accommodation was the most commonly noted factor associated with sleeping rough in a 1984 central London report. The aim must be therefore to see there is enough acceptable emergency accommodation to meet people's needs. I welcome the progress that is being made in many areas towards this goal, assisted by the impetus being given by the proposals to close DHSS resettlement units and the Government funding being made available in that context. In so far as limited periods of particularly cold weather make temporary extra provision desirable, it is open to local authorities and the voluntary sector to consider what can be done by opening up churches, schools and other public buildings as a temporary measure if satisfactory arrangements can be made.

More generally, homelessness as a continuing and increasing problem is a matter of deep and serious concern. Not having a roof over one's head is obviously one of the most traumatic things that can happen to anyone. But it is no good Labour Members or anyone else saying that it is all the Government's fault or that the remedies lie in the Government's hands. Much of the reason for homelessness being such an intractable problem is that it reflects social factors. Of those accepted by local authorities as homeless, for instance, the proportion becoming homeless as a result of marital dispute has risen by 25 per cent. in the past seven years. To give a basis for action to help deal with this aspect we as a Government are planning to commission research on the housing consequences of breakdowns in relationships. We will also be setting up a working party with the local authority associations to consider the implications for housing management in the public sector. Young people are also, it seems, continuing to leave home without fully appreciating the difficulties of finding other accommodation. Here, as a preventive measure, the Government are helping to fund the production of a leaflet by the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless Trust for wide distribution in schools and youth clubs advising young people thinking of leaving home on other accommodation prospects.

Mortgage arrears as a proportion of homeless acceptances have also doubled over the past seven years. This is another area where preventive work can help. Mortgage arrears problems arise for a number of reasons, but whatever the cause the answer is fundamentally the same—go to the lender as soon as possible to explain the circumstances in which one finds oneself. Respectable lenders take most seriously the need to try to resolve these problems early and in the right way. They are often willing, for example, to reschedule the loan or allow interest-only payments until the borrower can afford the full repayment again. For our part we have given a grant to the Birmingham settlement money advice centre to set up a national telephone counselling service to advise people in difficulties with debt repayment problems.

We also give a good deal of support to other organisations concerned with preventing people becoming homeless. Our overall budget for funding those projects and other housing advice services provided by voluntary bodies to the general public or to particular sectors, for example, prisoners, or young people leaving care, has been increased by over 50 per cent. in the past year or so and is now in excess of £500,000 per year. Prevention of homelessness is an important area and it may be that some

local authorities would find that greater attention to it —by counselling and in other appropriate ways—would represent good value for money.

As hon. Members will be aware, it is on local authorities that the primary responsibility for helping homeless people rests. Homelessness is a factor in our allocation of resources to individual authorities and for 1986-87 this was altered to give a better measure of homelessness problems in each area. It is for authorities to decide for themselves their priorities for investment, but we have asked them to concentrate their resources on the homeless and other groups in special need.

Given the inevitable limitations on resources, it is essential to see that good use is made of existing property. Authorities must of course look carefully first at how efficiently they are managing their own resources. Can they do more to reduce the number of their empty dwellings and to speed up relets? There were—in some ways it is unbelievable — 113,300 empty council dwellings at 1 April 1986 including 27,100 which have been empty for over a year. We have taken a number of steps over the past year or so to encourage greater use of empty properties. We issued advice on this in July last year and extended grant to properties awaiting major repairs. We are currently consulting the local authority associations about a proposed general consent to authorities disposing to housing associations of an interest in such properties by way of leases of up to five years. And we help fund the empty property unit which gives advice on the use of empty housing.

Our most substantial recent measure has clearly been our offer of direct help through the estate action unit for authorities with the most acute homelessness problems. Extra resources as well as the unit's knowledge and expertise, which are considerable, have been offered to authorities which can take immediate advantage of them to bring empty dwellings back into use for homeless families. We have already announced approval of projects in London in Newham, Greenwich and Islington, and today I am happy to make the first announcement that we have now also approved projects for five authorities outside London—South Tyneside, York, Woodspring, Rushmoor and Milton Keynes. In all, this involves extra resources of £1·25 million with 130 dwellings being brought into use for the homeless. I hope that other authorities with similar problems will also now be able to take advantage of our offer.

Increasing the use of existing housing to benefit homeless people is an area where a number of authorities are beginning to show imagination. Bromley, Brent and Croydon, for instance, are providing financial incentives to encourage existing council tenants to move out and buy in the private sector. We are watching these schemes closely to see what lessons may emerge. Brent has had some success in persuading owners to lease empty flats above shops to provide interim accommodation for the homeless. Bexley has, with our financial support, launched a campaign to encourage owner occupiers to take in lodgers. Other councils perhaps need to consider more imaginative ways of encouraging futher use of their properties and of concentrating tenancies on those in the greatest need.

At the same time we are discussing with the Housing Corporation how to target its resources more on homelessness both inside and outside its housing stress areas. We are also taking action to make its resources go further by bringing in private finance. In particular, by using the new provisions on assured tenancies in the Housing and Planning Act 1986, grant at no more than 30 per cent. and private finance for the rest, housing associations will be able to provide decent accommodation for homeless families until permanent housing can be found. An additional £20 million of resources has been allocated for schemes in conjunction with the private sector and, together with the £10 million previously allocated, this will permit additional expenditure of about £100 million. This is an important breakthrough and the main beneficiaries will be young people moving to take up jobs and homeless families currently in bed and breakfast accommodation. The growing use of bed and breakfast——

Mr. John Fraser: The Minister has used the phrase additional resources more than once in relation to the estate action project and the Housing Corporation scheme. Am I right in thinking that both these initiatives are simply funded by monies which have been subtracted or transferred from other parts of each programme and do not represent additional new resources? In one case the funds have been subtracted from the total housing investment programme and in the other from the total of funds to the Housing Corporation.

Mr. Tracey: The resources are being specially targeted in a particular way and will use the expertise and knowledge of our housing experts. The hon. Gentleman is correct about such resources. Those resources are now being directed by the Government in a much more useful and valuable way than was previously the case.

The growing problem of bed and breakfast is a matter of serious concern to the Government. Our code of guidance to authorities on the homelessness legislation, now part III of the Housing Act 1985, regards the use of bed and breakfast as very much a last resort as interim accommodation. It is clearly unsuitable for families for any considerable period and is also usually the most expensive form of accommodation, as a recent Audit Commission report has made clear. The continuing increase in the number of homeless households being placed in bed and breakfast by authorities—5,400 in England at the end of June 1986, including 3,820 in London—and the reported increase in length of stay, with one or two London authorities warning new applicants that they would face a three-year stay in bed and breakfast, is alarming by any standards.

As you probably know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my Department is undertaking a programme of research on homelessness. This will cover in particular how authorities operate the homelessness legislation and their use of temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfast. It is certainly not clear to me why, for example, some authorities make so much more use of bed and breakfast than others in what look like relatively similar situations. Our research involves a postal survey of all authorities in England and Wales, case studies of individual authorities, interviews with people in bed and breakfast and other forms of temporary accommodation and an appraisal of standards. We expect to receive the report of the postal survey in February and the rest of the research results in late 1987 or early 1988.

While on this point, it is worth emphasising how important it is that authorities should co-operate in such

[Mr. Tracey]

research and in completing our quarterly statistical returns on homelessness. We are considering what we can do to improve authorities' response and it was gratifying to have the support of the hon. Member for Norwood when he said:

"I have no hesitation in saying that there should be an absolute duty on local authorities to supply the information that is essential for us to make policy decisions, irrespective of political control".—[*Official Report*, 3 November 1986; Vol. 103, c. 745.]

I note that the hon. Gentleman said "us" and we join across the House in that point. It beats me how authorities can imagine it is in their own interest to deny us such information.

I mentioned earlier what some authorities were doing to reduce reliance on bed and breakfast and I have referred to our initiatives through the estate action unit and the Housing Corporation to target additional resources on homeless families with the same goal. Permanent accommodation is of course, as our code makes clear, the aim for the homeless just as it is the wish of people in general. We have done a lot to help those who wish to buy their own homes and have taken some steps — for example, on shorthold and on assured tenancies — to encourage the provision of rented accommodation in the private sector, but we fully accept that for others, including the large majority of those accepted by authorities as homeless, renting from a local auhority or from a housing association is, at the moment at least, the only answer. How authorities allocate their housing is basically a matter for each authority to decide, taking into account their duties to the homeless and other statutory obligations.

Finally, the House will, I am sure, expect me to say something about housing resources. This year we increased the planned level of public sector investment in housing to £3,253 million — £200 million above the 1985-86 figure. For 1987-88 we are making a further increase to £3,661 million — £451 million higher than previously planned. But, whatever the level of housing investment, we can be sure that it will always fall short of the ideal as in so many other areas of life. Therefore, it will remain important to make the best use of the public sector resources that are available and to augment those as far as possible with private sector resources. Our break-through with housing association schemes is a good sign of this.

It is no good hon. Members saying that this is all a matter of resources. It is not. There is no panacea. It is important to do what we can to prevent homelessness. I hope that I have pinpointed that very clearly. In an era of perpetually rising expectations, prevention of homeless-ness is difficult enough, but it is also important to look carefully at the large number of relatively small measures —for example, those initiatives being taken by some of the London boroughs to encourage greater use of existing dwellings — which can improve flexibility and remove unnecessary obstacles. This is an essential area for effort, enterprise and good ideas. That brings far more dividends than any striking of political attitudes by Opposition

Mrs. Kuldip Kaur

10.56 am

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): I wish to bring to the attention of the House the problems facing a constituent of mine and his wife who is being held in prison by the Indian Government. In those circumstances, some background information may be of use.

Mr. Paul Bedi and his wife are both British subjects and are respected in the Asian community, not only in my constituency in Hayes, but throughout Britain. I have letters which prove their status in and value to the community. Indeed, one of those letters is from the Prime Minister and is dated 3 June 1985.

Mr. Bedi is a Sikh leader. He is a teacher of mentally handicapped children in Ealing and he is, for how long we cannot now be sure, chairman of the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society.

Earlier this year, in May, Mr. Bedi's wife undertook a trip to India to make arrangements for her daughter's dowry. When she arrived in New Delhi she was met by the eldest son of the Minister for Home Affairs in Delhi, a Mr. Buta Singh. The son arrived at the airport and quickly took Mrs. Bedi — who is also known as Mrs. Kaur — through immigration and customs. She was driven to where she was staying and subsequently during that visit she dined twice with the Home Affairs Minister. Indeed, she received VIP treatment on a surprising scale.

While Mrs. Bedi was there, she attempted, at the request of friends in Britain, to meet someone who had been detained by the Indian Government merely because he had lost his passport. She made an effort to see that person but because the arrangements took place in another part of India she was unable to do so. After making arrangements for the dowry and having had those social meetings with the Home Affairs Minister, she returned to the United Kingdom. That was a fairly uneventful visit.

I should add that the brother of Mr. Buta Singh, the Home Affairs Minister, who is the equivalent to our Home Secretary, also lives in my constituency, and is a friend and supporter of Mr. Bedi and his wife.

When Mrs. Bedi returned to the United Kingdom her eldest daughter's wedding took place and she received good wishes from the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker of the House of Commons. I have copies of the letters sent by them to Mr. Bedi and his wife.

During that time there was an election for the post of chairman of the Anglo-Asian Conservative society and, like the good politician he is, and we all try to be, Mr. Bedi decided he would do his best to ensure that he became chairman. He was successful on 18 August. I have to say that there is a great deal of anger among the people he defeated, in particular a Mr. Saroop, who has managed the organisation for some time. He took it upon himself to say some rather angry things about Mr. Bedi and to him because of the result. I make no comment about democracy within that society. All I can say is that it seems good politics to ensure, if one wants to win something, that one has friends who will vote in one's favour and out vote one's opponents. That is the story of the events that occurred between Mrs. Bedi's first visit to India and the second visit.

She went to India again on 27 August to see her father who was sick and to show the family some pictures of the wedding and other information. She took with her the

cutting from an Asian newspaper printed in this country which showed pictures of the wedding. Unfortunately for her, instead of photocopying one side of the paper, she took the newspaper with her. On the reverse side of the details of the wedding and the support from the Prime Minister and others, there was an advertisement regarding Sikh extremist leaders. That will become significant.

As I have said, she arrived to see her father and relatives and had quite a long stay in India. On 18 October she was on her way to the airport with somebody from the British high commission in New Delhi who was seeing her off. As she was about to board the aeroplane in the early hours of the morning she was taken off by the police for questioning. One of the things they held against her was the cutting that shows the details of the wedding on the front and on the back details of the extreme Sikh movement.

She was questioned for a considerable time but no charges were made against her. Her passport was taken away and she was told to make frequent appearances at the police station in New Delhi. Throughout the 14 days from the time of her arrest I made contact with the Foreign Office and the Minister responsible for consular matters. I had several phone calls and actually met him to discuss the situation. In fact, I took Mrs. Bedi's husband with me on one occasion. It seemed impossible for the Foreign Office and the high commission in India to get very far. They were thwarted and were not told what the likely charges would be. They were not told whether she was to be released.

It was generally suggested that the Anglo-Indian situation is a bit delicate at the moment and that India is concerned about Britain being friends of Sikhs and not deporting Sikh extremists — people whom the Indians think are Sikh extremists. It was said that the matter should be kept low key because the Government do not want to exacerbate the situation.

After 12 days of getting nowhere fast, at the request of Mr. Bedi and some of his colleagues I decided to fly to New Delhi to see whether I could intervene on behalf of Mrs. Bedi, who was not allowed to come home. When I arrived on 31 October the high commission had been unable to arrange for me to see anyone. The authorities concerned flatly refused to see any representatives of Mrs. Bedi, despite the fact that she was my constituent and I had flown from the United Kingdom to try to influence the situation.

Because of the inability of our high commission to arrange a meeting for me with Mrs. Bedi, who was able to move freely around Delhi, I met a local politician who put me in touch with the Speaker of the Indian House of Commons. Within five minutes of meeting that man he had picked up the telephone, got through to Mr. Buta Singh, the Home Affairs Minister, and a meeting was arranged for me the next morning, Monday 3 November, at Mr. Buta Singh's office. I was made to feel as if I had asked to have an audience with, if I may use the expression, our Lord. I was made to feel that I was lucky to have the opportunity to meet such a man.

I arrived at 11 o'clock that morning and was ushered into his office. After the usual niceties he said, "Have you something for me — a gift?" In my usual ignorance of such affairs I pretended that I did not know what he was talking about and, effectively, the interview ended. He told me that he knew nothing of the family or of the case. He said that he would have to take advice from his officials. I have a reference from the same Mr. Buta Singh dated 31 October 1965 which he gave on behalf of Paul Bedi. It says that he is a social worker and the reference goes on:

> "I have known him for long past. He has impressed me with his devotion towards the national integration movement of India."

In spite of that, he sat there and told me he knew nothing of the family or the case. I asked him whether he had had a phone call from his own brother who lives in my constituency on behalf of the lady. He did not answer. I asked him whether he had had a phone call from Mr. Bedi direct and he did not answer. He then said that he had an important Cabinet meeting to attend and we had to end the meeting. He said that he would ring at 5 o'clock that evening, 3 November, to tell me what had happened and what views he might have after looking into the case. I am still waiting for that telephone call.

The next day through the high commission I attempted to obtain an audience — I suppose that is the correct word to use for the Prime Minister of India these days in view of the way he lords it around the world — to see whether I could raise the matter at that level. I was told by the high commission through the Prime Minister's private office that he would be ringing me later that day. Again, I am still waiting for that phone call. In the meantime, I went with Mrs. Bedi to the police headquarters in New Delhi. I cannot find words to describe the conditions at the so-called police headquarters. If the prisons of India are anything like the police headquarters, I have great concern for the people of that country who might be interned within them.

I arrived at police headquarters for a meeting with the deputy commissioner of police who was again to interrogate this lady at 1 o'clock. We were still sitting there at 3 o'clock although she and her lawyer had been separated from me. At 3 o'clock that afternoon I was asked to leave. I said that I was not prepared to leave until I had heard what they were saying and what they were going to do to my constituent. My constituent's lawyer then advised me to go because they said I might be locked up. There may be some people in this country, perhaps in my own party, who would prefer that. However, I decided to take the lawyer's advice and I left.

It was 9.40 that evening, after nine hours, that that lady was allowed to leave. Again, they did not tell her whether she was to be charged. She left in a very distraught state. In my submission, she was in no fit state to be treated in that way. I am not qualified in the medical profession, but one could see that she was on the point of a breakdown and that she needed help, support and understanding. I would add that that was given by the high commission. Miss Docherty, who was responsible for consular affairs, performed an excellent job, doing all she could to support the lady.

I came back and reported to the Foreign Office on this matter. While I was in India I was told quite clearly by the high commission staff that, "The British Government are very concerned about Anglo-Indian relations. We must not give the impression that we are treating this lady differently from any other consular case because the Indian Government might say that we are treating her specially because she is a Sikh and they might say that the British Government are treating Sikhs specially and harbouring potential terrorists."

I find all of that rather amazing bearing in mind the long friendship that Mr. Bedi and his wife had —

[Mr. Terry Dicks]

perhaps still have, I do not know—with the Minister for Home Affairs. I asked the Foreign Office if it could tell me in how many other consular cases the prisoner involved was a personal friend of somebody the equivalent of our Home Secretary, had been welcomed by him in his official car, taken to his home and dined with him twice. Indeed, I forgot to mention that when Mrs. Bedi was lifted from the plane she had gifts from Mr. Buta Singh, the Home Affairs Minister, for his brother in this country. I have never heard of a similar case in which such circumstances have taken place.

The other interesting thing is that some time after my return Mr. Bedi had a personal telephone call from the Indian high commissioner in this country, saying: "Have you heard the good news?" Mr. Bedi said "No, what is it?" The reply was, "Your wife is to be released, and she is coming home." One can imagine the delight in the husband's heart when he heard that. He told his children, and they were thrilled to hear that at last their mother would be coming home. An hour later Mr. Bedi had a telephone call from his wife's lawyer, saying, "She is being charged and she is moving from the place where she is staying outside the police headquarters to a cell in the police headquarters."

What sort of country is it that can tell the high commissioner in this country to pass on personally to a man the message that his wife is being released and within the hour tell him the opposite? It is appalling for a so-called liberal, civilised Government to behave in that way. However, when I was asked for a bribe by the Home Affairs Minister, I should not have been surprised by such an attitude. I understand that we give about £114 million in various sorts of overseas aid to India. I do not know why. If that is the sort of Government who run that country, I reckon that we could almost double the Christmas bonus that we give to our old-age pensioners by redirecting India's money to them. That is a personal view, but it shows how strongly I feel about the disgusting treatment meted out by the Indian Government to my constituent, and about their attitude.

A newspaper cutting dated 30 November this year states:

> "The investigating agency admits that so far there is no concrete evidence against Mrs. Kaur."

I say to our Foreign Office that it is no good sitting down and playing the waiting game, saying, "Let's see what happens. Let's keep it quiet." That is not the way in which to treat this situation. If we could intervene at the top level with the Iranian Government to get the release of a British subject in Iran, why on earth are we not intervening at the top level to get Mrs. Bedi released, when she is being held on what I consider to be trumped-up charges?

We must discuss the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society. I understand from a newspaper today that is likely to be disbanded after a meeting in Conservative Central Office this morning, although, on checking with Central Office, I was told that it is not likely to happen. In the newspapers and elsewhere it has been suggested that there has been a secret takeover of the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society. Before the election took place, Sikh representation on the society was low. We are told that the Sikhs have taken over, and that is one of the reasons why Central Office has taken such action.

Let me tell the House what the breakdown of the society's executive committee is since the election in August. There are five Moslems, five Sikhs, three Hindus, one Bengali and one Englishman. Does that sound like a Sikh takeover? Does that sound like an organisation that has a one-sided view of what is needed to help our party win the next election? It does not seem so to me.

Mr. Saroop, who has manipulated and managed the society for many years—he has been chairman for six years out of a possible 12—was annoyed about this allegation. It is alleged—I say "alleged" advisedly—that he has contacts in India. It is not surprising to hear that when pressure was put on Mrs. Bedi, when she was in India, that was just after the election of her husband to the position of chairman. She was vulnerable to pressure in India by those over there who hate the thought of a genuine Sikh, who represents the community, and who has the support of the Hindu and Moslem groups in this country, running what the Indian Government consider to be an influential organisation.

It is not difficult to believe that pressure has been brought upon Mrs. Bedi so as to get Mr. Bedi to resign from his post over here, but, judging by the newspaper reports, the information that I am beginning to get is that he will have to resign or he will be kicked out. The organisation has been in existence for 11 years, and it is strange that the first time a Sikh takes the chair democratically the society has to be re-examined to make it more representative. The figures that I have given show how representative the society is.

The general feeling among correspondents in India to whom I spoke when I was there, and this is shown in the press coverage since then, is that Mrs. Bedi might be being held out there on trumped-up charges as a result of the political situation in this country. I often think that the Foreign Office always looks to the Foreign Office's interests first and the British interests afterwards. Again, that is a personal view, although I know that it is held by other colleagues, too. Yet again the Foreign Office wants to treat this as a consular matter when I believe that it is more important than that.

In the first stages, when the Foreign Office was short of information, it was doing all that it could. I praised it at the time, as well as the high commission in India, but the circumstances have changed. Mrs. Bedi is being held in prison. The police authorities have said that they can find nothing against her. Do they release her? Not on your life, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have passed the facts to the intelligence agency so that the agency can take up the case. It is strange that Mr. Buta Singh, the man who is so keen on gifts before he does anything, is the very person who is in charge of the police and who arranged for Mrs. Bedi to be arrested and have the case passed on to the intelligence agency.

The Indian Government's behaviour is nothing short of appalling. It should be understood to be that and put on the public record. That is the reason why I have raised the case today. I want our Foreign Office to take a high profile. We know how important diplomacy is, and we also know the failures of diplomacy, but sometimes it demands that this country stands up for its subjects, no matter where they are and where they are being abused. It is not good enough to whisper in the corridors of power, "Don't worry. Things will work out all right if we play a

low profile. Don't forget, Mr. Dicks, when you speak about your constituent, we have to concern ourselves with Anglo-Indian relations."

Mr. Bedi has the support of Asians throughout the community — not just Sikhs. The whole Asian community is watching what is happening. A strange turn of events is that Asians are saying, "Is it because Mrs. Bedi happens to be Asian that things are not being done on her behalf by our Foreign Office?" I have my suspicions about why things are not happening. I have a firmly held belief that the Indian Government want the case to die quietly, and if they do, so does our Foreign Office. I could believe that some progress was being made were Mrs. Bedi still being questioned and free to move around Delhi, but now she has been arrested. She is in a state of mental torture, if nothing else. Yet, after the police said that there was no evidence on which they could charge her so far, she has now been passed over to the security forces.

What will our Foreign Office do about that? Will it just sit back and let that lady languish in a cell? In the previous debate we heard about the needs of the homeless at Christmas time. What about the needs of Mrs. Bedi? I know that she is not a Christian, but her family living in this country enjoys Christmas as Christians do. While we are celebrating, that lady is likely to be languishing in a prison in India because of a corrupt Government. I say that advisedly. The legal advice that I received out there was that that lady and others there can be locked away pending police inquiries for 10, 15, or 20 years. The deputy commissioner told my constituent's lawyer out there, "You should feel yourself lucky that I happened to look at her case twice in a fortnight. I have some cases on my desk that I do not look at for as long as six months." Between the police examining those cases and saying, "Shall we question somebody else?" the people involved are left in prison cells or kept under house arrest. Is that the way in which the biggest democracy in the world should operate? I do not believe so.

I want our Foreign Office to take action and to adopt a high profile. I want it to be said, almost at Prime Ministerial level, that British citizens will not be treated in that way, as happened with Iran. We ought not to go crawling to the Indian Government, who do not know how to behave in a humanitarian way. The next time the Indian Prime Minister starts lecturing this country on our foreign policy towards South Africa or anywhere else, he should remember the British adage, "People in glass houses should not throw stones."

11.19am

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I understand the anxiety of my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington (Mr. Dicks) for the well-being of his constituent and for the distress suffered by her family in the United Kingdom. I pass on to my hon. Friend the apologies of the Minister of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton), who is away on Foreign Office business. That is why I am present this morning in his stead. However, we have spoken to my hon. Friend the Minister on the telephone and he was made aware of what my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington was likely to say this morning. I have taken specific advice.

I greatly regret some of the language that my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington has seen fit to use in referring to the Indian Government and the legal processes in that Commonwealth country. I firmly reject his suggestion that this Government or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are unsympathetic to the welfare of their citizens abroad, or of the hard-working Sikh community in the United Kingdom, which contributes a great deal in its areas.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend has made some unpleasant and unjustified remarks about members of the diplomatic service this morning. In all my inquiries into this case, I cannot fault those members for having tried to help as best they can under the circumstances. I think that we must face what has happened by considering the facts. I am sure that that is exactly what my hon. Friend would wish, even though his information has led him down a path which I cannot follow.

My hon. Friend knows, as he described—and I have the papers containing the dates before me—that Mrs. Kaur was formally charged on 6 November 1986 under two sections of the Indian Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act 1985. That is the law of India. Her case must be heard by the Indian courts, but it has yet to be heard. I am sure that hon. Members will understand that, when such a case is before the court of a land, the circumstances make it very difficult for me to comment on the substance of the case.

We do not know the specific details of the charges beyond the formal statement to which I have already referred. Mrs. Kaur's case has been handled in a manner which is fully in accordance with the legal procedures of the Republic of India. They may not be exactly the same as ours, but we cannot enforce our system on the Indian Government. They have their system. There is legal provision for the police to prevent departure from the country of people whom they wish to question in connection with possible criminal charges. That is a provision within Indian law.

Mrs. Kaur was free to move within Delhi while holding herself ready for questioning. Charges were laid against her on 6 November. By the order of the chief metropolitan magistrate, she was remanded in police custody until 12 November. On 10 November the magistrate gave permission for our consul to visit Mrs. Kaur. On 12 November the magistrate ruled against the police application for an extension of police remand and directed that Mrs. Kaur be remanded in judicial custody.

According to the Indian code of criminal procedure, the accused must be produced at not more than 15-day intervals before a magistrate who can then remand the accused for a maximum of 60 days. Mrs. Kaur was remanded on 27 November and 6 December.

Legal proceedings are, as my hon. Friend will know, normally the preserve of state Governments. Under the Indian Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act the central Government may, after consultation with the state Government, directly exercise all the powers conferred by the Act. We do not know why the central authorities have taken over Mrs. Kaur's case. We cannot therefore confirm press speculation that this relates to the nature of the evidence against her. Had I other information for my hon. Friend, I would give it to him. However, I simply do not have any.

Visits by consular staff to Mrs. Kaur have occurred on several occasions. My hon. Friend will know that the rights of access due under the Vienna convention on consular relations, of which both we and India are signatories, have been granted. I also understand that

[Mrs. Lynda Chalker]

hearings for Mrs. Kaur's application for bail have been postponed several times. Two of the postponements were for legal reasons and, on one occasion, there was a strike throughout Delhi, which made a hearing impossible. However, on three occasions the postponement was at the request of Mrs. Kaur's lawyer, Mr. Jethmalani, who works out of Bombay. Those dates on which the hearings of bail were adjourned at the request of Mrs. Kaur's lawyer were 17, 26 and 28 November.

Although I understand the anxieties of my hon. Friend and of Professor Bedi, the criticisms of the slow handling of the case are unfounded. I do not believe that under the legal system operating in India matters could have progressed faster given that there have been three adjournments at the request of Mrs. Kaur's lawyers.

I want to bring the House up to date with the latest legal position. The hearing on Mrs. Kaur's bail application was held on 17 December. Having heard it, the special magistrate reserved his position until today. We have no information at the moment as we have yet to hear his ruling. However, under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act 1985, the court can remand cases at 60-day intervals up to one year before trial. That is the law in India.

Hon. Members will understand from my account that we have sought to give Mrs Kaur, as a United Kingdom citizen, all the normal consular assistance in India. The high commission was in constant touch with her from the moment in mid-October — the night of 17 October — when she was prevented from leaving India until she was formally arrested and charged three weeks later. Since then she has been visited regularly by consular staff. I assure my hon. Friend that the high commission is continuing to monitor Mrs. Kaur's case, just as it monitors those cases of other British nationals detained in India regardless of colour or creed. I must refute my hon. Friend's comments with regard to Mrs. Kaur's Indian origin. She is a British citizen and she is being treated as such by our high commission.

It might be helpful if I made a few general comments about consular assistance abroad. Last year we produced a most useful booklet explaining what our consuls abroad can and cannot do for British nationals in trouble. Any British national living, working or travelling abroad is subject to the laws of that country. Our consuls cannot intervene in the due process of law in another country. If British nationals are detained our consul will visit them, ensure that they know their rights under local laws, tell them how to obtain legal representation and ensure that they are not discriminated against by reason of their foreign nationality.

It might be informative for the House to know that so far this year 2,106 arrests have been notified to us by our posts overseas, and that at any one time we reckon to have approximately 1,300 British nationals in prison abroad. That is the background. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington believes that this case is different. Quite honestly, publicity does not always pay off. We have been accused this morning — as we are accused sometimes in other cases — of doing nothing. We very often find that a low-key approach has resolved a problem when public acrimony has only aggravated it. I am concerned that we should use words with great care in this case and be extremely judicious in the way in which we deal with sensitive matters concerning the freedom of a British citizen held in India. Before making any intemperate statement, it is worth reflecting very hard as to whether it will help or damage her position. The legal process must be used and we have sought to ensure that that is the case.

Any suggestion that Mrs. Kaur may have been discriminated against on racial grounds is for the Indian Government to answer, but in our experience of cases in India over a long period there are no grounds for believing that to be true. My hon. Friend's comments about the resources spent helping hundreds of thousands of Indians through our aid programme were unworthy of him. That help goes to many poor and needy people in India and we have a responsibility in that respect.

Referring to his visit to India, my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington made some comments about Indian Ministers similar to those that he made in New Delhi. I must tell him that his comments have, indeed, caused grave offence within the Indian Government. As I was not present, I do not know the meaning intended by the words that were used. It is possible that there was a total misunderstanding.

Mr. Dicks: There was no chance of that.

Mrs. Chalker: I well know, however, that such comments will not help the cause of my hon. Friend's constituent or of the hundreds of thousands of moderate Sikhs in Britain. That is why I say this, with great regret, to my hon. Friend: how does he think that we would react if an Indian Member of Parliament came to London and referred to British Ministers in similar terms? I believe that there would be as much anger in this House as there has been in India.

Mr. Dicks: I did not create the situation. The suggestion that I mentioned came from the other party and it is unfair to suggest that I might have misunderstood. I did not misunderstand. I am sure that no Indian Member of Parliament visiting my hon. Friend the Minister or my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary in this country would find himself in that kind of embarrassment.

Mrs. Chalker: I note my hon. Friend's comments.

When the Minister of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Sussex, visited India last week the visit by my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington was a matter for discussion. I should make it absolutely clear, however, that my hon. Friend the Minister of State went to New Delhi for talks on a wide range of issues related to the battle against terrorism and Sikh extremism — we all know that some exists — including the possibility of an extradition treaty. My hon. Friend the Minister of State discussed the case of Mrs. Kaur very thoroughly with the high commission and was satisfied, as I have explained, that everything possible was being done to help her. It was not the purpose of the visit of my hon. Friend the Minister of State to raise consular cases. We ensure that the Indian Government are well aware of our consular interests at all times.

There are concerns among the Government of India that we should rightly note. My hon. Friend the Minister of State affirmed to the Indian Government the desire of the British Government to deal effectively with a problem that afflicts both our countries and he recalled the British Government's firm commitment to the territorial integrity

and unity of India. Both Governments have strongly reiterated that the encouragement of violence and the stirring up of racial and religious prejudice have no place in our democratic countries. India has a serious problem with terrorism. As in the Community of Twelve, and now much more widely, it is agreed that we must all stand firmly against terrorism. There must be a strong co-operative effort. We know how difficult it is to deal with problems of terrorism and the Indian Government have great worries in this respect, so it is not surprising that they should seek to deal with them. We should in no way seek to undermine their efforts to combat terrorism.

That is why the case of Mrs. Kaur must remain within the Indian legal system. It must go through the full legal process and not be drawn out from it, because only in that way can the Indian judiciary continue to be independent. After all, it is based on a British system of law. In the case of any British citizen, Mrs. Kaur or anyone else, we seek to ensure that the person concerned is fully represented. Ministers within and outside the Foreign Office have taken a considerable interest in this case and we have listened carefully to everything that my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington has said as well as to representations from Professor Bedi. The case has also been monitored closely in New Delhi and I cannot go along with the complaint of my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington about the way in which the case is being handled. There are no grounds for political intervention. I very much hope that the case will be heard soon. Indeed, I hope that we shall hear from the magistrates later today.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington suggested at one point that Mrs. Kaur might have been detained for political reasons. That is a very serious allegation. I am confident that truth and justice will prevail. We know that in addition to Mrs. Jaimalla, the junior lawyer, Professor Bedi has also employed Mr. Jethmalani, so Mrs. Kaur is well represented as the case comes to court.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington also suggested that the Government in general and the Foreign Office in particular were overly concerned about Indo-British relations. Of course we should be concerned about the totality of our relations with India, but that is in no way incompatible with our active and proven concern for the well-being of all British citizens abroad and, indeed, the Sikh community in this country, which has a great contribution to make. With regard to tracing links between the member of the Sikh community concerned and her husband in relation to private letters between members of the Cabinet and Professor Bedi, I should point out that Cabinet members frequently write to people whom they know on the occasion of a wedding, especially when those people have been particularly active in seeking to help in this country, so I do not regard any of the comments that were made as particularly unusual or out of the ordinary.

I should like to make one further point about the visit of my hon. Friend the Member for Hayes and Harlington to New Delhi. In line with his other comments, he sought to cast doubt on whether the high commission was doing all that should be done in such a case.

Mr. Dicks: With great respect, I praised the people out there for the efforts that they had made and told them personally how grateful I was for their help and kindness while I was there. That is clearly on record.

Mrs. Chalker: I am delighted to hear it. Nevertheless, my hon. Friend made comments about how we were dealing with the case. I should make it clear that the high commissioner, in seeking to deal with my hon. Friend as fairly and openly as possible, said that it was up to my hon. Friend whether to seek publicity but that there was a risk that the Indians, who are very sensitive to criticism, especially from the British, would act unhelpfully. He went on to say that before my hon. Friend's departure he would want to think carefully about the effect on Mrs. Kaur's prospects of a public personal attack by my hon. Friend on the Home Affairs Minister there. In our judgment, such an attack on a legal Minister by a British Member of Parliament would make those authorities close ranks and delay, rather than expedite, the decision. I understand that my hon. Friend and his constituents want a quick, thorough and just decision more than anything.

My hon. Friend made a charge against the Home Affairs Minister in India and sought to imply that the attitude towards Mrs. Kaur may have changed after Professor Bedi was elected to the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society. I cannot answer for the attitudes or actions of the Government of India. There are unexplained aspects of the case, but I cannot say that the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society has all the influence that my hon. Friend seems to think it has.

My hon. Friend suggested that Mrs. Kaur's detention and charge under the Act may in some way be bound up with the affairs of the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society. My hon. Friend will well appreciate that such party matters are not for the Foreign Office to delve into. As a member of my party of nearly 30 years' standing, I have made inquiries, particularly of the national union—the voluntary side of the party—on which I served for many years before coming to this House, to find out what is going on. I understand that it is meeting this morning. If this debate had not been held, I am sure that Professor Bedi would have been at that meeting because he is certainly entitled to attend it and give his view.

Those matters are not for the House. My hon. Friend should make his representations to the chairman of the Conservative party and the chairman of the national union in whose area these decisions lie. I cannot answer for them here, but my hon. Friend's words, which will be recounted widely, are for those people, not for me.

My hon. Friend sought to imply that I could answer for the Government of India in respect of any linkage, but I cannot do that. He seemed to say that only Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers are concerned about the need for good relations between Britain and India, but he is wrong. All Government Ministers share those concerns. India is an important place in the world. It has its own democracy and works under its own laws. We are not seeking to have a great row and misunderstanding. We want to ensure that Mrs. Kaur is taken fairly and justly through the processes of law in India. That is why his wish that this case should be treated differently from any other is not a sound way of proceeding.

I have already told my hon. Friend of the interest and concern of all Ministers in this particular case. However, all cases in other countries are not the same as Mrs. Bedi's.

[Mrs. Chalker]

When there is a case, such as the one mentioned by my hon. Friend in Iran, where there is no consular access and no charge at the time of protest, that is different. But in this case the charge was made, there is full consular access and, indeed, the point is different.

We shall continue to monitor the case of Mrs. Kaur. I am confident that the Government of India are well aware of the wish in the United Kingdom that all cases before Indian courts should be handled properly and in full accordance with local legal procedures. We shall not know the full nature of the charges until the case comes to court. Naturally, we hope that that will be soon, that a fair trial will take place and that as a result of the efforts of Mrs. Kaur's lawyers everybody will be satisfied with the result of this lengthy and painful process which Professor Bedi and his wife have been going through. The greatest care is being taken over the case within Indian law.

London Residuary Body

11.45 am

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): You will notice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a humble Back-Bench Member advancing to the Dispatch Box for the debate. I am emboldened to do so because I understand that there is a perfectly adequate precedent that you set as a Back-Bench Member. Obviously, I have a future to look to. Because the debate may degenerate, may I take this opportunity to wish you a most happy and peaceful Christmas.

My subject for the debate is the work of the London residuary body. I last raised the topic on 23 May 1986 and I make no apologies for bringing it back again. The LRB is an unelected, unaccountable body whose members were hand-picked by the Government. It is chaired by a Thatcherite Conservative—a former local government leader—who, it would appear, is finding it a little too much for him. I understand that he physically assaulted Mr. George Nicholson, the ex-planning chair of the Greater London council, in his office recently. Clearly, the man is under some pressure and I hope that in some small way I may add to that pressure today. Obviously, I hope not to bump into him outside if that is how he deals with his political opponents. However, one should not say too much about that because my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition was having his own difficulties in a curry restaurant the other night. Clearly, this muscular approach to politics is catching, but we shall try to remember that it is Christmas and be peaceful today.

Sir Godfrey Taylor's reward for asset stripping London local government and physically assaulting Labour politicians is a salary of £51,700 a year. The other members of the London residuary body board are paid at the rate of £6,246 a year for one day's work a week. That is a good job, if one can get it, but to do so it appears that one needs to be a good friend of the Tory party and Tory Ministers. When it comes to finding jobs for the boys and the girls, no one can touch the Government. I trust that we in the Labour party will learn from that.

I should like the debate to be as constructive as possible, so throughout my speech I shall direct questions to the Minister. I hope that he can answer them, but I shall understand if he cannot do so today and will give me answers subsequently. On the composition of the London residuary body, why are there no obvious Labour politicians? Why has Margaret Hodge, for example, the chair of the Association of Local Authorities, not been appointed? I understand that she was approached earlier. Why, for example, is councillor Peter Bowness still there, bearing in mind that he was appointed because of his position as chair of the London co-ordinating committee which has ceased to exist? Do the Government intend to appoint any new members to the London residuary body board in the next six months?

Last month the House received the annual report of the London residuary body. It is a slim document, in size and in information content. The report covers only the period from August 1985 to 31 March 1986. That is the period when the GLC was in existence. The House did not receive the report until November 1986. The next report will cover the period—very important for us—from April 1986 to March 1987. On past record, it would seem that we shall not receive the next report of the London residuary body until November 1987, which will probably be after the next general election—which of course the Labour party will win—when the LRB will be packing its bags to go.

Will the Minister undertake to present the next annual report of the LRB to the House before the summer recess of 1987? There are Adjournment debates on the activities of bodies such as the LRB, but other residuary bodies exist and we shall not be given an opportunity to debate any of them in the House.

I have a letter from the Leader of the House dated 30 October which is a point-blank refusal of my request that there should be debates in Government time on the activities of those residuary bodies. That refusal highlights the Government's contempt for democratic accountability. In 1986-87, the LRB, for example, handled a budget of £480 million. It makes decisions on behalf of 7 million Londoners and is responsible for a wide range of services and public assets. Indeed, the services for which it is responsible are somewhat greater than the Government originally designed because, of course, the shambles of abolition has taken much longer to clear than the Government thought, although we told them that that would be the case.

All of the proceedings of the LRB, which are very important to Londoners, are held in secret. It is under no obligation to make information available to the public and the press and positively resists doing so. The LRB has replaced a directly elected and open council—the Greater London council. The GLC would not have wished to conduct its business behind closed doors and in secret, nor, indeed, would it have been allowed to do so. The terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960—an early piece of activity by the Prime Minister—do not apply to the London residuary body, or do they? I do not know.

Why did the Government table Statutory Instrument No. 1929, with the catchy title of the Local Government Reorganisation (Miscellaneous Provisions) (No. 6) Order 1986 that trips easily off the tongue? Was it tabled because the LRB and all the residuary bodies should have held their proceedings in public with admission for interested parties from the press and from the local area? I should be interested to know the real reason for tabling the statutory instrument. We are told in the House that the

LRB is accountable to Parliament through Ministers. There are ways in which we can try to drag information out of Ministers, but it is a difficult job.

In my speech on 23 May, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment referred to answering 50 parliamentary questions from me on the LRB. I am sure that the number of questions from me has gone up somewhat, but the amount of information coming from the Government has not moved very much from its general level of unwilling co-operation with a Member of Parliament who has some political and personal interests in what is going on in county hall.

When I asked whether the LRB would hold its meetings in public or issue minutes or agendas to London Members or Members generally, the answer in each case was no. One can imagine the outcry that there would be if a directly elected public authority attempted to do likewise but, as I have said already, most of them would not want to do so and any of them who did would fall foul of the 1960 Act.

Clearly, information is the lifeblood of democracy, but information is a scarce commodity in the LRB. During the debate in May I was told that the LRB would be answering the points that I had made in the debate. But it took a series of letters and further parliamentary questions from me before the chairman of the LRB deigned to supply that information in a letter dated 24 October 1986. It took five months before I could get the information that was promised to me by the Minister in the House last May. No wonder I was less than impressed by the Minister's answer to my question on 21 October when he said:

"I am confident that the residuary bodies are providing information in response to all reasonable queries." — [*Official Report*, 21 October 1986; Vol. 102, c. *831*.]

All my queries were certainly reasonable, but the response was not a ready one. I trust that if the Minister promises me answers from the LRB when he replies, I shall not have to wait five months before I receive them.

On the issue of county hall, we know that the LRB is out to sell county hall. Indeed, it is spending £350,000 of ratepayers' money to encourage bids. The preferred option is a hotel and of course, with the Waterloo terminal for the Channel tunnel being located very close to county hall, that would make some sense to the hotel business. Office units are another possibility—perhaps preferred by the Prime Minister who undoubtedly would like to see county hall broken up in such a way as to make it exceedingly difficult for a Labour Government to take it back into public ownership.

At the moment, the Inner London education authority is the major user of county hall and it has been told that it must get out by 31 March 1988. In December 1985 and then in January 1986, the chair of the LRB told ILEA that if the authority was requested to move from county hall it would be provided with a capital equivalent asset at no cost to itself. That was the promise that was given by the chair of the LRB, but in summer 1986 that promise was withdrawn.

I ask the Minister whether the Government influenced the decision of the LRB to withdraw the promise to ILEA. ILEA has been in county hall since it was officially opened in 1922. The ILEA covers the same London county council boroughs that built and paid for county hall, so county hall belongs to the inner London ratepayers. Indeed, it is possible that it was paid for by those inner London ratepayers before the LCC was abolished. I should be interested to know whether the Minister has any information on that.

It is monstrous that the owners of county hall—the inner London ratepayers and the Inner London education authority—should be evicted. There is no guarantee even that the Prime Minister would allow it to purchase its own property if it could afford it. If I was advising ILEA, I would tell it to go for a judicial review and to challenge its eviction in the courts. It would have a good case. It is certainly a good case on moral grounds, even if not in law. Sometimes morality and the law do not coincide.

One can imagine the outcry if a Government took over ICI, Unilever, the clearing banks, British Gas and British Telecom and offered those enterprises back to the shareholders for sale. But that is precisely what the Government are doing with county hall and with much of the property that belongs to the London boroughs. The LRB is saying, "If you want it, you can buy it back." They are being offered their own property. It is monstrous, but it is something that we have come to expect from the Government. Why can public property be disposed of as though it belonged to no one while private property is always sacrosanct? The ratepayers of London are being robbed by the sale of county hall as the British taxpayers are being robbed by the privatisation of our public enterprises.

I have more specific questions about county hall. Will the Minister say how many offers the LRB has received for county hall? What are the preferred uses for the building? What is the current asking price for county hall? When will the announcement of the successful offer or offers be made? The Inner London education authority's consultants have estimated that if the authority is forced to find alternative accommodation, it will cost between £100 million and £200 million. Of course, ILEA will be strappped to find such resources. Will the Secretary of State allow ILEA to stay in county hall? I realise that the Minister will have to refer that question to the Secretary of State.

The Labour leadership has made it abundantly clear that, whatever happens, county hall will be compulsorily purchased by the next Labour Government if it is disposed of to the private sector. Therefore, all prospective purchasers have been warned—not by me, but by the leader of the Labour party and the shadow Secretary of State for the Environment, my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham).

I deal now with the 3,500 seaside and country homes. As late as 21 November, the Minister was assuring me that negotiations were on course to transfer the homes from the LRB to Anchor housing association. But, on 12 December, the LRB announced that the deal was off and that negotiations would start afresh with several housing associations. What is happening in respect of those seaside and country homes? Why did the transfer to Anchor housing association fall through? What discussions took place between the Department and the LRB on the decision to dump Anchor? Will the Minister guarantee that London will continue to enjoy 100 per cent. nomination rights for its pensioners going to those GLC seaside and country homes? Will he give a guarantee, as his predecessor did on 20 February 1986, that, on transfer, the housing associations will broadly maintain GLC levels of rent, management and maintenance expenditure? That

[Mr. Tony Banks]

is important. He must tell the occupants of those 3,500 properties that their rents and the standard of maintenance will remain broadly as they are now. He must tell the House that soon so that the elderly people who live in those houses and who are worried by the confusion surrounding the transfer can have their minds put at rest. Finally, when does he expect the transfers to be effected?

I now turn to mortgages since I am receiving a growing number of letters from the holders of GLC mortgages. Because of my position as the last chair of the GLC, I tend to attract much extra constituency work in respect of abolition matters. The letters that I have received—the Minister must know of similar letters coming into his Department—show that people believe that they are being harassed by the LRB, which wants to get rid of the mortgages to building societies. But at least 60 per cent. of the mortgage loans are at fixed interest rates, so new arrangements could cost the mortgagors money in the long run. We must also add the cost of making the transfer arrangements, which will run into hundreds of pounds in legal and valuation fees for each mortgage holder.

Will the Minister direct the LRB to pay the costs associated with the transfer of mortgages to building societies? Will he confirm that no mortgagor is obliged to transfer to a building society? We know that to be true, but it would be helpful if the Minister would underline it. What will happen to the mortgages when the LRB is wound up in four years' time, assuming that it has that amount of time left? Will those mortgages be compulsorily transferred to a nominated building society at the mortgagor's cost, or will yet another successor body be set up to handle those mortgages? How many mortgages are currently held by the LRB? Thousands of former GLC mortgage holders want to hear the Minister's answers, and I hope that he will give us some this afternoon.

I now come to the matter of Thamesmead. As a member of the Committee that considered the GLC abolition Bill, I well remember the claim of the former Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young), that Thamesmead would be transferred "within days" of the GLC's abolition. Nine months later we are still waiting for that transfer to take place. On 17 November, the Minister told me that the transfer of Thamesmead from the LRB to Thamesmead Town would take place on 1 January 1987. Does the Minister stand by that reply of 17 November? Will the transfer take place on 1 January 1987?

I am open to correction, but I have heard that the Government have been putting pressure on the LRB to hand Thamesmead over to the trust with a subsidy. But the LRB says that it is under an obligation under the 1985 Act to secure the price put on Thamesmead by the district valuer. Of course, it cannot do anything else unless the Government issue a directive to the LRB. Is it, therefore, the Government's intention to issue such a directive to the LRB in respect of Thamesmead, allowing the LRB to transfer the property to the trust at less than the district valuer's price? If so, why did not the Minister issue a similar directive to the LRB in respect of the 3,500 seaside and country homes? The same problem was confronted by the LRB in its negotiations with Anchor.

I turn now to something a little more personal, which relates to the matter of the GLC's heritage collection. I wish to put something on the record. There have been some good humoured exchanges and some very bad humoured exchanges over the GLC's family silver, as it has come to be known. As chairman of the GLC, I was responsible for having the GLC's entire collection catalogued for the first time in nearly 100 years. That collection of artefacts and documents represents the history of London local government since the middle of the 19th century. I wanted it catalogued and transferred to the Museum of London in order to keep it out of the LRB's preying hands. The decision to take that action was taken by the GLC on 17 March 1986.

As chairman of the council, I heard nothing more and assumed that all was OK. On 31 March, I removed the contents of the chairman's office from county hall, as I believed that all the items in the office belonged to the Museum of London. I was safeguarding those items for the Museum of London. I have all the documents here, although I shall not bore the House by reading them all out. However, they are here if the Minister or anyone else is interested.

On 4 April, a few days after abolition, I wrote to Max Hebditch, the director of the Museum of London, enclosing a list of the items that I had, and asking him what arrangements he would make to have them collected, or to tell me how I could deliver them. I received an acknowledgement on 7 April, and heard nothing more until I was written to, on 27 May, by a Mrs. Wendy West of the LRB. She said that she was acting on behalf of Mr. Hebditch, and offered to collect the items.

At that point, I was deeply suspicious. What was an employee of the LRB doing writing to me, saying that she was acting on behalf of the Museum of London? If the Museum of London owned all the items, why was it not writing to me saying it would come and collect those items, just as I had asked it to do on 4 April? Consequently, I started to make inquiries, and I made it clear that I was not prepared at that stage to hand over those items to the LRB, and that I wished only to hand them over to the Museum of London. Again, I heard nothing more until Sir Godfrey Taylor wrote to me on 9 July, informing me that the LRB owned the collection. That came as something of a shock to me, as I thought that I had speedily arranged the transfer of all the items to the Museum of London.

I asked for clarification from Sir Godfrey on 31 July. Dates are important. On 9 September, Sir Godfrey wrote again, laying claim to the collection. I now know that the instructions of the GLC to transfer the collection to the Museum of London were never carried out, and that they were blocked by the late, unlamented Secretary of State. Unfortunately, no one saw fit to inform me, as chairman of the GLC.

Under threat of High Court action, I handed over the catalogue of items to the LRB. I did not hand them back, because it had never had them. However, I have not handed over the catalogue itself. I had three copies made, and I asked for one for myself because I wanted to make sure that there was at least someone with a record of all the items who could be relied on to preserve their integrity as a collection. When I made that request, no one challenged it. The LRB has secured two of those catalogues and is now after the third, which is in my possession. I have offered, through my solicitors, to place that catalogue in the Library of the House of Commons, because I have now heard that senior LRB officials have been told verbally that the GLC heritage collection will be broken up, and that items will be sold if they cannot be

transferred or are refused by museums. If that is true, it is a scandal, and it justifies and vindicates all that I have said and done since 31 March. I want that collection to stay in one piece. It represents an important account of London's local government history, and it would be monstrous if the Government allowed the LRB to sell it off.

Will the Minister direct the LRB to maintain the integrity of the entire collection by transfering it to the Museum of London? If not, will he direct the LRB not to sell off any items? Will he allow me to place my catalogue in the Library of the House of Commons for the benefit of students of London local government and to preserve an independent record of the GLC's collection? The LRB has two catalogues. If it gets a third, no one will know what represents the entire collection, and what I feared back in April will then take place. Those items could start to disappear and if they do not go legally, they might go illegally.

I want to finish with a few quickies. Has the Minister received the LRB's recommendations about Hampstead heath, and if he has not, when does he expect to receive them? What will happen to the research and intelligence unit at county hall? What will happen to the scientific services, the computing service and the welfare benefit service? These are all small matters at the end of a speech but major items when one is considering the impact of the abolition of the GLC on a whole range of services vital to Londoners.

I know that I have directed many questions to the Minister, and he does not have a great deal of time to answer them, but I shall not rush him. I am happy for him to think about these questions over the Christmas period in between his turkey and his Christmas pudding, and jot down a few notes and come back to the House and let me know whether he is able to answer them. They are important questions. Let me give him some more.

Will the LRB distribute to the London boroughs all the money that it now has available? I understand that it has about £20 million in capital receipts. When will that money be distributed? It also has £300 million of notional receipts. These are very important—everything is about creative accounting and notional receipts these days. If those receipts could be transferred to the boroughs, it would relieve them of a number of capital problems. Why is it that, with all its resources, the LRB still seems intent on setting a levy for next year? I am informed that the LRB has sufficient funds to enable it to set a zero levy for 1987-88. That, of course, would mean transferring real resources to the boroughs.

Why is the LRB allowed to build up assets and resources that it clearly does not need? After all, we were told that the work and function of the LRB were all about redistributing the spoils from the GLC to the London boroughs. It would be wrong and improper for the LRB to hold on to the money that the hard-pressed ratepayers of Greater London could use during the arcane discussions about the rate support grant settlement for 1987-88.

I am obliged to the House for giving me the opportunity to raise a series of points and matters relating to the work of the London residuary body. It will be a late body when the next Labour Government is elected. I look forward to that day. Until that day arrives and the LRB is despatched, it will be up to people like me to raise the important matters about its activities.

12.15 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope): I join the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) in wishing you seasonal greetings, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However, I regret that many of the hon. Gentleman's comments were not made in the spirit of Christmas. It was particularly unfair of him to make an unwarranted attack on the chairman of the London residuary body. The chairman has done much to steer the procedures forward and to overcome all the difficulties that he inherited from the GLC largely because of the behaviour of some elected GLC members in the last months of the life of that organisation.

It is particularly inapposite that the hon. Gentleman should attack the chairman of the residuary body, when I understand from an extract from the 19 November edition of *The London Evening Standard* that he himself made threats against officials of the LRB because of his concern about what happened to the so-called GLC treasure. I understand that he said bitterly that clearly the people who were working both for the GLC and the LRB "felt it was in their career interests to thwart the wishes and instructions of the GLC.

"'I won't forget that, and I won't forget the names of the persons either. If that sounds like a threat it is meant to be'."

Mr. Tony Banks: Yes.

Mr. Chope: I hear the hon. Gentleman confirm that he intended to make that threat. I do not know whether he intends to carry it out.

Mr. Banks: I hope that I can.

Mr. Chope: The hon. Gentleman hopes that he can carry out his threat. That is a sad reflection on what should be a time of Christmas cheer.

Luckily, last night's issue of *The London Evening Standard* was able to put into context the abolition of the GLC and its inability to provide good quality services at reasonable cost to London. Under a leader headed "A Christmas Bonus", *The London Evening Standard* recorded:

"It will be particularly galling to supporters of the late unlamented Greater London Council that the one area in which it most prided itself on its service to ratepayers—public transport—has prospered even more mightily under the successor authority. Ratepayers' subsidy to London's tube and bus network has been dropping steadily since London Regional Transport took over from the GLC. This Christmas they are being given a further bonus of £36 million in lowered contributions, giving boroughs room to cut their rates, should they wish to. LRT has achieved this by carrying more passengers more efficiently. We wish them an even happier New Year!"

It is significant that the hon. Gentleman spent two thirds of the time available for this debate dealing mainly with more detailed matters. He spent little time commenting on the major achievements of the abolition of the GLC and the major achievements of the London residuary body.

Mr. Banks: That is not my job.

Mr. Chope: The hon. Gentleman said that that is not his job. Hon. Members must bear in mind what he said before the abolition of the GLC. He predicted doom and disaster. He was sceptical about the savings that could or would be made and suggested that the LRB would cost more money and be less efficient. It is worth pointing out exactly what has been achieved so far. Far from the

[Mr. Chope]

problems worsening and the predictions of doom and gloom being fulfilled, matters are much better. Tasks assigned to the London boroughs are being carried out without many effects, except beneficial ones, on consumers. It is worth paying tribute to the boroughs for the way in which they have taken over new and enhanced functions.

I do not think that any reasonable Labour politician really believes that a Labour Government — in the unlikely event of there ever being another — would wish to reinstitute the Greater London council. The GLC was attacked privately by Labour party members while it existed, and now it is not lamented at all. Only the hon. Member for Newham, North-West and one or two of his hon. Friends seem to have a sentimental attachment to the GLC.

It will not be long before the GLC is completely forgotten but the savings which will have resulted from abolition will not be forgotten. The manpower savings which were expected to result, and which my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for the Environment predicted, are being implemented. In London there has been a net reduction of 4,600 full-time posts because of abolition. This will bring a continuing annual saving to London ratepayers. In the first year following abolition, the saving net of one-off redundancy payments and of detriment payments will be about £30 million. In subsequent years, savings will rise to an estimated £52 million a year. Further significant savings will come as the LRB winds down its activities.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West raised many detailed issues. I shall try my best to answer some and reply by letter to those which I cannot answer. I hope that those questions which are for the LRB will be answered faster than in the past. I do not seek to defend the position where the LRB has apparently overlooked replying to letters. The hon. Gentleman, by raising many questions to which he already knows the answers, causes a certain scepticism to develop in the minds of members of the LRB.

Those members were appointed by the Secretary of State under section 57 of the Local Government Act 1985, including a member of the co-ordinating committee as provided under section 57(4). My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State sees no need at present to make further appointments to the LRB. It is well on the way to fulfilling its objective of doing itself out of a job. There seems to be no reason to change its membership.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the report and accounts of the LRB and referred to those for 1985-86. Obviously, no annual report and accounts can be laid before the House until they are received, so I cannot give any guarantees. I take the hon. Gentleman's point that he wishes the LRB's activities to be subject to debate. By raising the matter, the hon. Gentleman has been able to achieve that objective. I am sure that he will not be slow in coming forward to raise issues of concern to him.

The Government have always accepted that residuary bodies need to be accountable. That is why the 1985 Act imposed on them an audit regime giving public access to their accounts, with the provision that they should produce annual reports. That is an appropriate regime of accountability for such bodies, but for the public to have the right to come to their formal sessions is inappropriate and unnecessary. It would be wrong to impose such a burden on bodies which are largely administrative with a limited life and no powers to initiate policies. That is why the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 was not applied to residuary bodies. The order to which the hon. Gentleman referred was laid to avoid any doubt that the 1960 Act does not apply.

The future of county hall is a matter for the London residuary body. The building has been put on the market and, in answer to the question of the hon. Member for Newham, North-West, so far there have been some 250 enquiries. Perhaps those enquiries are further evidence of the view held outside the House that the Labour party has no hope whatever of being elected to Government. In view of the background of threats to compulsorily purchase county hall — that apparently is Labour party policy — there would be little interest within the private sector in purchasing it if it was believed that those threats could ever be implemented. Those 250 enquiries speak for themselves.

As a former member of the Inner London education authority, I am aware of that authority's interest in county hall and its continuing need for headquarters accommodation. The LRB has given ILEA notice to quit by 31 March 1988 but ILEA has asked the Government to direct the LRB to make a proposal for the free transfer of the building to ILEA. That request is receiving careful consideration. I must emphasise, however, that we have always taken the view that ILEA's continued occupation of county hall and the question of alternative accommodation are matters for negotiation between ILEA and the LRB.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Chope: I will not give way as I have only four minutes left. This is a 45 minute debate and the hon. Gentleman took up half an hour.

The LRB has also submitted planning applications to Lambeth, but it would not be right for me to comment on those matters as they may well come before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment in due course.

With regard to ILEA, it is worth reminding ourselves that it employs around seven administrative staff for every 1,000 pupils or students and that is against an average in England of three administrative staff. Even after allowing for London weighting, ILEA spends twice as much on administration per pupil as the average.

Mr. Spearing: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chope: It spends 30 per cent. more per pupil than the inner city authorities of Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle and 60 per cent. more than the Labour authority in Birmingham. Last year, ILEA kept nearly 500 teachers supernumerary to its own generous establishment. ILEA's finances should be considered in that context and especially as it employs many more administrative staff than would seem to be necessary.

The matter of mortgages has been causing concern to a number of people. I would like to respond to the comments of the hon. Member for Newham, North-West in some detail. The fact is that no one who has a former GLC mortgage would be compelled to pay any charge for the transfer of his or her mortgage. The letter from the LRB was an invitation to borrowers to refinance their

mortgages through one of five building societies. The offer is entirely voluntary. The letter did say that anyone who took advantage of it would have to pay certain charges, but there is no obligation on any borrower to refinance his mortgage through this initiative.

When the LRB is wound up any mortgages remaining with it must be transferred to the successor body. I assure the House that, whatever arrangements are made, they will take full account of borrowers interests. I give the categorical assurance that there will be no question of any fee being charged to borrowers for the transfer. It is not yet possible to say what those arrangements will be. It is for the LRB to propose a scheme for the disposal of any properties, rights and liabilities remaining with it when it is wound up. In due course my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will consider carefully the scheme brought forward by the LRB and will take appropriate steps to see that mortgages are transferred to a reputable successor and that borrowers' interests are fully protected.

With regard to seaside and country homes, I understand that the LRB is now inviting offers from six or seven housing associations. After discussions with the Housing Corporation, a decision will be made on those housing associations which can fulfil the responsibilities. That offer has been made following the breakdown in negotiations with the Anchor housing association. It is a matter for the LRB. There have been problems in making progress because of a wide difference of view on the valuation of the homes. That is why those negotiations are now being widened. But, given that the LRB has a duty to London's ratepayers to secure the best price reasonably obtainable in the circumstances, it is understandable that it should now wish to pursue those alternative options. I hope that satisfactory arrangements will shortly be concluded for the future of those homes. It is not fair to alarm the residents in the way in which the hon. Gentleman sought to do. The residents of those homes have nothing to fear.

I do not have time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to deal with the other points that were raised, but, as I said earlier, I

A420 (South-West Oxfordshire)

12.30 pm

Mr. Robert Jackson (Wantage): There is a story of a politician campaigning in an African election who pledges the people at a meeting that he will bring them roads and bridges. A call comes from the back of the room, "We have no rivers", to which the politician replies, "I shall bring you rivers also." Thank heavens that nobody can come before the House in the spirit of that African politician. Road construction in Britain, or, at least, the detail of road construction, is not a party-political matter.

It is of course true that the amount of money overall that is allocated for road construction is, in a sense, a political matter, because it involves a choice of priorities. And here the Government's record on that stands up well. In 1985-86 the capital spend on roads increased by 20 per cent. in real terms over the level in 1978-9. And in the coming year, 1986-87, the capital spend will be no less than 30 per cent. higher in real terms than in 1979. We should pay tribute to the Government for that fact. The Government have made the right political decisions to allocate resources for road construction on a generous and rising basis.

Nevertheless, the point that I was making about the African politician remains. In this country the procedures for designating priorities for roads and for designing those roads are not political in character. The system is designed to reflect objective factors and to deal as dispassionately as possible with the costs and benefits of different choices.

I say all that to show my hon. Friend the Minister that in raising today the future of the A420 in Oxfordshire I am fully conscious of the fact that this is only one among many trunk roads with problems which he has under his responsibility. I want to make that clear from the start. Nevertheless, the A420, as it runs from east to west—or west to east, depending on where one starts—through my constituency from Swindon to Oxford, is a trunk road with problems, as I hope to demonstrate in the course of my remarks. I am glad, on behalf of my constituents, to have this opportunity to draw my hon. Friend's personal attention to these problems.

I invite the House and my hon. Friend to come with me along this road on what the Beatles called a "Magical Mystery Tour". Let us start out from the dreaming spires of Oxford, or at any rate from the dreaming spire of Hartwell's garage at Botley. The first stretch runs from Botley to the Cumnor Hill bypass. That seems to work well, although we notice, as we drive along this stretch of the road, that the traffic is moving fast in both directions. Indeed, if the police are not watching, many people exceed the speed limit.

That is what causes the problems which we find when we hit the second stretch of the road, from the end of the Cumnor Hill bypass to the beginning of the dual carriageway at Tubney Wood. Here we will find a problem that comes up again and again along the A420. Having moved extremely fast along the earlier bit of the road, we have to slow down dramatically as we come to the single carriageway. We begin to see a build-up of frustration in the motorists travelling on that road.

The result is that when we come to a short stretch of dual carriageway at Tubney Wood drivers speed up tremendously as they try to break out of the log-jam, and there is a lot of overtaking as people try to get ahead before

[Mr. Robert Jackson]

the next stretch of single carriageway between Tubney Wood and Kingston Bagpuize where, again, there is more slowing down, more frustration, and more people waiting for the next opportunity to push ahead.

When we reach Kingston Bagpuize we come across our first major problem on the road. There is an urgent need for the bypass at Kingston Bagpuize. It is the only settlement along the A420 that has not yet been bypassed and it faces serious problems. Those problems are well illustrated by the latest figures — the road is being surveyed at present — which show that 16 per cent. of the traffic at Kingston Bagpuize is constituted of heavy goods vehicles above 3 tonnes in weight. That compares with a national average on trunk roads of about 10 per cent. Furthermore, there has been a dramatic growth in all traffic of 15·6 per cent. over the past three years, compared with the national average growth of 9·5 per cent.

I have to say to the Minister about the Kingston Bagpuize bypass that there really must not be any further delay in its construction. I draw the Minister's attention to the petition I sent to him in the summer.

My constituents at Kingston Bagpuize see that the Oxfordshire county council, when it was responsible for the road, completed the Shrivenham and Faringdon bypasses before the road was trunked. They see that since the A420 has been trunked there has been a considerable delay building up in the work on the Kingston Bagpuize bypass. Not unnaturally, they are putting these points together and are reaching conclusions that should make my hon. Friend the Minister and his Department feel uncomfortable. That is why I would like to bring, if I may, a delegation from the community at Kingston Bagpuize to meet my hon. Friend the Minister to discuss the future programme and how we can speed it up. I would be grateful if my hon. Friend will confirm his willingness to do that at a mutually convenient time.

It is not for me to comment on the details of the design of the Kingston Bagpuize bypass. Under our system that is a matter for expert judgment. However, I am concerned about three points. First, there is the line of the road. The petition to which I referred suggests that a substantial majority of the local people want to press ahead with the preferred northern route, although I have to say to my hon. Friend that it was a psychological error in October 1984 not to consult on both routes, the one running south as well as that running north.

A second point concerns access from Longworth. The Minister will have to strike a difficult balance between the interests of Longworth residents gaining access to the A420 and to Southmoor and the interests of residents at the Draycott Wood estate in not having their environment further damaged by the construction of a bridge. I do not envy the task that my hon. Friend and the inspector face in this matter. My hope is that he will seek to minimise the damage to the environment for people on the Draycott Wood estate.

Third, there is the question of the A415 crossing on the A420. It would be deeply unsatisfactory if this were not to be resolved at the same time as the construction of the bypass. We must not allow an essentially bureaucratic factor, which is that the Department of Transport is responsible for the A420 while the Oxfordshire county council is responsible for the A415, to produce what will be a bungle if this issue is not properly addressed. It is my belief that the Department of Transport must recognise that what it is going to do on the A420 is bound to have an effect on the A415 at that point, and that these limitations must be resolved together.

Let us return to our drive along the A420. We come next to the single carriageway leading from Kingston Baguize to the Faringdon bypass. Here we find a continuation of the problem I described earlier of traffic build-up, blockage and frustration. And this leads us to the next major problem we encounter on our drive—the Faringdon bypass. There is no doubt that that is an accident black spot. There have been nine serious accidents in the past three years, a number of them fatal. Town councillor Donald Barber has conducted a useful house-to-house survey involving quite a large sample. This has shown that 27 per cent. of those polled in Faringdon believe the junction to be unsafe and a further 48 per cent. believe it to be positively dangerous.

The basic cause of the situation is not seriously in doubt. We are getting frustrated drivers building up on the single carriageway stretches. They see something that looks a bit like a dual carriageway at the bypass, and they accelerate to overtake after the bottlenecks—and then they smash into cars that have been pulled into the ghost islands in the centre waiting to turn towards Faringdon.

I believe that the proposal to deal with this problem by improving delineation is not good enough. The Department of Transport will have to accept that there must be a roundabout. I know that that will slow down traffic on the trunk road, but there are roundabouts, for example, on the A34 — a trunk road — between Woodstock and Oxford. They have been found to be necessary there, as I believe one to be necessary at Faringdon.

Let us continue along the road: we are near the end of our journey. The next stretch lies between Faringdon and the Shrivenham bypass. Once again, traffic is building up, leading to problems at the Shrivenham bypass that are similar to those at Faringdon, although they are less serious. On this matter, I am grateful to my distinguished constituent, Professor Charlesby, for the work that he has done. The bypass at Shrivenham should have been built as a dual carriageway, and I believe that it will have to be dualled eventually. So we come to the final stretch of the A420 in Oxfordshire, between Shrivenham and the county boundary, where, once again, we have the problem of a single carriageway on an increasingly intensively used road.

Before I draw some general conclusions from this journey through my constituency, I should like to say a word about the problem of service facilities. There is no doubt that we need at least one more service facility on the A420 in Oxfordshire. There are current applications at Faringdom, at Buckland and at Kingston Bagpuize. The latter two are currently the subject of an inquiry, and we are waiting to hear from the inspector.

The only comment that I wish to make, which is a point of general application, is that I should like to draw the attention of my hon. Friend the Minister to the serious inconveniences—I put it mildly when I use that word—that are caused by the apparent lack of a Department of Transport policy on the provision of services on trunk roads. It cannot be a matter just of highway safety. Other interests have to be taken into account, among them, for example, the optimal spacing between facilities. The Minister's Department must grasp this issue so as to

relieve pressures that my constituents at Buckland have been facing because of an application which is probably unsuitable.

Having taken the House and my hon. Friend on this journey through "leafy Oxfordshire", I should like to leave three main points in his mind. I should like him to recognise the growing pressure on this road. It is one of the principal axes of communication in what is now called the M4 corridor, an area of fast and growing economic development which is important to the national interest. This development is reflected in the traffic figures that I cited: I draw particular attention to the percentage and growth of HGV traffic. We must welcome such an event, but I shudder to think of the consequences for the A420 if and when Honda expands its operations at Swindon, linked to its partner, Austin Rover, at Cowley. The amount of heavy traffic passing between these two facilities is already considerable, and there is every prospect of it growing substantially in future.

The Minister must, I think, accept that the whole road will have to be dualled. I understand that the forecasts of traffic growth over the next 15 years show increases that are well in excess of the criteria currently used for justifying the construction of dual carriageways.

Second, I should like my hon. Friend to recognise that the whole of the A420 requires attention, not just the bits between the bypasses or, for that matter, the bypasses themselves. I very much welcome the news of the decision to review the A420 in Oxfordshire, but I should like my hon. Friend's assurance that no solutions will be precluded by the terms of reference of the review that will be conducted. I am thinking particularly of the necessary improvements of the Faringdon and Shrivenham bypasses.

Finally, I should like my hon. Friend's assurance that, notwithstanding the overall review of the problems of the A420 in my constituency, it will not be allowed to inflict any additional delay on work on the bypass which is necessary to relieve the problems of the unfortunate inhabitants of Kingston Bagpuize. The situation there is bad and continues to become worse. Only on Wednesday there was a serious accident outside "Fallowfields", in the same place where someone was killed last year. Reports of such events—and of dangerous near misses which are not reflected in the statistics, but which are real nonetheless — come to me almost every week. The planning routines of my hon. Friend's Department are no doubt very important, but, for God's sake, let those necessary routines not be leisurely—let them be urgent.

12.44 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): My hon. Friend the Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson) has done a service to his constituents by raising issues about the A420 and associated roads. My hon. Friend's contribution reminds me of the importance of having single-Member constituencies. He has taken us on a tour of the A420 and he has also disclosed his age because I suspect that many people would not immediately understand the reference to the Beatles' "Magical Mystery Tour." My hon. Friend has shown such expertise that that is either a full qualification or a total disqualification for taking my job if ever there is an unexpected vacancy. I sometimes wonder, if there were multi-Member constituencies, whether such issues would be raised in the way in which my hon. Friend has raised them.

At the beginning of his speech my hon. Friend referred to the road building programme. I am sure that he will be pleased to note that last year we spent within 0·5 per cent. of the capital funds allocated. If he and I had had a debate at any time between 1974 and 1979 I would have had to have said that the national roads programme was being cut. We have managed to increase it, as my hon. Friend has said. More than that, we have achieved better value for money, more miles per million pounds, and that has meant more relief, more bypasses and more accident investigation and prevention work, otherwise known as low-cost engineering. That is the kind of approach to dangerous road situations to which my hon. Friend has referred. Sometimes these can be solved by ghost islands, by roundabouts or by grade separation. All the money is used to advantage.

The Department recognises the importance of the A420 as the main route linking Swindon and the M4 with the A34 at Oxford and from there with main routes to the east midlands, M1 and the north.

My hon. Friend has helpfully outlined the background. The A420 was until recently the responsibility of the appropriate local authorities—Wiltshire at the western end and formerly Berkshire and more recently Oxfordshire to the east. In the 1970s the Oxfordshire county council built a bypass and new interchange at Cumnor, with financial help from the taxpayer through the Government.

In 1978 the then Secretary of State announced his intention to improve conditions on the A420 with bypasses for Shrivenham, Faringdon, and Kingston Bagpuize. The Faringdon and Shrivenham bypasses which were opened in 1979 and 1984, respectively, were financed by 100 per cent. grant from the Department in recognition of the importance of the route and the benefit of removing traffic from rural towns. We are now preparing a bypass for Kingston Bagpuize and I will return to this in a moment.

The Government subsequently announced that the A420 would be taken into the national trunk road network following the completion of the Shrivenham bypass. The necessary orders to achieve this positive step were made in December 1985.

On a more general point, often, when a road is trunked, that means a change in possible timing because that takes the control of preparation work out of the hands of the county highway authority acting as principal and puts it into the hands of the Government, although often the local highway authority acts as the agent for the Department.

My hon. Friend is understandably concerned about the proposed bypass of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor which is the only major settlement on the A420 without a bypass. In the autumn of 1984 we consulted the public on a proposed route to the north of the village. Often when we consult on one route people say that we should have consulted on others. On other occasions people claim that it would be faster if we consulted only on one route so that a bypass might be provided without unnecessary delay. I am willing to accept that on occasions we may take the wrong course. I am not sure that we did that on this occasion. However, I understand my hon. Friend's point about consultation with local people on alternatives rather than having to wait for the inquiry process to have the opportunity to put forward alternatives.

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

After careful consideration of the views expressed by the public, local authorities and interested organisations and after weighing the various factors involved, we announced in May this year that a northern route would be adopted. This route is generally within or very close to the corridor protected for the bypass since 1966, first by Berkshire county council and then by Oxfordshire county council.

We are continuing the necessary preparations for the publication of draft orders under the Highways Act by about the middle of next year. The actual start will, of course, depend on the outcome of the remaining statutory procedures. We also have to allow time for completion of the detailed design, preparation of contract documents and tendering procedures. I cannot give an assurance on timing, but my hon. Friend may like to know that, on the basis of experience elsewhere, I would hope that construction would start within the next three years or so. I know that the scheme is important to my hon. Friend's constituency and more widely, and if we can improve upon that timetable we shall do so.

I know that some of my hon. Friend's constituents would prefer a route to the south of the village. We did not offer this for public consultation as it seemed not to give good value for money, but when the orders are published next year the public will be able to object. If there is a public inquiry, which seems likely, members of the public will be able to put their views to the independent inspector. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments about that process. As he said, it is not party political. The procedures for any individual road scheme mean that objections come before an impartial inspector and I think that people have confidence in that system. Our procedures provide for such an inquiry and we regard it as important for people with genuine concerns to be able to state those objections and, if they wish, to propose alternative routes.

Part of Kingston Bagpuize is a conservation area and provision of a trunk road bypass will accord well with our policy of getting traffic out of towns and villages and facilitating the flow of traffic to and from industrial centres to aid economic recovery.

I know that my hon. Friend and his constituents would also like an A415 bypass. As he said, that road is the responsibility of Oxfordshire county council and he knows that I cannot provide trunk roads for it. Nevertheless, it would be surprising if there were not co-ordination, as those concerned know that road travellers are not particularly interested in whether they are travelling on a national road or a county road.

My hon. Friend has rightly drawn attention to the increase in use of the A420. We recognise that it carries a relatively high proportion of heavy goods vehicles and that this may increase slightly as a result of the facilities being constructed by Honda at Swindon. In recognition of the increased traffic, I hope that we shall be able to justify constructing the Kingston Bagpuize bypass as a dual carriageway. I note my hon. Friend's comments about the standard of previous bypasses. It is clear that roads have to be constructed according to the standards applying at the time. It is also clear that if we can keep road spending to what is justified at present, with a reasonable look forward, it will be possible to bring more bypasses into the programme. We have completed 60 or 70 since 1979 and many more have been added or taken back off the shelf because funds were available. That in itself requires the exercise of some consistency in standards.

My hon. Friend referred to accidents on the A420 and I was sorry to hear of the fatality near Faringdon on 11 December and of other recent accidents and near misses. Like my hon. Friend, I extend my sympathy to the bereaved and the injured. In fact, the overall accident rate is lower than the national rate for this type of road and the Faringdon bypass has halved the accident rate that would otherwise have been expected. Nevertheless, I will ensure that my hon. Friend's observations about individual junctions are properly considered.

We are very conscious of the importance of the trunk road network in Oxfordshire. The A34 is being progressively improved from Oxford southwards to provide a high-standard route to Southampton and Portsmouth. Northwards, good progress is being made with the planning of two schemes — the A43/A421 improvement from Peartree hill to Wendlebury and the M40 extension, which will provide a vastly improved route between Oxford and the midlands. We are also improving the A43 between Wendlebury and the M1.

My hon. Friend asked whether it might be suitable to meet him and representatives of his constituents. I know that he had a meeting with my predecessor, now the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and I am sure that it would be possible and, perhaps, helpful to have a meeting. However, I would not wish people to think that by having a meeting they could accelerate the process faster than it can naturally be taken. Nothing would be worse than for us to make an unnecessary mistake in our preparation work. That may be more damaging than trying to take the proposed bypass properly through the procedures.

My hon. Friend asked about service facilities. Plainly, the old tradition of relying on what happens to be at the side of the road may have worked when there were only on-line improvements. Then the hotels, service stations and telephones may have been sufficient, but we have moved on from that. In general our policy is right. The location of such facilities should be determined by market forces so long as they are subject to normal planning procedures and the need to maintain highway safety and the flow of traffic. The acceleration of the road programme in recent years may have left the provision of facilities behind. As we move towards getting facilities on our motorway network, we hope that the private sector and planning authorities will consider what is most appropriate and provide the conveniences that people expect on our trunk roads.

The A420 will provide an important connection to those routes. Indeed, it already does as the exceptional growth of traffic has demonstrated. My hon. Friend quoted figures to show that in recent years traffic has been growing about 50 per cent. faster than in average years.

In case those listening to the debate or those who read it later think that road spending is being concentrated on the south-east, let me say that having an integral road network is advantageous to people all over the country. If people from the south-west, for example, are trying to take goods to the east coast, they will find roads such as the A420 an advantage. Even the completion of the M25 has advantages in terms of employment prospects in Lancashire, the north-east and the north-west because it provides access to the Channel ports. It does not matter

where the improvements take place so long as they help commerce to have reliable deliveries. I am in no sense arguing for traffic to travel faster in terms of miles per hour, but I am arguing for reliable deliveries to make commercial connections which help all areas.

In view of the importance of the A420 as part of our normal ongoing process of reviewing the needs of the trunk road network, we have recently agreed to a wide ranging study to cover the A420 between the county boundary and Botley interchange. It will be undertaken by our agents, the Oxfordshire county council, and will involve the collection of data on accidents, delays, layout standards, traffic volumes and movements. When complete, the study will enable us to decide whether any further improvements are needed on this road, in addition to the bypasses I have already mentioned. We shall also be able to get a good idea of what form those improvements should take.

My hon. Friend will forgive me if I reiterate that safety on the roads depends in part on traffic engineering—road layout, having bypasses, being able partially to exclude traffic, and through roads for through traffic—but in 95 per cent. of accidents a human factor is involved. It may be a misperception or misreading of the road, such as the ghost island problem, to which my hon. Friend referred. But the greatest contributor is drink.

One fatal accident in four involves drink. Each year we could fill the Royal Albert hall with dead bodies from our roads and one seat in four would be occupied by a victim of mixing drinking and driving. The campaign against drink-driving is not just before Christmas. It continues through every month of the year. About 120 people a month die on our roads through the mixture of drinking and driving.

I assure my hon. Friend that in terms of road casualty reduction and trying to increase our economic opportunities, the Department of Transport will continue to do what it can to bring relief, not only in my hon. Friend's constituency, but throughout the country, so that without covering the countryside with concrete or tarmacadam we shall provide the transport mobility that people should be able to expect.

Homelessness (Wandsworth)

12.59 pm

Mr. Alfred Dubs (Battersea): Homelessness is becoming an increasing problem in Tory Britain. At present, there are estimated to be 100,000 homeless families. In London, the problem is more acute. I am especially worried about those homeless people and homeless familites in bed and breakfast accommodation. The estimates are somewhat uncertain, but the generally accepted figure for March of this year was 4,382 people in bed and breakfast accommodation in London. That figure is expected to rise to about 6,000 by March 1987. We all know that those figures are the tip of the iceberg of the homelessness problem in Britain.

In July of this year, a letter was written to *The Guardian* on behalf of 17 directors of housing in London boroughs, which said that they wished to express

"our concern at the rising tide of homelessness sweeping across the city."

The letter continued:

"Some councils are having to use accommodation which is neither safe nor reasonable . . . The amount of public money being wasted on bed-and-breakfast is scandalous . . . The Government is well aware of the action necessary. Little is being done, and we are no longer prepared to stand by and say nothing."

In Wandsworth, 185 families are in bed and breakfast accommodation. There are perhaps a further 70 in the next stage of homeless families accommodation; a few may also be in property provided by a housing association; and some are in short-life property. We all know that whether families are accepted into this accommodation depends on whether the local authority says that they are intentionally or unintentionally homeless. Wandsworth council especially has told many families and individuals threatened with homelessness, or who are homeless, that it will do little for them because it says that the families or individuals are intentionally homeless. People cannot fight against that. That is the position if the council defines it as such.

The council sent a letter to me a few weeks ago about a woman with a child who was in bed and breakfast accommodation. The letter said that the woman, who does not want her name mentioned,

"has been in our temporary bed and breakfast accommodation since 5th February 1986. She was due to move to Nightingale Square—"

which is where the second-stage homeless families move—

"on 10th September 1986 but unfortunately it was discovered that she had not in fact been using the bed and breakfast accommodation for a period of several weekends which raised the question of whether in fact she was homeless."

I discussed this matter with the woman and discovered that she had not been in the bed and breakfast accommodation all the time because the cooking facilities were inadequate for herself and for her baby. So, during the day, she went to a friend's house and used the cooking facilities there. It seems that, for that reason, the council questioned whether the women was homeless. The council went on to say in the letter that the woman

"was informed that, were she to stay consistently at the hotel for another four weeks, she would be eligible to move into Nightingale Square."

It is almost as though the local authority treats bed and breakfast accommodation as a punishment, and people must serve their time there before they can move to better and more appropriate accommodation. We know that the cost of this accommodation is prohibitively high. It has

[Mr. Alfred Dubs]

been estimated that it costs £14,500 to accommodate a family of four in bed and breakfast accommodation. That is roughly double the cost of keeping the same family in local authority accommodation, if such accommodation was available.

Why is there so much homelessness and why is it increasing? There are two reasons. First, there is a sheer lack of adequate property — houses or flats — to rent. The second reason is the poverty of many homeless people, especially in our inner cities. As for the supply of accommodation to rent, Wandsworth council has acted exactly as the Government wished. In Wandsworth, we see the full effects of Conservative housing policies as wished by central Government and by the Prime Minister's favourite local authority. Since 1979, the Government have said that housing must bear the brunt of public expenditure cuts. In Wandsworth, no new council housing has been started since the Conservatives took control of the council in 1978. I do not complain about the right of council tenants to buy their homes, but Wandsworth council has a policy of designating flats and houses in desirable areas and saying that when they become empty they should be sold. They are not made available to people on the waiting list, the homeless or people in desperate need of accommodation.

Moreover, the council has sold whole blocks and council estates to speculators. Some had to be cleared because of asbestos and were then sold to speculators which, in turn, sell them at prices ranging up to £120,000 for a two-bedroomed flat. Wandsworth council has sold about 1,000 properties to people not on the waiting list and not even living in Wandsworth. That excludes the property sold to speculators, which has often been sold in turn to people from outside Wandsworth.

The result is that the housing pressures are becoming intolerable. Families which have a good case for transfer but which are not necessarily homeless are not being offered alternative accommodation, because there is none, and homeless people are even further down the queue for the chance of getting a decent home.

It might be appropriate to show what the council's priorities are. A family — I have permission to use the name — called Mr. and Mrs. Meredith, who have two children, live in my constituency. Their 18-month-old son is extremely handicapped with cerebral palsy. They desperately need larger accommodation, and they are 65th on the list for transfer. Yet within a few hundred yards of where they live is an empty council property that would be perfectly suitable for them. It has been empty since June this year and it has not even been valued for sale. It is awaiting a purchaser. Is that not disgraceful?

I quote the example of a family of seven — two adults with five children — who live in a two-bedroomed flat. The flat is very damp — I have visited it — and they are desperately overcrowded. But they will be offered nothing in the foreseeable future because they are too far down the list. What chance do homeless people have?

Occasionally, there are glimmers of hope. On 10 December, in the other place, Lord Skelmersdale said:

"But for those who cannot afford to buy their homes the range of choice in the rented sector, public and private, is much more restricted. It is this that needs our concentration now."

—*[Official Report, House of Lords*, 10 December 1986; Vol. 482, c.1180.]

It may need the Government's concentration, but there is precious little sign that the Government are doing anything about it.

In Wandsworth, about 7,700 people are on the waiting list and about 5,700 families are on the transfer list. They and the families who live in bed and breakfast accommodation are too poor to buy the properties that Wandsworth has for sale. On the Government's own figures, quoted earlier this year, mortgage default is increasingly a reason for people becoming homeless. I am not saying that that is the main reason for people becoming homeless in Wandsworth, but it must be an element when 10 per cent. of people become homeless as a result of court orders for mortgage default. Perhaps such people are not all the families who become homeless in Wandsworth. Their poverty may be such that they have never had the chance to buy in the first place.

We should consider for a moment what it is like being in bed and breakfast accommodation, because that is what we are sentencing so many of our people to live in for such a long time. I wish that the Minister, tonight or on any Friday evening I have one, would come to an advice session and listen to the cries of desperation and to people who burst into tears because they are so distressed about their inadequate housing or homelessness, and their unwillingness to have another night with their children in bed and breakfast accommodation. There is a real sense of bitterness, and I wish that the Minister would listen directly to what they have to say.

It is understandable that people should feel so desperate. Often, they are moved into bed and breakfast accommodation outside the borough and are isolated from their families who might give them support. If children are of school age, they have to be moved to another school. We all know how poor are the amenities in these bed and breakfast places. There may be poor or no facilities for washing clothes, which for a mother with a baby can be difficult, and there may be inadequate or no cooking facilities. We know from figures that two thirds of homeless families tend to be single parent families. Only recently, the Minister said:

"We recognise, however, that there is a need to get homeless families out of bed-and-breakfast accommodation as quickly as possible, not only because we are concerned at the size of the bill to the public purse . . . but because such accommodation is generally unsuitable for families with children."—*[Official Report*, 5 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. 1256.]

That is the understatement of the year.

I was approached by a woman with a child who found conditions so intolerable that she managed to find friends who would temporarily put her up until the council would move her to the next stage of bed-and-breakfast accommodation. "Not so," said the council when it found out. "You are not in the bed-and-breakfast place, so you are not eligible to move on to the next stage. Take your chance on the transfer list." She would never have got far on that. This is another example of the council treating bed-and-breakfast accommodation as punishment, for which people have to serve time.

I have another of these horror stories of the deprivation that people feel. I can read a letter, although I am not permitted to mention the individual's name. The letter comes from a woman in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, who says:

"I am now registered as disabled and I receive Invalidity Benefit amounting to £81·15 per week, I pay £50 for my room

and £5 to a Catalogue firm. I spend the remaining money on food which is limited to most cheap cafes, as cooking facilities are available if you have utensils which I have not. If it was not for close friends and common sense I would not be able to eat 1 or 2 decent meals a week, but I am sure a lot of people in this type of accommodation do not eat regular cooked meals. Most people . . . live off the breakfast we receive, which is a small bowl of corn flakes, two slices of toast and a cup of tea or coffee and they make do for the rest of the day. The system is an absolute disgrace for people who got into a situation which is often no fault of their own choosing.

We are not all layabouts who just like living off the state."

That woman had been the victim of a serious criminal attack some time before. The manager of the hotel wrote a letter in which he said that because of her medical condition, it was impossible to look after her adequately. She has severe asthma. In another letter to me she says:

"I have to climb 60 stairs to my room at present and this is extremely difficult due to my Asthma."

She requires constant medical attention during the night for her asthma. Before she moved into the accommodation,

"one of my family takes it in turns to stay overnight in case I need a Nebulizer. I have my own machine by my bed but I need help to operate it. This is impossible while I am in B & B as they cannot stay overnight."

There are countless examples of people in the same desperate situation. I do not think that the cost argument is the main argument, but whether one argues about the cost or, more importantly, about the human lives involved, that is no way to treat our fellow citizens. I appreciate that Wandsworth council, aided and abetted by the Minister and his Government friends, want the council to have a policy that says that as long as the council looks after most of the people in the borough, who can buy their houses on the open market, it need not worry about those who cannot afford to buy, or who become homeless.

I like to think that Britain may once again become a decent and civilised society. Consequently, I believe that we have a great responsibility for the, say, 20 per cent. of our fellow citizens who are badly housed and for that smaller but important minority who are homeless. We have no right to turn our backs on them, because they face a gloomy and desperate Christmas and a bitter new year.

1.15 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Richard Tracey): The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs) has chosen to exemplify the problem of homelessness by reference to his borough of Wandsworth. I am glad that he did so, because it gives me a fine opportunity to demonstrate how a sensible housing strategy, coupled with effective housing management, can make a significant contribution to coping in a real way with the problem of homelessness.

The facts of the case speak for themselves. First, the number of homelessness households in Wandsworth, standing at 982, is well below the average for Inner London boroughs at 1,586 and is around the average for London boroughs as a whole, standing at 965. During the financial year 1985-86 the Inner London boroughs accepted an average of 1,586 households as homeless. Acceptance in Wandsworth was 40 per cent. below that level.

Secondly, if we look at the most recently available figures for the numbers of homeless households placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by the London boroughs, we find that on average the figures for the end of September 1986 were 20 per cent. higher than those for the end of June 1986. However, in Wandsworth there was actually a 16 per cent. reduction in the number of households placed in bed and breakfast by that borough. In Ealing, where the Leader of the Opposition chooses to make his home, the numbers placed in bed and breakfast by that borough increased, by contrast, almost threefold, from 117 to 325.

Some may try to argue that the level of homelessness in Wandsworth is the reverse side of the coin of that council's extremely successful sales policy. Indeed, the hon. Gentleman almost made that point. But hon. Members must be aware that since 1978 Wandsworth has pursued a vigorous policy of council house sales, involving both right to buy, voluntary sales and sales to other than sitting tenants. Over 8,500 dwellings have been sold, 4,000 of them to sitting tenants. Again, the facts speak otherwise. The level of homelessness is significantly higher in those London boroughs whose only sales policy is a rather grudging recognition of the right to buy.

To those who say that Wandsworth's sales policy is in flagrant disregard of the existence of homelessness in the borough, I point out that, in the financial year 1985-86, 47 per cent. of all Wandsworth's new lettings went to homeless families compared, interestingly enough, with only 36 per cent. in Tower Hamlets, 38 per cent. in Southwark and 41 per cent. in Hackney.

Wandsworth's policy is to get those homeless households that are in bed and breakfast hotel accommodation into permanent homes as quickly as possible. Wandsworth is able to do that by securing the rapid re-letting of its housing stock. The number of dwellings awaiting reletting in Wandsworth accounts for less than 1 per cent. of the borough's total stock of 38,000 dwellings, but in Hackney it accounts for 7 per cent. and in Tower Hamlets for 8 per cent. The result is that Wandsworth puts far fewer households into bed and breakfast accommodation than either Hackney or Tower Hamlets and, indeed, far fewer than many other boroughs, including Brent, Camden, Haringey, Newham and the Leader of the Opposition's Ealing.

The efficiency of Wandsworth's housing reletting programme is reflected in the relatively small size of the waiting list for council accommodation. Figures submitted to the Department by local authorities show that, at 1 April 1986, Wandsworth had the smallest housing waiting list of any inner London borough. This would seem to suggest that Wandsworth has been rather more successful in providing housing than have some other local authorities whose approach to the management of their housing stock is less than efficient and who have failed to appreciate that responding to housing needs means more than just providing for those who need to rent but also facilitating home ownership. It is indicative of the position that in the borough of Wandsworth there are nearly three times as many people on the special waiting list for those wishing to buy council dwellings—15,000 to 20,000—a list which gives priority to existing council tenants, as there are on the waiting list for those wishing to rent, of whom there are 6,981.

But Wandsworth's sales are not just the other dimension of a more comprehensive approach to meeting housing needs in the locality. They are also about releasing additional resources to supplement the borough's HIP allocation to assist major capital repairs and improvements to the existing stock and to provide capital for lending to housing associations. In 1985-86, for example,

[Mr. Richard Tracey]

Wandsworth spent £45 million on its own housing stock, using some £28 million of receipts on top of a basic HIP allocation of £17 million. No other inner London borough has generated such a high ratio of capital receipts to basic allocation. The availability of these additional resources has helped to reduce the need to have dwellings standing empty for long periods awaiting repairs. In some other London boroughs properties have been lying empty awaiting repairs for two years or more. Altogether, there is in London a total of nearly 7,000 council-owned dwellings awaiting repair or improvement.

At the same time, the council, although it does not itself build new dwellings, is an active supporter of housing associations whose new building and renovation programmes form a major plank of its housing strategy. In the financial year 1985-86, Wandsworth spent over £5 million through its lending programme in support of housing association schemes, many of which will accommodate households that might otherwise have been homeless.

The lessons to be learnt from the Wandsworth case are that, by the effective management of housing resources, a local authority can be successful in containing the problem of homelessness. Although the primary responsibility for dealing with the problem of homelessness rests with the local authorities, I should make it clear that the Government do not propose to let local authorities face this problem alone. As I have said on previous occasions —in fact, earlier this morning—the Government fully recognise the problem of homelessness and are taking action on a number of fronts to deal with it.

Let me illustrate this action by briefly listing some of the initiatives that the Government have put in train. First, there has been a £390 million increase in the total resources available for local authorities' capital spending on housing for 1987-88. Secondly, there has been approval in principle of an additional £14 million of housing capital resources for London boroughs in the current financial year through the Department's urban housing renewal unit, now rechristened Estate Action. Of this sum, £8 million has already been allocated to schemes now under way. Essentially, these resources are to support the necessary capital investment to under-pin measures to improve the standards and effectiveness of management. Wandsworth has received £1·6 million from Estate Action in the current financial year as a contribution to a major scheme of works at the 900-unit Doddington estate—an area well known by the hon. Member for Battersea — an investment which will help homeless families by releasing more accommodation to let. The Government are increasing the amount of funding available to Estate Action from £50 million in the current financial year to £75 million in 1987-88.

We are making additional resources available from this year's Estate Action budget to help local authorities with homelessness problems bring back into use in the current financial year empty dwellings on their estates. My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing has already given approval in principle to the funding of three schemes in Newham, Greenwich and Islington at a total estimated cost of nearly £700,000. Wandsworth is among the London boroughs that have been invited to submit a bid for these resources and an initial bid has been received and is now under consideration by my Department.

We are allocating an additional £20 million to the Housing Corporation next year to generate an additional £45 million to £50 million from private sources for priority works aimed at getting homeless families out of bed and breakfast hotels and at providing accommodation for young people moving to cities to take up jobs in areas where there is a shortage of rented housing. As one of the Housing Corporation's priority areas for funding, Wandsworth stands to benefit from a significant share of these resources which we expect to make a major contribution to getting homeless households out of bed and breakfast accommodation. We have increased to £500,000 the amount of grant aid to the voluntary bodies concerned with homelessness to £500,000. Our grant aiding of the Greater London mobility scheme is designed to enable people to be housed as and where accommodation is available.

We have invited local authorities to put forward for consideration on their merits requests to acquire buildings suitable for use as temporary hostel accommodation for homeless families. Although, to date, only a few local authorities have come forward with proposals, consent has already been given to acquisitions which at any one time will afford temporary accommodation to at least 100 homeless people, and we now await further applications.

The desired effect of all these measures is to bring about a significant reduction in the number of homeless households placed in bed and breakfast hotels by local authorities, particularly in London. Such accommodation is generally quite unsuitable for families with children, yet, despite the fact that the Department's code of guidance to local authorities on this matter makes it crystal clear that bed and breakfast accommodation is to be used only in the last resort, London boroughs spent some £26 million on it in 1985-86.

The Government, in discussion with the local authorities, will go on searching for and exploring new ways of approaching the problem of homelessness. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction will be meeting representatives of the local authority associations early in January to discuss a number of matters relating to the problem of homelessness and to follow up some of the issues that emerged at a meeting between Ministers and local authority representatives earlier this year.

The Government are also looking closely at the measures that the local authorities are implementing, including incentive schemes to encourage council tenants to buy in the private sector, thus releasing their former council accommodation for those who most need to rent, and at the short-term leasing of private sector properties.

I should like to conclude by emphasising that there is no single or, indeed, simple solution to the problem of homelessness. Not all the solutions are in the Government's hands—far from it. We shall continue our dialogue with the local authorities with a view to pressing forward on this issue. There is a great deal of scope for local enterprise and initiative and a will to act, such as that demonstrated by the local authorities that are giving incentives to council tenants to buy in the private sector and to the type of enterprise so well demonstrated by the borough of Wandsworth.

Hotel Classification and Registration

1.29 pm

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): It seems appropriate at this festive time that the House should debate a key element of the tourism industry — the difficult and sometimes thorny subject of hotel classification and registration.

I recognise the energy that the Government have devoted to maximising employment and other opportunities in tourism since responsibility for it has moved to the Department of Employment, and the determination of my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to remove obstacles to its efficient management.

I declare an interest. In addition to being the elected secretary of the all-party parliamentary tourism committee and vice-chairman of the Conservative parliamentary tourism committee, I am consultant to Consort Hotels, which is Britain's largest consortium of independent hotels. Both locally and nationally, hoteliers contribute substantially to the economy. Indeed, it is Britain's fastest growth industry. It is expanding at a rate of over 50,000 new jobs each year. However, it is primarily the consumer aspect of the hotel industry that I wish to discuss today.

It may be helpful to consider the origin of that building in which are provided lodgings, meals and other services for the travelling public. The derivation from the French hotel or the old French hostel or ostel takes us to the Latin hospitâle—a clear reference to an apartment for guests. The hotel has, and continues to take, many forms. It includes properties for travellers who expect superior amenities. That reminds me of Smollett's remarks in 1765:

"The expense of living at an hotel is enormous."

The term encompasses simple hotels or boarding houses that supply breakfast known as hotel garni. In a letter in 1858 George Eliot considered this form of hotel to be rather spartan:

"He took us to two Hotels Garni—places where you get lodgings and attendance and coffee and nothing else"

In 1774 Horace Walpole expressed fear of such a location:

"I now live in dread of my biennial gout, and should die of it in an hotel garni"

Yet another form is the hotel academia — effectively a "hostel" in a university which is regarded today as part of the important world of the university conference market.

We have a tremendous range of accommodation and related services. The hostelries of the Roman era, sited principally along their roads, took on a commercial revival in the Middle Ages with the development of inns and hostels. Many were operated by religious foundations. Even in 13th century China, Marco Polo found in existence an extensive system of relay houses that provided accommodation for travellers. With the industrial revolution, innkeeping set a standard for the world in cleanliness, comfort and good food. The American innkeepers set a standard for size.

With Thomas Cook's development of travel for pleasure, the expanding hotel trade of the 20th century can look back on a history that has led to a tourist industry that has outgrown national boundaries and become truly international.

Today's consumer has a right to expect accurate and objective information. Such information about the hotel world is a minefield. There is a plethora of choice. The Automobile Association and the Royal Automobile Club have undertaken hotel classification for many years and their one to five star rating system is well understood. To a lesser extent, their system of "approving" accommodation other than of hotel status is also understood. However, it is a voluntary rather than a comprehensive scheme, the hotelier can opt to be considered or he may decide not to be included in the publications of the motoring associations. The criteria adopted by the AA and the RAC also differ.

The consumer can consult Michelin, or the Consumers Association's "Good Hotel Guide", the "Ashley Courtenay Recommended" or Egon Ronay. There is no shortage of published material—it is almost bewildering. Then, dependent upon the location, the traveller may encounter regional symbols—the hearts of the Heart of England board and the sea-horses of the Isle of Wight. Just imagine the size of the information board that my hon. Friend may encounter during his Christmas break — assuming permission is granted to the hotelier who wishes to inform the public of his hotel since we still do not have deemed consent — with RAC stars, AA stars, rosettes, crossed forks. The symbolism could be endless.

Mandatory hotel registration and classification is surely the answer. The Government have skirted around the issue for far too long. Yet the United Kingdom already has compulsory registration. Northern Ireland has managed such a system since 1948 and has no procedural problems. As each new hotel is built the relevant inspector is invited in and the information so published gives confidence to the traveller, respect to the Ulster hotel trade and a firm foundation for marketing the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

In Britain there is a shabby mess. Eugene O'Neill, in "The Iceman Cometh", wrote:

"You know how it is, travelling around. The damned hotel rooms."

I wonder how much better informed the visitor will be by the development of yet another symbol — the crown. That was devised by the Scottish Tourist Board and subsequently taken up by the national boards of England and Wales.

The new system consists basically of judging hotels on a one-to-five-crown basis. That will be seen by the public when it is revealed next month as a Government scheme. In essence it is, since the taxpayer is by far the major source of funding for the boards. It is incredible that a new scheme is to be introduced which has no market research foundation, lacks proper consultation with consumer and trade bodies, is inconsistent in its criteria, is late for the 1987 season and will have damaging consequences on our overseas visitor market.

The public will erroneously equate crowns with stars. There is no such equality. The Green Park hotel in Harrogate, with 44 bedrooms, has two stars but four-crown status. The Belvedere hotel in Bournemouth is AA two-star but has four crowns. The Terraces in Stirling has 14 rooms and two stars, but four crowns. The Fern Bank hotel, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, has two stars but four crowns.

Furthermore, some unstarred hotels now have several crowns. Consider the Mapleton hotel in Torquay. It is AA listed but has three crowns. The Kingswood hotel in Sidmouth, again AA listed, has four crowns!

Then there are the five crown properties. The Park Way hotel in Kirkcaldy has 40 rooms and three stars, yet it has that elevated status. The Crown hotel in Carlisle has 52

[Mr Conal Gregory]

rooms and three stars, and the New Continental in Plymouth, to go to a different part of the country, has 76 rooms and three stars.

The overseas traveller will expect the facilities of a hotel with five crowns, such as the Inn on the Park, to be mirrored elsewhere. Unless corrected, this is a time-bomb. After problems beyond our control earlier this year when international terrorism knocked the United States visitor market, this ill-conceived scheme is of our own making.

Not surprisingly, many large hotel groups are refusing to put their hotels forward for crown classification. Crest, Rank and Trust House Forte have fundamental objections and Thistle has such strong reservations that it may well withdraw. Therefore, the giants of the hotel trade do not back the scheme.

Since qualitative assessment is so important in selecting a venue, Scotland intends to introduce a three-tier grading to add to its range of crowns—approved, commended and highly commended. The English Tourist Board has said that it will not go down that path — another inconsistency—although it no doubt keeps that option open for the future. Instead, aware that far too many hotels have been awarded five-crown status—over 200 in England alone compared with only 21 five-star hotels in the whole of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland—it intends to add gold topping. Like the cream on milk, the board will award a gold crown, no bronze or silver awards — but perhaps those symbols, too, will come later — but five gold crowns which means six different variations. One can recall Trollope's comment:

"It is because we put up with bad things that hotel-keepers continue to give them to us."

It is essential that the small operators have just as fair a chance as the large establishments as they are the backbone of the industry. The tourist boards must develop a national scheme where the criteria are uniform throughout the United Kingdom, recognise improvements and are understood by the public. Grading is wanted by the industry and will be of immense benefit when it is introduced as it will give the customer a greater degree of confidence and help to improve standards generally. In spite of that, there is grading only in Scotland with a full-time inspectorate.

Already the regional boards have identified problems — and that is before the scheme is launched. Many consider that a tier needs to be introduced between listed and one crown and that standards at four and five crown level should move towards the four and five star ratings of the motoring organisations. The provision of meals and the introduction of en-suite facilities for two crown upwards will bring the crown classification much more into line with the star system.

I hope that the Department of Employment will ensure better co-ordination between the various Departments of State that have a direct interest in tourism. We were led to believe that that was taking place but at the very first test, registration and classification, it has failed. The answer is to introduce a joint industry-tourist board working committee that will review the situation and report directly to the Government with recommendations on how to implement a national system as originally planned. That would work to unite a system rather than continue the political football game between the tourist boards.

The scheme is now published in all tourist board literature but a delay in the public launch could be beneficial so that problems in the different schemes could be resolved. After such a review it can be announced to the public with a good public relations campaign. It is important that the English Tourist Board, which has by far the vast bulk of the United Kingdom bed stock, is not forced to accept the requirements of the other two national boards. There is not even a commonality of approach. Even the rates charged to the hoteliers differ between the national boards.

The aim should be to inform the public accurately and to effect a general raising of accommodation standards. If that is to be achieved, the unified voice of the industry needs to be harnessed and I hope that the Government's response will be a stimulating one in recognising the damage that can be done, halting it in time and turning their involvement to positive advantage through national criteria which truly help the visitor and assist the development of this great industry.

1.42 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier): My hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory) has been ingenious in raising this matter on the Floor of the House on a number of occasions. The issue of classification of hotel and other accommodation is one that has commanded wide attention both inside and outside the industry over the past few years. Therefore, as the Minister with responsibility for tourism in England, I am pleased to have the opportunity of describing the progress that has been made.

Tourism, as my hon. Friend suggested, is one of the most important sectors of the economy in the United Kingdom and is a major source of employment. My hon. Friend and I believe that the potential to increase employment within the sector will gather momentum and we have no doubt that that potential is within the tourist industry.

There are about 1·2 million people currently employed in the industry and the prospects for growth are enormous. The providers of hotel and other forms of accommodation have an essential role to play in ensuring the success of tourism—after all, more people will come here if they have somewhere suitable to stay. There are in England nearly 17,000 hotels and motels and nearly 13,000 bed and breakfast and farmhouse establishments. In addition, England and Wales together have over 4,000 licensed private hotels and guest houses. In Britain the industry employs some 250,000 people and indications are that that number is set to increase significantly, as I have already suggested. It is essential that we provide a product that matches in quantity and in quality what the customer wants and expects. To that end, the tourist boards are laying great store on the need to improve and upgrade the standards of accommodation offered to meet the requirements of today's market.

An essential prerequisite of a successful sale is that the customer shall know in advance what he or she is buying. Hence the Government very much welcome and fully support the initiative by the tourist boards to introduce a standardised classification system throughout the country. A further recent development has been the proposal by the European Commission for standardised information on hotels to be used in official hotel guides throughout the European Community. That measure has been extensively

discussed by HOTREC, the body representing the hotel industry across the whole of Europe and on which the British Hotels, Restaurants and Caterers Association is represented. The Commission has proposed a series of self-explanatory symbols, which show the facilities that are available at hotels and which it is hoped can be understood by all. In agreeing those symbols HOTREC has also consulted representatives of the United States and Scandinavian industries. We hope to be able to put that measure to the Industry Council on 22 December, next week, for ratification that will lead to its introduction throughout the Community. That of course is not a classification system, but one that we hope will be a valuable aid to the promotion of tourism within the Community. My hon. Friend will recall, when we had the opportunity to debate that and similar matters only a few weeks ago on the Floor of the House, there was some misunderstanding—not in the mind of my hon. Friend but perhaps in the mind of some of our colleagues—about what the new Community system would do. I hope that we have now cleared up that matter.

As my hon. Friend said, the new crown classification scheme is to be launched by the English Tourist Board to the public in the new year through a media campaign and mail drop to several million households. The objective of the public awareness campaign will be not only to acquaint as many people as possible with the existence of the scheme but to make people familiar with the details of the classification system used. The scheme will apply to hotels and other serviced accommodation. It will be administered in England by the English Tourist Board with the help and support of the non-statutory regional tourist boards. In Scotland and Wales the scheme is being administered by the respective national tourist boards. Each national tourist board has adopted the same criteria for hotel classification, although the scheme in Scotland includes a qualitative grading of establishments, as my hon. Friend said. Although the charging mechanisms may vary among the national tourist boards, in each case the charges are designed only to enable the boards to break even on the costs of running the classification scheme.

The scheme allows each hotel to be placed into one of six categories, ranging from that of "listed" for establishments providing a more basic style accommodation, to five crowns for establishments catering for the top of the market. Under the scheme, managements are required to undertake to follow a specified code of conduct that lays down minimum standards of cleanliness, courtesy and information available to visitors. Establishments are classified according to the range and quality of facilities offered. The previous sytem operated by the English Tourist Board had not shown itself as fulfilling the needs of either the industry or the customer. It was complicated and not easily understood by the user, and it had become apparent that there was a need for something better.

I am sorry to have to say to my hon. Friend that the Government wish to make clear their view that we want a voluntary system of hotel classification. We have always believed, as my hon. Friend knows well, that compulsion and Government regulation would be wrong. My hon. Friend kindly said in his opening remarks that I had tried personally, whenever I could in the Department of Employment, to deregulate to ensure that those who were enterprising, not just in tourism but in small firms, had the air to breathe and were able to expand and develop. That is the Government's main policy.

Mr. Gregory: I am exceptionally grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way and I will interrupt only for a moment. In view of his enthusiasm for the open market in that respect, do the Government intend to withdraw, after so many years, the Northern Ireland scheme that has worked so successfully since 1948?

Mr. Trippier: My difficulty, as my hon. Friend will know, is that I am not responsible for Northern Ireland. I appreciate that that is the reply that my hon. Friend might have expected. I made it clear at the outset—as my hon. Friend will recall—that I am the Minister responsible for tourism in England. The less said about that, the better.

I was grateful to my hon. Friend for his earlier remarks about deregulation responsibility within the Department of Employment. That sits uneasily with the stance that my hon. Friend has adopted, which would impose compulsion and increase regulation. Regulation would be more costly to the industry and hence to the consumer. It would certainly be more rigid and bureaucratic and would require significant resources for its operation and administration. It would also be inflexible and unresponsive to changing needs and would have no advantage over a voluntary scheme in encouraging the upgrading of standards.

In an attempt to bring my hon. Friend and myself together on this point, he would be the first to admit that the Government try desperately hard to listen to the voice of industry. That is the major plank of my platform in addressing the debate today. I want to try to convince my hon. Friend that we have listened to the tourism industry. We did not want to introduce a proposal which the industry did not want.

The view that I have expressed is shared by the majority in the tourism industry in this country. I do not say this in an unkind manner because I know of the great enthusiasm that my hon. Friend has for the tourism industry and his particular interest and involvement not least in his constituency, yet he would be the first to admit and acknowledge that in the debate on the European regulations on 26 November there was no support expressed on the Conservative Benches for a compulsory system—that is, for his proposals.

The current crown classification scheme is the result of lengthy and detailed consultations between the national tourist boards and trade, local authority and consumer interests. Organisations representing the industry as well as individual hotel operators were given the opportunity to make their views known either directly to the English Tourist Board, or at meetings organised by the regional tourist boards. I am confident that adequate opportunity was given to all concerned to contribute to the debate, but of course it was up to the industry to take full advantage of the opportunity offered. Account was also taken of the lessons learnt in operating the old scheme and of suggestions received from members of the public as to how the system could be improved. The scheme is designed to ensure that the customer knows what he or she will be getting when booking accommodation and to help in deciding whether what is being offered represents value for money. It will also provide a yardstick to hoteliers who

[Mr. Trippier]

wish to improve the facilities offered and an incentive to upgrade the quality of the accommodation stock to meet rising customer expectations. In addition, membership of the scheme will give hotel operators a marketing advantage over their competitors who have not opted for classification. The classification categories are designed to help both British and overseas visitors to select with confidence establishments that meet their needs. I believe that such a system is necessary if this country is to compete successfully in the international tourism market.

Since the announcement of the scheme in October 1985, over 12,000 establishments in England, Scotland and Wales have applied for registration under the scheme. That compares with an estimated 10,000 establishments participating in one or both schemes operated by the motoring organisations. I am aware that initially some parts of the industry expressed concern about aspects of the scheme, but I believe that the degree of positive interest so far shown in the scheme indicates that it is favourably regarded by a broad cross-section of the industry. A breakdown of establishments that have so far registered shows that the scheme is receiving support from all types of hotel. The number of establishments so far registered with the scheme in England falls only just short of the target numbers for the launch date.

As I have already mentioned, the three national tourist boards employ exactly the same criteria in classifying hotels, although the Scottish Tourist Board goes further and also grades establishments according to an assessment of the quality of facilities offered. I am aware that some siren voices south of the border would also welcome qualitative grading. I can see that there may be a case for suggesting that it would be advantageous if exactly the same scheme operated throughout Great Britain, but certain sectors of the industry have expressed strong reservations about grading and these have led to the English Tourist Board's decision to restrict the scheme only to classification of facilities for the present. However, the introduction of grading remains under active consideration — and so it should. The English Tourist Board is of the view that if there are sufficient indications of support from within the industry it will consider introducing qualitative assessment. I understand that the Wales Tourist Board is soon to begin an exercise to seek the views of the industry in Wales on the principle of quality grading.

Other voices have suggested that the public will be confused by the existence of the new crown classification scheme alongside other schemes such as those run by the motoring organisations. The AA and RAC have set up schemes designed to meet the needs of their members, which may not necessarily be the same as the requirements of the population generally. Additionally, they do not cover the full range of the types of hotel and other accommodation offered. The Government therefore believe that there is a need for a scheme to be set up which has national applicability and which provides a fully objective assessment of the facilities offered. The public awareness campaign to which I have referred should make everyone familiar with the crown system and avoid any confusion which might otherwise arise.

As I have said, it is now just over two years since the English Tourist Board originally began consultations on the form of classification. It has been an illuminating experience for the board and, I suspect, for many within the industry. Progress has not always been easy, but I believe that we now have the basis of a system which meets the needs of both the industry and its customers. At the request of the Government, the English Tourist Board is reviewing the classification scheme to see what lessons there are to be learnt in the light of the experience gained so far. I assure my hon. Friend that full account will be taken of all comments and criticisms in any future amendments made to the scheme and the English Tourist Board will give ample notice of any significant changes proposed to the classification criteria to give interested parties time to make their views known. The view has been expressed by some that the board's willingness to hold a review at this stage suggests a lack of confidence in the scheme, but needs change and we learn by experience. Indeed, since the inception of the scheme, a review was planned during its first year of operation, along with a continuous assessment of performance. In this context, a consumer research project will be carried out during 1987 to establish the public's reaction to and perception of the scheme. Any modifications will have the aim of improving standards and enhancing consumer confidence.

An example of the boards' responsiveness to comment from the industry is the recent decision by the English Tourist Board to introduce an additional superior or five gold crown classification category. This was agreed in response to reservations expressed by the industry that too many hotels were meriting inclusion in the top five crown category — the very point that my hon. Friend made. The five gold crowns will be awarded to those few hotels which offer the highest levels of service and facilities. It is expected that not more than 35 hotels in England will attain that classification, compared with more than 200 which have to date been awarded five crowns.

The country has long needed a national classification system which applies to all serviced accommodation, one which is not aimed at a particular section of the market but satisfies the needs of the whole industry and of all potential customers. The true test of the scheme will only come with experience of its operation and this is not to begin until the new year. We must await the verdict of the user, but I am confident that the scheme will be welcomed by all concerned.

Herstmonceux Castle

2 pm

Mr. Charles Wardle (Bexhill and Battle): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in this Adjournment debate which comes at the 11th hour of parliamentary business for 1986. During the year I have raised the subject of Herstmonceux castle on several occasions, each time in the context of the proposal to move the Royal Greenwich Observatory away from it in 1990. I have done so in questions to my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Education and Science and in a speech on tourism on 9 July. However, the opportunity has not previously arisen to express in any detail for the parliamentary record the extent of my anxiety and that of many others about the plans of the Science and Engineering Research Council to remove the observatory and thereby radically to alter the use to which the castle has been put so successfully for almost 40 years.

Obviously, there have been other ways in which my parlimanetary colleagues and I have been able to voice our anxieties during the past months. Many meetings have taken place since the SERC made its initial announcement in March about moving the observatory. There has also been a considerable volume of correspondence with my hon. Friend the Paliamentary Under-Secretary of State, other Ministers and representatives of SERC. However, despite all that activity, which brought to light widespread and fundamental reservations about SERC's proposals on the part of many eminent astronomers and scientists, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has recently announced that he is not willing to interfere with the judgment that the SERC says is made on scientific grounds.

It should be made absolutely clear that, contrary to some rumours about Rayner initiatives over the castle some years ago, the decision to move the observatory was not Government inspired. In fairness to the Secretary of State, I must say that no Government have ever challenged a decision by the SERC on its scientific merits. Therefore, the observatory is due to move to Cambridge in 1990 and the castle is to be sold.

There is, perhaps, an irony in the choice of year in which the castle is to be vacated. 1990 will also be the 550th anniversary of the year when a licence was granted to crenellate the castle. The anniversary will focus attention on the span of five and a half centuries since the castle's early significance was officially recognosed. Yet under the SERC's proposals its importance is now being overlooked. It is in danger of being seen merely as an asset to be divested by the SERC for a target sum. It is a balance sheet item with a hypothetical valuation to satisfy the Treasury that the cost of rebuilding the observatory in Cambridge can be afforded.

No guidelines have yet been set either by the SERC or, to the best of my knowledge, by my hon. Friend for the most suitable type of buyer to be approached, or for the ways in which the castle should continue to be enjoyed as a public amenity of major historic interest after is has changed hands.

The irony becomes more evident when one bears in mind the fact that the castle has been attracting over 60,000 tourists a year to the observatory and has generated revenue for the SERC. It has created local employment opportunities in tourism — a field of endeavour specifically highlighted by the Department of Employment as having special growth potential for jobs. Yet, when I asked the chairman of the SERC, Professor Mitchell, about the tourist potential of the observatory while it is maintained at the castle, he said that tourism simply was not part of his brief.

The castle is an outstanding example of early 15th century brickwork in elegantly symmetrical design. In the Sussex volume of their well-known series, "The Buildings of England", Pevsner and Nairn describe it as

"a splendid sight"

and

"the most striking proof of the extent which all-round symmetry had reached in England three generations before the Renaissance."

They say that, despite

"its moat, battlements and turrets, it is a mansion rather than a castle."

In the 18th and 19th centuries it fell into decay, but it was brilliantly restored in the early part of this century, first by Colonel Lowther and then by Sir Paul Latham, with the architect, Walter Godfrey. As a result, the Royal Greenwich Observatory, prompted by observational difficulties at its original site in Greenwich, was pleased to move to the castle in 1948.

The Royal Greenwich Observatory occupied the castle, added new buildings on the west side and installed the six telescopes of the equatorial group in a carefully landscaped position on the east side of the castle park. Over a period of nearly 40 years thereafter, the Royal Greenwich Observatory's international status has grown and its contribution at Herstmonceux to advances in ground-based astronomy has been recognised throughout the world.

In recent years, responsibility for the Royal Greenwich Observatory has been transferred from the Admiralty to the SERC. Operational responsibility is now delegated to the council's Astronomy, Space and Radio Board, which supports the range of observational astronomy from radio to gamma-rays, using ground-based facilities and other systems deployed in space. The search for better quality ground-based observations has led to developments of new, larger and technologically more sophisticated telescopes which have been established on mountain top sites at Hawaii and La Palma where they benefit from the greater transparency of the earth's atmosphere.

The Royal Greenwich Observatory has been made responsible for commissioning the three optical telescopes in the Isaac Newton group at La Palma, the third and largest of which, the 4·2 m William Herschel telescope, was completed this year. Its commissioning programme has been scheduled to run until 1990. Inevitably, the shift of emphasis in observational facilities from Herstmonceux to La Palma has led to a changed but nevertheless a continuing vital role at the Royal Greenwich Observatory. Efforts are now concentrated at Herstmonceux on La Palma's behalf on the development of instrumentation, control equipment and related software, new optical and spectroscopic systems, the upkeep of photographic and digital data banks and the important liaison function with universities and astronomical societies in this country and elsewhere.

As a result of that shift in emphasis, the SERC decided to vacate Herstmonceux castle and move to a university site. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the

[Mr. Charles Wardle]

announcement made by the SERC in March that the Royal Greenwich Observatory would definitely be moved in 1990 caused something of an uproar.

By then it was well known that the report prepared by a working party led by Professor Kingman which the SERC had considered just two months earlier had failed to point to any overriding reasons for moving the Royal Greenwich Observatory. Indeed, the Kingman report concluded that staying at Herstmonceux was a definite and positive option. Therefore, when the SERC appeared to rule out that option in March, with no reason given for its exclusion, the protests began in earnest. In the months that followed, a great many astronomers, ranging from university professors to the well-known television presenter of "The Sky at Night", Mr. Patrick Moore, asked why the Royal Greenwich Observatory needed to be moved, even allowing for the changed role in support of the Isaac Newton group of telescopes at La Palma.

The protesters were joined by worried members of the Royal Greenwich Observatory staff, notably by Dr. Penston and Janet Dudley, by the indefatigable Mary Smith, who presented to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science a petition with 17,000 signatures in support of retention of the observatory at Herstmonceux, by my parliamentary colleagues in East Sussex, by the East Sussex county council, the Weald and District council, and by the Herstmonceux parish council.

Because of the constraints on my time in the debate, I shall simply quote the opinions of three leading astronomers. The first is Professor Rees, who is Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge. On 21 April, he said:

"I think much the best solution would be for the RGO to remain at Herstmonceux, on its magnificent site, and to be maintained as an outstanding institution for atronomical research and development, as well as a storehouse for the important archives."

Professor Rees has also made a powerful argument why the Royal Greenwich Observatory would do well to be located in Cambridge if it must be moved. Nevertheless, at the outset, he said that it would be better for the observatory to remain where it is.

Dr. Lynden-Bell, the president of the Royal Astronomical Society, said:

"Any policy to dismember, destroy or merge the Royal Greenwich Observatory as an institution will be strongly resisted by a wide body of astronomers."

He said that the way forward is

"to build up the scientific side of the RGO at the expense of the engineering and facilities side."

On 2 June, Dr. P. A. Charles, the university lecturer in astronomy at the University of Oxford, wrote to me:

"SERC is seen spending an enormous sum of money on a move that nobody has called for and in order to solve problems they can neither specify nor quantify. The long-term effects of this can only be negative."

That is the extent of the evidence that I produce from the astronomical community—from those who thought that the observatory should stay where it is and be developed on site.

The main thrust of the argument against the decision to vacate Herstmonceux came from three directions. The first was criticism about the lack of proper consultation. It must be said that that was because other members of the astronomical community who were interested in what the Kingman report said had no sight of it. The SERC eventually embarked upon fairly extensive consultation with the staff at the Royal Greenwich Observatory, but only after complaints had been made in March and April about the lack of consultation until that time. But there is no question that the lack of communication in the early stages of the decision-making process caused much unhappiness.

The second area of criticism concerns the inadequate scientific justification for the move. Only the most generalised arguments emerge from the minutes of the SERC's March meeting. If the Royal Greenwich Observatory was to be combined with the royal observatory in Edinburgh, the benefits were no more specific than a

"larger operational unit with the increased flexibility, efficiency and opportunity to co-operate"

and the

"interaction of background activities, e.g. information technology, computing, microelectronics."

Moving to a university site such as Cambridge or Manchester, which was also contemplated, would avail

"an infrastructure with strength in astronomy and related disciplines."

At Cambridge, there would be

"good engineering, computing and physics departments,"

while Manchester offered

"one of the best astronomy centres renowned for its radio work at Jodrell Bank,"

with

"strength in optical astronomy"

and

"a good background in other relevant disciplines."

No doubt every point was a worthy reference for the other university sites, but it is hardly the overwhelming scientific evidence that one would have expected the Science and Engineering Research Council to have cited in support of a move that would cost — by way of disposal of Herstmonceux castle—more than £3 million.

The third criticism concerned the absence of proper financial justification for the move. It has been suggested that the disposal of Herstmonceux castle looks like asset-stripping, and several questions have been asked about the detailed ongoing financial calculations which seem to suggest that operational savings will be made when the staff move to Cambridge. It must also be borne in mind that by the time for which the move is scheduled—1990—the Royal Greenwich Observatory staff is expected to number no more than 120 or 130. Therefore, I suspect that some of the savings would have been made whether the Royal Greenwich Observatory stays at Herstmonceux castle or whether it goes to Cambridge or elsewhere. Nevertheless, the financial justification has been called in question by a number of my parliamentary colleagues and other people concerned by the move.

There is then the question of other services at Herstmonceux for which the future has not been clearly demarcated. The first concerns the satellite laser ranger, which I shall describe as briefly as possible. It is a system whereby a laser bounces off a large lens and shoots some 5,000 miles in the sky, rebounds off a satellite which it locates in the sky and comes back down to Herstmonceux so that a computer at the satellite laser ranger can identify within an accuracy of 2 in. the spatial relationship between Herstmonceux castle and the satellite 5,000 miles in space. The moment that that satellite ranger is moved, even if it is moved only a mile, all the valuable work and reference

computations will have to be altered, and that will be an enormous waste. The SERC has admitted that it does not yet have the solution to such a move.

Another service of the Royal Greenwich Observatory is the time service, in which my hon. Friend the Member for Somerton and Frome (Mr. Boscawen) has taken an interest, on behalf of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers. It has made these observations:

"The SERC has given as a reason for terminating the Greenwich time service that the money to replace the electric tubes and other equipment is not available. Yet Concerned American Institutions and Companies have offered to replace all the equipment at the cost of £500,000 free of charge."

That is another uncertainty.

I have one general criticism. We should be building up our existing bases of technological and scientific excellence, not allowing a contraction on to fewer sites. Bearing in mind the importance of new technology to this nation's wealth and future jobs, we should adopt an enterprising approach to a site of excellence such as the Royal Greenwich Observatory, rather than seeing it moved to Cambridge where, inevitably, to some extent it will be merged into the university's community.

I do not believe that such a move would have been contemplated if this were in the United States, Germany, Japan or Switzerland. I suspect that one of the reasons is that, worthy as is all the work done by the SERC, it is predominantly led by academics. It has some business men on it, but relatively few. I suspect that if those few business men were to be a little more forceful about adopting an enterprising approach to our sites of technological excellence, the outcome would be different in future when other such cases arise.

I am pleased to say that there is some good news as a result of the SERC's recent concessions. Those staff at the Royal Greenwich Observatory who are still employed in 1990 will all be offered jobs at Cambridge, and concessions have been made over tourism. The astronomy exhibition centre is to stay open in the park at Herstmonceux and the equatorial group of telescopes will continue working. I emphasise to my hon. Friend the Minister that we need to do even more if we are to fulfill the potential of Herstmonceux castle. Discussions have already taken place with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment and my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment who has responsibility for tourism, and with the chairman of English Heritage, Lord Montagu.

It is perfectly clear that, if the castle is to be sold, we need to embark on a feasibility study now that gauges what the castle's full tourist potential will be when the Royal Greenwich Observatory moves. Perhaps we should talk to the likes of the owners of Madame Tussauds, the Pearson Group, or to, say, the British Tourist Authority, the English Tourist Board or to anyone with expertise in tourism who can suggest how the castle's future potential may be realised. If we do that, I am sure that the best possible price will be realised for the SERC when the castle is sold, which can be no bad thing, and that after that the interested purchaser will no doubt consider a conference centre, a hotel development, a planetarium or a scientific museum that could be combined with the astronomy exhibition centre so that the tourist potential could be maximised.

I said that I believe that the move of the Royal Greenwich Observatory from Herstmonceux castle is a matter of regret. However, given the decision by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, I accept that the move in 1990 is inevitable. However, I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to make sure that that study of the castle's tourist potential is commissioned so that, after 550 years, the castle can embark on a further exciting and enterprising period.

2.21 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. George Walden): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bexhill and Battle (Mr. Wardle) on being successful in the ballot and on raising the subject of the future of Herstmonceux castle this afternoon. It is clearly one of importance to his constituency. I should also like to pay tribute to his tireless advocacy on behalf of his constituents, including the staff of the Royal Greenwich Observatory, who will be affected in some way by the observatory's move from Herstmonceux.

We have also received several representations and, one might almost say, earnest entreaties from my hon. Friends the Members for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) and for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow). I believe that what my hon. Friend the Member for Bexhill and Battle said about his researches into the architectural history of Herstmonceux illustrates the depth of his interest in the whole environment. Now that a decision has been taken on the future of the RGO he is understandably focusing the same energy on encouraging the SERC, the local authorities and the tourist boards to explore ways of minimising the impact of the move on the locality.

I have recently met the leader of the East Sussex county council and representatives of other local interests, and I should like to take this opportunity to express my sympathy to those adversely affected directly or indirectly over the decision to move the observatory. Nevertheless, I believe that the SERC has taken the correct decision. I should also point out that there have been a number of other moves and mergers of research council institutes over the past few years, as a response to the changing requirements of scientific research. My hon. Friend the Member for Bexhill and Battle quoted a number of eminent opinions against movement from Herstmonceux, but I do not need to remind him that many of the decisions that the SERC has to take inevitably provoke public discussion and disagreement among academics.

The Royal Greenwich Observatory is a component part of the SERC, whose prime responsibility is to promote the highest quality of British science in United Kingdom universities and polytechnics. The standing of British astronomy is very high, due in no small part to the magnificent facilities that the SERC has provided; the optical telescopes at La Palma in the Canary islands, in collaboration with the Netherlands and Spain; the Anglo-Australian and United Kingdom Schmidt telescopes for observing the southern skies; infra-red and submillimetre wave telescopes in Hawaii, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii and the Netherlands; and experiments on a number of satellites, including the Giotto mission to Halley's comet and the infra-red satellite, IRAS. In 1985-86, the council's Astronomy, Space and Radio Board had a budget of £50 million, which is 17 per cent. of the SERC's total expenditure.

The council has to support research in many other areas of science and engineering, and therefore has a duty to

[Mr. George Walden]

ensure that its activities in large basic sciences, such as astronomy, are carried out in the most cost effective way. If it does not do so, other areas of science, of more short-term applicability, will suffer. It has therefore examined carefully the support required for its ground-based astronomy facilities in the 1990s and beyond.

The RGO has a glorious past of which we can all be proud, and there is no reason to fear for its future at Cambridge. Indeed, its standing would be likely to decline if it remained as an isolated unit at Herstmonceux. In terms of its 300 or more years of existence, the period in Sussex has been fruitful, but relatively short; it moved there from Greenwich in only 1948 in order to take advantage of the clearer Sussex air. Since then, advances in astronomy have completely transformed the subject, with the exploitation of other types of telescopes, such as the radio-telescopes at Jodrell Bank and Cambridge, and, with the advent of space facilities, telescopes in the X-ray, ultra-violet and infra-red regions of the spectrum.

The council believes that an isolated establishment will not be able to provide the level of support that would be required into the next century without a significant increase in planned staffing levels, and the council is unwilling to reallocate funds to astronomy for this from elsewhere in its activities. On the other hand, the council believes that the RGO could provide the required service if it were closely associated with relevant university departments, and, in particular, a university with an active experimental optical astronomy group and also a wide range of other astronomy interests, and — just as important — departments with expertise in the enabling technologies of micro-electronics, computing and communications, which are required for the development of instrumentation and remote operation facilities at La Palma. In the council's view, the most appropriate environment for the RGO would be associated with the Institute of Astronomy at Cambridge, where it could also benefit from the expertise available in, for example, the departments of radioastronomy, engineering and physics.

I stress that the decision was a scientific one, and one that the council believes to be in the best interests of the RGO and the university community that it serves.

A new building is to be provided for the RGO on the university campus, and all of the observatory's activities presently at Herstmonceux can be accommodated there, with the exception of the Equatorial Group of telescopes, which I shall mention later. The observatory will remain a council establishment and retain its integrity and identity.

In order to fund the construction of the new RGO building at Cambridge, the council plans to sell the Herstmonceux estate and has been given the necessary approvals to retain the receipts for this purpose. My hon. Friend rightly addressed the potential of the Herstmonceux estate. I note his remarks on the necessity of a feasibility study.

The SERC is, of course, very much aware of the significant part played by the RGO in the economy of East Sussex and in particular its contribution to tourism in the area. Access to the castle has in the past been limited, but there is no doubt that the grounds and the astronomy exhibition in the Equatorial Group are a major tourism asset to the community. The council understands and is sympathetic to the local concern to remove the uncertainty over future public access to the grounds and castle. It is therefore making a considerable effort to discuss with the interested local and national bodies ways in which the castle can be retained as a tourist attraction.

I can report that the SERC has had two meetings with the English tourist board, the South East England tourist board, and representatives of the East Sussex county council and the Wealden district council to consider various options. My hon. Friend kindly alluded to those meetings. The possibility of these bodies jointly commissioning a pre-feasibility study to examine these options, as my hon. Friend also mentioned, is being discussed, and I welcome such co-ordinated initiatives. There are a number of possibilities open. These range from bringing in a purchaser to develop the whole site as a tourist attraction—including the castle itself—to finding an owner who would simply allow public access to the footpaths in the grounds.

It is very much hoped that any future sale arrangements will allow the astronomy exhibition and the Equatorial Group of telescopes to remain in the castle grounds where they can form part of an integrated attraction. Nevertheless, if the SERC is not successful in finding a suitable owner who is willing to exploit the exhibition and telescopes, the council is willing to exclude this area from the sale. It has set up a joint working party with the National Maritime museum to consider the practicalities of the museum taking over the day-to-day operation of this part of the site. The museum is already responsible for the Old Greenwich observatory and has expressed an interest in the Equatorial Group. This would provide the possibility of developing public access to these telescopes.

I hope that my hon. Friend will understand from what I have said that the potential of Herstmonceux has not been overlooked by the Government or the SERC. I assure the House that I shall continue to take an interest in this aspect of the move of the Royal Greenwich Observatory, although this does not directly fall within my responsibility.

My hon. Friend mentioned the satellite laser ranger. He is technically astute on these matters, as I know from discussions with him. I again assure him that discussions on the future of the satellite laser ranger are continuing with other sponsors and users of that facility.

I congratulate my hon. Friend again on his highly informed and impressive advocacy on behalf of his constituency.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(5) (Standing Committees on European Community documents.)

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

That this House takes note of the proposal by the Commission of the European communities for a Council Regulation on the granting of financial support to transport infrastructure projects as set out in the Department of Transport's unnumbered Explanatory Memorandum of 1st December 1986; and welcomes the Government's intention to work for a structured approach to the European Community's future role in transport infrastructure, based on the co-ordination of infrastructure projects in the Member States.—*[Mr. Malone.]*

Asbestos

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 11216/85 on the prevention of environmental pollution by asbestos; and agrees that the draft Directive, while controlling the emissions of asbestos from manufacturing industry, should not prevent the safe use of asbestos materials.—*[Mr. Malone.]*

Question agreed to.

Prisons

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Malone.]*

2.30 pm

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): Events in prisons this year have clearly shown how delicate is the day-to-day atmosphere in our prison system. Just under the surface in every prison lie the tensions and bitternesses of prison life. We hear repeatedly of the ever-increasing number of people in prison. I understand that a Home Office report shows that, early in the 1990s, the prison population could be 55,000 to 60,000. There are already about 48,000 people in our prisons.

Many prisons are old, overcrowded and lack the modern basic facilities to provide reasonable living and working conditions and opportunities. They are degrading and unhygienic for inmates and officers. Vast numbers of people are sent to prison who should never be there. They often need some kind of care, but certainly not prison. We have made little progress in finding alternatives to prison. The Minister should go to any prison to see the people who should not be there—the drug addicts and the mentally ill.

Keeping someone in prison costs an enormous amount. We must start to ask what that achieves. It certainly keeps out of society some people who, I readily accept, should be kept out, but what of the majority who are in and out of prisons most of their lives and face short sentences? What does the system achieve with them? They spend hours on end locked up in cells. On 14 November this year, Wandsworth prison in my constituency locked up 1,548 inmates, and there was work for 720. I suggest that that happens in prison after prison.

It is proposed that prison workshops should be closed. What will happen if they do close? What other activities will be introduced, or is this solely a money-saving exercise? If it is, there will be problems. I readily accept that we spend vast sums of money on prisons, but much of it is wasted. The whizz-kids of the management teams put the information down on paper and, at times, it looks wonderful, but prisons do not work like that. The people who run the system — the governors and the prison officers — may be consulted, but I wonder whether the authorities ever listen to their views, which are based on experience, and whether their ideas are ever put into practice.

I am sure that the Minister will tell me about the prison building programme and obviously that has a role. But let us look at the existing record. Are prison numbers going down? Are conditions improving? Is life better in prisons? Are officers or governors happier? Does the system work better? There is no indication of that whatsoever.

There have been a number of prison disturbances this year and it would be interesting to know what kind of survey the Home Office intends to carry out into that problem. It is a fact that conditions in prisons are worse today than they were 20 years ago. We have more life sentence prisoners, more terrorist prisoners and more violent offenders in prison than ever before. There is more violence occurring in prisons between prisoners, more violence against staff and less recreation in prisons.

More prisoners spend more time locked up in their cells than ever before. The drug problem in prisons increases. Time and time again the Home Office has been told of

[Mr. Tom Cox]

those problems, but where is the evidence that it has done anything about it? If the Minister doubts what I say he should read the annual reports of prison boards of visitors. Take any six reports from anywhere in this country and discover what is said by many men and women not connected with the prison service or the Home Office. In their reports, they spell out the complaints, the despair and the "do the best you can" attitude that is so often adopted. Where is the long term programme? Where is the vision of prison reform that will show how the system will be working in this country in the year 2000? I see nothing that gives me any hope.

I should like to discuss the Home Office policy statement "A Fresh Start". Prison officers all over the country have rejected it. From time to time I am sure that the Minister must read the Prison Officers Association journal, "Gatelodge". I hope that he has read the October edition because I would like to quote three or four brief summaries of local branch reports that commented on "A Fresh Start."

The monthly report from Buckley Hall stated:

"By now I am sure everyone will have seen the latest propaganda from the Prison Department. We have all received, I'm sure, the booklet, "A Fresh Start". . . Without being too unkind, at the time of writing, they haven't even sorted out this year's problems, never mind inventing new ones. . . it contains one of the most retrogressive ideas yet put to this Association. For 'contracted hours' read 'compulsory overtime'. No matter how you read it, that's what they are talking about."

Let us consider what the report from Frankland, a major prison, said about the statement:

"Let us all hope that we are not dragged back to the Dickensian days and that our representatives remember that we are working in conditions that warrant a reduction in working hours and as such the last thing we deserve is to be committed to an increase in conditioned hours. The proposed 'New Start' has all the signs of a Department Confidence Trick."

Lowdham Grange's report stated:

"We have, since I last wrote a branch news item for the magazine, been confronted with a document known as 'A Fresh Start'. I don't wish to say much on this matter as I'm sure we will hear plenty in the next few months. It suffices to say that the booklet now hangs on a piece of string for use in the staff toilet".

It is sad that that is the officers' attitude to this particular document. The final quote I shall use comes from the report from Shrewsbury prison which states.:

"the Department has issued us all with a pamphlet entitled 'A Fresh Start,' hooray, at last, things are moving — but where? Goodness knows! There has never been a less inspiring, more empty set of proposals put to Prison Officers in the history of the Prison Service. We certainly need a fresh start or rather should we say we need some fresh starters at the top, people competent to run an organisation the size of this Service."

Those are the views of long-serving officers in our prison system about the Home Office document, "A Fresh Start". There is bitterness and a feeling of being let down. Many prison officers have little confidence for their future. At this moment the fresh start scheme has little chance of being accepted by prison officers. The Minister can think or say what he likes, but it has little chance of being accepted. I beg him not to try to force an agreement on the Prison Officers Association. It would be far better for him and the Home Secretary to invite a group of officers from prisons around Britain to their Department to hear what they are saying. With their support there is a chance, if their views are heard and listened to, of achievements being made.

I could quote many examples, but I shall quote just two. A letter sent to the Home Secretary by the Brixton Prison Officers Association in October this year says:

"Dear Mr. Hurd, I have been instructed by the Branch Committee to inform you of the very grave concern of the staff shortage here at Brixton. The Governor and C.O. have done all within their power to help, but there is a lot more that can be done by the 'Higher Ups'"

The branch secretary of Wandsworth prison in my constituency is a man called Steve Spratling. I know him and he has been in the prison service for many years. He is a dedicated officer. In *Prison Service News* in October this year, he said:

"As everyone is aware, the Prison Service is suffering drastically from the effects of financial restraints. This in turn has brought to a head differences in relation to negotiating rights for safe manning levels.

Prison officers cost too much! That is what the Home Office Prison Department would have everyone believe. But what of the real cost? The real cost is met by prison officers, their wives and families.

We work sometimes long hours, exhausting our reserves of tolerance dealing with some of the most difficult elements society can throw at us. We are subjected to verbal and more often physical attacks by simply doing our job. At the end of the day, there is little or nothing left when we return home exhausted and tired, and often nothing left to offer as a husband and father. Our wives and families suffer too."

That comes from the branch secretary of Wandsworth prison in my constituency—a man who has been in the service for a long time. In that letter he conveys the feeling of himself and his fellow officers. They are the views of prison officers and they are ably supported by David Evans, the general secretary of the Prison Officers Association, and the executive committee.

In this Adjournment debate I have not sought to make this a political issue. I speak of what I know and of what I am told. Recently, during a visit that I made to Wormwood Scrubs prison, bulletin 4 of "A Fresh Start" was being given out to officers. Their view, in the general discussion that I had with them for a couple of hours or so, was that they could in no way accept it. I could give many examples of what they bitterly complain about, but I shall give just two.

The prison service needs a proper salary structure without the conditions that would be imposed by the fresh start scheme. Such propaganda from the Home Office is in no way conducive to building up support among prison officers and their association. There is no way in which all officers will get the much talked of £15,000 a year, as is mentioned in "A Fresh Start."

The Home Office also has to face up to the fact that there has to be a major increase in staffing in our prisons. In Wandsworth prison earlier this year a young officer was brutally attacked. That attack, sadly, took place because of totally inadequate staffing for the job he was doing. It was taken up by me and the local POA with the Home Secretary. In no way were prison officers happy with the response they received from the Home Secretary to that very serious attack against a young officer.

I have said that our prisons are in crisis, and all the evidence shows that they are. The men and women who run them know that and it is time that those people were listened to and that the Home Office started to work with them. If that happens, a solution is possible. Try to force something on them and there will be no support. There will

be increasing bitterness and mass resignations from the service. That is the choice that the Minister and the Home Office face. Let us hope that they understand it because prisons are going to be in our society for a long time to come and it will be dedicated men and women officers who will run them. I suggest to the House that it is time we started to hear what they say to us and took note of it.

2.46 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) for providing me with the opportunity to set out today how the Government see the future of our prisons and the conditions for those who live and work in them. I know of the hon. Gentleman's long-standing interest in prison issues, and the personal contribution he has made as a member of the board of visitors at Wormwood Scrubs.

Of course, conditions in many of our prisons leave much to be desired. We have never had to have that fact beaten out of us; we have always made it clear. The chronic problems of overcrowding, inadequate facilities and restrictive regimes are not of recent provenance. Indeed, we inherited a prison estate from the previous Government in an entirely shocking state. This is the first Government in living memory who have tried to put resources into the prisons to make improvements that might, with advantage, have been made many years ago. I know that the hon. Gentleman, wanting to be fair in making sure that this is not a political issue, will accept that and the fact that some real improvements are being made.

My real criticism of what the hon. Gentleman has said is that for someone with his wide experience of prisons he has taken a rather narrow POA-orientated view, when there are other views and many counter-arguments to suggest that the lot of the prison officer is a great deal better than it was and a great deal better than is suggested by one or two of the quotations that he read out.

Even if one concedes, as we do, the difficulties faced in many prisons, we also have to face the fact that many of the problems do not apply in all establishments. Many training prisons and youth custody centres are little affected by overcrowding and provide good conditions and positive regimes for prisoners and staff alike.

The hon. Gentleman knows Wandsworth prison in his constituency very well. I know it too—less well than the hon. Gentleman—as I am a Member from the same borough. Of course, conditions in a number of similar prisons of Victorian origin are not good. There are a number of reasons for the problems that I have outlined, not least of which is the lack of investment by successive Governments in the prison estate. It is a shocking fact that no new prisons were built in England and Wales between 1918 and 1958 and the resources devoted to repair and maintenance were totally inadequate until this Government took office.

Another major problem is the rise in the prison population. That has obviously contributed to the problems of the system. Last year's major surge in the population to 48,200 in the summer placed heavy demands on the capacity of the system to cope. After falling steadily to about 45,000 by the beginning of 1986, the population has increased gradually again this year and, sadly, reached a peak of over 48,300 last Friday. This year's increase is attributable mainly to a rise in the remand population, together with an increase in long-term adult male offenders.

I must also point out to the hon. Gentleman that the percentage of the prison population sharing cells doubled from 18 per cent. to 35·8 per cent. in the five years of the Labour Government 1965-70. Since then it has remained pretty steady. That is because of the work that has been done by the Government in building more prisons and refurbishing existing establishments. Despite the 8 per cent. rise in the prison population between 1980 and 1985, we have been able to keep constant the percentage of those sharing cells. Had we pursued the policy of the Labour Government and not invested in the prisons—indeed, made cuts in prison building—today's situation would be far worse.

I say that to the hon. Gentleman in response to some of the criticisms that have been made, which tend to suggest that the problems that we face are all of the Government's making, and matters to which we have been wilfully blind. Far from it. Building new prisons and refurbishing old prisons is not something that one can do with the wave of a magic wand. It is a long and extended process. When one adds to that the enormous pressure through the increased number of prisoners coming from the courts either on remand or as sentenced prisoners, the situation becomes one of the most difficult management problems that any Government Department has been called upon to face.

I appreciate that the POA members to whom the hon. Gentleman speaks have a vested interest in preserving present working practices, but we cannot apply resources to the prison system without asking serious questions about the efficiency of management systems and the applicability of working practices to a modern prison system. We have arrived candidly at the view that some of those practices have hindered progress for a long time, so something has to be done about them.

That is why the fresh start proposals have been introduced. It was interesting that when we had a debate in the early hours of the morning at which, by happy chance, you were also present, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley), speaking from the Labour Front Bench, said that there was a great deal that he welcomed in fresh start. I prefer his view of fresh start to that which has been fed to the hon. Gentleman by some of his contacts in the system.

What are we trying to do? I cannot go into it all in great detail, but there are three main strands to what we are about. The first is to reduce the demands on the prison system. The second is to increase and update its capacity to cope with those demands. The third is to make better use of the resources, of both staff and money, which are devoted to the service.

I refer first to reducing the prison population. Many people think that the prison problem could be dealt with exclusively by reducing the number of people held in prison, but that view is unrealistic. The prison system has to respond to the demands placed on it by the courts. The public expect to be protected from serious offenders and further expect that they will be properly punished. That is why Parliament has given the courts the sentencing powers that it has. However, we have to do all that we can to ensure that a custodial sentence is seen by the courts as a last resort. In England and Wales, we have a wide range of non-custodial disposals for offenders of all ages. It is worth pointing out that we have increased expenditure on the probation service by 38 per cent. in real terms over the past

[Mr. David Mellor]

six years and strengthened the probation order and many of the other bedrock parts of the non-custodial sentence system to make them more attractive to the courts.

Secondly, the Government have embarked on the largest programme of prison building and refurbishment since the Victorian era. I said that there were 40 years in this century when not a single new prison was built. By contrast, three new establishments opened last year alone. Another five are currently being built and another 12 are at various stages of design or planning. Together, those new establishments, including the three already opened, will provide some additional 10,600 places by the mid-1990s. In addition, there is a programme of expansion at existing establishments to provide some 6,600 further new places, making 17,200 in all. A further vital element of the building programme is the modernisation and redevelopment of the existing estate.

For a Government so often unreasonably traduced for cutting budgets, major capital work is in progress or planned at about 100 establishments, including nearly all of the Victorian local prisons and Wormwood Scrubs, which the hon. Gentleman knows so well. Approval has been given to fund the first phase of redevelopment work scheduled to begin in April 1987 at a cost of £4·78 million. Planned expenditure on the building programme in total for 1986-87 is £53 million on new prisons and £65 million on building and repair work in existing prisons.

This work is being carried out to improve access to sanitation in the older cellular establishments, and that is a priority. Of course, progress depends on the provision of new places to ease overcrowding because, in order to make the improvements, existing accommodation has to be taken out of use. In the short term, the ameliorating efforts can add to the problems of the prison estate coping with the numbers arriving from the courts.

To give the House an idea of how we are trying to improve conditions, I can state that by the end of 1990 some 28,000 prison places will have access to sanitation. By the end of the century, under the plans, 37,800, or 70 per cent., of all certified places will have that access.

The hon. Gentleman spoke on behalf of prison officers and I make no criticism of him for that. I would like to tell him a little about the resources devoted to the prison service. Between 1978-79 and 1985-86 the number of prison officers has risen by nearly 18 per cent. while the average inmate population rose by about 12 per cent. There are more staff resources proportionately than when the Labour Government were in office. Over the same period, expenditure on the service rose by 36 per cent. in real terms. That compares with an increase of only 12 per cent. under the previous Administration. The Government's public expenditure White Paper last January showed our intention to continue to give prisons priority in relation to other Home Office spending.

The third element in these matters relates to improved efficiency. We have spent the money as a tangible expression of our support for the prison service. We have reversed the previous neglect of our penal system that was a crying shame to so many of our predecessors. However, the increased resources carry with them the responsibility to ensure that they are used in such a way as to secure the best value for money. Unless we do that, we will not be able to achieve the improvements that we all want. That is why the work that is being carried out in the service to improve management systems is an integral part of our programme for improving the prison service.

The prison service is well on the way to achieving better management accountability and clearer targets for each establishment under arrangements first introduced in 1984. These involve the drawing up of a contract between the region director and the governor setting performance standards and targets for improvement for each establishment. In that way, each governor must account for his establishment's performance. Similarly, recent developments in financial accountability are a vital element in making the best use of existing resources. From 1 April this year, the first stage of a new local budgeting scheme was introduced.

The most recent and perhaps the most significant development is the package of proposals to which the hon. Gentleman referred somewhat tendentiously, the proposal known as "A Fresh Start", which is now under discussion with the prison service trade unions and that is undoubtedly why the hon. Gentleman raised the matter.

It is one of the paradoxes of the service that, at the same time as the Government have invested the substantial additional resources to which I have referred, the quality of regimes in some establishments seems to have suffered. A large part of the explanation for this lies in the rigid systems of working and complementing that currently operate in establishments. I do not have time to go into all these proposals in detail today. I did so in the debate that we had in the early hours of the morning a few days ago. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not mind if I refer him to what I said on that occasion.

The aim of the revised arrangements is to provide prison management with flexible systems to enable governors to make better use of the staff that they have and so to pursue improvements in regime standards for prisoners. The key feature of the system of management accountability that has been introduced is that governors are required to manage their resources so that prisoners are occupied as fully as possible throughout the week and spend the maximum time out of cell. I entirely agree with the points raised by the hon. Gentleman about the need for that. Of course, there are many constraints on achieving that objective but it rightly focuses the attention of all concerned on the quality of prison life.

We take regime developments seriously. The initiatives currently in hand include an exercise to pool ideas between regions on positive steps that might be taken to advance work in that area. The aim will be to reach agreement on a programme of action throughout the country. In addition, much valuable work is being carried out in establishments which involves inmates in one way or another in working positively for the community.

Time is running out. I end by saying once again that I am glad to have had this opportunity to set out the Government's policy in this important area.

Mr. Speaker: Before I adjourn the House, may I wish the Members and staff of the House a restful holiday and a very happy Christmas and a new year of good order.

The House now stands adjourned until Monday 12 January.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Three o'clock, pursuant to the resolution of the House of 15 December.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 8 December 1986.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Administration of Justice Act 1985

Mr. Weetch asked the Attorney-General what is the current position with regard to the implementation of the provisions of part II of the Administration of Justice Act 1985; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Section 12 of and schedule 13 to the Administraion of Justice Act 1985—establishment of the council and supplementary provisions—came into operation on 12 March 1986.

Sections 13—training rules—22—keeping of accounts and establishment of client accounts—23—interest on client's money—and 38—rules—came into operation on 1 October 1986. Education and training, accounts, deposit account and accountants' report rules made by the council under these powers were approved by the Lord Chancellor on 6 October 1986. The remaining provision of part II will be brought into effect before the first licences are issued, which is expected to be in April 1987.

Criminal Injury

Mr. Hume asked the Attorney-General if he will make it his policy to reduce the cost of an appeal in cases of criminal injury to the county courts in Northern Ireland from its current level of £50 to bring it into proportion to the cost of other court fees.

The Attorney-General: After consultation with the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland and with the concurrence of the Treasury, the Lord Chancellor is responsible for determining the amount of fees payable in court proceedings in Northern Ireland. It is Government policy that fees levied in the civil courts shall cover the full cost of civil proceedings, less judicial costs. The current fee of £50 is calculated in accordance with this policy, and is comparable with other fees charged for the initiation of proceedings in the county court and the High Court.

State Security

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether a law officer will prosecute Mr. Chapman Pincher, under section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920, for inducing Mr. Peter Wright to break his duty of confidentiality on security matters to the Crown by being party to the offer of payments by Summerpage of moneys in respect of information to be included in his book, "Their Trade is Treachery".

Mr. John Morris asked the Attorney-General what consideration he gave to prosecuting Mr. Chapman Pincher as an unauthorised receiver under the Official Secrets Act.

The Attorney-General: The matter is under consideration.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General why he did not seek an injunction to prevent the publication in the current year of the book "Double Agent" by John Moe a former MI5 employee.

The Attorney-General: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on a matter which is or may be at issue in the proceedings, concerning the Peter Wright case in Australia while those proceedings continue.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether he will establish an inquiry into which of the 198 persons whose names were deleted at official request from the book by Nigel West, "In Place of Trust", have given information of a confidential and classified nature to Mr. Nigel West.

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply. No.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether he will appeal to the Irish Supreme Court in the case of the judgment on the book, "One Girl's War", by Joan Miller.

The Attorney-General: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. McLoughlin) on 4 December at column *720*.

Mr. John Morris asked the Attorney-General if, further to his statement of 1 December, *Official Report*, column *620*, he will identify those of his responsibilities in respect of which there is collective responsibility.

The Attorney-General: In criminal proceedings the Attorney-General acts wholly independently of the Government. In civil proceedings a distinction is to be drawn between proceedings in which the Attorney-General is involved in a representative capacity on behalf of the Government, and action undertaken by him on behalf of the general community to enfore the law as an end in itself. In the latter capacity the Attorney-General again acts, whether ex officio of ex relatione, wholly independently of the Government. In the former he is by definition representing it. In this representative capacity the Attorney-General will assert the public interest as perceived by the Government as a whole. It may be for other Ministers to assert the public interest in civil matters which may concern their own ministerial responsibilities—for example, when making a claim to public interest immunity from discovery of documents. Any advice sought from the Attorney-General, as the first Law Officer of the Crown, will of course be given impartially, and proceedings will be taken in his name only if he is satisfied as to the legal propriety of the action.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General why he failed to seek an injunction to prevent the transmission by Granada Television on 3 December of a "World in Action" programme which included material which was confidential to the security services; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on a matter which is or may be at issue in the proceedings concerning the Peter Wright case in Australia while those proceedings continue.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether he will prosecute Granada Television under the Official Secrets Act 1911 for having transmitted a "World in Action" programme on 3 December which included material confidential to the security services.

The Attorney-General: No.

Johnson Matthey Bankers

Dr. McDonald asked the Attorney-General if he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the current police investigations into the lending business undertaken through Johnson Matthey Bankers in the period before October 1984; and when these inquiries are likely to be completed.

The Attorney-General: No. It is not the practice to publish details of current police investigations lest their success be compromised. There is also a need to ensure that any criminal proceedings in being or in contemplation are not prejudiced by the disclosure of such information. Police investigations have already been completed in relation to a number of specific allegations of fraud made against creditors of Johnson Matthey Bank Ltd. relating to events prior to October 1984. Statements about these were issued by the Commissioner of Police for the City of London on 8 April and 29 July this year. For the most part, those allegations related to matters unconnected with the substantial losses sustained by JMB Ltd. A wide-ranging investigation into the circumstances of those losses is continuing and the police have the benefit of accounting assistance and advice from the fraud divisions of the Crown Prosecution Service and counsel. It is not possible to say when the investigation will be completed.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh (Bridge Projects)

Mr. John M. Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what help the British High Commission in Dhaka has given in support of British consultants securing the phase II consultancy for the Jamuna bridge contract in Bangladesh, as well as other work deriving from the Bangladesh bridges phase II programme; and what steps the Overseas Development Administration's permanent delegation to the World Bank is taking to monitor the progress of these projects.

Mr. Chris Patten: The British High Commissioner in Bangladesh has offered his full support to the British consultants.

The United Kingdom delegation to the World Bank is in touch with bank staff about the award of the phase II contract, and will continue to monitor progress.

PRIME MINISTER

Poor People

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Prime Minister what action she intends to take to seek to reduce the numbers of the poor in Britain.

The Prime Minister: The way to combat poverty is to develop a competitive and thriving economy, to reduce the burden of taxation on the low paid, and to target help on those in need.

Since 1979 the burden of taxation has been significantly reduced. Lower income tax has benefited the 18 million people on below average male earnings who pay 42 per cent. of the tax yield, and the 40 per cent. of pensioners who pay tax. Real take home pay for a family with two children on three-quarters of average earnings has in fact gone up by 16 per cent. since 1979.

We will also continue to build on our excellent record of protecting and improving the position of those most in need. Spending on social security has never been at a higher level, both in cash and real terms. It is currently running at some £44 billion a year—about one third of total Government expenditure—costing working families an average of £55 per week each. Since we came to office, supplementary benefits, benefits for long-term sick and disabled people, retirement pensions and prescribed levels of family income supplement had, at the date of the July uprating, increased ahead of inflation, and the uprating in April 1987 alone will cost an extra £700 million.

The Social Security Act 1986 will direct resources more effectively to those who need help most. Nearly twice as many low-income working families with children will get extra help under the new family credit scheme. The new income support scheme will direct specific help to groups such as disabled people, lone parents, families with children and pensioners.

Ultimately, however, adequate provision for the poor depends upon policies which protect the value of incomes through the control of inflation. This is what our policies have been designed to achieve and it will continue to be our objective.

Solicitor-General's Letter

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister what evidence was sought or obtained by the Cabinet Secretary as to whether she had made any inquiries about who had leaked the Solicitor-General's letter to the then Secretary of State for Defence, prior to the inquiry being authorised.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November at colums *49* to *50*.

Weapons (EEC Directive)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the desirability of permitting the Commission to proceed with the drafting of a directive on the abolition of controls on weapons at internal Community frontiers; and if she will further seek agreement at the Council that any such proposal should be subject to unanimity despite the terms of the Single Act.

The Prime Minister: It is open to the Commission to make proposals on matters falling within the scope of the Community treaties. We are aware that the Commission is preparing a proposal for a directive covering the movement of firearms across internal Community frontiers. Any proposal which is put to the Council of Ministers will be examined very carefully but there is no question of our being prevented from carrying out the kind of checks which are needed to preserve our security and maintain law and order. The attitude taken by the United Kingdom will depend on the content of the proposal and our analysis of its implications.

Attorney-General (Public Interest)

Mr. John Morris asked the Prime Minister what are the current instructions to Departments as to the need to

consult the Attorney-General when questions of public interest arise; and if there has been any change since the present Government took office.

The Prime Minister: Appropriate steps will continue to be taken to see that Departments are aware of the Attorney-General's responsibilities and functions.

Mr. John Morris asked the Prime Minister what is the practice of her Administration on the circumstances in which the Attorney-General's authority is not sought when Her Majesty's Government seek to prohibit the publication of a book where the public interest is involved.

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply given to him this afternoon by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General.

Security Services (Members' Confidentiality)

Mr. Alan Williams asked the Prime Minister in what form the duty of life-long confidentiality imposed on serving and retired members of the security services is brought to their attention.

The Prime Minister: All members of the security service sign the Official Secrets Act and are made fully aware of their duty of confidentiality.

ENERGY

Electricity Supply

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 25 November, *Official Report*, column 154, he will name and describe reports he has received since 1984 on strategic planning development of the electricity supply system beyond the six-year horizon of the medium term development plan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Member's previous question, reported in column 154 of the *Official Report* for 25 November.

Radioactivity (Incidents)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will now make available for independent assessment all the details of the incidents at Windscale between October 1979 and January 1980 of increased radioactivity in ground water, the incidents on the week of 24 to 30 August 1980 involving a worker receiving radiation in doses exceeding permissible levels, the incident on 16 April 1981 involving a health physics monitor and the incident involving the radioactive contamination of two process workers and a fitter towards the end of December 1980 and all the documents relating to subsequent inquiries;

(2) if he will now make available for independent assessment all the details of the incidents at Sellafield on 2 September 1981 involving plutonium contamination on 18 June 1981 involving radioactive contamination, on 13 November 1984 of reported information of the incident of radioactive contamination reported to the nuclear installations inspectorate, and during the month of July 1981 at the Magnox fuel decanning plant at Sellafield involving a radiation monitoring film and all the documents relating to subsequent inquiries;

(3) if he will now make available for independent assessment all the details of the incidents involving radioactive or plutonium contamination of workers at Windscale on 8 February 1980, on 6 May 1980, between 6 and 12 January 1980, on 30 January 1980, 14 February 1980, 8 February 1980, on 23 February 1980, 15 February 1980, on 29 April 1980, 16 September 1980, 18 July 1980, 19 August 1980, 15 December 1980, 4 November 1980, 27 March 1981, 26 March 1981 and 10 July 1980 and all the documents relating to subsequent inquiries.

Mr. Goodlad: These incidents were independently assessed at the time by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive. Descriptions of the incidents and the results of investigations which were carried out are given in the HSE's quarterly statements of nuclear incidents for the first, second, third and fourth quarters of 1980, the first, second, third and fourth quarters of 1981, and fourth quarter of 1984, copies of which are in the Library of the House.

Nuclear Sites

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Energy if the latest detailed six-year forecast of capital requirements supplied to his Department by the Central Electricity Generating Board in respect of developments of nuclear sites contains any identified provision for payments of compensation or for the purchase of residential property beyond that required for operational purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: Estimates of the costs of developing nuclear sites and other major developments submitted to my Department by the CEGB are expected to include all relevant costs associated with such developments.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Energy if investment approval has been given by his Department in respect of any programme of purchasing residential property in the vicinity of sites under consideration for radioactive waste disposal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: UK NIREX Ltd. was established under the Companies Acts and there is no requirement for its investment proposals to be approved by my right hon. Friend.

The company has, however, advised my right hon. Friend of the costs likely to be associated with various schemes for property purchase which it is considering.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Energy what reports or forecasts have been received by his Department on the estimated total cost of payments of compensation and purchases of property in the vicinity of actual and proposed nuclear sites over the next 10 years; if the cost of such payments and purchases has been taken into account in cost calculations submitted to his Department by nuclear operators; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I would expect nuclear operators to make provision for such costs in any forecasts they make. No such reports or forecasts have been received in my Department except from UK NIREX Ltd.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to the purchase of

residential property in the vicinity of sites under construction for radioactive waste disposal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: This is a commercial matter for UK NIREX Ltd. I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

UK NIREX Ltd.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to receive the first accounts of UK NIREX Ltd.

Mr. Goodlad: In January.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information his Department receives in respect of the operations of NIREX and its successor body, UK NIREX Ltd.; if his Department has received detailed financial accounts and forecasts in respect of the operations of these organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodland: UK NIREX Ltd. provides the Department of Energy with information covering the range of the company's activities, including financial matters.

British Gas

Mr. Hannam asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a further statement about the privatisation of British Gas.

Mr. Peter Walker [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 November 1986, c *352*]: I am delighted that more than 5 million people have applied to become shareholders in British Gas plc. More than 4½ million applications have been received, and more than half a million of these were in joint names. British Gas will have the largest number of shareholders of any company in the world.

The United Kingdom public offer was four times subscribed, with applications for 6·6 billion shares being received. Because of this heavy demand, allocations to financial institutions and overseas have been scaled down so that 64 per cent. of the shares could be made available to the British public. Offerings of British Gas shares in the United States, Europe, Japan and Canada are now taking place.

Everyone who submitted a valid application will receive an allocation of shares. All those who made valid applications for 400 shares or less will receive all the shares they applied for. Details of the scaling down of higher levels of applications are shown in the table.

There has been a particularly heavy demand for shares from employees and pensioners of British Gas: 85,000 employees, some 99 per cent. of those eligible, are now shareholders in the company. Customers of British Gas have been given preference in the allocation of shares.

Number of shares applied for	*Number of shares allocated*	
	General public application	*Customer share scheme application (green form)*
100	100	100
200	200	200
300	300	300
400	400	400
500-700	400	500
800-1,000	500	600
1,500	600	800
2,000	800	1,000
2,500	1,000	1,200
3,000-5,000	1,200	1,400
6,000-10,000	1,400	1,600
15,000-100,000	10 per cent.	10 per cent. plus 300
150,000 or over	7 per cent.	7 per cent. plus 300

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iran—Iraq War

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action has been taken by Her Majesty's Government within the Council of Ministers and the United Nations to review the supply and sale of weapons for use in the Iran-Iraq war; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Our own firm policy remains as set out in the answer that my right hon. and learned Friend gave to the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) on 29 October 1985 at column 454. While we would like all countries in the European Community and outside to adopt a policy as strict as ours, the supply and sale of defence equipment is a matter for national Governments, and it is not covered by the treaty of Rome. We do not believe it would be constructive to raise the matter in the Council of Ministers within European political co-operation, or at the United Nations while no prospect for a general agreement exists.

Arms Sales

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government will make it their policy to discontinue the sale of all equipment to repressive regimes which may be used in the violation of human rights; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Careful control is exercised over our export of defence equipment. Arms sales to any country require an export licence under the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985. We take account of all the relevant security, political and economic factors, paying particular attention to proposals to sell items to countries with a poor human rights record. A licence would not be granted if it was thought that the equipment would be used for aggression, for internal repression or to violate human rights.

Arturo Cruz (Visit)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any Minister or official of his Department, or any other Government Department, will be meeting Contra leader Arturo Cruz during his visit to the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We know of no plans for any such meeting.

BBC External Services

Mrs. Peacock asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will use his good offices to facilitate examination by the National Audit Office of the finances of the external services of the BBC; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: In our view, it is right that the National Audit Office should have access to the accounts of the BBC external services, in order to carry out economy, efficiency and effectiveness examinations. We have used our best endeavours to persuade the external services to allow the National Audit Office such access. This would in no way diminish the independent responsibility which the BBC external services rightly exercise over their editorial policy.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Healthy Foodstuffs

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will seek powers to ensure that the price of healthy foodstuffs is increasingly attractive compared to that of less healthy foodstuffs; and if he will promote such policies in discussions with other European Community member states.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The choice of food and the selection of a balanced diet is entirely a matter for the individual. I believe that this Government's policy of continued free and fair competition in the high street is the best way of matching food prices to demand and so providing the consumer with the widest opportunity of a healthy and balanced diet at a reasonable cost.

Our record in more than halving the average annual rate of food price increase since 1979 compared with that prevailing over the previous five years under Labour is the measure of the success of our policies for all, including the rest of the Community, to see.

North Sea (Pollution)

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the areas around the coast of the United Kingdom bordering the North sea which have been identified by his Department as being environmentally impaired by man-made causes.

Mr. Gummer: Human activities give rise to an environmental impact wherever they occur. With that in mind, and in accordance with its responsibilities under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, my Ministry undertakes a programme of surveillance and research in United Kingdom coastal waters to monitor the impact of sea dumping in order to ensure that it does not cause unacceptable damage to the marine environment.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Batiste asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many civil servants employed by his Department and engaged primarily on regional matters are based in *(a)* Yorkshire and Humberside, *(b)* the north-east and *(c)* the north-west.

Mr. Jopling: Staff employed in the Ministry's regional organisation are engaged on duties which are primarily concerned with implementing its responsibilities within the area in which they are located. Staff in the Ministry's divisional office areas which approximate to the regions given in the question are as follows:

Divisional office area	*Number of Staff*
(a) Beverley and Northallerton	323
(b) Newcastle	222
(c) Carlisle and Preston	349

In addition, all 242 staff employed at the northern regional office at Leeds are concerned with the regions quoted, as are a proportion of the 310½ staff at the midlands and western regional office in Wolverhampton which is responsible for four divisional offices, one of which, Preston, is in the north west. A further 92 staff are employed in three experimental husbandry farms.

Milk

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what provision is made in the emergency regulations proposed for the milk sector for providing compensation for milk quota reductions, and for providing alternative markets for milk powder which would otherwise go to intervention, respectively; what provision has been made for additional expenditure; and whether the funds in question will be provided from European Economic Community or national funds.

Mr. Gummer: The Commission's proposals for the milk sector contain no specific provision for either compensation for milk quota reductions or providing alternative markets for skimmed milk powder. Consequently no provision has been made for expenditure on such measures from Community or national funds.

Horses

Mr. Freud asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many representations he has received in respect of the Medicines (Hormone Growth Promoters) (Prohibition of Use) Regulations 1986 (S.I., No. 1876, 1986); whether he proposes to introduce legislation reflecting the status of British horses as distinct from that accorded by the United Kingdom European partners who eat them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Some 70 organisations have been formally consulted of whom 24 made representations. In addition, further consultations have been held with four organisations most closely concerned, the National Farmers Union, the Meat and Livestock Commission, the British Veterinary Association and the National Office of Animal Health. A number of companies and individuals have made representations either through hon. Members or directly.

There is no intention to introduce legislation on the lines suggested by the hon. Member.

Thames (Pollution)

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what report he has received from the Thames water authority about the pollution of the Thames tideway on 5 July by the discharge of a large volume of sewage from Thames water authority stormwater outfalls.

which caused the deoxygenation of the river over several miles and the elimination of the fish population between Putney and Limehouse; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I understand that an unusual set of circumstances arose on 5 July, following an exceptionally heavy rainstorm, which led to an overflow of sewage into the upper tidal Thames. Many fish died as a result, but remedial measures were quickly applied by the Thames water authority. Arrangements are also in hand for the introduction of fresh stocks of fish. According to the authority, full recovery of oxygen levels took 2 to 3 weeks and no long-term effect on fish stocks is expected. Responsibility for the regulations of sewage discharges is, of course, a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Alternative Crops

Mr. Nicholas Baker asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to encourage farmers to use alternative crops for land to cereals currently in over supply within the European Economic Community.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 December 1986; c. 665]: As an element in the package of measures needed to improve the balance between supply and demand for cereals, I am pressing for the Community to develop a scheme of voluntary land diversion, whereby incentives would be paid to those who choose an alternative use for land currently used to grow cereals. My Department has financed studies into alternative land uses and is pursuing research in those areas identified as providing good opportunities.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General (1) what is the current level of unemployment in the Liverpool, Riverside constituency at the latest date; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list the level of unemployment in the Liverpool constituencies at the latest date.

(3) if he will list the level of unemployment on Merseyside on a constituency basis.

Mr. John Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the numbers of unemployed claimants in the parliamentary constituencies of the Merseyside area at 9 October 1986.

Constituency	*Number of unemployed claimants*
Birkenhead	9,614
Bootle	10,675
Crosby	5,562
Knowsley North	9,527
Knowsley South	9,593
Liverpool Broadgreen	8,587
Liverpool Garston	7,838
Liverpool Mossley Hill	7,586
Liverpool Riverside	11,404
Liverpool Walton	10,791
Liverpool West Derby	9,380
Southport	4,908
St. Helens North	6,904
St. Helens South	7,775
Wallasey	7,367
Wirral South	4,038
Wirral West	4,469

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General what are the figures of youth unemployment in the Liverpool, Riverside constituency at the latest available date.

Mr. John Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants aged under 25 in the Liverpool Riverside constituency was 4,199.

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General what is the level of long-term unemployment in the Liverpool, Riverside constituency at the latest available date.

Mr. John Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 9 October 1986 the number of claimants who had been unemployed for over one year in the Liverpool, Riverside parliamentary constituency was 6,893.

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General if he will give a breakdown of unemployment on a ward basis in the Liverpool, Riverside constituency at the latest available date on a percentage basis.

Mr. John Lee: The information requested is not available. Unemployment rates are not calculated for areas smaller than travel-to-work areas. The numbers of unemployed claimants in the electoral wards of the Liverpool, Riverside constituency are available in the Library, and are also given in a separate reply to the hon. Member.

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General (1) what was the level of unemployment in the Liverpool travel-to-work area at the lastest available date; and what were the figures for June 1979;

(2) what was the level of unemployment on Merseyside at the latest available date; and what were the figures for June 1979.

Mr. John Lee: The following information is in the Library. On 9 October 1986 the numbers of unemployed claimants in the Liverpool travel-to-work areas and the Merseyside Metropolitan areas were 102,951 and 136,018 respectively. Comparisons with June 1979 are difficult to make because of changes in the method of collection and compilation of the data. However, in June 1979 the numbers of unemployed registrants in jobcentre areas closely corresponding to the Liverpool travel-to-work area, as defined in 1978, and the Merseyside Metropolitan area were 59,399 and 82,729 respectively.

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to reduce long-term youth unemployment in Liverpool; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Lee: Our economic policies are designed to provide the conditions in which industry and commerce can create new jobs for long-term unemployed young people and others.

Two year YTS training means that no school leaver under 18 need be unemployed and job prospects for those completing training are further enhanced by the New Workers Scheme.

Our Action for Jobs campaign is ensuring that unemployed people are aware of the full range of help available.

Special help for the long-term unemployed is provided by the restart programme and by the community programme.

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General (1) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the measures to reduce long-term unemployment on Merseyside; and if he will make a statement.

(2) what steps are being taken to reduce long-term unemployment in Liverpool; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: My Department and the Manpower Services Commission operate a wide range of employment, training and enterprise measures nationally. The effectiveness of each of these measures is regularly reviewed. The full range is described in the "Action for Jobs" booklet. By March 1987 every long-term unemployed person in Merseyside will have been invited for an interview under the restart programme and offered one of a number of positive opportunities to help them back towards employment. This may include, for example, the community programme, a jobclub or a restart course.

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General if he will give a breakdown of unemployment in Liverpool on a ward basis at the latest date.

Mr. John Lee: The following information is in the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants on 9 October 1986 for each of the electoral wards in the Liverpool local authority district.

Electoral Ward	*Number of Unemployed Claimants*
Abercromby	1,923
Aigburth	1,525
Allerton	939
Anfield	1,764
Arundel	2,088
Breckfield	2,150
Broadgreen	1,458
Childwall	1,072
Church	1,228
Clubmoor	2,008
County	1,681
Croxteth	1,239
Dingle	1,667
Dovecot	2,217
Everton	1,538
Fazakerley	1,365
Gillmoss	2,011
Granby	2,858
Grassendale	828
Kensington	2,380
Melrose	1,921
Netherley	1,360
Old Swan	1,549
Picton	1,876
Pirrie	1,905
St. Mary's	1,612
Smithdown	2,129
Speke	1,731
Tuebrook	2,128
Valley	1,367
Vauxhall	1,330
Warbreck	1,910
Woolton	829

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General if Her Majesty's Government intend to introduce future measures to reduce youth unemployment in Liverpool.

Mr. John Lee: Our present programme of measures to improve the employment prospects of young people is kept under constant review. We have no present plans to introduce new measures.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Paymaster General if he will list the numbers of unemployed for each postal code area in the Dunfermline, East constituency for November 1986, November 1983 and November 1985, respectively.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986]: The information requested is not available. Postal code areas cannot readily be linked to constituencies which are defined in terms of wards. However, figures for local authority wards from June 1983 are available in the Library.

Departmental Offices, Hornchurch

Mr. Squire asked the Paymaster General (1) if he is satisfied with the conditions of work for his Department staff in the two buildings in North street, Hornchurch;

(2) when he expects that the building currently shared between his Department and the Department of Health and Social Security in North street, Hornchurch, will be made available for the exclusive use of his Department;

(3) how many of his Department's offices require staff or files to cross a main road in order to deal with their clients.

Mr. John Lee: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Job Training Programme

Mr. McCrindle asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on progress in the nationwide implementation of the job training programme.

Mr. John Lee: My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment announced, on 9 October, a new pilot job training scheme to be tested in nine areas around the country. Pilot programmes are now in operation in all of the nine areas. There has been an enthusiastic response from training providers, and unemployed people are beginning to come forward in significant numbers.

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General whether those enrolling on the job training scheme will be regarded as unemployed for the purposes of the unemployment count.

Mr. John Lee: No. Like other trainees on Government sponsored schemes who are not entitled to benefits as an unemployed person, they will be excluded from the claimant count.

Restart Programme

Mr. McCrindle asked the Paymaster General how many long-term unemployed people have been *(a)* invited to interviews and *(b)* attended interviews as part of the Government's restart programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Lee: The latest figures available are that by 13 November 1986, 729,635 long-term unemployed people had been invited to a counselling interview as part of the restart programme. 582,386 have so far been counselled as some of the invitations relate to interviews due to take place after 13 November 1986. Of those who attended, 90 per cent. were offered the chance to apply for a job, training or other suitable opportunity.

Sex Discrimination Act (Prosecutions)

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Paymaster General how many prosecutions there have been of employers under the Sex Discrimination Act for having asked women seeking employment about their intentions on starting a family.

Mr. John Lee: The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes it generally unlawful as a matter of civil law for an employer to discriminate on the grounds of sex when recruiting employees. Discrimination in recruitment is not a criminal offence, and prosecutions cannot be brought in this respect under the Act. Rather, it is open to individuals who believe they have been discriminated against in recruitment for jobs to seek redress by making a complaint to an industrial tribunal.

Whether or not the asking of certain questions constitutes evidence of sex discrimination would be a matter for an industrial tribunal to decide, on the merits of the particular case. I regret that tribunal case statistics are not recorded at a sufficient level of detail to identify specific grounds of complaint.

Speech Therapists (Pay)

Mr. Rowe asked the Paymaster General what assessment he has made of the implications for Government policy on equal pay of the recent finding of an industrial tribunal in a case brought by three speech therapists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Lee: I assume that the cases referred to are Mrs. E. Clark *v.* Bexley Health Authority (6768/86), Dr. P. Enderby *v.* Frenchay Health Authority (8677/86) and Miss L. Kelly-Atherton *v.* South Glamorgan Health Authority (5353/86).

These cases were heard together from 17-21 November; the tribunal announced on 21 November that it was dismissing them. Since the written reasons for the tribunal's decision are not yet available, I do not feel it would be appropriate for me to comment.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General (1) if he will make a statement regarding the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed;

(2) if he will make a statement about representations made to him from community leaders regarding the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed;

(3) if he will make a statement about representations made by local community relations councils regarding the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed;

(4) if he will make a statement about representations made to him by local black and Asian representatives regarding the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed;

(5) whether the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed will be entirely voluntary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Inner City Initiatives

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to pilot any specific inner city employment initiatives directed at disadvantaged residents and their communities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Tobacco Industry

Mr. Parry asked the Paymaster General how many workers were employed in the tobacco industry at the latest date; and what was the figure in June 1979.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986]: In September 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 16,500 employees in employment in the tobacco industry in Great Britain. In June 1979 the figure was 31,400.

SCOTLAND

Dunblane Bypass

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is in a postion to announce an amendment to the line of route of the Dunblane bypass.

Mr. Michael Ancram: While my right hon. and learned Friend has no proposals to change the line of the bypass, he has decided to publish amended proposals for the junction arrangements. These will provide for a grade-separated layout at the Doune Road junction, and will no longer incorporate a junction at Old Doune Road.

Sheep (Radioactivity)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing each of the readings of radioactive caesium found in sheep and lambs in Scotland since 1 May which were in excess of 3,000 bequerels per kilogram, indicating the precise figure in each case, the date of the reading, and the approximate location.

Mr. John MacKay: The following is the information:

District	Date sample taken	Cs. 134 + Cs. 137 (Becquerels per kilogram)
Stewartry	7 July 1986	4,120
Stewartry	7 July 1986	3,068
Stewartry	8 July 1986	3,330
Stewartry	8 July 1986	3,365
Stewartry	9 July 1986	4,218
Stewartry	2 September 1986	3,370
Stewartry	8 October 1986	3,560
Cunninghame (Arran)	10 July 1986	3,203
Cunninghame (Arran)	1 August 1986	3,030
Nithsdale	9 July 1986	3,354
Nithsdale	17 September 1986	3,950
Nithsdale	17 September 1986	3,690
Kyle and Carrick	28 July 1986	3,230

Forth Road Bridge

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his timetable for responding to the engineers' report alleging danger in certain traffic conditions on the Forth Road Bridge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Ancram: The Forth Road Bridge Joint Board has full statutory responsibility for the operation of the Bridge. It is the Board's responsibility to secure its own professional advice on the integrity of the structure and to determine the action to be taken in the light of that advice.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the average cost separately for acute, chronic and geriatric beds in each of the regional health authorities in Scotland; if he will give the highest and lowest cost in each category of bed in each of the regions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The information is not available in precisely the form requested but for each of the Scottish Health Board areas the average, highest and lowest cost per in-patient week for acute, mental illness and mental handicap, and geriatric hospitals is set out in the table below.

Comparison with figures for health authorities elsewhere in the United Kingdom should be approached with caution in view of the differences in health service structure, information systems, definitions and hospital classifications between countries.

1985/86

	Cost per in-patient week (£)		
	Average	Maximum	Minimum
Argyll and Clyde			
Acute Hospitals	481	1,071	229
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	260	319	234
Geriatric Hospitals	255	305	186
Ayrshire and Arran			
Acute Hospitals	482	710	292
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	197	205	189
Geriatric Hospitals	239	287	199
Borders			
Acute Hospitals	441	600	304
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	242	242	242
Geriatric Hospitals	238	292	203
Dumfries and Galloway			
Acute Hospitals	479	641	379
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	295	295	295
Geriatric Hospitals	268	277	260
Fife			
Acute Hospitals	478	658	271
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	232	236	230
Geriatric Hospitals	370	420	304
Forth Valley			
Acute Hospitals	567	645	501
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	190	191	190
Geriatric Hospitals	270	430	236
Grampian			
Acute Hospitals	413	800	227
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	244	345	170
Geriatric Hospitals	237	293	192
Greater Glasgow			
Acute Hospitals	646	931	304
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	206	241	167
Geriatric Hospitals	293	381	208
Highland			
Acute Hospitals	565	906	334
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	220	227	213
Geriatric Hospitals	232	243	227
Lanarkshire			
Acute Hospitals	708	1,434	342

	Cost per in-patient week (£)		
	Average	*Maximum*	*Minimum*
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	239	354	169
Geriatric Hospitals	263	401	206
Lothian			
Acute Hospitals	579	805	398
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	233	264	199
Geriatric Hospitals	261	361	213
Orkney			
Acute Hospitals	529	529	529
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	No hospitals in this grouping		
Geriatric Hospitals	No hospitals in this grouping		
Shetland			
Acute Hospitals	533	533	533
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	No hospitals in this grouping		
Geriatric Hospitals	No hospitals in this grouping		
Tayside			
Acute Hospitals	486	796	279
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	251	287	226
Geriatric Hospitals	295	319	271
Western Isles			
Acute Hospitals	765	804	727
Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals	No hospitals in this grouping		
Geriatric Hospitals	220	220	220

British Nuclear Fuels plc (Handbook)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the approximate date on which he expects British Nuclear Fuels plc to make available to the public copies of the emergency handbook for the Chapelcross site; and if he will comment on the reasons why this action is not practicable sooner.

Mr. Ian Lang: I am advised that the company intends to make copies of the emergency plans for the Chapelcross site available to the public. Publication is expected within two weeks.

Householders

Mr. Maxton asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the number and percentage of households in Scotland inhabited by single adults, *(b)* the number and percentage of these single adults currently receiving housing benefit and *(c)* the number and percentage currently paying rates from earned income.

Mr. Ancram: According to the 1981 Census of Population, on 5 April 1981 there were 433,228 households in Scotland containing one person over 16 years of age, with or without others under 16. These represented 24·3 per cent. of all Scottish households. The remainder of the information requested is not available centrally.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Switchgear Industry

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the state of the high voltage switchgear industry.

Mr. Butcher: The high voltage switchgear industry is one which suffers from worldwide excess capacity. There are two United Kingdom manufacturers of switchgear of transmission voltages. In the absence of sufficient export orders an adequate home demand is necessary.

The home ordering programme is a matter for the electricity boards, but I understand that as a result of recent discussions the CEGB's future ordering intentions have been clarified and it is for the industry to plan ahead in the light of these.

We shall of course continue to give them full diplomatic and commercial support in their export efforts.

Technology 87

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make a statement on his support for the exhibition Technology 87, to be held in Tel Aviv, Israel, from 6 to 13 May 1987; and what information and guidance he is giving to British firms to encourage them to exhibit there.

Mr. Alan Clark: In October the British Overseas Trade Board offered assistance for Technology '87 under the joint venture scheme to its Area Advisory Group, British Overseas Trade Group for Israel, the sponsoring organisation. Confirmation of this offer is dependent upon the firm commitment of a minimum group of 10 companies by the end of December. As with all JVs, it is the sponsoring organisation's task to recruit and organise the British presence. Publicity for the JV has been given in "British Business."

Economic Performance (North-West)

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of which factors have determined the performance of the economy in the north-west since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Like other regions, the north-west suffered the effects of the global recession in manufacturing and consequent industrial restructuring. But it has benefited from falling inflation, lower tax rates, removal of unnecessary restrictions on business and improved incentives. These have been and remain essential features of our policy for industrial revival in the regions.

Ceramic Tiles

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which countries are the major exporters of tiles to the United Kingdom; and if he has any evidence to suggest dumping.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The major tile exporters to the United Kingdom are in the European Community, in paticular Italy and Spain. No evidence which is sufficient to warrant a complaint being submitted to the European Commission under the anti-dumping or competition rules has not yet been provided.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give figures for each of the last five years for *(a)* sales of tiles in the United Kingdom, *(b)* production of British tiles and *(c)* imports of tiles.

Mr. Butcher: I shall reply to the right hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Association of British Chambers of Commerce

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the officers of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce.

Mr. Pattie: My right hon. Friend will be meeting members of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce's economic and industrial committee this evening.

Nominee Accounts

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to prohibit the use of nominee accounts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Insider Dealing

Dr. McDonald asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list those banks currently involved in investigations by his Department into insider dealing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I am not prepared to comment on the conduct of particular investigations by inspectors whilst they are under way. I would, however, point out to the hon. Lady that all that is necessarily implied by "involvement" in an investigation under section 177 of the Financial Services Act is probable ability to give information about a contravention.

Cement

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has regarding the current levels of surplus cement and cement products in the European Community; what representations he has received concerning possible unfair trading practices by companies of other member states involved in cement production; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following information has been provided by Cembureau, the European Trade Association for the cement industry.

(1,000 tonnes)

	1985
EEC production	152,507
EEC consumption	134,259
EEC surplus	18,248

No representations have been received about unfair trading practices by companies of other member states. Representations have been received concerning subsidised imports of cement from Greece. These are being followed up vigorously in Brussels and Athens.

Copyright

Mr. Guy Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to bring forward legislation to cover the law of copyright, as it affects educational material, in the current session.

Mr. Pattie: The Government intend to reform the law of copyright on the basis of the proposals in the White Paper "Intellectual Property and Innovation"—Cmnd. 9712—including those proposals affecting educational material. A Bill will be introduced when the parliamentary timetable permits.

NEDC (Research and Development)

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the National Economic Development Council to discuss research and development funding.

Mr. Giles Shaw [*pursuant to the reply*, 1 December 1986; c. 434]: I attended a meeting of the National Economic Development Council on Wednesday 3 December, although R & D was not discussed on this occasion.

The council has from time to time discussed research and development funding and my right hon. Friend and I anticipate that it will be covered in future meetings since R & D is an issue which is of great importance in improving United Kingdom industrial performance.

Statistics

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, in respect of the statistics kept and published by his Department, he will publish in the *Official Report* any changes since 1979 in *(a)* the statistical series which are published, including those which have been introduced and those which have been dropped, *(b)* the basis on which any elements in the statistics are estimated, calculated or presented, *(c)* the periods over which, and the dates on which the series are collected or published and *(d)* any other respects in the ways in which the statistics are collected, recorded presented, evaluated or published; and if he will explain the reasons for any such changes.

Mr. Alan Clark [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 December 1986; c. 634-35]: Changes in the basis of compilation, presentation and publication of statistical series are made from time to time in response to the Government's requirements for statistical information, changes in the administration systems on which some series are based, the development of new statistical techniques and technological developments affecting the compilation and dissemination of statistical data. When such changes are made they are fully documented in the relevant statistical publication.

During the period in question the most major and widespread change to statistical series has been the change from the 1968 to the 1980 standard industrial classification and the rebasing of index numbers on to 1980 = 100. In addition, the more significant changes to this Department's statistical series are listed in table 1. Tables 2 and 3 show statistical inquiries which have been discontinued or introduced since 1979.

TABLE 1

Regular statistical series with significant changes since 1979

Series	*Nature of changes*	*References*
Quarterly sales by Manufacturers	1981 — major restructuring to exclude small firms from the Quarterly Sales Inquiry	Individual Business Monitors
	1986—minor restructuring. Changes to inquiry cut-offs. Two industries discontinued and five quarterly inquiries made annual	British Business 16 August 1986
	1986 — introduction of periodic topping-up inquiry to improve the estimates of quarterly sales	British Business 16 August 1986
Quarterly Stocks	1986—coverage of results expanded to encompass all industries	Prime Minister's Review Report[1], Press Notices, and British Business 26 September 1986
Quarterly Capital Expenditure	1986—coverage of results expanded to encompass all industries	Prime Minister's Review Report[1], Press Notices, and British Business September 1986
Biennial Investment Intentions	1982—frequency reduced from triennial	Rayner Report on DTI Statistical Services[2]
Annual Census of Production (Manufacturing)	Fewer forms in most years due to intensified sampling	Prime Minister's Review Report[1], Business Monitors (PA series)
Annual Census of Production (Construction)	Fewer questions in most years. Fewer forms in most years due to intensified sampling	Prime Minister's Review Report[1], Business Monitors (PA series)
Miscellaneous Monthly Inquiries	1981—reduction in number of monthly forms despatched	
Monthly Inquiry into Iron Castings	1983 — converted from monthly to quarterly basis	British Business 19 July 1985
Retailing Inquiry	1981—the pattern was switched from a regular annual "full" inquiry to an alternating pattern of "full" and "slim-line" inquiries	British Business 27 February 1981
	1982 — revised grossing methodology introduced	Business Monitors SDQ25, 1982
Service Trades Inquiry	1981—frequency reduced from annual to biennial	British Business 27 February 1981
	1986—inquiry extended and strengthened	Statistical News, February 1986
Property Inquiry	1981—frequency changed from annual to biennial	British Business 27 February 1981
Quarterly Inquiry into Steel Stocks and Consumption	1984 — reduced coverage to eliminate very small contributors. Number of questions reduced	Prime Minister's Review Report[1]
Monthly carpet Production	1982—change of data source	
	1983 — replacement of actual sales figures by an index	
Monthly Footwear Inquiry	1981 — introduction of monthly information on orders	
Engineering Sales and Orders	1983 — detailed quarterly publication suspended	
	1984 — detailed monthly publication suspended	
Overseas Trade Analysed in Terms of Industries	1983 — change from 1968 to 1980 Standard Industrial Classification	British Business 7 October 1983
Monthly Credit Business	1986 — inclusion of running account agreements and credit advanced on bank credit cards to improve coverage of credit statistics	Business Monitor SDM6, January to March 1986
Quarterly Assets and Liabilities of Credit Grantors	1983 — coverage reduced to exclude companies which became part of the monetary sector at the end of 1982	Business Monitor SDQ7 for third quarter 1983
Annual Balance Sheet for Insurance Companies	1984 — full balance sheet introduced replacing assets only to fill gaps in national and balance of payments accounts	British Business 6 June 1986
Annual Overseas Direct Investment and Earnings	1984 — inclusion of oil and insurance companies to improve coverage of direct investment in the balance of payments	British Business 6 June 1986
Triennial Benchmark Inquiry into Expenditure and Employment in Industrial Research and Development	1986 — frequency reduced to quadrennial with annual sample surveys to provide more up-to-date information on R and D.	
Company Accounts Analysis	1982 — expanded to cover small and unlisted companies	Business Monitor MA3, twelfth issue February 1982

Series	*Nature of changes*	*References*
Company Liquidity Survey	1985 — results grossed up to provide estimates covering all large industrial and commercial companies	British Business 31 May 1985
Insolvency Statistics	1980—Monthly estimates introduced	British Business 22 August 1980
United Kingdom Visible Trade	1983—rebasing onto 1980	British Business 23 September 1983
	1981 — revised seasonal adjustment procedures	Economic Trends February 1981

Notes:

[1] All regular surveys to businesses are reviewed once every five years under an instruction from the Prime Minister in 1981. The review reports are published.

[2] An article in British Business (27 February 1981) described in general terms the effects on DTI statistics of implementing the Rayner Review.

Table 2

Regular statistical series discontinued since 1979

Quarterly survey of UK company sources and uses of funds	(1980)
Monthly inquiry into export prices	(1980)
Monthly rubber stocks and consumption	(1980)
Quarterly inquiry into catering turnover	(1980)
Quarterly inquiry into motor traders' turnover	(1980)
Annual and quarterly series on international trade and credit extended and received and direct exports	(1982)
Monthly inquiry into made-up clothing	(1985)
Monthly admissions and takings for cinemas	(1985)
Quarterly inquiry into oils and fats in soapmaking	(1985)
Quarterly inquiry into raw jute	(1985)
Monthly inquiry into paper and board	(1985)
Monthly inquiry into waste paper	(1985)
Quarterly inquiry into pulp	(1985)
Quarterly inquiry into exports of books and periodicals	(1985)
Annual inquiry into the film exhibition industry	(1985)

Table 3

Regular statistical series introduced since 1979

Quarterly inquiry into engineering sales and orders	(1981)
All stocks price index	(1981)
Annual income and expenditure of pension funds	(1982)
Quinquennial inquiry into private generation of electricity	(1983)
Aerospace and electronics cost indices, simplified version	(1983)
Annual income and expenditure of insurance companies	(1984)

Regional Assistance

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his budgeted figure for payments in *(a)* regional development grant and *(b)* regional selective assistance; and what is his best estimate of the amounts due.

Mr. Giles Shaw [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986]: Taken together, my Department's Supply Estimate and Winter Supplementary Estimate provisions for payments of regional development grant and regional selective assistance in 1986-87 are £243·8 million and £93·4 million respectively. I am not yet able to give a clear estimate of the amounts due.

Rural Investment and Employment

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received concerning the encouragement of investment in rural areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have been asked to reply.

I am not aware of any recent representations of this nature.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his policy in relation to increasing *(a)* investment and *(b)* employment in rural areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have been asked to reply.

The Government's general strategy is designed to provide economic conditions conductive to investment and employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas. In relation to rural areas in England, the Secretary of State is advised and assisted by the Development Commission and their agency, the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas. The Government have raised the Development Commission's grant-in-aid by about a fifth in real terms since 1983 in recognition of the part the commission plays in stimulating investment and providing jobs through, for example, financing the provision of small factory units in keeping with the character of rural areas. The commission seeks increasingly to involve and encourage the private sector through support for local enterprise agencies, close co-operation with financial institutions and pump-priming investment.

Shipbuilding Intervention Fund Support

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under what circumstances shipbuilding intervention fund support is now available to private sector yards; and what are his proposals for the future.

Mr. Giles Shaw [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986]: Under the fifth directive, shipbuilding intervention fund support for merchant shipbuilders could be given only in return for restructuring of the industry, which faced considerable excess capacity. Therefore, the yards that were privatised or are now being returned to the private sector by British Shipbuilders are regarded as being taken out of the sector eligible for intervention fund support. The only circumstances in which the Commission agreed that it would consider cases for intervention fund support for the privatised yards was for reasons related to the maintenance of defence capacity. Other private sector yards are eligible. We expect the position on eligibility to continue under the sixth directive.

Regional Aid

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans for any further moratorium on the payment of regional development grant; and if he will give details of any such plans.

Mr. Giles Shaw [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986]: The Government's projections for expenditure on regional development grants will be dealt with in the public expenditure White Paper to be published in January.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Research Assistants

27. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Lord Privy Seal what representations he has received regarding the number of Members' research assistants currently holding House of Commons passes.

Mr. Biffen: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Wansdyke (Mr. Thompson) on 19 November 1986 which indicated that 523 research assistants held temporary and full Palace of Westminster photo-identity passes, and broke these down by nationality. I have had no other representations recently.

ENVIRONMENT

Flues

Mr. Cash asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to amend the building regulations to make it mandatory that a class 1 flue be provided in all new houses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Building regulations are made for the purposes of health, safety, conservation of fuel and power and the provision of access for disabled people. I do not consider that there is sufficient justification for these purposes to require in the regulations provision of a class 1 flue in all new homes.

Urban Programme Projects

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the criteria laid down under the urban programme concerning projects sponsored by religious and cultural groups; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: All urban programme projects should adhere to ministerial guidelines for the UP as a whole, copies of which are in the Library of the House. Support through the UP is not normally given to projects which serve an exclusively religious or cultural purpose.

Travellers (Greater London)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals his Department is considering for the provision of family-sized caravan sites for travellers in the Greater London area; and what locations are under consideration.

Mr. Tracey: In Greater London, responsibility for the provision and operation of travellers' sites rests with borough councils. My right hon. Friend has powers to make grants towards the capital costs of providing sites. Applications currently under consideration are: LB Bromley — Star Lane, St. Paul's Cray; LB Croydon — Beddington Farm; LB Ealing — Bashley Road; LB Hackney — Gransden Avenue/London Lane; LB Haringey — Wood Green Common; LB Newham — Clays Lane; LB Richmond — Bishops Grove, Hampton; LB Sutton — Carshalton Road; LB Southwark — Ilderton Lane; LB Waltham Forest — Folly Lane; LB Wandsworth — Trewint Street.

In addition, my right hon. Friend has before him two planning applications by the London borough of Brent for sites at the Brook centre and Vale Farm.

Housing Waiting Lists

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many people are currently on local authority housing waiting lists *(a)* in each of the London boroughs and *(b)* in each of the parliamentary constituencies in the London borough of Southwark.

Mr. Tracey: I will answer this question shortly.

Radioactive Waste Disposal

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what reports or forecasts have been received by his Department on the estimated total cost of payments of compensation and purchases of property in the vicinity of sites under consideration for radioactive waste disposal; if the cost of such payments and purchases has been taken into account in examining the best practicable environmental options for disposal of such waste; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Apart from the compensation scheme it has already announced in the areas affected by their current site investigations, I understand that UK NIREX Ltd. is considering the possibility of further measures. Although provisional estimates of the costs of possible measures have been shown to my Department, NIREX has not yet made any firm estimate of the total costs of compensation and house purchase. No account was taken of compensation measures in the study of best practicable environmental options, where the costing figures are in any case under review.

Peak park Planning Board

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many people have been appointed by Derbyshire county council to serve on the Peak Park planning board; and how many of them live in the board's area.

Mr. Waldegrave: Eight members of the Peak Park joint planning board are appointed by Derbyshire county council. One of these lives within the national park.

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money has been given by his Department to the Peak Park planning board over the last four years.

Mr. Waldegrave: The amounts of national park supplementary grant paid to local authorities in respect of the Peak Park joint planning board in the last four years are:

	£
1983-84	1,492,300
1984-85	1,566,300
1985-86	1,644,400
1986-87	1,828,600

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to review the way in which the Peak Park planning board is operating; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend has no plans for such a review.

Cornish Unit Housing

Mrs. Golding asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the *(a)* total cost and *(b)* average cost of bringing the Cornish unit houses designated under the Housing Defects Act 1984 up to standard.

Mr. John Patten: Comprehensive information on repairs already carried out to Cornish unit houses is not yet available. However, we expect most of the privately owned properties to be repairable under the housing defects legislaion within the expenditure limits of £14,000 — for houses with one storey PRC elements — and £16,000 — for two-storey PRC elements. Local authorities will need to reach their own view on the renovation work needed to properties in their own stock.

Mrs. Golding asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many building societies are either refusing to give mortgages or being highly selective in the giving of mortgages on Cornish unit houses designated under the Housing Defects Act 1984 and subsequently repaired; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I understand that a survey carried out by the Building Societies Association of the 30 largest societies, representing over 90 per cent. of the industry's assets, showed that all, save one, would consider lending on properties designated under the housing defects legislation and repaired by a method approved under the National House Building Council's scheme. The Building Societies Association has itself endorsed that scheme. We look to smaller, local societies to take the same approach.

Mrs. Golding asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many Cornish unit houses have been designated under the Housing Defects Act 1984.

Mr. John Patten: Some 23,000 Cornish unit houses are designated under the housing defects legislation in England.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what criteria the London residuary body adopt for arriving at a current market value;

(2) what criteria the London residuary body adopts for arriving at an open market value.

Dr. Boyson: The criteria for current or open market values are matters for the London residuary body and its professional advisers. Residuary bodies are subject to the duty imposed by section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 that they must not dispose of land for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained, except with the consent of the Secretary of State.

Secondary Mortgage Market

Dr. McDonald asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the working group examining protection for borrowers in the emerging secondary mortgage market to complete its report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I expect to receive shortly a report from the secondary mortgage market working group.

Council Housing Estates (Demolition and Sale)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to provide for his consent to be required for the demolition of a council housing estate, and sale of the land.

Mr. John Patten: I will answer this question shortly.

Portsdown Park Housing Estate, Portsmouth

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the value of grants Portsmouth city council has received for *(a)* the original construction of the Portsdown park housing estate and *(b)* capitalised repairs since 1970.

Mr. John Patten: I will answer this question shortly.

London (Barrier Flood Plan)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what arrangements he has made to maintain the former Greater London council's post barrier flood plan;

(2) why the Greater London council's flood control centre has been closed;

(3) which authority is responsible for operating the Greater London co-ordination centre in the Kingsway; and what financial and staffing resources are available to operate it.

Mr. Chope: I will answer these questions shortly.

Housing Shortage

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the level of the current housing shortage.

Mr. Tracey: There is no overall shortage of housing. We regularly receive representations about housing policy from a large number of bodies, some of which relate to shortages of housing, particularly for rent, in high pressure areas such as parts of London and the south-east. We have taken initiatives which will enable the private sector to play an increasing role in remedying such shortages.

"Faith in the City"

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he has taken in the light of the report "Faith in the City", on matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Ridley: I will answer this question shortly.

Homeless Persons

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many persons have been homeless each year since 1979, including the latest figures for 1986.

Mr. Tracey: The number of households accepted as homeless by local authorities in England is as follows:

(000's)

Year	*Households*
1979	57
1980	63
1981	70
1982	75
1983	78
1984	83
1985	94
1986[1]	51

[1](1st half).

Note The method of collection changed during 1980 for non-metropolitan local authorities and during 1982 for metropolitan local authorities.

Portsmouth City Council (Telephone Call)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what request as to the revelation of the contents of the telephone call to the leader of Portsmouth city council on 4 March was made in the course of the telephone call.

Mr. John Patten: I will answer this question shortly.

Council House Sales

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all local authority improvement for sale schemes for which Exchequer subsidy has been paid during the last six years; and if he will specify for each scheme *(a)* the number of units of accommodation improved for sale *(b)* whether these units were acquired by the local authority for improvement for sale, or previously let by the local authority under secure tenancies *(c)* the level of subsidy paid per unit included in the scheme *(d)* the capital receipt to the local authority from the sale of the properties and *(e)* the value per unit of improvements.

Mr. Tracey [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986]: The available data on local authority improvement for sale schemes, toward which contribution has been paid, are set out below. Data are collected by dwellings rather than schemes, which may contain any number of dwellings, as contribution is payable separately for each dwelling rather than in aggregate for a scheme. Information on whether these units were acquired for IFS or were previously let as secure tenancies is not available on a directly comparable basis, and would be disproportionately expensive to provide. Information is not available on the proportion of the total qualifying cost of works to each dwelling attributable to works of improvement.

	1981-82			*1982-83*			*1983-84*			*1984-85*			*1985-86*		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
1. Bristol	—	—	—	5	3,867	63,250	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Wokingham	—	—	—	1	4,875	28,500	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Peterborough	—	—	—	2	15	17,000	7	823	53,500	6	2,473	67,450	—	—	—
4. Crewe and Nantwich	—	—	—	2	670	30,700	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Halton	—	—	—	1	3,802	16,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6. Warrington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	4,875	24,500	—	—	—
7. Hartlepool	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	2,895	114,500	7	4,131	147,000	—	—	—
8. Carrick	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	4,801	112,050	—	—	—
9. Carlisle	—	—	—	3	1,935	41,450	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10. Erewash	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2,936	14,450	—	—	—
11. South Derbyshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	1,549	45,550	1	1,218	11,500	—	—	—
12. Plymouth	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	93	20,105	2	2,639	45,500	1	1,527	22,500
13. Mid Devon	1	1,420	19,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14. Torbay	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	4,875	147,000	—	—	—
15. Torridge	—	—	—	—	—	—	25	4,875	336,750	—	—	—	—	—	—
16. Chester le Street	1	3,250	6,500	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
17. Darlington	—	—	—	2	533	18,000	1	1,090	10,000	3	3,538	30,300	—	—	—
18. Easington	—	—	—	6	704	112,648	2	784	36,800	—	—	—	—	—	—
19. Wear Valley	3	1,080	25,250	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20. Lewes	—	—	—	2	1,405	46,500	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
21. Braintree	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1,980	21,000	1	783	23,000	1	2,273	21,750
22. Thurrock	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	60	3,234	1,095,000	59	4,895	1,130,617
23. Gloucester	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	3,126	16,839	2	1,507	35,000	2	2,306	36,500
24. Southampton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4,875	23,000	—	—	—
25. Leominster	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1,472	21,750	2	1,715	49,000	—	—	—
26. Malvern Hills	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	4,097	59,510	—	—	—
27. Worcester	—	—	—	3	1,892	51,450	1	2,929	17,500	—	—	—	—	—	—
28. Wychavon	—	—	—	10	2,898	188,080	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
29. Scunthorpe	—	—	—	1	1,120	8,150	—	—	—	2	1,779	23,000	—	—	—
30. Shepway	—	—	—	2	1,686	35,500	2	948	38,250	—	—	—	—	—	—
31. Blackburn	3	2,262	22,060	6	3,274	48,250	1	4,519	6,500	3	3,524	28,800	2	4,035	21,250
32. Burnley	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4,508	5,000	10	4,492	67,400	1	4,875	5,500
33. Hyndburn	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4,581	23,750	3	2,883	30,250
34. Pendle	3	2,609	21,500	11	2,782	81,700	8	2,088	59,200	8	3,263	70,950	—	—	—
35. Charnwood	1	619	15,000	5	1,942	70,500	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
36. Norwich	3	538	52,500	3	581	52,500	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
37. Blyth Valley	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	4,384	68,000	—	—	—	—	—	—
38. Wansbeck	—	—	—	2	3,191	27,026	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
39. Scarborough	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4,875	16,500	7	4,391	114,950	1	4,875	16,500
40. Ashfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3,078	36,200	5	4,800	78,100	1	2,108	14,950
41. Nottingham	—	—	—	1	4,875	11,950	1	4,875	10,750	—	—	—	—	—	—
42. Vale of White Horse	—	—	—	1	4,875	32,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
43. Bridgenorth	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	3,103	76,500	1	3,122	14,000	—	—	—
44. The Wrekin	1	1,394	14,300	9	3,638	122,200	5	3,345	84,166	7	3,461	74,600	—	—	—
45. Stafford	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2,267	32,000	—	—	—	—	—	—
46. Ipswich	—	—	—	4	3,251	57,750	4	3,203	69,750	6	3,892	109,500	4	3,708	96,000
47. St. Edmondsbury	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4,875	21,000	—	—	—	—	—	—
48. Waveney	—	—	—	1	3,250	16,750	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
49. Rugby	3	325	36,500	1	1,021	12,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
50. Bolton	4	4,831	41,050	9	4,632	96,250	23	4,520	256,708	39	4,624	474,750	17	4,875	211,000
51. Bury	—	—	—	8	3,550	76,607	7	2,724	100,160	3	3,350	40,850	—	—	—
52. Manchester	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	22	4,840	362,990	1	4,875	16,250
53. Oldham	1	3,250	10,550	6	2,993	58,900	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
54. Stockport	1	297	14,950	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1,537	9,000	—	—	—

	1981-82			1982-83			1983-84			1984-85			1985-86		
	1	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*3*
55 Tameside				2	2,960	24,700									
56 Wigan										8	4,445	99,725			
57 Knowsley										30	4,875	588,450	1	42	18,000
58 Sefton	2	2,886	15,600	1	2,984	8,000									
59 Newcastle-upon-Tyne	19	4,150	287,150	36	4,345	532,850	8	4,741	121,630	12	2,734	157,500	3	2,294	39,250
60 South Tyneside	2	37	16,000	3	827	32,250	2	2,477	32,000	1	76	16,000			
61 Birmingham	11	2,693	100,375	25	3,101	271,320	5	2,707	60,655	2	3,088	25,250	1	1,885	11,850
62 Walsall	2	835	26,000	7	4,029	83,500	3	3,688	38,000	15	4,176	194,500	1	1,125	12,000
63 Wolverhampton	20	4,172	168,300	8	2,294	73,250	2	3,083	23,250				2	2,625	25,000
64 Leeds	2	1,907	18,100												
65 Brent	—	—	—	5	3,199	145,500	18	2,664	591,500						
66 Ealing							5	3,250	117,973	2	6,500	48,900			
67 Newham				1	1,851	16,000				2	2,060	44,200			
68 Waltham Forest							4	5,696	101,000	5	5,892	148,000	3	2,219	81,000

Column 1. Number of units towards which contribution was paid.
Column 2. Average contribution per unit.
Column 3. Market value of units (see note).
Note: In certain circumstances local authorities may sell improved properties at a discount. For the purposes of calculating the contribution payable, however, the market value rather than the selling price is used. Data on discounts given on these sales are not available.

WALES

Education (South Glamorgan)

15. **Mr. Grist** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to that proportion of South Glamorgan county's capital expenditure which was allocated to education over the last two years; and how this compares with similar expenditure by other Welsh local authorities.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The proportion of South Glamorgan county council's capital expenditure allocated to education was 16·5 per cent. in 1984-85 and 5·5 per cent. in 1985-86. This was a lower proportion than that allocated to education by other Welsh counties.

Health Authorities

16. **Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for Wales on what basis he intends to invite individuals and organisations to submit nominations for membership of health authorities in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: As required by the National Health Service Act 1977, nominations for appointments to health authorities in Wales will continue to be canvassed from health related professional organisations, the University of Wales, the health authorities themselves and other statutory and non-statutory organisations concerned with the provision of health services. To further widen the field, occasional press advertisements will invite members of the public or organisations not directly approached to make applications for lay membership.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales why, in the Welsh office circular CT/5275/86 of 28 June to chairmen and general managers of Welsh health authorities, comments were not invited on the recommendation of the optional appraisal from 14 July.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Public consultation was deferred pending the findings of a review of psychiatric service provision in north Wales which are expected shortly.

Community Paediatricians

17. **Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many health authorities in Wales employ consultant community paediatricians.

Mr. Mark Robinson: There are 37 consultant paediatricians, but no consultant community paediatricians, working in the hospital service in Wales.

Psychiatric Services

18. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions, following the publication of the recent Health Advisory Service report, his Department has had with the Gwynedd health authority concerning the improvement of psychiatric services in the county; and whether he is taking any direct steps to ensure an improvement in these services in Gwynedd.

Mr. Mark Robinson: My right hon. Friend is anxious that there should be speedy action to remedy the deficiencies in services for the mentally ill in Gwynedd highlighted in the recent HAS report. A team of senior Welsh Office officials met officials of the health and social services authorities in north Wales on 28 November to review their progress in responding to the report. There will be further meetings to monitor the situation and to discuss proposals for developing services for mentally ill people in the county.

Cervical Cytology

19. **Dr. Roger Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will state the number of medical pathologists employed full-time for cervical cytology slide interpretation by each health authority in Wales; and what was the comparable figures two years ago.

Mr. Mark Robinson: A range of technically or medically qualified people is involved in slide interpretation in addition to medical pathologists. At 31 December 1985 there were 45·33 whole time equivalent posts dealing with slide interpretation in Wales; the equivalent figure for 1983 was 40·36. The figures are as follows. The number of whole time equivalent posts dealing with slide interpretation in each health authority at 31 December 1985 and two years earlier were:

	1983	*1985*
Clwyd	5·50	7·00
East Dyfed	2·00	1·40
Gwent	9·36	9·11
Gwynedd	4·20	3·60
Mid Glamorgan	8·05	8·55
Pembrokeshire[1]	—	—
Powys[1]	—	—

	1983	*1985*
South Glamorgan	7·33	9·25
West Glamorgan	3·92	6·42
	40·36	45·33

No laboratories in these areas.

Trunk Roads

20. **Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many miles of dual carriageway trunk road he expects will have been opened in Wales in 1986.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Approximately nine miles, comprising the A55 bypasses of Holywell and Bodelwyddan.

Local Authority Housing

21. **Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out his criteria for funding of the building of new council houses in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Local authorities are free to determine their own priorities for housing investment within the resources available to them. However, in announcing their housing capital allocations on 26 November, my right hon. Friend again stressed the priority he attaches to the renovation of the housing stock.

Beef

22. **Sir Raymond Gower** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with farming unions in Wales regarding the future of the beef variable premium; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I and my officials have met the farming unions in Wales on several occasions on which the future of the beef variable premium has been discussed. The Agriculture Council is considering proposals for reform of the beef regime including a Community-wide premium scheme which would replace our variable beef premium. We are pressing for arrangements which will give adequate and effective support to our industry.

Sir Raymond Gower asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement concerning the present state of beef production in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The beef market in Wales remains weak and the 1986 June census results record a further marginal decline in the beef breeding herd in Wales. In the last marketing year, beef producers in Wales benefited by £4·9 million under the beef variable premium scheme, £3·5 million under the suckler cow premium scheme and over £7 million in hill livestock compensatory allowances.

Labour Statistics

23. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will now answer questions about forecasts of the level of unemployment in particular constituencies in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: No. It has not been the practice of this or previous Governments to forecast levels of unemployment.

Valuation Panels

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the clerks of the local valuation panels in Wales, indicating which of these are competent to deal with their work through the medium of the Welsh language; and what is the policy of his Department in relation to these panels undertaking their business through the medium of the Welsh language.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The clerks of the local valuation panels in Wales are as follows:

LVP	*Clerk*
Clwyd	Mr. A. J. Cogher
Dyfed	Mr. D. O. Evans
Gwent & Powys	Mr. H. F. Frowen
Gwynedd	Mr. D. Pritchard Jones
Mid & South Glamorgan	Mr. B. McCarthy
West Glamorgan	Mr. D. A. Richards

Messrs. D. O. Evans and D. Pritchard Jones are competent to deal with their work through the medium of the Welsh language. It is for each panel to decide its policy in relation to undertaking its business through the medium of the Welsh language. All Welsh LVPs may use the services of an interpreter whenever necessary.

Paediatric Cardiac

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will detail plans to set up a department of paediatric cardiothoracic surgery in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: It is planned to develop a paediatric cardiac unit in Cardiff. There are no plans to further develop paediatric thoracic surgery at present.

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the hospitals in Wales where paediatric cardiothoracic surgery is carried out on a regular basis.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Paediatric cardiac surgery is carried out at the University hospital of Wales, Cardiff and thoracic surgery at Llandough hospital, Penarth.

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will enumerate the consultant cardio respiratory surgeries at hospitals in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: There are three consultant cardio thoracic surgeons who are based at Llandough hospital, Penarth.

Paediatric Cardiologists

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will detail the locations of consultant paediatric cardiologists in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: There is a locum consultant paediatric cardiologist at the University hospital of Wales, Cardiff where South Glamorgan health authority is presently seeking to make a permanent appointment.

Private Health Care

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales what consultations he has had on private health care in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: No. I have not undertaken any formal consultations on this matter.

Acute, Chronic and Geriatric Beds

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the average cost separately for acute, chronic and geriatric beds in Wales; if he will give the highest and lowest cost in each category of bed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Information is not collected centrally in this form. The cost returns submitted by health authorities to the Department show average costs per in-patient day for hospitals of different types but do not distinguish between differing categories of beds within those hospitals.

Copies of the Department's annual publication "Welsh costing Returns" which summarise the information collected from health authorities are held in the Library.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what policy guidelines have been issued by his office to public departments and authorities in Wales concerning correspondence with individuals or local authorities through the medium of the Welsh language.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The use of Welsh in correspondence is a matter for each public department and authority. The Welsh Office replies in Welsh to all correspondence received in that language.

Homelessness

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales what guidance he has given to housing authorities in Wales on the training of homelessness officers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: We have issued a code of guidance to local authorities in Wales on the discharge of their responsibility towards homeless people. A copy is in the Library. The Housing Management Advisory Panel for Wales has advised housing authorities to give appropriate training to their homelessness officers.

TRANSPORT

M1 (Accident)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Transport what period of time elapsed from the complete closure to the reopening of the northbound carriageway north of junction 16 on the M1 motorway between London and Wakefield on Friday 28 November.

Mr. Moore: The northbound carriageway of the motorway was closed completely at 05.52 for a period of 4½ hours. A single lane was open between 10.19 and 19.45 and a further lane until 11.00 on Saturday 29 November when the motorway was fully open to traffic.

M1 (Contra-flow Systems)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many contra-flow systems were working on 1 December between London and Wakefield, northbound and southbound; what are their locations, how long they will be operating; and on what estimated dates they will be terminated.

Mr. Moore: The information requested is as follows:

Site	*Location of contraflow*	*Start date*	*Programmed completion date*
M1—J31-33	Both carriageways	6 October 1986	17 December 1986

M1 (Repairs)

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many separate sections of engineering works, carriageway repairs and maintenance were being carried out on 1 December on the first 60 miles of the M1 motorway, south of Wakefield towards London, in places where speed restrictions applied.

Mr. Moore: Speed restrictions applied at three sites as follows:

Site	*Location of restriction*	*Type or restriction*
J29-30	Both carriageways	Advisory 50 mph limit
J31-33	Both carriageways	Advisory 50 mph limit
J35-36	Both carriageways	Advisory 50 mph limit

Bristol Channel (Rescue Facilities)

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to seek to increase rescue facilities and lifeboat cover in the Bristol Channel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No. My Department has no plans to increase the cover of rescue facilities in the Bristol Channel. The overall level of air and sea search and rescue capability in the area does not give rise for concern.

Lifeboat cover is of course a matter for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, with which my Department has agreed terms of co-operation. These include the reporting of changes of deployment and it is understood that a replacement for the recently withdrawn lifeboat at Ilfracombe is expected to be available early in 1987.

Vehicles (Owner Identification)

Mr. J. Enoch Powell asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects that the ownership of D registration vehicles will become available for identification by the police.

Mr. Moore: Details of the registered keepers of new vehicles are passed to the police national computer within 15-20 days of registration taking place.

Racal-Decca Navigator (Financing)

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether the arrangements he has made to

transfer the financing of the Racal-Decca chain of navigational transmitters to the general lighthouse fund include provision for reducing the cost of renting the on-ship equipment to those users whose rents currently include a charge for the use of the transmitters.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The arrangements that are under negotiation between the company and the General Lighthouse Authorities do not contain a specific provision of this sort. But (as envisaged when the arrangements were agreed in principle between the company and my Department) Racal-Decca is not informing its customers of the reductions in hiring charges for its Navigator receivers that will be effective from 1 January next. For example, the annual rent for the Mk 21, which is the model in widest use, will be reduced from £1,360 to £800. Moreover, models which hitherto have been available only for rent will be offered for sale at prices that compare favourably with current rental charges. Whether sold or rented, these receivers will be in free and direct competition in the United Kingdom market with other manufacturers' products.

Thames Crossing

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport what studies his Department has recently undertaken into the feasibility and effects of an additional crossing of the Thames at *(a)* Blackwall or *(b)* another location in the Greenwich area.

Mr. Moore: The only new crossing of this part of the Thames envisaged by my Department is the proposed east London river crossing, now at public inquiry. The Department has made available to the inquiry its assessment of the engineering feasibility and relevance in transport terms of various alternatives proposed by objectors including a new tunnel at Blackwall.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Gale asked the Secretary of State for Transport what maximum net weight of aerosol container he expects to allow to travel unescorted through the proposed Channel tunnel.

Mr. David Mitchell: Under the Channel fixed link concession agreement, it is for the concessionaires to develop rules for the transport of dangerous goods through the Channel tunnel and to submit these for the approval of the Anglo-French intergovernmental commission. To date, no such proposed rules have been submitted. If and when they are, the safety authority will advise the intergovernmental commission on what categories of dangerous goods should be permitted to travel through the Channel tunnel, in what quantities and under what conditions.

Level Crossing Barriers

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from individuals and organisations regarding the use of non skirted level crossing barriers by British Rail.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have received a small number of representations, from individuals and organisations, since 1981 when a revision of the Department's Requirements permitted the railways to install full-width barriers without skirts, or to remove the skirts from some existing barriers. Each representation has been considered on its merits.

Buses

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress to date in bus deregulation in south-east Hampshire.

Mr. David Mitchell: Local bus operators and Hampshire county council have worked hard on the transition to deregulation. As with any major change there have been teething problems, but I have no doubt that these will be resolved, and, in the longer term, competition will produce benefits for the public.

London Regional Transport

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what consultations have taken place with London boroughs in drawing up London Regional Transport's 1987-88 business plan.

Mr. David Mitchell: This is a matter for London Regional Transport since consultation is not required by statute.

Road Studies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish the findings of the four London road assessment studies.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to publish the consultants' reports on the four corridor studies in the London area; and at what price these reports will be available to members of the public.

Mr. Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will now publish the corridor studies report, together with all evidence and data available to the consultants who produced it.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on 2 December at column *587*. The price depends on the final production cost.

London Underground

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the projected forecast for operated mileage on the London Underground for 1986-87.

Mr. David Mitchell: 30·6 milllion miles, as given in the current published "Annual Business Plan of London Regional Transport".

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give details of steps being taken to combat crime and violence on the London Underground system.

Mr. David Mitchell: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) on 28 November.

Transport Policies, London

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to respond to the transport policies for London sent to him in September 1986 by the London Strategic Policy Unit.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have already done so.

Public Transport, London

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations have been made to his Department on the re-introduction of train services in London.

Mr. David Mitchell: Between 1 June 1982 and 5 December 1986 this Department received four representations about the re-introduction of train services in London. Three concerned the line which British Rail propose to re-open between Farringdon and Blackfriars stations via the Snow Hill tunnel. The other concerned the Finsbury park to Alexandra palace line which was closed in 1954.

London Coach Terminals

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport when the inquiry into London coach terminals will be held.

Mr. David Mitchell: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler) on 17 November.

Shipping (Lights and Navigational Aids)

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the light dues paid by merchant shipping using United Kingdom ports is devoted to the provision of lights and other aids to the navigation of ships in the Irish Republic; and what information he has as to whether similar subsidy arrangements for navigational aids exist with or between any other member countries of the European Community.

Mr. Michael Spicer [*pursuant to the reply*, 1 December 1986]: Navigational aids to shipping around the coasts of the Republic of Ireland are provided by local lighthouse authorities, for example, harbour boards, within their areas of responsibility; by the Commissioners of Irish Lights, outside those areas; and by the Irish Fisheries Board, in respect of the Hibernian chain of the Racal-Decca Navigator system. The finances of the local lighthouse authorities and the Irish Fisheries Board are not matters for my right hon. Friend. The Commissioners' expenditure, however is subject to my right hon. Friend's aproval, since it is met from the general lighthouse fund, which is derived chiefly from light dues paid by shipping in the United Kingdom. But the costs incurred by the Commissioners in the Republic are not identified in the fund's accounts; moreover, light dues levied in the Republic are also paid into the fund, and the Irish Government have undertaken to make a supplementary payment to it.

I am not aware of similar arrangements between other members of the European Community, nor is there any such arrangement between the United Kingdom and a member.

I will write to my hon. Friend to say why it is not possible to say what proportion of the light dues collected in the United Kingdom ports is used in this way.

A19 (Crash Barriers)

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to put crash barriers on the central reservation of the A19 particularly where it passes through urban areas.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I visited Cleveland on 5 December. I am giving urgent consideration to the provision of central reserve barriers on the A19, particularly in the urban areas of the county.

Drink-driving

Mr. David Penhaligon asked the Secretary of State for Transport for the most recent three years for which statistics are available, what was the percentage of car drivers killed in motor accidents who had at the time a level of alcohol in their blood which exceeded the legal limit.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Drivers killed in Great Britain: percentage over the legal blood alcohol limit

	Percentage
1983	31
1984	26
1985	23

These figures cover drivers of all motor vehicles other than motorcycles.

Full details are available in "Road Accidents Great Britain 1985: The Casualty Report". A copy is available in the Library.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

School Closures

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the proposals for school closures or reorganisations he has received from local education authorities which are outstanding for *(a)* 15 months or more, *(b)* 12 months or more, *(c)* nine months or more, and *(d)* six months or more and *(e)* three months or more, respectively; and when he expects to reach a decision in each case.

Mr. Dunn: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Leeds LEA

Mr. Batiste asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what procedures exist in his Department for monitoring the competence and efficiency of the Leeds local education authority.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend is empowered under the Education Act 1944 to intervene if he has reason to believe, as a result of a complaint or otherwise, that a local education authority may have failed to discharge a statutory duty or may have acted unreasonably in using a statutory power or discharging a duty. Her Majesty's inspectorate also monitor the work in local education authorities' schools and colleges.

GCSE

Mr. Batiste asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to how much is being spent on average per pupil per subject for GCSE by the local education authorities in *(a)* Leeds, *(b)* Wakefield and *(c)* Bradford in addition to the sums specified by him as the Government contribution.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not collected by the Department.

Student Grants

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will show *(a)* the number of students in receipt of the older students' allowance and the average individual payment made in the past three years, *(b)* the total cost of the allowance in each year, *(c)* the average amount of student grant, other than the allowance, received by students covered by the allowance in each of these years and *(d)* estimates of these statistics for the current academic year.

Mr. Walden: In answer to parts *(a)* and *(b)* of the question, the latest available information is as follows:

Year	*Students receiving older students' allowance*	*Average payment*	*Total cost*
		£	£
1983-84	12,430	510	6,354,000
1984-85	11,927	530	6,317,000

The information sought under parts *(c)* and *(d)* of the question is not available.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what estimate he has made of the effects of the change in the eligibility conditions for the older students allowance on the total number of awards given, and as to how this will be split between those *(a)* losing and *(b)* gaining eligibility compared with the previous regulations.

Mr. Walden: No students who were receiving the allowance under the arrangements operating before 1 September 1986 will lose their entitlement. Information about the number of students entering higher education on or after that date who would have qualified for the older students allowance under the previous criteria but who are not now eligible, or who now qualify for the allowance but would not have done so previously, is not available. The number of students entering higher education and receiving mandatory awards depends on a number of factors. Any attempt to estimate the future effect on that number of the change in the conditions of eligibility for the older students' allowance, or of the increased rates of allowance, would be purely speculative.

Western Infirmary

Mr. Maxton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the reasons for the resignation of a senior member of staff in the hypertension unit funded by the Medical Research Council in the Western infirmary in Glasgow; and if an inquiry will be held into the matter.

Mr. Walden: No. It is a matter for the member of staff concerned and his employer, the Medical Research Council.

Medical Research Council

Mr. Maxton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidelines are issued by the Medical Research Council to hospital staff in units funded by the council about their relationship with pharmaceutical companies.

Mr. Walden: The Medical Research Council gives detailed guidance in its staff code to all members of staff regarding relationships with industry.

AIDS

Mr. Maxton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what financial resources have been allocated by the Medical Research Council for research into a vaccine for acquired immune deficiency syndrome and into possible cures for those at present suffering from the disease.

Mr. Walden: I understand that the MRC as allocated about £1·5 million in grants for research on AIDS. While none of this research holds immediate promise of leading to a vaccine against AIDS a number of virological studies that are relevant to the design of future potential vaccines are in progress.

Teachers (Pay)

Sir Peter Hordern asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the average increase in teachers' salaries per head, expressed as a percentage, each year since March 1979, to the latest convenient date.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information is as follows, from March 1979 to April 1986, on both a cash and a constant price base.

Percentage increase in the average salary of teachers

Year (April)	*At cash prices*		*At constant prices*	
	Year on year	*Cumulative*	*Year on year*	*Cumulative*
	Per cent.	*Per cent.*	*Per cent.*	*Per cent.*
1979	+10	+ 10	0	0
1980	+37	+ 51	+12	+12
1981	+ 9	+ 64	− 3	+ 9
1982	+ 7	+ 76	− 2	+ 7
1983	+ 6	+ 86	+ 2	+ 9
1984	+ 6	+ 97	+ 1	+10
1985	+ 8	+112	+ 1	+11
1986	+ 7	+228	+ 4	+15

Higher Education

Sir Peter Hordern asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the increase in the total sum paid in wages and salaries of those employed in higher education, each year since March 1979, expressed in figures and percentages, and as a proportion of the total sum spent on higher education.

Mr. Walden: The information for universities in Great Britain and local authority institutions of higher education in England, for the years for which it is available, is estimated as follows:

	1982-83 £ million	1983-84 £ million	1984-85 £ million
Salaries, wages and related expenditure	1,544	1,633	1,739
Cash increase over previous year	—	89	106
Percentage increase over previous year	—	5·8	6·5
Salaries, wages and related expenditure as a proportion of total current expenditure (per cent.)	62·9	62·5	62·0

Information in respect of universities only for the period 1979-80 to 1984-85 is available in "University Statistics 1984-85" volume 3, table 5, copies of which are in the Library.

School Meals

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of children entitled to free school meals at the beginning of this autumn term, and the number now entitled to them after the recent changes for each local education authority in the west midlands.

Mr. Dunn [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986]: LEA returns are currently being processed from the October 1986 school meals census, and results will be published in the spring. The numbers of children receiving a free meal on the day of the census will then be shown for each LEA, but information is not collected on the number of children entitled to a free school meal.

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Aspinwall asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools in Avon take part in the assisted places scheme; and if he will give the name of the schools and the number of places involved.

Mr. Dunn [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986]: There are 13 Avon schools participating in the assisted places scheme with intake quotas for 1986-87 as follows:

	11+	12+	13+	VI Form
Clifton College	10	—	—	—
Clifton High School for Girls	6	—	2	5
Colston's School	8	—	7	5
Colston's Girls' School	20	—	—	5
Kingswood School	2	2	2	5
Monkton Combe School	3	—	2	5
Bristol Cathedral School	20	—	—	5
Bristol Grammar School	40	—	—	5
Queen Elizabeth's Hospital School	25	—	—	5
Red Maids' School	25	—	—	5
Redland High School	10	—	—	5
Bath High School for Girls	18	—	—	5
King Edward's School at Bath	14	1	1	2
	201	3	14	57

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hospital Beds

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give the average cost separately for acute, chronic and geriatric beds in Northern Ireland; if he will give the highest and lowest cost in each category of bed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The information requested is as follows:

	Acute £	Chronic £	Geriatric £
Average cost (per in-patient week)	616·56	262·79	261·62
Highest	1,019·90	575·11	391·05
Lowest Cost	173·20	158·96	183·09

Note:
The present accounting system attributes costs to individual hospitals rather than to types of beds and for the purpose of the answer the definitions used are those derived from the Annual Analyses of running costs, Related Income and Statistics of Hospitals compiled by the Department ie;
Acute
Teaching hospitals with acute beds; acute, mainly acute, partly acute, and sub-acute hospitals.
Chronic
Long stay, mainly long stay, mental handicap, and tuberculosis and chest disease hospitals.
Geriatric
Hospitals within the Long Stay and Teaching Hospital categories which provide wholly or mainly geriatric accommodation.

Weapons (EEC Directive)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will raise, at the next meeting with representatives of the Republic under the Anglo-Irish agreement, the implications of the proposed European Economic Community directive on the abolition of controls on weapons at internal community frontiers with particular reference to cross-border security; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: No. It would not be useful to do so until we know the full details of the Commission's proposal concerning the movement of firearms across internal community frontiers. But we will discuss with our Community partners—including the Republic—any firm proposals made by the Commission.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Residential Care

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to move towards a system of care of the elderly under residential home conditions without qualified nursing staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: No. We continue to draw a firm distinction between the types of care provided in residential care and nursing homes. Any necessary nursing care for residents in residential care homes should be provided through the community nursing services. People who require more intensive or sustained nursing care should receive this from qualified staff employed as nurses in hospital or in an establishment registered as a nursing home.

Statutory Sick Pay

Ms. Clare Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many prosecutions there have been of employers for failure to pay statutory sick pay or to provide adequate information over the past 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholas Lyell: None.

Industrial Death Benefit

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the initial rate which the industrial death benefit was first introduced for the widows of those who died through industrial injury disease, together with the dates of each subsequent increase in the weekly rate payable; and if he will indicate, for each figure, its value in current purchasing terms.

Mr. Major: Industrial death benefit is payable at one of three rates. All industrial widows receive an initial industrial widow's pension, currently £54·20 a week, for the first 26 weeks of widowhood. Thereafter two permanent rates are payable depending on the widow's age and whether she has dependent children. The higher permanent rate, £39·25 a week, is payable to older widows and widows with dependent children. The lower permanent rate, £11·61 a week is payable to younger widows without dependent children.

The initial pension is paid at the same rate as national insurance widows' allowance. The lower permanent rate is the same as that payable to a widow aged 40 under the NI scheme.

The following table relates to the higher permanent rate which has been 55p a week higher than national insurance widow's pension since November 1967:

Industrial Death Benefit

Date	*Higher permanent rate* £	[1] *Real value* £
July 1948	1·50	18·47
July 1952	1·85	17·90
April 1955	2·25	20·39
January 1958	2·80	22·45
April 1961	3·20	24·49
May 1963	3·75	26·63
March 1965	4·50	30·21
November 1967	5·05	30·95
November 1969	5·55	30·68
September 1971	6·55	31·08
October 1972	7·30	31·93
October 1973	8·30	33·03
July 1974	10·55	37·00
April 1975	12·15	36·21
November 1975	13·85	36·95
November 1976	15·85	36·78
November 1977	18·05	37·05
November 1978	20·05	38·09
November 1979	23·85	38·60
November 1980	27·70	38·88
November 1981	30·15	37·79
November 1982	33·40	39·40
November 1983	34·60	38·93
November 1984	36·35	38·97
November 1985	38·85	39·50
July 1986	39·25	39·25

[1] Based on the movement in the retail price index between the dates shown and July 1986.

Member's Correspondence

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he is now in a position to reply to the letter sent to him on 1 October by the hon. Member for Erith and Crayford concerning taxation and national insurance.

Mr. Lyell: My noble Friend wrote to my hon. Friend on 13 November.

Inner Cities

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what factors led to his decision to restrict extra funding for inner city health authorities for the south-east.

Mr. Newton: I assume the hon. Member is referring to the £30 million we shall make available over the next two years to help ease the transitional problems which some districts in regions receiving less than national average growth may face. The Thames regions are expected to be the principal recipients of the new fund, but there has been no decision to restrict the fund to them. My right hon. Friend hopes to announce details of allocations from the fund shortly.

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received on the provision of extra funding for inner city health authorities in the north-west region.

Mr. Newton: We have received representations from a number of hon. Member and members of the general public on various aspects of the funding of health authorities in the north-western region including those providing services to inner city areas.

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made any assessment of the extra funding needs of inner city teaching districts within the north-west region.

Mr. Newton: Responsibility for allocating resources to districts lies with regional health authorities.

Health Education Council

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) over what period of time his Department has been considering the abolition of the Health Education Council:

(2) what consultation has taken place with the medical profession and other interested groups concerning the abolition of the Health Education Council; what plans exist for further consultation; and whether he will postpone further action until a full consultation process is completed.

Mr. Newton: The role of the council in connection with the public education campaign on AIDS has been under consideration for some months. We think it important that the proposed new special health authority should be in effective operation as soon as possible and my right hon. Friend sees no need in the circumstances to consult with outside bodies before going ahead with the change.

Agency Nurses

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for the latest available year the

expenditure of each district health authority and special health authority on agency nursing; and if he will give the totals for *(a)* inner London, *(b)* Greater London, *(c)* each region and *(d)* England.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the hospital closures and significant partial permanent closures which have been agreed locally, without reference to Ministers, since 1979 giving, in each case, the name of the hospital, the date of the closure and the name of the district special and regional health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: Following are the hospitals approved locally for complete or partial permanent closure since 1979. The information we keep centrally does not include a record of the date on which closure is implemented. Many of the buildings have been turned to other uses. For further information the hon. Member might like to approach the regional health authority concerned.

Hospitals approved locally for complete closure 1979-1986 (August)

Region and Area—District	*Hospital*	*Date approved*
(i) Hospitals approved locally for complete closure May 1979-December 1979		
NORTHERN		
Durham	Darlington Memorial Hospital, Hunden's Unit	July 1979
TRENT		
Derbyside	Nightingale Maternity Home	July 1979
Sheffield	Wales Court Hospital, Sheffield	December 1979
NORTH WEST THAMES		
Barnet	St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Barnet	June 1979
Barnet	Orme Lodge, Barnet	December 1979
Barnet	Stanmore Cottage Hospital	December 1979
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Camden and Islington	Garrett Anderson Maternity Home	September 1979
SOUTH EAST THAMES		
West Lambeth	Holmhurst Hospital	December 1979
SOUTH WEST THAMES		
Mid Surrey	Schiff Hospital, Surrey	December 1979
WESSEX		
Dorset	Capesthorne Children's Unit, Dorset	May 1979
OXFORD		
Berkshire	Peppard Hospital, Berkshire	November 1979
MERSEY		
Chester	Barrowmore Hospital, Chester	June 1979
Chester	Davenham Hospital, Northwich	October 1979
Wirral	St. James Hospital	July 1979
Wirral	Thingwall Hospital	July 1979
Wirral	Birkenhead General Hospital	July 1979
(ii) Hospitals approved locally for complete closure 1980.		
NORTHERN		
Cleveland	Overdene Maternity Home, Cleveland	February 1980
YORKSHIRE		
Leeds	Haigh Hospital, Leeds	May 1980
TRENT		
Nottinghamshire	Adbolton Hall, Nottingham	August 1980
EAST ANGLIAN		
Cambridgeshire	Grange Maternity Unit, Cambridge	March 1980
Norfolk	Stow Hall Hospital, Norfolk	November 1980
NORTH WEST THAMES		
Bedfordshire	Luton and Dunstable Hospital, Children's Annexe	July 1980
Hertfordshire	Tolmers Park Hospital, Herts	January 1980

Region and Area—District	Hospital	Date approved
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Camden and Islington	Thomas Barlow Home	July 1980
Camden and Islington	Cromwell Lodge	November 1980
Essex	Waltham Abbey War Memorial Hospital	December 1980
SOUTH EAST THAMES		
Canterbury and Thanet	Princess Mary's Hospital, Margate	February 1980
Hastings	Bexhill Convalescent Home	October 1980
South East Kent	Dover Eye Unit	December 1980
SOUTH WEST THAMES		
East Surrey	Caterham Main Hospital	September 1980
East Surrey	Clerks Croft Hospital, Surrey	September 1980
East Surrey	East Surrey Hospital	September 1980
East Surrey	Horley Hospital	September 1980
East Surrey	Smallfield Hospital	September 1980
Mid Surrey	Cuddington Hospital	September 1980
Mid Surrey	Queen Elizabeth House	May 1980
WESSEX		
Dorset	Firs Maternity Home, Dorset	July 1980
Dorset	Hahneman Convalescent Home, Dorset	September 1980
SOUTH WESTERN		
Cheltenham	Holm Hospital	March 1980
Plymouth	Devonport Hospital	October 1980
WEST MIDLANDS		
Hereford and Worcester	Holme Lacy Hospital	November 1980
Hereford and Worcester	Stretton Sugwas Hospital	July 1980
Staffordshire	Groundslow Hospital	June 1980
Staffordshire	Standon Hall Hospital	June 1980
MERSEY		
Liverpool	Liverpool Psychiatric Day Hospital	September 1980
Wirral	Highfield Maternity Hospital	February 1980
Wirral	Wallasey Hospital for Women	May 1980
NORTH WESTERN		
Bolton	Wilkinson Hospital	March 1980
Lancashire	Deepdale Hospital	November 1980
Lancashire	The Willows, Preston	November 1980
Lancashire	Lostock Hall Continuation Hospital	December 1980
Oldham	Strinesdale Hospital	August 1980
Wigan	Pemberton Day Hospital	October 1980

(iii) Hospitals approved locally for complete closure 1981

YORKSHIRE		
North Yorkshire	Fulford Maternity Hospital	January 1981
TRENT		
Lincolnshire	Tuxford Hostel, Nottingham	August 1981
Nottinghamshire	Firs Maternity Hospital	May 1981
Nottinghamshire	Nottingham Women's Hospital	May 1981
Sheffield	Thornbury Hospital	April 1981
Sheffield	St. Joseph's Hospital, Sheffield	September 1981
Sheffield	Hallwood Isolation Hospital	November 1981
EAST ANGLIAN		
Cambridgeshire	March Maternity Home	April 1981
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Barking and Haringey	St. Faith's Hospital	October 1981
City and East London	Aldersbrook Hospital	October 1981
City and East London	Queen Mary's Hospital, Newham	October 1981
City and East London	St. Mary's Hospital, Newham	October 1981
SOUTH WEST THAMES		
Merton and Sutton	Wimbledon Hospital	October 1981
WESSEX		
Hampshire	Winchfield Hospital	January 1981
Wiltshire	St. Martin's Hospital	April 1981
OXFORD		

Region and Area—District	Hospital	Date approved
Oxfordshire	St. Mary's Hospital	July 1981
WEST MIDLANDS		
Warwickshire	St. Mary's Hospital, Harborough Magna	October 1981
Wolverhampton	Queen Victoria Nursing Institute	May 1981
MERSEY		
Chester	Tadley Hostel	December 1981
Crewe	Wrenbury Hostel	December 1981
Sefton	Fleetwood Road Hospital	October 1981
Wirral	Leasowe Hospital	January 1981
Wirral	Victoria Central Hospital, Surgical Unit	January 1981
NORTH WESTERN		
Trafford	Urmston Cottage Hospital	July 1981
(iv) Hospitals, approved locally for complete closure 1982		
NORTHERN		
Durham	Langley Park Smallpox Hospital	September 1982
TRENT		
Leicestershire	Markfield Hospital	May 1982
North Derbyshire	Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Royal Hospital	October 1982
North Lincolnshire	Alexandra Hospital, Woodhall Spa	January 1982
North Lincolnshire	Foxby Hill Hospital, Gainsborough	July 1982
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Camden and Islington	City of London Maternity Hospital	April 1982
Camden and Islington	Whittington Home	April 1982
Enfield	Enfield War Memorial Hospital	October 1982
SOUTH EAST THAMES		
Dartford and Gravesham	Joyce Green Hospital	May 1982
Tunbridge Wells	Mawsell House, Tunbridge Wells	December 1982
SOUTH WESTERN		
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Perranporth Hospital	September 1982
WEST MIDLANDS		
Shropshire	Ludlow and District Hospital	September 1982
Worcester and District	South Bank Nursing Home	April 1982
MERSEY		
Macclesfield	Collar House, Prestbury	December 1982
NORTH WESTERN		
Bolton	Havercroft Free Discharge Unit, Bolton	February 1982
Stockport	Marple Dale Hospital, Stockport	January 1982
Thameside and Glossop	Apsland Maternity Home, Salford	June 1982
(v) Hospitals approved locally for complete closure 1983		
NORTHERN		
South Cumbria	Kendal Green	August 1983
South Cumbria	Meathop	August 1983
South Cumbria	Westmoreland County	August 1983
YORKSHIRE		
Dewsbury	Batley General	July 1983
Dewsbury	Dewsbury General	July 1983
Dewsbury	Mirfields Memorial	July 1983
Harrogate	Carlton Lodge Maternity	December 1983
Harrogate	Thistle Hill	September 1983
Leeds Western	Leeds Maternity	February 1983
Leeds Western	Leeds Hospital for Women	February 1983
TRENT		
Leicester	Zachary Merton Recovery Home	June 1983
North Derbyshire	Ashgate Maternity Home	January 1983
North Derbyshire	Ashgate Annex E	June 1983
North Derbyshire	Morton	April 1983
South Derbyshire	Blakeley	March 1983
South Derbyshire	Draycott	March 1983
South Lincolnshire	Boston General	March 1983
EAST ANGLIAN		
Cambridge	Mill Road Maternity	February 1983

Region and Area—District	*Hospital*	*Date approved*
East Suffolk	St. Helens	September 1983
Huntingdon	Huntingdon County	September 1983
Peterborough	Butterfield	March 1983
North West Thames		
North Hertfordshire	North Hertfordshire Maternity Hospital	November 1983
Victoria	All Saints Hospital	December 1983
Victoria	Vincent Square Day Hospital	December 1983
North East Thames		
Bloomsbury	Royal National Orthopaedic	October 1983
North East Essex	Clacton Maternity	February 1983
North East Essex	Essex Hall	July 1983
South East Thames		
Brighton	Newhaven Valley	June 1983
Lewisham and Southwark	St. John's	June 1983
Tunbridge Wells	Hawkenbury	July 1983
South West Thames		
Croydon	Waddon Hospital	October 1983
Wessex		
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire	Sandy Point	November 1983
Salisbury	Fordingbridge Cottage	September 1983
Oxford		
East Berkshire	Farnham Park Rehabilitation Centre	November 1983
Oxfordshire	Neithrop and Pines	December 1983
West Berkshire	Henley War Memorial	December 1983
South Western		
Frenchay	Leigh Court	June 1983
Plymouth	Alexander Maternity Home	March 1983
Plymouth	Greenbank	March 1983
West Midlands		
Dudley	The Limes	December 1983
Dudley	*Prestwood	December 1983
North Western		
North Manchester	Memorial Jewish	December 1983
Board of Governors (Queen Charlotte's)	St. Leonard-on-Sea Convalescent Home	November 1983

(vi) Hospitals approved locally for complete closure January 1984—December 1984

Northern		
Northumberland	Stannington Children's Hospital	February 1984
South Tees	Belmont	November 1984
Yorkshire		
Grimsby	Springfield Hospital	March 1984
Wakefield	Snapethorpe Hospital	March 1984
Harrogate	Thistle Hill Hospital	October 1984
Trent		
Central Nottinghamshire	Debdale Hall Recovery Home	February 1984
North Lincolnshire	Lawn Hospital	February 1984
Doncaster	Swallownest	July 1984
North Derbyshire	Darley Hall Maternity	September 1984
	Corbor Hall Maternity Home	October 1984
Nottingham	Coppice Hospital	December 1984
Rotherham	Aughton Court Hospital	September 1984
Sheffield	Scott Road and Commonside Hostels	October 1984
Southern Derbyshire	Derwent Hospital	October 1984
East Anglian		
Norwich	The Vale	May 1984
	Blofield Hall	September 1984
North West Thames		
Paddington and North Kensington	Hereford Lodge	July 1984

Region and Area—District	Hospital	Date approved
Hillingdon	St. John's Hospital	October 1984
	Lugano Nursing Home	May 1984
SOUTH WEST THAMES		
Merton and Sutton	Cheam Hospital	April 1984
North West Surrey	Murray House, Ottershaw	April 1984
East Surrey	Bletchingley Hospital	July 1984
Mid-Downs	Raffey Park	October 1984
Wandsworth	Royal Dental Hospital	September 1984
WESSEX		
Winchester	Tichbourne Down House Hospital	April 1984
Bath	Winsley Centre	November 1984
OXFORD		
Oxfordshire	Longworth	March 1984
Northampton	Upton Lawn Day Hospital	October 1984
East Berkshire	Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital	November 1984
SOUTH WESTERN		
Somerset	Wellington Maternity Home	March 1984
Gloucester	Cotswold Hospital	November 1984
WEST MIDLANDS		
Bromsgrove and Redditch	Blackwell Recovery Hospital	March 1984
Herefordshire	Tupsley Hospital	February 1984
Mid-Staffordshire	Yarnfield Hospital	April 1984
North-Staffordshire	Biddulph Grange Orthopaedic Hospital	February 1984
	Leek Memorial Hospital	February 1984
	Lymewood Hospital	February 1984
	Westcliff Hospital	February 1984
South Birmingham	Birmingham Accident Hospital	May 1984
Worcester and District	St. Wulstan's Hospital	June 1984
Wolverhampton	Parkfields Hospital	November 1984
MERSEY		
Liverpool	Newsham General Hospital	March 1984
	Heswall Hospital	November 1984
Wirral	Priory Day Hospital	October 1984
NORTH WESTERN		
South Manchester	Duchess of York Hospital	March 1984
(vii) Hospitals approved locally for complete closure January 1985-March 1985		
TRENT		
South Lincolnshire	Carey House	January 1985
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Bloomsbury	Royal Throat, Nose and Ear	January 1985
(viii) Hospitals approved locally for complete closure April 1985-June 1985		
YORKSHIRE		
York	Naburn	
NORTH WEST THAMES		
South Bedfordshire	Priory	
SOUTH WEST THAMES		
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	Westmoor House	
WESSEX		
Isle of Wight	Longford	
SOUTH WESTERN		
Gloucester	Horton Road	June 1985
MERSEY		
Southport and Formby	Sunnyside	April 1985
NORTHERN		
Northumberland	Castle Hills Maternity Unit	November 1985
SOUTH WEST THAMES		
North West Surrey	Rowley Bristow	October 1985

Region and Area—District	*Hospital*	*Date approved*
SOUTH WESTERN		
Southmead	Elizabeth Blackwell House	December 1985
WEST MIDLANDS		
Kidderminster and District	Lea	November 1985
Hospitals approved locally for complete closure 1986		
YORKSHIRE		
East Yorkshire	Northfield, Duffield	July 1986
Scunthorpe	Westfield	July 1986
Scarborough	St. Thomas	January 1986
Bradford	Children's	July 1986
Wakefield	County	June 1986
EAST ANGLIAN		
West Norfolk and Wisbech	St. James	Closed September 1986
NORTH WEST THAMES		
Barnet	Hendon District	April 1986
Riverside	Banstead	September 1986
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green	May 1986
SOUTH EAST THAMES		
Bromley	Lennard	May 1986
	Beckenham	June 1986
SOUTH WEST THAMES		
Croydon	Queens Hospital	March 1986
	St. Marys	March 1986
WESSEX		
Winchester	Victoria	October 1986
Bath	Claverton Down	January 1986
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire	King George's	January 1986
NORTH WESTERN		
Chorley and South Ribble	Heath Charnock	February 1986

Hospitals approved locally for partial closure 1979-86 (August)

Region/District	*Hospital*	*Date approved*
Hospitals approved locally for partial closure 1980		
TRENT		
Sheffield	Middlewood	June 1980
Nottinghamshire	Newstead	March 1980
EAST ANGLIAN		
Suffolk	Newmarket General	November 1980
NORTH WEST THAMES		
Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster	Athlone House	November 1980
MERSEY		
Cheshire	Cranford Lodge	August 1980
Liverpool	Radiotherapy Clinic	January 1980
Hospitals approved locally for partial closure 1981		
TRENT		
Nottinghamshire	Highbury	May 1981
OXFORD		
Berkshire	Canadian Red Cross	February 1981
Oxfordshire	Longworth	January 1981
WESSEX		
Hampshire	King George's	January 1981
Wiltshire	Royal United	April and September 1981
	St. Martin's	April 1981

Region/District	*Hospital*	*Date approved*
MERSEY		
Wirral	Highfield Maternity	July 1981
	St. Catherine's	July 1981
	Clatterbridge	July 1981
Hospitals approved locally for partial closure 1982		
EAST ANGLIAN		
West Norfolk and Wisbech	Bowthorpe	May 1982
West Suffolk	St. Leonard's, Sudbury	November 1982
NORTH WEST THAMES		
Brent and Harrow	Shenley	February 1982
North West Herts	Harpenden Memorial	October 1982
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Enfield	Highlands	October 1982
Camden and Islington	Hornsey Central	February 1982
Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green	September 1982
SOUTH EAST THAMES		
West Lambeth	South Western	December 1982
MERSEY		
Liverpool	Royal Liverpool Children's	November 1982
Macclesfield	Collar House	December 1982
Hospitals approved locally for partial closure 1983		
YORKSHIRE		
Leeds Western	Leeds General Infirmary	February 1983
TRENT		
Leicestershire	Ellen Towle	June 1983
	Leicestershire Royal Infirmary	June 1983
	Groby Road	June 1983
North Derbyshire	Walton	April 1983
NORTH WEST THAMES		
North Bedfordshire	Park	December 1983
Victoria	Banstead	December 1983
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Waltham Forest	Whipps Cross	August 1983
WEST MIDLANDS		
Dudley	The Guest	December 1983
	Burton Road	December 1983
	Wordsley	December 1983
	The Corbett	December 1983
East Birmingham	Yardley Green Unit	October 1983
Mid-Staffordshire	Chase, Cannock	November 1983
Walsall	St. Margaret's	February 1983
MERSEY		
Macclesfield	Congleton War Memorial	February 1983
Hospitals approved locally for partial closure 1984		
NORTHERN		
South Tees	Middlesbrough General	September 1984
	Poole	March 1984
YORKSHIRE		
Harrowgate	Scotton Banks	October 1984
TRENT		
Central Nottinghamshire	Forest	February 1984
	Victoria	February 1984
NORTH WEST THAMES		
Hounslow and Spelthorne	West Middlesex	September 1984
	Ashford	September 1984
North Bedfordshire	Clapham	January 1984
Victoria	St. Stephen's	September 1984
	Westminster	September 1984
	Banstead	March 1984

Region/District	*Hospital*	*Date approved*
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Enfield	Highlands	July 1984
	Highlands	July 1984
SOUTH WESTERN		
Gloucester	Lydney and District	February 1984
WEST MIDLANDS		
North Birmingham	Highcroft	May 1984
South Warwickshire	Warenford General	August 1984
	Stratford General	August 1984
MERSEY		
Liverpool	Newsham	July 1984
	St. Paul's (Eye)	July 1984
	Alderney Children's	July 1984
Hospitals approved locally for partial closure 1985		
YORKSHIRE		
Scunthorpe	Brumby	March 1985
EAST ANGLIAN		
Norwich	St. Andrew's	November 1985
	Kelling	Early 1985
NORTH WEST THAMES		
Ealing	Ealing	February 1985
North West Herts	Harpenden	March 1985
Paddington and North Kensington	St Charles	February 1985
SOUTH WEST THAMES		
West Surrey-NE Hampshire	Farnham	January 1985
OXFORD		
Aylesbury Vale	Tindal	March 1985
WEST MIDLANDS		
Walsall	St. Margaret's	December 1985
Hospital approved locally for partial closure 1986—to August		
NORTHERN		
North Tees	North Tees General	March 1986
TRENT		
Southern Derbyshire	Pastures Grange Children's Unit	April 1986
Leicestershire	Market Harborough and District	June 1986
	Rutland Memorial	June 1986
	St Mary's, Melton Mowbray	June 1986
	Ashby de la Zouch and District	June 1986
EAST ANGLIAN		
Norwich	Hales	March 1986
NORTH WEST THAMES		
Riverside	St. Stephen's	May 1986
NORTH EAST THAMES		
Basildon and Thurrock	Orsett	N/A
City and Hackney	St. Bartholomew's	August 1986
SOUTH EAST THAMES		
Bromley	Beckenham	May 1986

Health Authorities (Resources)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how his Department calculates the weighted population share for allocation of capital resources to regional health authorities;

(2) in allocating capital resources to regional health authorities to what factors he has regard in addition to the weighted population share.

Mr. Newton: The method of calculating weighted populations for capital allocations is based on the recommendations of the resource allocation working party (RAWP) in its report "Sharing Resources for Health in England"—Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1976.

The base data are regional health authority managed populations projected five years ahead of the year of allocation. The populations are then weighted separately for each of six main service blocks—non-psychiatric in-patients, day and out-patients, mental illness in-patients, mental handicap in-patients, community health and ambulance services—to reflect the differential use made of hospital and community health services by people of different ages and sexes. The weighted populations for the six service blocks are then combined to form an aggregated weighted population for each region.

RAWP's recommendations also aimed to take account of the existing distribution of capital stock. Thus, in addition to weighted population shares, the formula included some allowance for the disparity in the distribution of regions' inherited capital stock. After consultation with health authorities in 1983, it was agreed that, because of technical difficulties, the stock equalisation element of the formula should be phased out over the period 1985-86 to 1991-92. Thereafter, capital RAWP allocations will be based exclusively on regions' weighted population shares.

Other capital allocations outside RAWP are as follows:

1. Joint finance capital and inner cities bias capital: allocated according to RAWP weighted population with some modifications.

2. Dental hospital re-equipment grant: a flat rate allowance per dental hospital.

3. Teaching hospital schemes: 35 per cent of the NHS cost of teaching hospital capital schemes is met by central pre-emption.

4. Special and development schemes: Ministers take decisions on individual schemes or initiatives—for example, regional secure units.

5. Urban programme.

Local authorities submit programmes for consideration to locally based joint consultative committees for recommendations to the Department of the Environment. This Department is notified of Department of the Environment decisions and allocates funds accordingly for the total health authority cost of approved projects within the year(s) the expenditure is incurred.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether any press releases issued by the Health Education Council are referred for approval to his Department.

Mr. Newton: No.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what safeguards will be instituted to ensure the independence of the special health authority to be set up following the abolition of the Health Education Council.

Mr. Newton: My right hon. Friend will look to the new authority to provide independent advice to him on matters concerning health education and promotion. It will, as does the Health Education Council, carry out its work within the overall framework of ministerial policies and priorities.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people received severe weather additions in Leyton and Leytonstone last winter; and how many people will be eligible for such payments at the appropriate temperature under the new arrangements.

Mr. Major: The London boroughs of Leyton and Leytonstone are dealt with by the Department's office at Lemna road, Leytonstone. This office made a total of 432 payments for extra fuel consumed during the period of exceptionally severe weather last winter.

Information about the number of people in the area who would be eligible under the proposed new criteria is not available, since it would depend, among other things, on claimants' capital holdings at the date of claim.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has anything to add to his answer of 6 November, *Official Report*, column *580*, about health authorities with cervical cancer screening schemes in operation on 31 March in respect of Brent district health authority.

Mrs. Currie: On 31 March 1986 Brent was operating a cervical cancer screening scheme backed up by a limited computer system. Since 30 September Brent and Harrow have been operating a joint computerised scheme by arrangement with their corresponding family practitioner committees. I am glad that this has enabled women in Harrow to benefit from the scheme sooner than had been anticipated.

Derriford Hospital, Plymouth

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when construction work was completed on those wards at Derriford hospital, Plymouth, whose opening was announced in a press release on 28 November.

Mrs. Currie: Construction work on the shell of the building was completed in 1979 and the first wards were fitted out and opened in 1981 when 205 beds were commissioned, later increased to 347. Fitting out of the remaining wards is now all but completed. Together with the wards opened in November this will allow a further 300 beds or so to be brought into use over the next 20 months, and the regional health authority plans to have brought into use some 650 beds in the new podium and tower block at Derriford by the middle of 1988.

Local Office Staff, Hornchurch

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has delayed the moving of his staff, currently working in North street, Hornchurch, and Main road, Romford, into the new offices in North street, Hornchurch; and when he now expects to be able to house all those staff serving the constituents of the hon. Member for Hornchurch within that constituency.

Mr. Lyell: In August 1986 the Property Services Agency was unable to enter into a commitment with the developer to provide a new office for DHSS staff in Hornchurch because of a lack of funds. Following an increase in staff to be accommodated the options to provide rehousing are being examined further. I will let my hon. Friend have a fuller reply as soon as further information is available.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the average cost separately for acute,

chronic and geriatric beds in each of the regional health authorities in England; if he will give the highest and lowest cost in each category of bed in each of the regions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Information is not collected centrally in this form. The cost returns submitted by health authorities to the Department show average costs per in-patient day for hospitals of different types but do not distinguish between different categories of beds within hospitals.

Copies of the Department's annual publication "Health Services Costing Returns" which summarise by region the information collected from health authorities are held in the Library.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each health authority in each year since 1979 the total number of hospital beds and the number of acute beds.

Mrs. Currie: For the total number of beds in each district health authority in each year since 1979, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 24 November at columns *98* to *106*. I shall let the hon. Member have such information on acute beds as can be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost as soon as possible.

Health Authorities (Expenditure)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the revenue spending and the capital spending of each health authority in each year since 1979.

Mr. Newton: This information is given in the booklet "Health Authorities' Annual Accounts — National Summary (England)" prepared annually by the Department. Copies are available in the Library. The most recent edition is for 1984-85. The summary for 1985-86 will be available shortly. For 1979-80, the booklet gives only regional totals and I will write to the hon. Member with the individual health authority figures for that year.

The booklets do not include figures for special health authorities providing central services. These appear as part of the statutory summarised accounts of health authorities which are published annually as a House of Commons paper—for 1984-85, as Paper No. 411 of 1985-86.

NHS (Waiting Lists)

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what sources of information are used in the compilation of National Health Service waiting lists for *(a)* in-patient and *(b)* out-patient treatment; what assessment he has made of the accuracy of these figures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Information on waiting lists for out-patient treatment is not collected centrally. In-patient waiting list figures are collected centrally three times a year; on the district statistical return SBH 203 which records the position at 31 March and 30 September, and on the hospital return SH 3 at 31 December. The waiting list returns are validated by the Department in consultation with health authorities to eliminate obvious recording errors. About two fifths of those admitted from the waiting list know in advance the date they expect to be admitted. The waiting list contains an unknown proportion of people who no longer require treatment but whose names have not yet been removed.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to extend the deadline for the submission of applications by married women for invalid care allowance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 4 December at column *735*.

Tobacco Advertising

Mr. Wainwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many surveys have been made by his Department of the observance of the current voluntary agreement on advertising tobacco.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 1 December at columns *534-35*.

Family Practitioner Committee Administrators

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services to which grades in health authority management the salary scales for family practitioner committee administrators most closely approximate.

Mr. Newton: Family practitioner committee administrator posts are graded under a National Health Service Administrative and Clerical Staffs Whitley council agreement on one of the senior assistant secretary scales —scales 23, 27, and 29.

Hepatitis B

Mr. Pavitt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to enable all nurses to be routinely vaccinated against the blood-borne disease hepatitis B; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advises the Department on all aspects of vaccination. The JCVI's current advice on vaccination against hepatitis B is set out in the memorandum "Immunisation against Infectious Disease" which was issued to all doctors. It recommends that a number of categories of health care personnel, including nurses, should be considered for this vaccine.

At its meeting last month the JCVI discussed proposals for revising its guidance on hepatitis B vaccine and has now made recommendations to the Department. These are now being considered urgently.

NHS (Speech Therapists)

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Social services what assessment he has made of the implications for the National Health Service pay and personnel policies of the recent finding of the industrial tribunal in a case brought by three speech therapists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I understand that the health authorities involved in the preliminary hearing have not yet received the formal judgment.

Hospital and Community Health Services

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the annual percentage change since 1970 in actual input volumes for the hospital and community health sector of the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton: The tables set out annual percentage changes in the purchasing power of total gross current and capital expenditure in the hospital and community health service in England since 1972-73. Figures for earlier years are not readily available.

Figures for current expenditure expressed on this basis do not give a reliable measure of real terms growth in the service as they do not reflect the increasing level of resources being released by health authorities' cost improvement programmes. Nor do they reflect the improvements in productivity which have seen the numbers of patients treated rising steadily.

Hospital and community health service, gross current expenditure changes after NHS pay and prices (per cent.)

	Per cent.
1972-73	4·6
1973-74	3·6
1974-75	[1]4·2
1975-76	1·7
1976-77	0·3
1977-78	3·0
1978-79	[2]2·5
1979-80	−0·6
1980-81	3·0
1981-82	2·0
1982-83	0·8
1983-84	0·0
1984-85	−0·1
1985-86	0·2

[1] NHS reorganisation in 1974 incorporated community health services with the hospital service.

[2] Figures from 1978-79 are on a slightly different accounting basis and exclude Family Practitioner Committee administration costs.

Hospital and community health service, gross capital expenditure changes after NHS pay and prices (per cent.)[1]

	Per cent.
1972-73	17·9
1973-74	4·8
1974-75	−17·7
1975-76	0·3
1976-77	−2·6
1977-78	−22·1
1978-79	2·6
1979-80	−8·1
1980-81	9·1
1981-82	16·3
1982-83	1·5
1983-84	1·6
1984-85	8·7
1985-86	3·9

[1] Including proceeds of land sales.

Drugs (Transfer Pricing)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the Binder Hamlyn report into the question of drug companies transfer pricing.

Mr. Newton: No. This report was produced for internal use and guidance in the Department and was not intended for publication.

Consultants (Waiting Times)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average waiting time for each main specialty between general practitioner reference and first appointment with the consultant in each district health authority area.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks. Information on waiting time for out-patient appointments is not collected centrally.

AIDS

Mr. Maxton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what financial resources have been allocated by his Department for research into vaccine prevention of acquired immune deficiency syndrome and cures for those at present suffering from the disease.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 1 December at columns *525-26*.

Low-income Families

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will retabulate the data on low-income families given in the answer of 25 July on a male-female basis according to the following age groups: under pension age, less than 20, 20 to 29, 30 to 44 and 45 plus years; and over pension age, 60 to 64, 65 to 69, 70 to 79 and 80 plus years.

Mr. Major: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Wessex RHA (Computer Contract)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each tender submitted to Wessex regional health authority in relation to the computer contract subsequently awarded to Arthur Andersen and Co. *(a)* the name of the tenderer, *(b)* the tender price and *(c)* the date the tender was received; and if he will give the closing date for tenders as originally set by the regional health authority.

Mr. Newton: The recent Wessex regional health authority computer procurement was for three separate sub-systems forming part of the new regional information system: accounts, hospital information and manpower.

The companies that tendered for each sub-system were as follows:

Accounts
- Arthur Andersen & Co. Ltd.
- Digital Equipment Co. Ltd.
- ICL (UK) Ltd.
- Istel Ltd.
- McDonnell Douglas Information Systems Ltd.
- Package Programs Ltd.

Hospital information
- Arthur Andersen & Co. Ltd.
- British Medical Data Systems Ltd.
- ICL (UK) Ltd.
- McDonnell Douglas Information Systems Ltd.
- NCR Ltd.

Manpower
- Arthur Andersen & Co. Ltd.
- Digital Equipment Co. Ltd.
- ICL (UK) Ltd.
- Hewlett Packard
- McDonnell Douglas Information Systems Ltd.
- Package Programmes Ltd.

All bids were received by the closing dates for tenders which were 16 December 1985 for the accounts and manpower systems and 13 January 1986 for hospital information: they were opened and witnessed on those dates in accordance with the authority's standing orders.

Tender prices are submitted in commercial confidence and it is not the practice to publish unsuccessful bids.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services is he will place in the Library the terms of reference established by Wessex regional health authority for the tendering for the computer contract awarded to Arthur Andersen and Co.

Mr. Newton: I am arranging for copies of the following Wessex regional health authority documents to be placed today in the Library:

Invitation to tender for the hospital information system.
Invitation to tender for the manpower and personnel system.
Invitation to tender for the accounting system.
User requirement for a hospital information system.
User requirement for a manpower and personnel system.

These documents were issued to all tenderers in the region's recent computer procurement.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps were taken to ensure that the awarding of the computer contract to Arthur Andersen and Co. by Wessex regional health authority fully complied with the code of practice for the use of computer consultants and software houses by Government Departments issued by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency; and if he will place the code of practice in the Library.

Mr. Newton: I understand that the guidance to which the hon. Member refers was issued in 1973 by the former Central Computer Agency and has been largely superseded by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency's "IT Management Guide". Both documents are already available for consultation in the Library, but neither applies to the National Health Service.

Computer procurements undertaken by health authorities are subject instead to the "Guidance on Computer Hardware and Software Procurement and Contractual Procedures" issued by the Department. It was for the Wessex regional health authority to ensure that its recent procurement fully complied with this guidance and it has given an assurance that it did so.

Sickle Cell Anaemia

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has concerning the incidence of sickle cell anaemia by ethnic grouping.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 27 November 1986; c. *357*]: The incidence of sickle cell anaemia in different ethnic groups is very variable. While it is extremely rare in people of northern European extraction it is of significance in Afro-Caribbean, eastern Mediterranean and Asian polulations.

In certain Afro-Caribbean and eastern Mediterranean communities the proportion of people who carry the gene for sickle cell anaemia, but who do not have the disease, can vary from one person in 10 to one person in three. Amongst Asian populations the proportion may vary from one person in 100 to one person in three. These gene frequencies amongst these communities may give rise to proportions of people who have sickle cell anaemia that range from one person in 40,000 to one person in 40.

Junior Hospital Staff

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the ratio of junior hospital staff up to and including senior registrars to consultant staff, excluding associate specialists, in each of the recognised specialties in each of the English health regions in the year for which the latest figures are available.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986; c. *736*]: I regret that information in the precise form requested could be provided only at disproportinate cost. Information on the ratio of junior hospital staff to consultants for each specialty for England as a whole, and for each region for medical and dental specialties as a whole, is set out in the tables. Information on the number of staff in each grade by region and specialty, from which ratios for particular combinations of region and specialty could be calculated, is set out in the publications "Hospital Medical Staff — England and Wales" and "Hospital Dental Staff—England and Wales", copies of which are in the Library. This information must be interpreted with caution. The desirable ratio will widely vary between specialties and will depend on such factors as the expected rate of consultant expansion, the age distribution of the consultant stock, the length of time required for specialist training, and the extent to which the specialty contributes to general training for other hospital disciplines or for general practice. Some variation between regions may also be expected, for instance because of historical differences in the distribution of medical schools.

Table 1

Hospital medical and dental staff in post at 30 September 1985 England: Analysis by specialty showing ratio of junior hospital staff[1] to consultants[2]

Specialty	*Junior doctor Consultants ratio[3]*
All specialties Total	1·67
All medical specialties	1·68
General medicine	3·11
Cardiology	1·86
Endocrinology	1·52
Gastroenterology	1·08
Nephrology	1·75
Thoracic Medicine	1·56
Geriatric Medicine	2·39
Audiological Medicine	0·72
Clinical genetics	0·17
Clinical neurological physiology	0·22
Clinical pharmacology and therapeutics	0·76
Clinical physiology	0·31
Dermatology	0·66
Genito-urinary medicine	0·80
Medical oncology	2·62
Infectious diseases	2·32
Neurology	1·17
Occupational health	0·03
Rheumatology	0·84
Other	2·28
Paediatrics	2·51

Specialty	Junior doctor Consultants ratio[3]
Paediatric neurology	0·24
Accident and emergency	8·18
General surgery	2·90
Cardio-thoracic surgery	1·92
Otolaryngology	1·47
Neurosurgery	1·72
Ophthalmology	1·35
Paediatric surgery	2·06
Plastic surgery	1·39
Traumatic and Orthopaedic surgery	1·91
Urology	1·27
Obstetrics and gynaecology	2·61
Anaesthetics	1·13
Radiology	0·51
Nuclear medicine	0·34
Radiotherapy	1·21
Blood transfusion	0·18
Chemical pathology	0·74
Haematology	0·71
Histopathology	0·50
Immuno-pathology	0·30
Medical microbiology	0·63
Neuropathology	0·61
Mental Illness	1·68
Child adolescent psychiatry	0·41
Forensic psychiatry	0·36
Mental Handicap	0·62
Psychotherapy	0·73
All dental specialties	1·37
Oral surgery	1·77
Orthodontics	0·68
Restorative dentistry	1·26
Paediatric dentistry	2·04

[1] Senior registrar, registrars, senior house officer as house officer/dental house officer.
[2] Including senior hospital medical/dental officers with allowance.
[3] Ratio of number of staff expressed in whole-time equivalents.

Table 2
Hospital medical and dental staff in post at 30 September 1985 in England: Analysis by region showing ratio of junior hosptial[1] staff to consultants[2]

	Junior doctor/ consultants ratio[3]
ENGLAND[4]	1·67
Northern	1·58
Yorkshire	1·63
Trent	1·94
East Anglian	1·46
N W Thames	1·92
N E Thames	1·64
S E Thames	1·79
S W Thames	1·57
Wessex	1·28
Oxford	1·64
South Western	1·54
West Midlands	1·62
Mersey	1·88
North Western	1·73
SHAs/for the London postgraduate Teaching Hospitals	1·46

[1] Senior registrar, registrar, senior house officer and house officer/dental house officer.
[2] Including senior hospital medical/dental officers with allowance.
[3] Ratio of number of doctors expressed as whole-time equivalents.
[4] Including the Special Health Authorities for the London postgraduate Teaching Hospitals.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Coaches

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now take steps to ensure that powers are made available to the Metropolitan police to take action against coach drivers who abandon their coaches with their engines running.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is an offence under the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 to leave a motor vehicle unattended on a road unless the engine is stopped except in specified circumstances. It is also an offence to leave a vehicle on the road in contravention of parking restrictions irrespective of whether the engine is left running. The Commissioner has informed me that his officers take appropriate enforcement action where offences are detected.

Breath Tests

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to empower the police to conduct random breath tests on drivers during the Christmas period; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The courts have held that a constable may, under section 159 of the Road Traffic Act 1972, stop vehicles at random in order then to decide whether there are grounds for requiring a sample of breath for testing. A sample may be required where the constable has reasonable cause to suspect that the motorist has alcohol in his body; that he has committed a traffic offence while the vehicle was moving; or that he has been involved in an accident. The Association of Chief Police Officers has stated that these powers are sufficient to allow the law to be enforced effectively, and the Government have no plans to amend the legislation.

Leicestershire Constabulary

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received in favour of an increase in the establishment for Leicestershire constabulary in addition to any savings in manpower as a result of the civilianisation of some posts.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Leicestershire policy authority made an application in June for an increase of 110 police posts, to which I responded by saying that, before any consideration could be given to further increases in the police establishment, the force should carry out a review to identify posts held by police officers which could more appropriately be filled by civilians. I have received no representations about that response, and I understand that the review is in hand and that the police authority has approved proposals for the civilianisation of 43 posts in this financial year to release that number of police officers to operational duties.

Police (Public Houses)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his policy towards schemes promoted by some police forces in conjunction with brewery companies whereby one member of a group attending a public houses is designated to drive and to refrain from consuming alcohol; if he has any plans to seek to extend this scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Like the police service, I welcome initiatives of this nature aimed at fostering more responsible attitudes towards drinking and driving.

Fire Brigades (Recruitment)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department which local fire and civil defence authorities in England he has advised to implement a recruitment freeze of operational firefighters in their fire brigade from the financial year starting 1 April 1987 onwards; and whether he will list the fire brigades affected and estimate the number of firefighter posts in each brigade that will be lost.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None.

London Fire Brigade

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish information on the current locations of the London fire brigade's reserve fleet of fire appliances.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The location of the reserve pumping and special appliances, as at June 1986, is as follows:

Area Command	*Pumps*	*Specials*
north	14	2
north-east	15	2
north-west	16	1
south-east	16	1
south-west	12	1

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the percentage of the station ground of the former B25 Pageants Wharf fire station of the London fire brigade that is now in the station ground of *(a)* B24 Dockhead fire station, *(b)* B26 Old Kent Road fire station, *(c)* Deptford fire station and *(d)* B29 New Cross fire station of the London fire brigade.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish the date of, and give reasons for, closure of B25 Pageants wharf fire station of the London fire brigade, the number of fire appliances per type and establishment of firefighters per rank deployed at that fire station immediately prior to closure, the number of emergency calls received from that fire station's ground in the five years preceding closure, the risk categories of that station ground when closure was implemented and at present, and the fire stations at which each appliance and crew were redeployed when closure was implemented.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The London fire brigade closed B25 Pageants wharf fire station in 1965 on the grounds both of its age and condition which had rendered it uneconomical to maintain, and its unsuitability for changing operational needs. It housed prior to closure, two appliances, a pump escape and a pump. The adjoining stations which absorbed its station ground were (B27) Deptford and (B24) Dockhead fire stations. The present risk category of the station ground is A risk. The other information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Gavin Strang asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will provide a detailed breakdown of the proposed 1987-88 budget for the London fire brigade.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The proposed 1987-88 budget for the London fire brigade is a matter for the London fire and civil defence authority.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated cost of replacing the Greater London council crest on the uniform buttons, fire appliances and fire engines of the London fire brigade.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the London fire and civil defence authority that £7,000 has been approved for the preparatory work for a new crest. The cost of replacing the crest on such items as vehicles and uniforms has not been estimated. The new crest will only be introduced as new items of equipment come into service or existing ones are replaced.

Fire Stations (Closure)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish his criteria for accepting a proposal from a local fire authority under section 85 of the Local Government Act 1985 or section 19 of the Fire Services Act 1947 as amended by section 7 of the Fire Services Act 1959 for the closure of a fire station and also for the loss of a specialist and pumping appliance from a fire brigade.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Before approving a request by a fire authority to reduce its establishment of fire appliances, operational firefighters or by closing a fire station we would need to be satisfied that the proposal was consistent with the maintenance of the nationally recommended standards of fire cover and paid due regard to the need for such cover to be provided in the most economic and efficient manner.

Wheel Clamping

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will report on the new arrangements for wheel clamping vehicles within central London.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: As from 1 December the Metropolitan police has employed private contractors to carry out the physical work of fixing wheel clamps to illegally parked vehicles. Each wheel clamping is authorised by a police constable. The area of the wheel clamping operation has remained the same but the number of wheel clamping teams operating has increased. The Metropolitan police expect the number of wheel clampings to rise from the previous 30,000 to 40,000 a year to around 100,000 a year.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his Department's policy

towards diplomatic vehicles D and X registered which are illegally parked; and in what circumstances a diplomat's car would be impounded or wheel clamped.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Illegal parking, whether by diplomats or others, is unacceptable. Procedures were introduced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in May 1985 to deal with cases in which a large number of unpaid parking fixed penalties were incurred by a diplomat, and as a result the number of unpaid fixed penalties is now less than a quarter of their 1984 level. Vehicles bearing a D plate are not wheel clamped but are removed if they cause obstruction or danger. We expect removal fees to be paid in such cases. Vehicles bearing X plates, which do not denote an entitlement to full immunity, are wheel clamped or removed in the same way as any other vehicle.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many wheel clamped vehicles have never been reclaimed by their registered owners since the wheel clamping order came into effect; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Wheel clamping in central London commenced on 16 May 1983. The table shows the total number of wheel clamped vehicles which have not subsequently been reclaimed by their registered keeper or other authorised person in each year since wheel clamping began.

Year	*Unclaimed vehicles*
1983 (from 16 May 1983)	74
1984	741
1985	457
1986 (up to 2 December 1986)	304

Unclaimed Vehicles

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vehicles impounded in the Metropolitan police area have never been reclaimed by their registered owners in each of the past 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The table shows the number of vehicles removed to car pounds by the Metropolitan police (including those initially wheel clamped) which have not subsequently been reclaimed by their registered keeper or other authorised person in each year since 1980. The Commissioner has indicated that statistics in respect of unclaimed vehicles prior to 1980 are not available.

Year	*Unclaimed vehicles*
1980	1,140
1981	1,274
1982	1,810
1983	2,157
1984	2,069
1985	1,619
1986 (up to 2 December 1986)	1,646

News International Plant, Wapping

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his assessment of the impact on crime figures in other parts of London of the deployment of Metropolitan police at the News International plant at Wapping.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is not possible to say what effect police commitments in Wapping have had on the number of offences committed elsewhere in the Metropolitan police district.

999 Calls

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has been advised by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis of any threat to the capacity of the Metropolitan police to respond promptly to 999 calls.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis has told me that he is concerned about difficulties in recruiting and retaining the technical staff who are responsible for running and maintaining certain support systems, including the 999 system. We are urgently looking for a solution to these difficulties.

Burglar Alarms

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many activations of burglar alarms in the Metropolitan police area were false alarms in each year since 1979.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that no records are kept for alarms signalled by bells only. The total number of alarm calls, and the number of those recorded as false, from systems whose signals go to the police direct or via central stations maintained by alarm companies in each year since 1979 are as follows:

Year	*Total calls*	*False calls*
1979	177,370	174,636
1980	177,919	175,610
1981	182,941	179,698
1982	186,123	182,870
1983	196,190	193,470
1984	210,213	208,078
1985	246,592	244,561
1986[1]	213,671	209,500

[1] To 1 November

Metropolitan Police (Accounting Methods)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what benefits have accrued to the Metropolitan police from the exchange of views with London borough treasurers on the accounting methods of the Metropolitan police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the consultations enable a frank and open exchange of views from which both sides benefit. In particular they have helped the Metropolitan police to identify financial information which the local authorities want. A proposal to change the basis of the accounts has been put forward by the borough treasurers and will be discussed with Home Office officials.

Criminals (Exchange Controls)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the potential of exchange controls as a means of limiting the ability of

criminals, and in particular drug dealers, to move money out of the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We do not consider that the imposition of exchange controls would be suitable for this purpose. Comprehensive provision for attacking the proceeds of drug trafficking is made in the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986. This Act will require the Crown Court to confiscate a convicted drug trafficker's proceeds; will allow the restraint of suspected trafficker's property to prevent assets being concealed or transferred out of the jurisdiction; and opens the way to agreements between the United Kingdom and other countries enabling proceeds to be recovered from abroad. The Criminal Justice Bill now before this House contains similar provisions in relation to other forms of serious and profitable crime.

Weapons (Sale)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of the Government towards the opening of further shops to sell guns and other weapons.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Firearms Act 1968 requires chief officers of police to keep a register of firearms dealers and to issue a certificate of registration to each dealer which is renewable annually. Under section 34(2) of the Act, a chief officer may refuse to register an applicant if he is satisfied that the applicant cannot be permitted to carry on business as a firearms dealer without danger to the public safety or to the peace. Other sections of the Act empower a chief officer to impose conditions, for example relating to security, subject to which registration is to have effect, and to remove a person's name from the register and require him to surrender his certificate of registration. There are no plans to amend the legislation.

Football Grounds (Police Deployment)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out the methods used for calculating charges levied upon football clubs for Metropolitan police deployed on football grounds.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Charges are levied only in respect of officers deployed inside football grounds. The number of officers for each match is decided in consultation with the clubs. The charges to the club are based on basic staff costs plus a departmental charge and VAT.

Offenders (Maintenance Costs)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give details in the *Official Report* as to the average weekly and annual cost of keeping an offender in the following categories of custody *(a)* detention centre, *(b)* maximum security and *(c)* remand.

Mr. David Mellor: The available information relates to closed youth establishments including detention centres, dispersal prisons and local prisons and remand centres. The average weekly and annual costs in 1985-86 of keeping a person in one of these categories of custody were as follows:

	Weekly £	*Annual* £
Closed youth establishments	267	13,937
Dispersal prisons	470	24,534
Local prisons and adult remand centres	225	11,745

Prison Sentences

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* such information as is available to show the average sentence given, and the actual sentence served, for *(a)* rape, *(b)* attempted rape, *(c)* manslaughter, *(d)* occasioning grievous bodily harm and *(e)* murder in each of the past 10 years;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* such information as is available as to how the average time actually served in prison by offenders sentenced to a term of three years' imprisonment, seven years' imprisonment, 10 years' imprisonment, 15 years' imprisonment, 20 years' imprisonment, 30 years' imprisonment and life imprisonment, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Motorists (Prosecutions)

Mr. Neale asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions were brought against motorists for crossing traffic lights on *(a)* red and *(b)* amber in the year (i) 1984 and (ii) 1985.

Mr. Mellor: The available information relates to total proceedings at magistrates' courts for offences of failing to comply with traffic signals (excluding those at pedestrian light controlled crossings) and is published annually in "Offences relating to motor vehicles, England and Wales, Supplementary tables" (Table 5 of the issue for 1985), copies of which are in the Library. Details of the circumstances of these offences are not collected centrally.

London (Barrier Flood Plan)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the involvement of his Department in the Greater London council's post barrier flood plan.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This subject is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment together with the Thames water authority.

London (Emergency Procedures)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what London-wide emergency procedures exist; and which authority is responsible for implementation.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The emergency services and other organisations have responsibility for their specialised procedures and implementation as appropriate. The London Fire and Civil Defence Authority is responsible for civil defence under the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983.

Prisoners (AIDS)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if medical checks made on incoming prisoners include a test for the acquired immune deficiency syndrome virus.

Mr. Mellor: There is no statutory power to take blood in the absence of consent. A test to detect antibodies to the human immunodeficiency virus (the virus from which AIDS can develop) is considered only if an inmate requests one or if the medical officer judges a test to be clinically appropriate and the inmate concerned gives informed consent. In either circumstances the inmate will be counselled to ensure that he understands the full consequences of being identified as HIV antibody positive.

One purpose of the medical examination and inquiry to which all inmates are subject on first reception is to establish whether there is a history or risk of infectious disease calling for further investigation.

Football Grounds (Alcohol)

Mr. John Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to bring into force the relevant provision in the Public Order Act 1986 relating to the relaxing of current restrictions on the possession of alcohol in executive boxes and similar rooms at football grounds.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Under the Public Order Act 1986 (Commencement No. 1) Order 1986, schedule 1 to the Act, which contains this provision and other amendments to the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act 1985, will come into effect on 1 January 1987. A number of other provisions, including in particular section 11 (advance notice of processions) and section 38 (contamination of, or interference with, goods with the intention of causing public alarm or anxiety, etc.) will come into force on the same day. We intend to bring most of the rest of the Act into force on 1 April 1987.

Greiss Test

Mr. Richard Shepherd asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his letter of 11 September to the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills and his reply of 20 November to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), on what evidence it has become clear that the strength of caustic soda solution used by Dr. Skuse in the Greiss test on 22 November 1974 was almost certainly 0·1 per cent.

Mr. Mellor: Dr. Skuse told the present Director of the Chorley forensic laboratory in a telephone conversation on 15 January 1986, that he had used a solution strength of 0·1 per cent. The Director made a contemporaneous note of the conversation. Dr. Skuse gave the same information to the controller of the forensic science service in a separate telephone conversation. This conclusion was also supported by a guidance note which Dr. Skuse wrote, which refers to the use of a 0·1 per cent. strength solution, and which he circulated to colleagues in January 1975-February 1975.

However, as my hon. Friend will be aware, Dr. Black who gave evidence at the trial of the men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings, has recently said that his recollection is that Dr. Skuse indicated to him that the solution strength was 1·0 per cent. The then Director of the Chorley forensic science laboratory has also said that the information which he gave to Mr. Baldock in May 1985 —in which he referred to the use of a solution strength of 1 per cent.—was based on information given to him by Dr. Skuse.

Cigarette Sales (Prosecutions)

Mr. Wainwright asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many successful prosecutions for selling cigarettes to persons under 16 years of age there have been in the current year, and each of the preceding three years.

Mr. Mellor: The information available to me, which may be incomplete, is published annually in "Criminal statistics, England and Wales, Supplementary tables, Volume 1" in Table S1.1(A), under offence classification 144. Figures for 1985 are not yet available.

CIVIL SERVICE

"Public Bodies 1986"

Sir Philip Holland asked the Minister for the Civil Service when he proposes to publish "Public Bodies 1986"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The planned publication date for "Public Bodies 1986" is Wednesday 17 December 1986.

THE ARTS

National Portrait Gallery

Mr. Faulds asked the Minister for the Arts whether he will take steps to acquire the site of the former Royal Dental hospital in Leicester square, to enable the National Portrait Gallery to extend the number of paintings on public display.

Mr. Luce: I have informed the trustees of the National Portrait Gallery that no public funds are available for the acquisition of the site of the former Royal Dental hospital in Leicester square.

The National Portrait Gallery will gain some 29 per cent. net additional space (to be used for a variety of purposes) when it moves into the Crown-leased Orange Street properties, which are being rented and refurbished with the help of public funds.

I am in touch with the trustees of the gallery about further action they might take on the matter.

News International

Mr. Dobson asked the Minister for the Arts whether he has anything to add to his answer on Monday 24 November, *Official Report*, column 13, when he stated that certain named local authorities had maintained their ban on News International newspapers in libraries in defiance of sound legal advice.

Mr. Luce: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) on Thursday, 3 December 1986 at column 729

Mr. Dobson: asked the Minister for the Arts what was the source of the information he gave in his answer on Monday 24 November *Official Report*, column *13*, about News International newspapers in libraries.

Mr. Luce: Information regarding the lifting of the ban and the intentions of News International was obtained from the solicitors acting for News International and press reports.

Information about Camden, Ealing, and Hammersmith and Fulham having maintained their ban in defiance of advice received was obtained from the draft judgment of Lord Justice Watkins in the High Court judicial review proceedings brought by News International.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Taxation

Mr. Nicholls asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of total tax revenues was paid by the top 5 per cent. of taxpayers in the years since 1973-74.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to income tax paid by individuals. Information is given in the table. The analysis is of single people and married couples and the quantiles are determined by reference to income tax liability. The figures are based on the surveys of personal income for years up to 1984-85. For subsequent years, they are based on projections from the 1984-85 survey and are therefore provisional.

Quantile shares of Income Tax

Per cent.

Year	*Quantile group of tax units[1] Top 5 per cent.*
1973-74	28·6
1974-75	26·9
1975-76	24·7
1976-77	24·6
1977-78	24·9
1978-79	24·0
1979-80	23·4
1980-81	24·4
1981-82	24·8
1982-83	25·4
1983-84	25·4
1984-85 provisional	26·0
1985-86 provisional	26·5
1986-87 provisional	27·0

[1]ie counting married couples as one and combining their incomes.

Public Spending

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he makes of *(a)* the share of public spending going to the north-west region, *(b)* the per capita share of public spending going to the north-west region, and *(c)* the per capita share of public spending for the nation as a whole.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to take decisions on the range of options set out in the consultation document on value added tax input tax dated 7 August.

Mr. Brooke: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor hopes to make an announcement before the end of 1986.

Money Transactions

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what circumstances a financial institution is obliged by regulation to inform the police of international money transactions.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Bank of England Notes

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the guidelines relating to the use of reproductions of Bank of England notes are next due to be reviewed.

Mr. Ian Stewart: These guidelines are entirely a matter for the Bank of England.

Johnson Matthey Bankers

Dr. McDonald asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* his latest estimate of the total loss to the Bank of England, arising out of its investment in Johnson Matthey Bankers.

Mr. Ian Stewart: This is a matter for the Bank of England. As I indicated to the hon. Member on 28 November in cols. 581-2, the Bank's best estimate is that the total cost will not exceed £25 million and that this figure could be reduced by further recoveries in respect of the loan book and by the outcome of the claim against the former auditors of JMB.

Personal Debt

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has about the rise in the accumulated level of personal debt.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Statistics of personal sector debt are published in table 14.4 of "Financial Statistics". A finer breakdown of some categories of consumer credit is published in table 9·3.

Friendly Societies

Sir Peter Hordern asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received the report from the steering group of friendly societies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Mortgage Tax Relief

Mr. Cartwright asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many people claim mortgage tax relief; how many of these people also claim the married man's tax allowance; how many of those people who do not claim the married man's tax allowance claim mortgage tax relief in respect of the same property as another person who claims mortgage tax relief; and how many of those people who do claim the married man's tax allowance claim mortgage tax relief in respect of the same property as another person who claims mortgage tax relief;

(2) on how many dwellings mortgage tax relief is claimed; on how many of these dwellings two or more unmarried people claim mortgage tax relief; and on how many such dwellings mortgage tax relief is claimed on more than £30,000;

(3) what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer of limiting mortgage tax relief to individual residences rather than to individual taxpayers as suggested in Cmnd. 9756.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 25 November 1986, c. *239*]: In 1986-87 there are estimated to be 8·2 million mortgagors, of whom 1·7 million are single people and 6·5 million married couples.

Although firm information is not available, it is tentatively estimated that about 500,000 single people are involved in multiple borrower mortgages in respect of around 250,000 properties. The number of married couples involved in multiple borrower mortgages is thought to be very small. About 50,000 of these mortgages, involving around 100,000 individuals, are thought to exceed £30,000.

The estimated annual saving to the Exchequer of limiting mortgage interest relief to individual residences rather than individual taxpayers with a limit of £30,000 per property is about £15 million at 1986-87 levels of income and mortgage interest rates, assuming no consequential change in the distribution of mortgages outstanding.

Investment Depreciation

Sir Edward du Cann asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the effect on revenue which would follow from replacing the present 25 per cent. reducing balance method of depreciating investment for tax purposes by a 25 per cent. straight line system.

Mr. Lawson [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December 1986, c. *598*]: The effect on revenue would build up over a number of years and estimates depend crucially upon future levels of investment. The direct revenue cost in the peak year is tentatively estimated at £3·5 billion.

DEFENCE

Crown Proceedings Act 1947

Mr. Brinton asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to announce the results of the review of section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Younger: I have now completed my review of Section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947.

Section 10 was included in the 1947 Act on the grounds that members of the Armed Forces, by the very nature of their profession, undertake hazardous tasks which ordinary members of the public do not. At that time it was believed that this provision would not result in any overall financial penalty against servicemen, because they received benefits, payable regardless of fault, which were in most cases comparable with those which a civilian might expect from the courts. Our review has, however, shown that damages which courts have awarded in some cases of personal injury have now risen to a level which can considerably exceed the benefits which the serviceman receives. The Government have concluded that repeal of section 10 is the only satisfactory course which will remove this disadvantage.

By having the right of access to the courts in personal injury cases, the serviceman will have a right—the right to sue the Crown—which his fellow citizens already enjoy. We recognise that it will be necessary to avoid any effect on the maintenance of discipline and the quality of military training. My Department will therefore stand behind any serviceman who was sued by another serviceman for alleged negligence arising out of the execution of his duties and in doing so would aim to place on record the peculiar hazards and difficulties to which a serviceman's life is subject. The existing system of benefits which are payable in cases of death or injury, regardless of fault, will be maintained.

We shall need to be able to reactivate the provisions of section 10 in the event of impending or actual hostilities or grave national emergency.

We do not propose that the repeal of section 10 should be made retrospective because of the principle that legislation is for the future and because it would be wrong to impose retrospective liability. There may, of course, be cases arising in respect of incidents between today and the eventual repeal of section 10 in which claims for compensation would be accepted but for the continuing operation of section 10. We intend that, once a Bill has become law, any valid claims falling into that category should be dealt with on an ex-gratia basis.

Because of the constraints of the legislative programme the Government are unable to introduce the necessary legislation in this Session. However, we would be ready to support a suitable Bill that might be brought by a private Member.

Radar Systems

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made with siting an over-the-horizon radar system in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: As my right hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Sir A. Butler) advised the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) and the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) on 21 December 1984 at column *378* and the same right hon. Member on 11 March 1985 at columns *56-57*, the United Kingdom and the United States are collaborating in a joint programme of studies aimed at testing the feasibility of siting an over-the-horizon radar system in the United Kingdom. These studies are still continuing, and there are at present no firm plans for implementation.

Procurement Contracts

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the opportunities for private contractors in defence procurement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Since 1979 increased defence expenditure and a more commercial approach on the part of MOD have created considerable opportunities for all sectors of British industry in defence procurement. To obtain best value for money and strengthen the defence industrial base, an increasing proportion of our requirements is met by competition for both direct and sub-contract work. We have taken a number of initiatives to widen the circle of knowledge and opportunity in defence procurement, including the recently launched MOD Contracts Bulletin advertising MOD contract opportunities, and the MOD small firms initiative.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Nicholls asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received about maintaining nuclear weapons as a integral part of the British defence system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: On 3 December the House passed a motion in the names of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and other of my right hon. Friends by a substantial majority rejecting a non-nuclear defence policy for Britain. I am sure that the majority of British people take the same view.

Mounted Service Personnel (Headgear)

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Defence what headgear mounted officers and troops are required to wear on mounted duties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: For ceremonial duties officers and soldiers wear the head-dress appropriate to their full dress uniform. For non-ceremonial mounted duties all personnel are required to wear a protective skull cap of a pattern approved by the Army dress committee and complying with British Standard 4472.

Russian Submarine (Radiation Leaks)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent checks have been undertaken by Her Majesty's Government into possible radiation leaks from the Russian November class submarine sunk off the Scilly Isles in 1970.

Mr. Stanley: My Department has not conducted any checks for radiation leaks from the Russian November class submarine, which sank some 500 nautical miles off the Scilly Isles in 1970. I understand that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food undertakes monitoring of levels of radioactivity in the coastal waters of the United Kingdom, and that this monitoring has not detected any radioactivity from the source referred to by the hon. Member. Reports on coastal monitoring undertaken by MAFF are published annually and placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the frequency with which the Russians check radiation levels from the nuclear submarine sunk off the Scilly Isles in 1970.

Mr. Stanley: I understand that after the sinking Soviet naval survey vessels guarded the immediate area almost continuously for about six months. Thereafter routine patrols were conducted but these ceased in 1979, after which only occasional visits were made. The purpose of the routine patrol and the subsequent occasional visits is not known.

Tucano Aircraft

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Tucano to be in service with the Royal Air Force as its basic trainer; what was the date originally planned; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986]: Shorts advises that delivery of the first Tucano aircraft to the Royal Air Force will be in the spring of 1987. This represents a few months' slippage in the date originally planned.

Belize

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Defence what non-United Kingdom forces have had use of British facilities in Belize over the last three years.

Mr. Stanley [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986]: British facilities are used by the Belize defence force. So far as other foreign forces are concerned, records are available only for the last two years. In September 1986, both the BDF and British Forces Belize hosted a troop from the Bermuda Regiment during a two-week joint exercise. In February 1986 a sports team of United States service men from Panama visited the BDF and BFB. United States observers were invited to witness joint BDF/BFB exercises in January 1985, January 1986 and July 1986.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 9 December 1986

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

State Security

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Attorney-General whether the book "Their Trade is Treachery" was referred to the D Notice Committee for consideration by all its members.

The Attorney-General: The question whether a particular book was referred to the D Notice Committee is not one for which I have responsibility.

Public Record Office

Mr. Latham asked the Attorney-General whether he will set out in tabular form for each of the last five years the annual Government funding in respect of the Public Record Office; and what has been the amount payable in each year to the Property Services Agency in respect of remedial works to the air-conditioning system at Kew.

The Attorney-General: The amounts voted by Parliament for the Public Record Office for the past five years are as follows:

	Gross	*Appropriations in aid*	*Net*
	£	£	£
1982-83	3,999,000	320,000	3,670,000
1983-84	8,939,000	443,000	8,496,000
1984-85	9,793,000	438,000	9,355,000
1985-86	10,940,000	453,000	10,487,000
1986-87	11,098,000	927,000	10,171,000

Since the introduction of the property repayment system in 1983-84, sums have been transferred to the Property Services Agency by the Public Record Office in respect of accommodation charges, works, and fuel and utilities for all its four sites. The payments are not otherwise attributed to specific purposes and it is not possible to identify separate elements relating to remedial works to the air-conditioning system at Kew. The total sums transferred are:

	£
1983-84	4,211,000
1984-85	4,055,000
1985-86	5,066,000
1986-87	5,119,000

These figures do not include £750,000 for the cost of the works to the Kew building arising from the 1984 review by Messrs. Donald Smith, Seymour and Rooley, which are to be borne on the Property Services Agency Votes.

ENVIRONMENT

Marine Nature Reserves

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the location of all the proposed or established marine nature reserves in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The first statutory marine nature reserve, at Lundy island, was announced on 21 November. The Nature Conservancy Council has identified six further potential reserves at Skomer, Menai, Bardsey, the Scilly isles, Loch Sween and St. Abbs head. Detailed consultations are continuing and it is hoped to designate more sites in 1987.

Pollution

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken within the last three years aimed at *(a)* encouraging industrialists to introduce environmentally sound technology on to existing production lines, *(b)* substitute more environmentally sound products in the place of ones found to be harmful and *(c)* ensure that new plant incorporates the best available technology to reduce the amount and toxicity of both the waste produced and the end product.

Mr. Waldegrave: Over the past three years the Government have supported the Pollution Abatement Technology Award Scheme. We are supporting the United Kingdom international pollution abatement fair and conference next year, and are grant-aiding production of a directory of products, services and ideas emerging from the environmental industry. The development of pollution abatement technology attracts grant aid from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under the support for innovation scheme.

We have also co-operated with industry to develop environmentally-friendly products. Measures include the introduction of unleaded petrol, the progressive elimination of lead from decorative paint and a reduction in the organotin content of anti-fouling paint for boats.

The pollution inspectorates continue to require a high standard of pollution abatement in new plant; and we recently announced that all new coal-fired power stations must be fitted with acid-free technology to standards set by the Industrial Air Pollution Inspectorate.

International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans his Department has to mark the 1987 United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

Mr. Sean Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans his Department has to mark the 1987 United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

Mr. Tracey: Since the focus of the year is on assistance to developing countries, action to mark it is primarily a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Urban Economic Development

Mr. Wainwright asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he plans any new initiatives in policy towards urban economic development in the light of the findings of the Economic and Social Research Council in its publication "Critical Issues in Urban Economic Development"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The Department has had extensive contacts with the ESRC in the course of their inner cities research programme. Its findings are taken into account in the development of policy, although none of the current urban initiatives is solely attributable to them.

Public Record Office, Kew

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the original cost to public funds of the construction of the Public Record Office at Kew; what part of that cost was represented by the expenditure on the air conditioning system; and what proportion of the original cost is the amount spent over the last five years on air conditioning.

Mr. Chope: The total cost to public funds was £10·4 million at 1977-78 outturn prices of which the amount falling on PSA's works vote was £8·3 million. The air conditioning plant cost £1·2 million. Over the last five years some £1·2 million (at cash prices), has been spent on the maintenance and operation of the system. This includes £800,000 normal routine maintenance.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will set out in tabular form for each year since 1977 the amount of money spent on remedial works to the Public Record Office at Kew, indicating separately the amounts spent on air conditioning.

Mr. Chope: The costs of remedial works, over and above normal routine maintenance, carried out by PSA at the Public Records Office at Kew since 1977 are:

	Total cost	*Air conditioning costs only (assessed figures at cash prices)*
	£	£
1977-78	4,400	1,700
1978-79	6,200	3,400
1979-80	21,300	0
1980-81	3,100	700
1981-82	6,400	2,000
1982-83	65,500	34,000
1983-84	121,000	62,000
1984-85	132,500	72,000
1985-86	270,000	220,000
	630,400	395,800

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why £800,000 has been spent over five years on routine and regular maintenance to the air conditioning system of the Public Record Office at Kew; what proportion that represents of the original cost of its installation; and how it compares with the routine maintenance work on air conditioning in other Government offices over the same period.

Mr. Chope: The air conditioning is particularly sophisticated. The £800,000 spent over five years on the routine and regular maintenance of the air conditioning system represents 66 per cent. of the systems original 1976-77 installation cost of £1,200,000.

Approximately £90,000 per annum (£450,000 over the five year period) is spent on a service contract to provide for the day-to-day operation of the plant and equipment, and for minor repairs and servicing of any items costing under £500. In addition, any repairs over that amount are paid for separately as are all specialist services including the regular inspection and sterilisation of the water distribution system and the deep cleaning of the humidification plant.

The national statistics compiled by the Property Services Agency do not separate the costs of air conditioning plants from other engineering services. For the building as a whole, however, over the past five years, maintenance work has averaged £8·95 per square metre per annum (at 1985-86 prices) against a national model cost for buildings of this type, age and construction of £14·64.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the independent review of the Public Record Office at Kew and as to the reasons given in the review for the closure of the premises to the public for three months in 1984.

Mr. Chope: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement on this issue made by the Lord Chancellor in another place on 27 March 1985 at column 1138. The building was closed as a preventive measure whilst the air conditioning plant was thoroughly checked, cleaned and treated with disinfectants. Most of the work recommended by the review has been completed.

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication of the Management and Personnel Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982.

Mr. Ridley: The following Committees of this nature (other than committees of officials) have been abolished in this period:

Advisory Committee on Local Government Audit
Committee of Inquiry into the Conduct of Local Authority Business
Committee of Recreational Management Training
Hydraulics Reseach Station Advisory Committee

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committes to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication issued by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Ridley: The committee of inquiry into the Handling of Geographic Information is the only Committee (other than committees of officials) set up to advise me or my Department, which is not listed in "Public Bodies". It was set up in 1985 and will be submitting its report in March 1987.

"Paying for Local Government"

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish, by 19 December, a list of those responding to Cmnd. 9714 "Paying for Local Government" along with a summary of their responses.

Mr. Ridley: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave on November 1986 at column *392* and 27 November at column *317* to him and to his hon. Friend the Member for Mid Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle), respectively. The summary of responses I expect to publish will include a list of organisations which responded to the Green Paper.

Housing Corporation Development Programme

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will now give details of the Housing Corporation's approved development programme for 1987-88.

Mr. John Patten: We have now approved a development programme for 1987-88 which will allow the Housing Corporation to give approval to some 22,000 new homes for rent and for sale—a 21 per cent. increase over 1986-87. This is based on the gross provision of £705 million, announced by my right hon. Friend on 7 November, which included a £20 million increase specifically for new schemes mixing 30 per cent. grant with private finance. Together with a further £10 million of "challenge" funding we have now added from within the programme, we expect the mixed finance schemes alone to generate £100 million of new housing investment.

In 1986-87 the Housing Corporation was asked to concentrate new approvals on areas of greatest need. They identified 80 housing stress areas for which the 1985-86 allocations for new fair rent and shared housing projects were maintained in total in real terms in 1986-87. These allocations will be increased by a further 9 per cent. to £390 million in 1987-88 but there will also be increases for other areas.

Overall allocations for housing for rent will be 17 per cent. above 1985-86 levels of investment. The priorities for this programme will be to help homeless families, especially those in bed and breakfast accommodation, schemes to assist job mobility and provision for others with special housing needs including those in rural stress areas. The allocations for new major projects go up from £25 million to £40 million—60 per cent. increase. New starts on housing for sale will be kept at the same level as 1986-87. Provision made in this programme will be supplemented by wholly private financed schemes, both in the form of the index-linked shared ownership made possible by the Housing and Planning Act and also by the new initiatives recently announced by the Housing Corporation, which they have worked up in co-operation with Coventry Churches Housing Association.

The breakdown of the approved development programme for 1987-88 is as follows:

Housing Corporation—Approved development programme 1987-88

		£ million	£ million
Net allocation (cash limit)			637
Receipts			68
Gross allocation			705
Housing for rent			
Fair rent and shared housing projects			
1. Contracted expenditure (Block 1)			357
2. New tenders approved (Block 2)			139
3. New Fair rent and shared housing projects (Block 3)			56
Flexible HAG projects			
4. *(a)* Homeless families *(b)* Job movers *(c)* Other projects	committed expenditure New projects	3 30	33
5. *Major Repairs:*	committed expenditure	16	
	New projects	8	24
6. *Mini HAG:*			3
Housing for sale			
7. *(a)* Improvement for sale *(b)* Leasehold schemes for the elderly *(c)* Shared ownership *(d)* Home-ownership for tenants of charitable housing associations	Committed expenditure New projects	68 22	90
			702
8. *Right to buy mortgages* and other expenditure			3
			705

Note 1:
Included in Blocks 1, 2 and 3 (fair rent) and Housing for sale is £6·7 million to cover the cost of certain projects to be undertaken on Merseyside.

Note 2:
Within the provision for flexible HAG £3 million has been allocated to permit the transfer of some 700 units previously approved for fair rent to funding on a 30 per cent. HAG basis.

Note 3:
New Fair rent and shared housing projects. The allocation of funds under this head will initiate projects to a total cost of some £513 million to be completed over the next 3 to 4 years.

Portsmouth Councillor (Telephone Call)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what request as to the revelation of the contents of the telephone call to the Leader of Portsmouth city council on 4 March was made in the course of the telephone call.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: I do not recall asking Councillor Gibson to delay revealing the contents of the conversation to his council, and would have had no reason to do so. My recollection is that Councillor Gibson for his part did not ask that the conversation should be kept in confidence, but mentioned that he would wait until the letter giving details of the Secretary of State's decision arrived before informing the Council.

"Faith in the City"

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he has taken in the light of the report "Faith in the City" on matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to the reply*, 8 December 1986]: My Department continues to give priority to the regeneration of urban areas through existing programmes, including the urban programme and derelict land grant, which have greatly expanded since 1979. In addition new initiatives have been promoted, including proposals for new urban development corporations at Trafford Park in Greater Manchester, Teesside, the black country and Tyne and Wear, and the provision for urban regeneration grant contained in the Housing and Planning Act 1986. Also, my Department is giving specific assistance to the Archbishop's commission on urban priority areas with its work on identifying areas for assistance by the church urban fund. I shall be seeing the chairman and secretary of the follow-up group tomorrow.

Council Estates (Demolition)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to provide for his consent to be required for the demolition of a council housing estate, and sale of the land.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: The decision on whether to demolish property owned by it rightly rests with the local housing authority concerned. Sales of council housing land already require the consent of my right hon. Friend under section 32 of the Housing Act 1985.

Housing (Portsmouth)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the value of grants Portsmouth city council has received for *(a)* the original construction of the Portsdown park housing estate and *(b)* capitalised repairs since 1970.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: This information is not available in the form requested. Portsmouth city council does not currently require Exchequer housing subsidy to balance its housing account.

Council House Waiting Lists

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many people are currently on local authority housing waiting lists *(a)* in each of the London boroughs and *(b)* in each of the parliamentary constituencies in the London borough of Southwark.

Mr. Tracey [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: My right hon. Friend has received from the London boroughs the information given in the table. Neither the criteria for inclusion in the waiting list nor the checking of lists to remove the names of people no longer seeking local authority accommodation are uniform to the local authorities for which information is given.

Number of Households on the Housing Waiting List at 1 April 1986

	Number
City of London	553
Barking and Dagenham	3,880
Barnet	5,753
Bexley	3,751
Brent	18,496
Bromley	4,376
Camden	16,922
Croydon	5,226
Ealing	9,114
Enfield	7,825
Greenwich	15,015
Hackney	15,850
Hammersmith and Fulham	9,235
Haringey	12,147
Harrow	2,001
Havering	3,140
Hillingdon	3,722
Hounslow	8,637
Islington	9,500
Kensington and Chelsea	9,987
Kingston upon Thames	1,912
Lambeth	16,652
Lewisham	22,585
Merton	3,849
Newham	5,386
Redbridge	2,791
Richmond upon Thames	4,038
Southwark	14,583
Sutton	1,634
Tower Hamlets	10,000
Waltham Forest	7,578
Wandsworth	6,981
Westminster	9,152

Source: HIP returns 1986.

The Department does not hold this information on a constituency basis.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Sales

53. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is satisfied with the effectiveness of the end user certificates system for overseas arms sales.

Mr. Alan Clark: Yes.

Motor Industry

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his estimate of the number of British jobs dependent on *(a)* motor vehicle manufacturing, *(b)* the motor component supply industry, *(c)* the motor trade and *(d)* the motor industry.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Our estimate of the number of British jobs directly dependent on these sectors is as follows:

	Number
(a) motor vehicle manufacturing	157,000
(b) motor component supply industry	200,000
(c) the motor trade	514,000
(d) the motor industry (vehicle manufacturing plus component supply)	357,000

Pirate Radio, London

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has received any representations concerning increases in pirate radio traffic in the Greater London area.

Mr. Butcher: From time to time a number of organisations based in the Greater London Area whose legitimate activities have been affected by unlicensed broadcasting stations have made representations about the difficulties they have experienced.

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has received any reports of FM signal interference caused by pirate radio traffic in the Greater London area.

Mr. Butcher: My Department's radio investigation service receives frequent complaints of radio interference caused by unauthorised use of radio including unlicensed broadcasting stations in the Greater London area. Unlicensed broadcasters have caused interference to authorised broadcasting services and to radio systems used by the police, fire and ambulance services, services essential to the safety of customers and employees of airlines, gas companies, and bus companies. With this in mind we are committed to stopping the interference from unlicensed broadcasters.

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many prosecutions were brought under section 79 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 in Greater London last year; how many resulted in convictions; and how many resulted in the confiscation of broadcasting equipment.

Mr. Butcher: No prosecutions have been brought under section 79 of the Telecommunications Act 1984. Last year (1985), 182 prosecutions were brought under sections 1, 5 and 13 of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 in Greater London. Of these 93 related to unlicensed broadcasting of which 92 resulted in conviction. In 61 of the latter cases forfeiture of equipment was ordered by the court.

Radio Interference Service

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff the radio interference service has engaged in investigating complaints in the Greater London area.

Mr. Butcher: My Department's radio investigation service employs 220 staff throughout the United Kingdom who are deployed to particular regions as work demands. There are 55 staff based in London.

Nightwear

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the terms of his Nightwear (Safety) Regulations 1985 apply to garments other than nightwear; and if he will remake the regulations under a different title.

Mr. Howard: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to him on 2 December at column 548. As the hon. Member has also written to me on this subject, I shall reply to his letter as soon as possible.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Henderson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the encouragement of small firms to bid for Channel tunnel contracts.

Mr. Giles Shaw: My Department is seeking to make all United Kingdom industry aware of the business opportunities to which the project will give rise. Small firms are encouraged to register with the tunnel contractors, Transmanche link joint venture.

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publications of the Management and Personnel Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982.

Mr. Butcher: There are no such committees.

Sir Phillip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication issued by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Butcher: Advisory Committees to which the Secretary of State makes appointments which are not yet listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication are:

The National Accreditation Council for Certification Bodies.
The Alvey programme Steering Committee.
The Industrial Consultative Committee on Biotechnology.

They will be listed in the next available edition.

Standard Chartered Bank

Mr. Robin Cook asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will appoint inspectors to inquire into share dealing during the attempted bid by Lloyds for Standard Chartered Bank and related matters.

Mr. Howard: I shall appoint inspectors if and when I am satisfied that there are grounds to do so.

Trade Descriptions Act 1972

Mr. Conway asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to consult interested parties about successor arrangements to the Trade Descriptions Act 1972.

Mr. Howard: My Department sent a consultation letter to a wide range of consumer and trade associations on 4

December seeking their views on possible successor arrangements. I have arranged for a copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Tiles

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give figures for each of the last five years for *(a)* sales of tiles in the Unied Kingdom, *(b)* production of British tiles and *(c)* imports of tiles.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: The figures for *(a)* wall, floor and fireplace tiles and *(b)* clay roofing tiles and fittings are as follows:

£ million

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
(a) Sales in the United Kingdom	104·8	104·9	132·0	146·8	153·6
Sales of tiles produced in the United Kingdom	87·5	84·5	102·3	106·5	109·9
Imports of tiles	33·2	35·9	45·8	56·5	59·7
(b) Sales in the United Kingdom	13·8	17·7	23·4	25·7	27·0
Sales of tiles produced in the United Kingdom	14·1	17·9	23·4	25·8	26·7
Imports of tiles	0·1	0·2	0·4	0·5	0·8

Figures for Plastic, Rubber, Vinyl, Cork, Glass, Cement and Carpet tiles are not available.

Shipbuilders (International Comparisons)

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the most recent information available to him of the support for shipbuilders in *(a)* Japan, *(b)* Taiwan, *(c)* Korea and *(d)* all individual countries of the European Economic Community.

Mr. Giles Shaw [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986]: There is no direct support to shipbuilders in Japan or South Korea. I will write to the hon. Member about Taiwan about which I have no information to hand.

The following is the current information on support for shipbuilders in the European Community:

United Kingdom

(a) Up to 20·5 per cent. of contract price from the Intervention Fund and 2 per cent. Shipbuilders Relief. The maximum may be increased by 5 per cent. for vessels over 70,000 dwt built in Northern Ireland.
(b) Loss compensation in public sector yards.
(c) Shipbuilding redundancy payments scheme.
(d) Regional development grants.
(e) Enterprise Companies.

Belgium

(a) No production subsidies.
(b) 10 year plan from 1982 to take over redundancy payments to workers 55 and over.
(c) The Economic Expansion Law, 1970, provides credit facilities for investment.
(d) The Economic Expansion Law, 1970, provides interest free credits for the development of prototypes, new products and new production processes.

Denmark

(a) No direct production subsidies.
(b) Loans from National Bank for new building at official discount rate 1·5-2 per cent.
(c) Guarantees covering mortgages for small ships.

France

(a) Production aids for:
(i) small yards 10 per cent.;
(ii) large and medium yards 20 per cent.
(b) Aid for closures and reconversion.

Germany

(a) No direct production subsidies for shipbuilding.
(b) Rescue aid.
(c) Guarantees from one coastal Land.
(d) Grant aid for closures and reconversion.
(e) Grants of up 11·25 per cent. and guarantees for investment.
(f) Grants for research and development.

Ireland

Nil.

Italy

(a) Up to 25 per cent. of contract price. Additional 5·3 per cent. for large yards in the Mezzogiorno and 2 per cent. for others.
(b) Loss compensation.
(c) Stock holding of components.
(d) Up 30 per cent. grants for investments linked to rationalisation or re-organisation programmes which do not increase production capacity.
(e) Insurance or export credits.
(f) Aid for research and development.

Netherlands

(a) Up to 10 per cent. of contract price. Total aid is linked to turnover.

Portugal

(a) 25 per cent. of contract cost.
(b) Loss compensation.

Spain

(a) Up to 14·5 per cent. of value of the ship.
(b) Up to 2·5 per cent. of contract value for financial restructuring to be matched by beneficiary.
(c) Loss financing of public sector yards.
(d) Employment Promotion Fund 2 per cent. of value of ships built.
(e) Research and Development programmes financed by 0·5 per cent. of the value of ships built.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Police Accommodation

Mr. Dorrell asked the Lord Privy Seal if he has any proposals to make additional accommodation for the police guarding the Palace of Westminster available in No. 1 Bridge street; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Biffen: At present, the BBC, IRN and Metropolitan police occupy parts of the building on a short-term basis. During the recess further

accommodation was made available to the BBC. I understand that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Evironment has action in hand to provide the police with a new locker room. It is hoped that the new facility will be available early in the New Year.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication of the Management and Personnel Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend is not aware of any committee of this kind.

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office.

Mrs. Rumbold: There is one such committee not yet listed in the Public Bodies publication, namely the recently established National Advisory Council for the Youth Service to which my right hon. Friend and the Secretary of State for Wales make appoinments jointly.

Listed Buildings

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has sought to find out how much of the University Grants Committee's recurrent grant is used for the upkeep of listed buildings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend has not sought to find out how much of the University Grants Committee's recurrent grant is used for the upkeep of listed buildings and has no plans to do so.

Student Unions

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the cost to the taxpayer of student unions in each year since 1978-79.

Mr. Walden: The Department does not collect this information. Up to the academic year 1980-81, all student unions were financed by a per capita fee charged to the individual student. Since 1981-82, student unions in institutions of higher education have been financed by means of a block allocation from the resources of their parent institutions. The total amount of such allocations is not known. Arrangements for the funding of student unions in other further education institutions are locally determined.

Teachers

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the current availability of teachers in science and related subjects.

Mrs. Rumbold: Vacancies for teachers of science, mathematics and technology have risen recently though they still represent a low proportion of total posts. Many teachers have their main qualification in other subjects. The Government is backing a range of measures to improve supply including the introduction of a £1,200 tax free bursary scheme for entrants to initial teacher training courses in the shortage subjects, the allocation of £16·5 million in 1987-88 to support related in-service training and the formation of a national unit to publicise teaching as a career.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Mentally Ill Prisoners

Mr. Raynsford asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the latest estimate of the number of inmates in Her Majesty's prisons who are suffering from mental illness.

Mr. Mellor: On 30 September there were 339 inmates in prison custody in England and Wales who had a disorder which, in the opinion of the Medical Officer, was of a nature or degree which would make it appropriate for them to be detained in hospital under the terms of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Detained Persons (Food)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he is now having on possible changes in the procedures which allow food to be taken into prisons for people held on remand in custody; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We are reviewing the need in present day circumstances for the longstanding privilege of unconvicted prisoners to have food and drink sent into prison. Prison service catering offers an adequate and varied diet which prisoners may supplement by purchases from the prison canteen. The remand food privilege provides a means of smuggling unauthorised articles, including drugs, into prisons and requires staff time to be spent in searching that could be put into other use. The views of prison service trade unions have been sought and officials are considering the practical implications of abolishing the privilege.

Salmon Act 1976

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he is taking to ensure that police forces in England and Wales are fully briefed on the relevant sections of the Salmon Act 1976.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The enforcement of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 falls primarily to water authorities rather than the police, who may provide assistance on request. We are not aware of any difficulties encountered by the police which required advice from this Department.

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments

and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publications of the Management and Personnel Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982;

(2) if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication issued by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Hurd: There is no central record of unlisted committees which have ceased to exist. Only committees with a life of less than 12 months would not normally be listed.

The most recent regular survey of Home Office bodies identified three committees in existence on 1 April 1986 which had not been listed in the 1985 edition of "Public Bodies":

(i) The Special Panel of Advisers on Security Cases (paragraph 150 of the Immigration Rules HC 169), which had not at the time of the review convened since 1976;

(ii) The New Town Licensed Premises Committee (Milton Keynes) and the Advisory Committee on Service Candidates had appeared in earlier editions but were omitted due to an oversight.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people seeking asylum in the United Kingdom are presently being detained by the Immigration Service *(a)* at Harmondsworth, *(b)* at Latchmere house, Richmond and *(c)* elsewhere in the United Kingdom;

(2) how many persons seeking asylum in the United Kingdom and detained by the immigration service have been held in custody for more than two weeks;

(3) if it remains his policy to allow temporary admission to persons seeking asylum in the United Kingdom whilst their cases are being considered; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: The criteria for deciding whether to grant temporary admission are applied by the immigration service locally and are the same for asylum applicants as for others. These are an assessment of the likelihood of the person complying with the terms of temporary admission and of any compassionate features. On the information readily available, on 5 December 41 persons claiming asylum were detained at Harmondsworth, 29 at Latchmere house and 25 elsewhere; 64 of these had been detained for longer than two weeks on that date.

Prison Statistics

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the minimum recommended number of officers working in each of Her Majesty's prisons; what was the actual number on duty on the latest date for which figures are available; how these figures compare with the authorised establishment at each prison; what is the number of prisoners in each prison and how this figure compares with the recommended maximum; what is the recommended ratio of prison officers to prisoners at each prison and what is the actual figure; and if he will give these figures for each of the last three years, where appropriate.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply*, 24 November 1986, c. *45*]: Minimum recommended staffing levels are not set for prison establishments in England and Wales. The actual number of officers on duty at any one time varies according to such factors as the time of day, the day of the week, leave and training. This information is not held centrally. The number of prison officer class staff in post at each establishment on 31 October 1986 according to centrally held records is listed in column *(a)* of the table together with comparable figures for 31 December 1985 *(b)* 31 December 1984 *(c)* and 31 December 1983 *(d)*. The authorised staffing level as at 1 November 1986 is set out in column *(e)*; figures for past years are not available. There is no agreed recommended maximum number of inmates per prison; information recording the average and the highest population in each establishment is provided in the annual reports on the work of the prison department, which are available in the Library. The concept of a recommended officer to inmate ratio does not exist at present; actual ratios showing the number of inmates per member of the prison officer class for 31 December 1985, 31 December 1984 and 31 December 1983, are set out in the table at columns *(f)*, *(g)* and *(h)* respectively.

Establishment	*(a)*	*(b)*	*(c)*	*(d)*	*(e)*	*(f)*	*(g)*	*(h)*
Acklington	164	159	147	151	189	2·89	3·07	2·34
Albany	311	324	332	257	383	1·10	1·12	0·61
Aldington	36	36	37	40	44	2·69	2·89	1·58
Ashford	199	198	198	196	234	2·12	2·22	2·34
Ashwell	66	65	61	68	75	5·32	5·07	4·99
Askham Grange	48	42	42	41	46	2·52	1·76	2·41
Aylesbury	135	138	140	121	167	2·08	1·93	2·02
Bedford	172	172	181	169	204	1·78	1·65	1·93
Birmingham	417	399	403	406	443	2·37	2·16	2·30
Blantyre House	45	45	42	43	48	1·18	1·24	1·44
Blundeston	143	146	144	144	158	2·75	2·82	2·81
Bristol	244	240	249	252	260	2·51	2·07	2·19
Brixton	666	654	606	601	993	1·50	1·33	1·27
Brockhill	97	95	95	97	108	2·44	2·38	2·08
Buckley Hall	42	42	39	44	47½	2·00	1·97	1·36
Bullwood Hall	89	84	65	77	95	1·74	1·68	1·21
Camp Hill	180	177	174	195	203	2·64	2·34	2·33
Campsfield House	37	37	38	37	40	1·38	0·82	0·86
Canterbury	192	187	179	162	230	1·50	1·63	1·75
Cardiff	221	211	206	219	223½	2·04	1·79	1·81
Castington	104	106	108	100	116	1·65	2·56	1·66

Establishment	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
Channings Wood	147	149	139	150	153	2·85	2·60	2·65
Chelmsford	162	159	164	170	179	2·18	2·11	2·29
Coldingley	153	151	157	145	188	1·91	1·90	2·01
Cookham Wood	56	56	51	55	64	2·14	2·16	2·11
Dartmoor	253	235	225	216	239	3·15	2·27	2·50
Deerbolt	151	145	106	113	168½	1·81	2·53	2·46
Dorchester	94	90	98	91	106	1·81	1·96	1·93
Dover	109	104	95	108	113½	2·11	2·41	1·85
Drake Hall	77	75	75	72	78	2·95	2·80	2·46
Durham	404	384	364	371	401	2·52	2·65	2·52
East Sutton Park	29	28	23	24	27	2·50	2·22	2·04
Eastwood Park	53	51	53	50	55½	1·61	1·21	1·64
Erlestoke	95	97	91	92	107½	1·80	2·22	1·36
Everthorpe	111	115	113	104	115	3·13	3·03	3·36
Exeter	209	206	221	224	226	2·01	1·89	1·89
Featherstone	138	138	138	132	164	3·71	3·62	3·68
Feltham/Finnamore Wood	174	176	185	178	194½	1·66	1·57	1·77
Ford	96	97	102	98	103	5·07	4·26	5·39
Fosten Hall	36	38	39	37	39½	1·05	0·85	1·08
Frankland	381	364	349	333	337	1·19	0·89	0·93
Gartree	247	262	273	253	312	1·18	1·11	1·10
Glen Parva	261	246	253	240	295½	2·63	2·49	2·31
Gloucester	128	132	131	135	145	2·05	1·69	2·07
Grendon/Springhill	153	149	159	154	187	1·62	1·52	1·69
Guys Marsh	78	78	74	68	86½	1·88	2·61	1·87
Haslar	46	44	46	45	46	1·64	1·35	1·29
Hatfield/Gringley	97	98	97	86	100	1·86	2·22	2·24
Haverigg	99	103	104	102	127	4·86	4·89	5·01
Hewell Grange	55	54	55	50	62	2·70	2·27	2·42
Highpoint	196	200	178	148	241	3·06	2·98	3·57
Hindley	119	112	114	110	132½	2·59	2·82	2·73
Hollesley Bay	204	207	221	221	247	2·07	1·93	1·88
Holloway	336	345	384	292	370	0·88	0·81	1·05
Hull	250	250	249	246	290	0·99	1·17	1·20
Huntercombe	68	58	59	61	78½	3·14	2·90	3·07
Kingston	63	62	62	58	68	2·21	2·24	
Kirkham	80	79	80	77	86	6·08	6·21	7·45
Kirklevington	47	45	49	49	51	1·38	1·69	2·20
Lancaster	94	95	95	90	99	2·40	2·29	2·53
Latchmere House	76	79	80	76	86	1·73	1·60	2·01
Leeds	396	387	373	352	509	3·16	3·07	3·23
Leicester	221	215	232	218	256	1·56	1·52	1·70
Lewes	194	191	203	196	227	2·76	2·42	2·40
Leyhill	66	63	65	61	79	4·97	4·80	5·18
Lincoln	227	224	224	223	259	2·71	2·39	2·24
Lindholm	206	—	—	—	235	—	—	—
Liverpool	414	418	404	394	480	2·93	3·06	2·88
Long Lartin	312	312	314	319	364	1·28	1·25	1·21
Lowdham Grange	79	82	86	84	92½	2·89	2·92	2·80
Low Newton	119	116	123	116	127	2·09	2·33	2·01
Maidstone	193	186	184	197	225	2·81	2·76	2·56
Manchester	526	536	513	457	616	2·89	2·32	3·01
Medomsley	44	44	45	41	50	1·23	1·38	1·56
Morton Hall	35	27	—	—	44	3·59	—	—
New Hall	39	41	43	42	45	1·37	1·77	1·14
Northallerton	85	87	82	81	95	2·39	2·61	2·60
Northeye	89	89	98	94	116	4·91	4·16	4·55
Noth Sea Camp	64	60	63	62	71	1·62	2·02	1·42
Norwich	237	231	242	236	252	2·58	2·46	2·25
Nottingham	138	136	136	133	139	2·16	2·05	2·23
Onley	145	146	155	153	168½	2·84	2·54	2·55
Oxford	106	104	103	106	115½	2·08	2·22	2·19
Parkhurst	297	295	306	305	364	0·75	0·83	0·89
Pentonville	306	328	335	320	352	2·90	2·67	3·05
Portland	170	168	166	164	184	2·91	2·69	2·71
Preston	146	137	132	146	145	4·17	4·21	3·95
Pucklechurch	113	110	115	110	118	1·32	1·36	1·38
Ranby	117	114	120	122	128	3·11	3·03	2·76
Reading	144	136	108	144	160	2·20	2·80	1·93
Risley	530	516	463	443	514	1·82	1·97	1·95
Rochester	126	125	134	144	143	2·53	2·60	2·30
Rudgate	55	57	60	60	68	5·91	4·45	5·17
Send	42	44	46	44	49½	1·16	0·96	1·55
Shepton Mallet	82	79	83	84	83½	3·10	2·67	3·11
Shrewsbury	101	94	93	103	114½	1·88	2·22	1·73
Stafford	218	203	210	213	245	3·21	2·78	3·17
Standford Hill	95	104	106	114	132	3·13	4·38	4·22

Establishment	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
Stocken	114	107	—	—	127	2·68	—	—
Stoke Heath	140	139	138	132	149½	2·83	3·07	3·14
Styal	154	141	149	132	145	1·85	1·68	1·98
Sudbury	68	66	65	70	75	5·71	5·18	4·94
Swansea	148	146	160	144	153½	1·92	1·54	1·89
Swinfen Hall	96	99	103	100	113	1·83	1·64	1·80
Thorn Cross	82	69	—	—	94½	3·22	—	—
Thorp Arch	84	91	98	97	111	2·69	2·40	2·43
Usk	80	79	85	81	86	1·81	1·85	1·84
The Verne	133	133	132	132	140	3·83	3·83	3·82
Wakefield	445	424	424	406	464	1·75	1·66	1·75
Wandsworth	406	409	412	372	470	3·64	3·48	3·65
Wayland	130	128	—	—	157	3·64	—	—
Wellingborough	135	131	136	121	146	2·71	2·41	2·66
Werrington	50	46	45	43	50	1·93	0·87	1·00
Wetherby	74	75	79	78	75	2·35	2·71	2·38
Whatton	76	73	75	78	86	1·58	1·60	1·71
Winchester	269	259	281	275	298	2·47	2·15	2·27
Wormwood Scrubs	507	500	522	464	534	2·61	2·24	2·20
Wymott	209	213	216	210	230	3·76	3·61	3·84

NORTHERN IRELAND

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publications of the Management and Personnel Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982;

(2) if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication issued by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Scott: There are no bodies to which my right hon. Friend makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication. I am not aware of any bodies in this category which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982.

WALES

Small Farm Businesses

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects the survey of small farm businesses which is being collated in Wales by the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth and in which his Department is participating will be completed; when he expects the results to be known; if they will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The survey of small farm businesses is to be carried out during 1987 and 1988. Some results are expected to become available towards the end of 1987 and reports will be published in 1988 and 1989.

Pharmacists

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what is his policy towards the provision by pharmacists of explicit information as to the method whereby medication urgently prescribed can be obtained at times other than when the premises are open for business and rota duty dispensing;

(2) what representations he has received from individuals and organisations on the non-availability of urgently prescribed medications in areas which do not have a 24-hour, seven-day a week pharmacy service.

Mr. Mark Robinson: FPCs are encouraged to ensure that community pharmacists display clearly information as to whether the pharmacist may be contacted for urgent dispensing outside normal and extended pharmacy hours. We have received no representations about the availability of urgently prescribed medication.

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication issued by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Committees which we have set up to advise us and which are not listed in Public Bodies are the health policy board and the urban development grant appraisal panel. We also make appointments jointly with our right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education to the recently established National Advisory Council for the Youth Service and with our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Security to the intermediate treatment trust fund.

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publications of the Management and Personnel Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: There are none such.

Birth Statistics

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list for each of the years 1982 to 1985 the estimated percentages of women delivering in Wales *(a)* whose labours were induced, *(b)* whose labours were of spontaneous onset and *(c)* who had elective caesarean sections;

(2) if he will list for each of the years 1982 to 1985 the estimated percentages of women delivering in Wales whose deliveries were *(a)* spontaneous, including abnormal presentation of head and breach spontaneous, *(b)* instrumental (forceps, vacuumns), *(c)* by caesarean section and *(d)* other and unspecified means.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Structural Adjustment

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he makes his own appraisal of structural adjustment policies in countries where the United Kingdom has a bilateral aid programme.

Mr. Chris Patten: Yes. Structural adjustment programmes usually involve the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and we participate in board discussions. In addition, for countries where British bilateral programme aid is likely to be involved in significant financial support for structural adjustment programmes, ODA officials participate in relevant World Bank missions or otherwise consult World Bank staff closely. Our country aid programmes also finance studies of policies relevant to structural adjustment programmes which influence the nature of the reforms adopted.

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to ensure that adequate funds are available to debtor countries in the Third World which undertake structural adjustment programmes.

Mr. Chris Patten: We support a substantial eighth replenishment for the International Development Association and a general capital increase for the World Bank when required. We encourage increased use of World Bank funds for structural adjustment lending in appropriate cases. The resources of the International Monetary Fund are reviewed at about five-yearly intervals and constantly monitored to ensure sufficient funds are available for the programmes planned. We supported the establishment of the fund's structural adjustment facility.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Nitrates

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking to discourage the use of nitrates on agricultural land in England and Wales.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department encourages farmers to assess the requirements of each crop for nitrogen fertiliser in accordance with good husbandry practice and to restrict application to those times when the crops can utilise the nitrogen.

Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to announce his appointments to the Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks.

Mr. Gummer: Representative bodies concerned with all aspects of salmon were approached early in November seeking nominations for membership of the new Salmon Advisory Committee. We are now considering their responses. It remains our aim to have the committee meet before the opening of the new salmon fishing season.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give details of the expenditure in 1985-86 and 1986-87 by Her Majesty's Government on agricultural grants and subsidies excluding market regulation under the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Jopling: Details of the outturn for 1985-86 and the latest forecast of outturn for 1986-87 are as follows:

	Outturn 1985-86 £ million	*Latest forecast of outturn 1986-87* £ million
Price guarantees		
Wool	1·5	9·7
Potatoes	7·5	—
	9·0	9·7
Support for capital and other improvements		
Agriculture and Horticulture Development Scheme	65·6	50·7
Guidance Premiums	3·8	3·6
Farm Accounts	0·8	0·8
Farm Structure	0·3	0·3
Northern Ireland Agricultural Development Programme	4·9	2·3
Agriculture and Horticulture Grant Scheme	65·4	24·0
Agriculture Improvement Scheme (EC)	—	18·3
Agriculture Improvement Scheme (National)	0·2	11·4
Co-operation Grants	4·3	3·4
Others	1·8	1·8
	146·9	116·6

	Outturn 1985-86 £ million	Latest forecast of outturn 1986-87 £ million
Support for agriculture in special areas		
Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances	104·9	116·5
Additional benefit to farmers in special areas under AHDS, NIADP, AHGS, AIS(EC) and AIS(nat)	26·8	19·7
Others	6·2	4·7
	137·9	140·9
Other payments		
Milk Outgoers Scheme	9·6	9·5
Emergency relief 1985	16·7	—
Sheep Compensation Scheme 1986	—	4·9
	26·3	14·4
GRAND TOTAL	320·1	281·6

Some of this expenditure attracts contributions from the European agricultural guidance and guarantee fund. These are mainly received in the following year. In 1986-87 £42·4 million is expected to be received from the fund compared with £52·4 million in 1985-86.

The individual figures may not add up to the totals shown due to roundings.

Mr. Marland asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will provide details of the expenditure in 1985-86 and 1986-87 by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce and Her Majesty's Government on market regulation under the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Jopling: Details of the outturn for 1985-86 and the latest forecast of outturn for 1986-87 are as follows:

	Outturn 1985-86 £ million	Latest forecast of outturn 1986-87 £ million
(i) Expenditure by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce		
Cereals	654·0	136·2
Beef and veal	328·3	274·3
Pigmeat	−1·2	−1·7
Sugar	83·9	127·9
Processed goods	40·9	40·9
Milk products	353·7	302·2
Oil seeds	88·6	105·9
Sheepmeat	110·0	101·8
Others	24·3	17·1
	1,682·5	1,104·7
(ii) Expenditure by the agricultural departments		
Milk non-marketing premiums	2·6	0·1
Suckler cow premium scheme	26·9	27·7
Annual premium on ewes	128·2	163·3
	157·7	191·1
Grand total	1,840·2	1,295·8

Expenditure includes the beef and sheepmeat variable premium schemes (net of clawback for sheepmeat and charges on beef exported and sold into intervention), the premium schemes for the non-marketing of milk and the conversion of dairy herds, suckler cow premium scheme, annual premium on ewes, refunds on imports and exports (net of levies), the school milk subsidies, and the net cost of buying commodities into intervention less proceeds from sales. It also takes account of certain receipts treated as negative expenditure, namely, monetary compensatory amounts levied on intra-Community trade and the co-responsibility levies on cereals and milk producers and supplementary levy on milk producers. Of the estimated outturn for 1986-87, £1,288·8 million is expected to be financed from the European agricultural guidance and guarantee fund (EAGGF), the balance being financed from Exchequer funds. In 1985-86, £1,230·0 million was financed from EAGGF. Some of the expenditure benefits consumers and trade interests rather than United Kingdom producers.

ENERGY

Nuclear Fuel (Reprocessing)

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for Energy if British Nuclear Fuels have reprocessed spent fuel for *(a)* the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or *(b)* any Soviet bloc country.

Mr. Goodlad: No.

Sellafield

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he made an agreement with the European Commission regarding inspection and safety at Sellafield civilian nuclear reprocessing plant; and if he will made the details available in the Library.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer to my right hon. Friend's reply to the hon. Member for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean) on 4 June, at columns *594-95*, and to my reply to the hon. Member for Merionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 12 June at columns *268-69*.

North Sea Gas

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken since 1979 to ensure that any technical equipment used to explore and exploit petroleum natural gas in the North sea within the state's jurisdiction operates using only the best available technology.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Member on 28 November 1986 at column *385*.

PRIME MINISTER

Westland plc

Q10. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if she will make it her policy when answering questions on her role in the matter of the Solicitor-General's letter on Westlands by reference to an earlier reply, to detail the precise column in the *Official Report* where the specific information requested can be found in her ealier reply.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister told the hon. Gentleman on 17 November, full accounts of the Westland issue have already been given by her and other Ministers in statements in Parliament, speeches in debates and answers to parliamentary questions, and by the head of the home Civil Service in his evidence to the Defence Committee. The Government stand by those accounts, and see no reason to qualify or add to them; and that will continue to be our policy.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister what specific evidence was available to the Cabinet Secretary which led him to believe that officials did not understand what they were being asked to do in relation to giving information on the Solicitor-General's letter of 6 January to the Press Association.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave him on 17 November at columns *49-50*.

Merchant Fleet

Q90. **Sir David Price** asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the implications of the decline in the United Kingdom merchant fleet for national defence capability and the United Kingdom's ability to fulfil treaty obligations.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in reply to the right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) on 25 November at columns *158-59*.

Iran (Arms Supplies)

Mr. George Robertson asked the Prime Minister if any flights from the United States of America, containing arms shipments destined for Iran have used United Kingdom airports for refuelling.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

Neither the Civil Aviation Authority nor the Ministry of Defence has received any request for permission for such flights to use a United Kingdom airport for refuelling.

State Security

Mr. Winnick asked the Prime Minister if she will refer to the Security Commission allegations that the security services carried out illegal activities against the then Prime Minister, Lord Wilson of Rievaulx.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

No.

Engagements

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

Mr. Pike asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 9 December.

Mr. Biffen: I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend is today reporting to the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

Mr. Deakins asked the Paymaster General how many people in Walthamstow have left the employment register since the beginning of the restart programme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I do not have information in the precise form requested. Between 13 June 1986, the closest date available to the start of the restart scheme in the Walthamstow area, and 9 October 1986 some 2,246 people in the Walthamstow parliamentary constituency ceased to be unemployed claimants. I have no means of calculating exactly how many of these people ceased to be unemployed as a result of help under the restart programme because people are continually ceasing to be unemployed for a whole variety of reasons.

Mr. William Powell asked the Paymaster General if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of unemployed claimants in each parliamentary constituency of the United Kingdom in October and the proportion of the work force they represent, listing the various constituencies in decending order with the highest at the head of the list and the lowest at the bottom.

Mr. Lee: The information is not available in the form requested because unemployment rates are not calculated for areas smaller than travel-to-work areas. The numbers of unemployed claimants in each parliamentary constituency of the United Kingdom on 9 October 1986 are available in table 2.10 of the December 1986 edition of *Employment Gazette*.

Mr. Fallon asked the Paymaster General whether he will estimate the number of *(a)* European Economic Community nationals and *(b)* foreign nationals working in London and the south-east.

Mr. Lee: Estimates from the 1985 Labour Force Survey of the number of EC and other foreign nationals in employment, resident in Greater London and the south-east region are as shown in the following table:

EC[1] and other foreign nationals in employment
Thousands: Spring 1985

Area of Residence	*EC[2] Nationals*	*[3]Other Foreign Nationals*
South East Region[4]	223	379
Greater London	135	243

[1] EC 12, including Spain and Portugal.
[2] Excluding United Kingdom nationals.
[3] Including British Overseas and Dependent Territories Citizens.
[4] Including Greater London.

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General how the allowances are to be administered for those enrolling on the job training scheme; and if any legislation is envisaged to allow for continuity of receipt of housing benefit.

Mr. Lee: Training allowance is paid at an amount equal to unemployment/supplementary benefit in payment immediately before the start of training. It will be increased if benefit would have increased had the person remained unemployed; it will not decrease during training. Participants previously entitled to certificated housing benefit are entitled to standard housing benefit, topped up as appropriate by housing benefit supplement.

Because of the links with benefit rates, training allowance is assessed and paid by unemployment benefit office staff who have the necessary expertise. Payment is normally made fortnightly by Girocheque posted to the participant's home address. The training allowance and housing benefit arrangements are being monitored in pilot areas and will be reviewed in the light of experience.

Earnings

Mr. Pike asked the Paymaster General what was the average earnings of wage and salary earners at 1 September.

Mr. Lee: The latest available information on average weekly earnings is that for April 1986 from the 1986 New Earnings Survey. This is published in table 5.6 of the *Employment Gazette* for December 1986, a copy of which is in the Library.

Estimates for months since April 1986, including September, are contained in a note on average gross weekly earnings produced by the Department of Employment, a copy of which may also be found in the Library.

Special Employment Measures

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General, if he will place in the Library a constituency breakdown of those taking part in special employment measures.

Mr. Lee: We do not collect figures for all the employment measures on a constituency basis. For those measures where it is possible to provide constituency-based figures, this could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Community Programme

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Paymaster General what assessment he has made of the number of people currently on the community programme who would otherwise be registered as unemployed; and what was the comparable figure 12 months ago.

Mr. Lee: People entering the community programme have to satisfy certain eligibility criteria, which includes being unemployed, depending on age, for varying periods of time.

During the 12 months ending 31 October 1986, the latest date for which statistics are available, the number of entrants on to the programme was 301,791. Of these 96·3 per cent. were directly in receipt of unemployment, supplementary or other appropriate benefit. The corresponding figure for the period ending 31 October 1985, was 196,551 of whom 95·4 per cent. were directly in receipt of benefit.

Civil Servants (Regions)

Mr. Batiste asked the Paymaster General how many civil servants employed by his Department and engaged primarily on regional matters are based in *(a)* Yorkshire and Humberside, *(b)* the north-east and *(c)* the north-west.

Mr. Lee: The following information is provided:

	Permanent	*Casual*	*Grand Total*
Yorkshire and Humberside			
Department of Employment	2,549	98	2,647
A.C.A.S.	49	—	49
M.S.C	1,850·5	114·5	1,965
H.S.E	413·5	—	413·5
	4,862	212·5	5,074·5
North East			
Department of Employment	1,918·5	99·5	2,018
A.C.A.S.	35	—	35
M.S.C.	1446·5	107·5	1,554
H.S.E.	92·5	—	92·5
	3,492·5	207	3,699·5
North West			
Department of Employment	3,605·5	180·5	3,786
A.C.A.S.	71	—	71
M.S.C.	3,178·5	137·5	3,316
H.S.E.	230·5	—	230·5
	7,085·5	318	7,403·5

Health and Safety

Mr. Cohen asked the Paymaster General how many *(a)* fatal and *(b)* other accidents at work have been reported (i) in Leyton and (ii) in respect of residents of Leyton in each of the last five years.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: There is no record of any fatal injury to persons at work in Leyton reported either to the Health and Safety Executive from 1981 to date, or to the London borough of Waltham Forest during 1982-85. I regret that the other information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Disabled People

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Paymaster General if he will place in the Library a list of those employers, by county, who employ 20 or more staff, but do not employ 3 per cent. registered disabled people.

Mr. Lee: Information about the application of the quota scheme provisions of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act to individual employers has been treated by successive Governments as confidential and is not disclosed without their agreement.

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Paymaster General (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication issued by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office; (2) if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication of the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: There are no advisory committees to which I or my right hon. and noble Friend make appointments which are not listed in "Public Bodies" and there have been no advisory committees to which we make appointments which have not been listed and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982.

Departmental Office, Hornchurch

Mr. Squire asked the Paymaster General if he is satisfied with the conditions of work for his Department staff in the two buildings in North street, Hornchurch.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: We would prefer the staff in the two buildings in North street, Hornchurch to be housed in one office. The timing of the rehousing depends upon appropriate premises becoming available, and the nature of competing claims on the funds set aside for premises improvements at the time.

Mr. Squire asked the Paymaster General when he expects the building currently shared between his Department and the Department of Health and Social Security in North street, Hornchurch, to be made available for the exclusive use of his Department.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: I understand that the Department of Health and Social Security is unable to foresee when it might vacate the building. I am therefore unable to comment on when it might become available for the exclusive use of my Department.

Departmental Offices

Mr. Squire asked the Paymaster General how many of his Department's offices require staff or files to cross a main road in order to deal with their clients.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: Precise figures are not available. However, such offices are few in number, the aim of my Department being to house unemployment benefit offices in one building where possible.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Intermediate Nuclear Forces

52. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to pursue the zero option in so far as intermediate nuclear forces are concerned.

Mr. Eggar: We remain in close touch with our allies about intermediate nuclear forces, and support the continued United States efforts at the Geneva nuclear and space talks to achieve an INF agreement. At their recent meeting at Camp David, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and President Reagan identified such an INF agreement, with restraints on shorter-range systems, as one of three priorities for arms control negotiations. There will be a further opportunity for full discussion of these issues at the North Atlantic Council meeting on 11-12 December.

Gulf Shipping

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further measures Her Majesty's Government intend to pursue in order to protect British lives and cargoes in the Arabian Gulf.

Mr. Eggar: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence said during his recent visit to Oman, the Royal Navy has increased its profile in the Gulf to provide reassurance to those who operate and sail in merchant ships there, and to give assistance should this be needed. We keep in regular contact with the shipowners' and the seamens' unions and continually review what more could reasonably be done to ensure safe passage for merchant sailors and vessels in the Gulf.

Iran (Arms Supplies)

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what evidence he has of British companies losing business to competitors in Europe as a result of the embargo by the United Kingdom on the supply of lethal arms to Iran; what specific discussions he has had with the Federal German Government on this matter in relation to the supply of engines for Chieftain tanks; if he will raise the question of a co-ordinated European approval to arms sales to Iran at the next Council of Foreign Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Specific evidence of European competitors having taken business which might have come to Britain is hard to come by. However, we have refused licences for the export to Iran of significant amounts of defence equipment.

We have had recent assurances that any application to export tank engines to Iran from the Federal Republic of Germany would be automatially rejected. Such a sale would contravene the FRG's policy of neutrality in the conflict and of not permitting the export of goods for military use to areas of tension.

Defence sales are a matter for national Governments and are not covered by the treaty of Rome. We would like to see all other European countries adopt a policy as stringent as our own, but it would not be constructive to press for a co-ordinated defence sales policy within political co-operation while little possibility of agreement appears to exist. There is, however, an exchange of information on defence sales policy within the machinery of political co-operation.

Extraterritoriality

Mr. Paddy Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has taken or proposes to take to curb recent interference in the

United Kingdom computer industry by personnel stationed at the United States Embassy in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: None. I have no reason to believe that any such action is necessary.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to assist any initiative by India to find a peaceful and just solution to the problems facing the Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Eggar: We have consistently urged all parties in the Sri Lankan conflict towards a negotiated political solution. The Government of India have played a vital role in recent moves towards this goal and we fully support their efforts.

Notifiable Military Activities

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish the annual calendars of notifiable military activities of other participating states which are required to be communicated to him under the provisions of the final document of the Stockholm conference on confidence and security-building measures in Europe.

Mr. Eggar: No. It is for each CSCE participating state to decide whether or not to publish its annual calendar; we have published our calendar today in a response to a question from the hon. Member. We hope other participating states will take similar action.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish the annual calendar of notifiable United Kingdom military activities which is required by the final document of the Stockholm conference on confidence and security-building measures in Europe.

Mr. Eggar: The United Kingdom calendar of notifiable military activities is as follows:

Annual Calendar of Military Activities for 1987

1. *Designation:* Exercise Cold Winter.
Type of Military Activity: Field Training Exercise.
General Characteristics and Purpose: To exercise in winter conditions and to practice cooperation between Norwegian and Allied forces.
States Involved; United Kingdom, Norway, Netherland, United States.
Area of Activity: Norway (North Norway including Ofoten Peninsula, Tjeldoya and Hinnoya).
Date and Duration: From 20 March for 6 days.
Planned Total Number of Troops: United Kingdom element 4,000.
Types of Armed Forces: Amphibious forces.
Level of Command: Brigade.
Number and Type of Divisions: Amphibious brigade.
Other Relevant Information: Involves landing craft and support helicopters.

2. *Designation:* Exercise Plain Sailing.
Type of Military Activity: Logistic Exercise.
General Characteristics and Purpose: To practice setting up of communication.
States Involved; United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Germany.
Area of Activity: Federal Republic of Germany (Northern Area).
Date and Duration: From 4 September for 14 days.
Planned Total Number of Troops: United Kingdom element 13,500.
Types of Armed Forces: Logistic and movement control units plus non-mechanised infantry.
Level of Command: Division.
Number and Type of Divisions: One infantry division.
Other Relevant Information: Being carried out in agreement with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

3. *Designation:* Exercise Keystone.
Type of Military Activity: Infantry Field Training Exercise.
General Characteristics and Purpose: To exercise reinforcement and field operations.
States Involved; United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Germany.
Area of Activity: Federal Republic of Germany (South-East Neidersachsen).
Date and Duration: From 7 October for 20 days.
Planned Total Number of Troops: United Kingdom element 24,000.
Types of Armed Forces: Non-mechanised infantry.
Level of Command: Division.
Number and Type of Divisions: Two infantry divisions.
Other Relevant Information: Being carried out in agreement with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

4. *Designation:* Exercise Purple Warrior.
Type of Military Activity: Amphibious and Field Training Exercise.
General Characteristics and Purpose: To exercise joint services operations in amphibious and land operations.
States Involved; United Kingdom.
Area of Activity: Scotland (Galloway, Arran, Kintyre).
Date and Duration: From 4 November for 18 days.
Planned Total Number of Troops: 10,000 (of which 7,000 will participate in amphibious operations).
Types of Armed Forces: Amphibious and airborne forces.
Level of Command: Division.
Number and Type of Divisions: One reduced division based on two brigades.
Other Relevant Information: Will include an airborne assault by up to 1,000 troops.

Addendum to Annual Calendar of Military Activities for 1987
Activities Within Excess of 40,000 Troops in 1988

1. *Designation:* United Kingdom Home Defence Exercises.
Type of Military Activity: Home Defence.
General Characteristics and Purpose: To exercise military home defence plans.
States Involved; United Kingdom.
Area of Activity: Throughout United Kingdom.
Date and Duration: 7 September to 2 November.
Planned Total Number of Troops: May exceed 40,000 at certain times during the period.
Types of Armed Forces: Non-mechanised army district units.
Level of Command: Military district.
Number and Type of Divisions: Not applicable.
Other Relevant Information: Troops will not exercise in divisions or equivalent formations but as a series of military district exercises which may overlap.

Stockholm Conference

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has for the dissemination and publication of the text of the final document of the Stockholm conference on confidence and security-building measures in Europe, as required by paragraph 103 of that document.

Mr. Eggar: The Stockholm document was published as a Command Paper on 28 November and is available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office bookshops. Our intention to publish the document as a Command Paper was

announced in the autumn "Arms Control and Disarmament Quarterly Review", which was distributed to 3,500 individuals and organisations. Copies of the Stockholm document have been placed in the Library of the House and has been distributed to the press and to all of Her Majesty's embassies and high commissions.

Foreign Military Vessels

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if all foreign military vessels require prior diplomatic clearance before entering British territorial waters.

Mr. Eggar: All foreign vessels enjoy under international law the right of innocent passage through territorial waters. Prior diplomatic clearance is required for visits of foreign warships to British ports.

Poseidon Ballistic Missile Submarines

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his United States counterpart on the withdrawal of Holy Loch-based Poseidon ballistic missile submarines as a means of bringing the United States back within the SALT 2 treaty limits.

Mr. Eggar: None.

Binary Chemical Weapons

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent consultations have taken place between Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government on the deployment plan for United States binary chemical weapons.

Mr. Eggar: None.

Chemical Weapons

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications for current arms control negotiations of the French Government's decision to resume production of chemical weapons.

Mr. Eggar: We and all our NATO allies remain committed to a comprehensive and verifiable global ban on chemical weapons.

Immigration

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visa applications have been turned down by entry clearance officers since the introduction of the visa requirement for persons travelling to the United Kingdom from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria.

Mr. Eggar: From 15 October up to the end of November, of the 25,092 short-term entry clearances applied for in the four countries, 1,063 have been refused. The breakdown by country is as follows:

	Applications received	*Applications refused*
India	12,719	100
Pakistan	6,558	336
Bangladesh	1,583	353
Nigeria	4,232	274

Since the visa requirement for Nigeria has not yet been introduced, in the case of Nigeria the above figures relate to applications for optional entry clearance between 15 October and the end of November.

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current waiting time from the first application to the final decision for persons seeking settlement in the United Kingdom, at the relevant posts overseas in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Mr. Eggar: Waiting time in months from application to first interview as at 31 October were as follows:

	New Delhi	*Bombay*	*Dhaka*	*Islamabad*	*Karachi*
Q1: (Right of Abode/dependent relatives over 70/special compassionate cases)	2	3	3	3	3
Q2: (All spouses and all children under 18)	4	6	8	7	6
Q3: (Fiances/Fiancees and other applicants for settlement)	8	9	8	13	11
Q4: (Reapplicants)	12	10	22	15	13

Waiting times from interview to decision necessarily vary from case to case.

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he has taken to ensure that in countries from which visitors to the United Kingdom require visas an emergency visa can be issued in urgent family, medical or other compassionate circumtances to a person who has already applied for settlement in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Eggar: In such cases all entry clearance posts have a duty officer who can be contacted by telephone via the mission concerned. Any outstanding settlement application will not necessarily prove an impediment to the granting to a visit visa in a genuine emergency.

SOCIAL SERVICES

AIDS

51. **Sir Philip Goodhart** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of its resources to screen for AIDS

students coming to the United Kingdom from Africa, America and the middle east; and what estimate he has made of the cost of providing that screening.

Mr. Newton: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Family Statistics

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many children were in families where the head of household was unemployed in 1979 and, on the latest date available, broken down into those who had been unemployed for less than one year, one year or more, two years or more and three years or more.

Mr. Major: I regret that figures for 1979 are not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The latest available information is based on the 1984 family expenditure survey. It is not always possible to establish from this survey whether a person is required to be and is actually available for work, nor is it always possible to determine the duration of the unemployment. The information, subject to these provisos, is given in the table.

Number of children in families where head of household is unemployed

	Thousands
Total	1,400
Less than one year	600
One year or more	750
Two years or more	500
Three years or more	350

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 50,000 and totals do not therefore always agree.

Hospital Staff (Assaults)

Mr. Lawler asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many physical assaults on staff were recorded at the Bradford royal infirmary and St. Luke's hospital in 1985, and to date.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not available centrally. My hon. Friend may wish to write to the chairman of Bradford health authority who may be able to provide the information requested.

Statutory Sick Pay

Ms. Clare Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many references have been made by employees and employers to the adjudication officer on statutory sick pay;

(2) what is the average length of time taken by adjudication officers to adjudicate on statutory sick pay references.

Mr. Lyell: I regret that the information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, the number of references to adjudication officers on statutory sick pay is known to be very small. In the 12 months ending 31 December 1985 there were only 69 appeals against adjudication officers' decisions on SSP. The length of time taken by adjudication officers will be affected by the need to obtain details from the employer. Only employees and the Secretary of State can refer SSP cases to the adjudicating officer.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Batiste asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many civil servants employed by his Department and engaged primarily on regional matters are based in *(a)* Yorkshire and Humberside, *(b)* the north-east and *(c)* the north-west.

Mr. Lyell: The number of civil servants employed in the Department and engaged primarily on regional matters in the north-east and north-west regions is approximately 10,600 and 10,000, respectively. Yorkshire and Humberside is within the north-east region and accounts for some 6,500 of that region's total.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will extend the eligibility rules for mobility allowance to enable those over 75 years of age to qualify on the grounds that payment would enable them to continue living in their own home.

Mr. Major: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) on 25 November at column *288*.

"Handicapped and Impaired in Great Britain"

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has any plans to update the 1968-69 survey carried out by Amelia Harris, "Handicapped and Impaired in Great Britain".

Mr. Major: My right hon. Friend announced on 2 April 1984 that there was to be a new survey of the extent of disablement in the population of Great Britain. As in 1968-69, this is being carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. The survey forms part of the Government's strategy on the reform of social security benefits as illustrated by the references to benefits for disabled people, in volumes 1 to 3 of the Green Paper "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 5917-9).

Interviews in relation to a nationally representative sample of children and adults with significant disabilities living in private households were completed last year. Interviews in relation to a representative sample of adults in communal establishments are almost complete and the possibility of extending this to disabled children permanently resident in institutions is under consideration. Publication of the full results of the survey is expected in 1988.

Blood (Safety)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he is taking to reassure haemophiliacs and other patients requiring blood of the safety of such transfusions; if he will use publicity to reassure such patients; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The doctors who prescribe blood products for haemophiliacs are best able to give them any necessary reassurance about safety. Reassurance to patients who need blood transfusions can also best be given by the patient's doctor. The leaflet to be delivered to every household next month will refer to the action which has been taken to safeguard the blood for transfusion.

Blood Products

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress has been made in the fractionating of blood from the various regional hospital blood banks at Elstree to secure maximum potential use of donated blood; and if he will make a detailed statement.

Mr. Newton: Whole blood can be separated by the regional transfusion centres into plasma and cellular components. The plasma is sent to the blood products laboratory at Elstree for fractionation whilst the cellular components are sent to hospital blood banks for direct use. The yield of plasma has been increased by the application of new technology such as the development of additive solutions.

This system allows best use to be made of all the valuable components of donated blood.

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication of the Management and Personnel Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982;

(2) if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" and publication issued by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office.

Mrs. Currie: The advisory committees to which the Secretary of State makes appointments which have not been named in the annual publication "Public Bodies" of the Management and Personnel Office are listed in table 1. Those committees not named in "Public Bodies" which have been abolished since 1 January 1982 are listed in table 2. These lists represent committees (other than committees of officials) set up to advise my right hon. Friend or the Department which have a life span of less than one year, or which meet only very infrequently.

Table 1. Advisory committees not listed in "Public Bodies"

1. Advisory Committee on Gene Modification Therapy
2. Advisory Group on Boarding Out Regulations and Guidance
3. Advisory Group on Personal Pensions
4. Community Medicine Inquiry
5. Dental Advisory Committee
6. Intermediate Treatment Fund
7. Leprosy Opinion Panel
8. Manpower Advisory Committee (Community Medicine)
9. Maternal Mortality Committee
10. Microbiology Advisory Committee
11. Regional Secure Units Working Group
12. Technical Development Team for Demountable Storage
13. Transplant Advisory Panel
14. Working Groups for Pathology Laboratory Equipment
15. Working Group on the Safety of Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Imaging
16. Working Party on Containers and Closures for Sterile Fluids

Table 2. Advisory committees not listed in "Public Bodies" and abolished since 1 January 1982

1. Advisory Committee on Medical Manpower Planning
2. Community Nursing Review
3. Dental Equipment and Materials Advisory Group
4. DHSS Medical Working Group on Drug Dependence
5. Ethylene Oxide Working Group
6. Fire and Safety of New Residential Accommodation for the Elderly: Planning and Design Group
7. Medical Supplies Working Party Microbiology Panel: Sub-committee on Disinfection and Sterilisation by Low Temperature Steam and Formaldehyde
8. National Voluntary Organisation on Alcohol Misuse: Steering Group
9. National Health Service Management Inquiry
10. Pre-registration House Officers Working Group
11. Project Control Study Group
12. Review of Audit in the National Health Service
13. Social Security Inquiries 1984
14. Steering Group on the Training of Contact Tracers
15. Study Group on Medical Manpower Information
16. Working Group on Services for Epilepsy
17. Working Group on Acceptance Testing of Electrical Equipment in the National Health Service.

Birth Statistics

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list for the years 1982 to 1985 the estimated percentage of women delivering in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and Wales, whose deliveries were (i) spontaneous, including abnormal presentation of head and breach spontaneous and (ii) instrumental (forceps, vacuum and breach extraction), (iii) by caesarean section and (iv) other and unspecified means;

(2) if he will list for the years 1982 to 1985 the estimated percentages of women delivering in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and Wales (i) whose labours were induced (ii) whose labours were of spontaneous onset and (iii) who had elective caesarean sections.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Stillbirth-Abortion Statistics

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give available figures, for the Coventry health authority for 1984, 1985 and the first six months of 1986 for *(a)* foetus mortality and *(b)* spontaneous abortion rates.

Mr. Newton: Exact figures for foetal loss are not available. However, the figures in the table may be of some help to the hon. Member.

Number of stillbirths registered, and number of notifications of legal abortions, to women usually resident in Coventry district health authority, for 1984, 1985 and first six months of 1986

Year	*Number of stillbirths*	*Number of abortions*
1984	27	980
1985	24	983
1986 (1st 6 months)[1]	13	532

[1] Figures for 1986 are provisional.

Hip Replacement

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average waiting time for a hip replacement operation for the elderly in each National Health Service region; and what were the corresponding figures in 1979.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Residential Care Homes

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the annual aggregate figure for the

amount of benefit being paid to those in residential care homes; and how many people are living in homes run by *(a)* private organisations, *(b)* voluntary organisations and *(c)* local authorities.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 November 1986, c. *331*]: I regret that the information is not available in the form required.

In 1984, the latest year for which figures are available, supplementary benefit was paid to 42,000 residents of private and voluntary residential care and nursing homes at a total cost of £200 million. In addition, £45 million was paid to 35,000 claimants in residential care accommodation provided by local authorities either in their own residential care homes or in private and voluntary homes. These figures relate to Great Britain. Information on the amount of other social security benefits paid to people in residential care homes is not available.

Information on the number of supplementary benefit claimants in each of the three categories specified is not available. However, the following table shows the number of residents in the different categories of homes in England at 31 March 1985.

	Number
All residents in homes for the elderly and disabled	
(1) Private	69,000
(2) Voluntary	31,423
(3) Local authority	105,864
(4) Lodgings	[1]211
Supported residents in homes for the mentally handicapped[1]	
(1) Private	1,019
(2) Voluntary	3,620
(3) Local authority	12,281
(4) Lodgings	603
Supported residents for the mentally ill[1]	
(1) Private	285
(2) Voluntary	952
(3) Local authority	2,682
(4) Lodgings	419

[1] No information is available on residents not supported by local authorities in these homes.

Benefits

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table using his department's low incomes families 1983 tables showing how many people fell below supplementary benefit level, were on supplementary benefit or 140 per cent. of supplementary benefit level, analysed according to both economic and family status together at the latest available date.

Mr. Major [*pursuant to the reply*, 2 December 1986, c. *615*]: The information requested is shown in the tables. The assumptions used are the same as those published in the 1983 low income tables:

Numbers of persons in supplementary benefit assessment units below pensionable age by types and economic status—Great Britain 1983—thousands

Economic Status	*Married Couples*	*Married Couples with Children*	*Single Persons*	*One Parent Families*
1. Where the head is in receipt of supplementary benefit or housing benefit supplement.				
Over pension age	540	—	1,340	—
Under pension age				
Full-time employment	—	—	—	—
Sick/disabled	50	53	131	8
Unemployed	223	1,552	792	24
Others	107	36	73	1,198
2. Where the head is not in receipt of supplementary benefit or housing benefit supplement but with net resources below the supplementary benefit scale rates.				
Over pension age	430	—	660	—
Under pension age				
Full-time employment	90	433	134	29
Sick/disabled	24	9	37	0
Unemployed	79	170	284	0
Others	43	77	245	53
3. Where the head is not in receipt of supplementary benefit or housing benefit supplement but with net resources up to 140 per cent. of the supplementary benefit scale rates (includes supplementary benefit assessment units shown at 2 above)				
Over pension age	2,000	—	1,820	—
Under pension age				
Full-time employment	224	3,363	434	93
Sick/disabled	134	134	114	0
Unemployed	152	230	507	0
Others	110	196	509	223

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is his latest estimate of the cost of the housing benefit scheme; how many people received housing benefit in 1985; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the latest estimate of the cost of the housing benefit scheme currently met by *(a)* central Government and *(b)* local government; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he proposes to increase the proportion of the cost of the housing benefit scheme met by local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986, c. *731*]: An estimated 7·15 million householders were receiving housing benefit in autumn 1985. The latest

estimates of the cost of benefit payments and the scheme's administration are £5 billion and £168 million, respectively, for the current financial year.

Local authorities are reimbursed in full for their expenditure on certificated benefit and for 90 per cent. of their expenditure on payments of standard benefit by direct Exchequer subsidy and for a fixed proportion (set at 60 per cent., 65 per cent. and 70 per cent. for authorities in England, Scotland and Wales respectively) of their administration costs through specific grant within the rate support grant arrangements. Residual expenditure on benefits and administration is taken into account when authorities' entitlement to block grant is calculated.

The Government propose to change the arrangements for subsidising local authorities' expenditure under the reformed housing benefits scheme from April 1988 to provide more incentives for authorities to control costs as well as a fair level of support for expenditure which they may properly incur. The detailed arrangements are currently under discussion with the local authority associations.

TRANSPORT

Merchant Shipping

Mr. Budgen asked the Secretary of State for Transport what evaluation he has made for each $100 million of investment in merchant shipping of the question of aids to such investment available in each member country of the EEC, distinguishing between investment in new and secondhand ships.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have made no evaluation of this kind.

Marine Pollution

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken in accordance with United Kingdom obligations under Article 4, paragraph 4, MARPOL 73/78.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Article 4, paragraph 4 of MARPOL 73/78, which refers to penalties, applies only to the annexes of the convention that are in force. Annex 1, being the regulations for the prevention of pollution by oil is the only Annex currently in force internationally. The United Kingdom, in accordance with its obligations, made regulations during 1983 giving effect to Annex 1 of MARPOL 73/78. The penalties for failing to comply with the regulations include fines not exceeding £1,000 or £50,000 depending upon the nature of the offence.

Arms and Explosives (Air Transport)

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Transport what notification procedures are required if an airline wishes to transport armaments and explosives and use a United Kingdom airport for refuelling.

Mr. Michael Spicer: An airline wishing to carry munitions of war or dangerous goods to or from the United Kingdom (including one wishing to make a transit stop at a United Kingdom airport) is required to obtain permission from the Civil Aviation Authority. Applications for permission must be made in writing at least 10 working days before the proposed date of the flight and give full details of the proposed cargo and flight.

Evergreen International Airways

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Transport if Evergreen International airways has notified any United Kingdom airport of an intention to carry armaments from the United States of America to a third country.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The airline has not sought the permission of the Civil Aviation Authority which would be necessary for any such flight.

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many flights by Evergreen International Airways used Stansted airport in October.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Five.

Disabled People

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to issue guidelines to all transport operators and local authorities on levels of access to vehicles and facilities which they ought to be expected to provide for disabled people.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (established under the Transport Act 1985) is working closely with the Department in drawing up guidelines for transport operators on various aspects of provision for elderly and disabled people. These include vehicle design and adaptation, staff training and the size and nature of the potential passenger market amongst disabled people.

Bicycles (Child Injuries)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department is currently undertaking or financing any research work into the injuries of children resulting from inappropriate design of bicycle parts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Transport and Road Research Laboratory is conducting a study of cycling accidents involving adults and children. Information is being collected about the contributory factors and the severity and location of injuries sustained. This will enable us to assess the relationship between bicycle part design and children's accidents and injuries.

Road Safety

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is aware of any research that has been undertaken in the United Kingdom to assess the effectiveness of medical tests for the renewal of driving licences in promoting road safety in general and that of elderly road users in particular; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I am aware of a study of London Transport bus drivers carried out in the 1970's. This indicated that notification of ill-health led to substantially more retirements of drivers on medical grounds than did routine age-related medical examinations.

All applicants for driving licences (first-time and renewal) are required to answer health questions. Current licence holders must notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre of any medical condition which may

affect their ability to drive safely. Where appropriate the DVLC can investigate the medical condition of any licence holder or applicant. Given the evidence that medical condition does not constitute a significant factor in accidents, there seems no case for changing these arrangements.

Lorries (Speed Limits)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information his Department holds on the non-compliance rates of heavy goods vehicles with statutory speed limits.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No data have been collected on heavy goods vehicle speeds since the limits were raised in March 1984. Earlier information was published on page 21 of Road Accidents Great Britain 1983. A copy is in the Library.

Buses (Children)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department is currently undertaking or funding any research into the problem of bus transport of children; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: My Department has a comprehensive programme of research into all aspects of the deregulation of local bus services, and this will cover any problems which arise with the transport of children.

Bicycle Riders (Helmets)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he proposes to issue any advice to bicycle users on the availability of an effectively protective helmet for both children and adults; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I am keen that cyclists should be able to identify helmets that offer a defined standard of protection. The British Standards Institution is preparing an appropriate standard for pedal cycle helmets suitable for both children and adults and we expect this to be published next year.

Public Service Vehicles

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to amend the construction and use regulations governing public service vehicles to specify features to improve access for disabled people with particular reference to step height, position of handholds and lighting levels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are well aware of the difficulties encountered by elderly and disabled people when they use public transport, especially buses. We have carried out research in order to find ways to improve access to buses and have to put to the bus industry detailed proposals on steps and hand rails derived from this research as a basis for an amendment to the Construction and Use Regulations.

We are still consulting the bus industry on which of the research findings are appropriate for incorporation in regulations and which are more appropriate to a voluntary code of practice.

Settle-Carlisle Railway Line

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will instruct British Rail to consult fully with all relevant bodies to produce an agreed plan to promote use of the Settle to Carlisle railway line.

Mr. David Mitchell: I shall of course want to see that all realistic options for the future of this line have been properly considered before I reach a decision; and I am sure that British Rail would be ready to discuss any such proposals the local authorities might put forward. But it would be inappropriate for me, in advance of reaching my decision, to give any directions to the Board.

Dr. Marek asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will provide additional funding for relevant local authorities to promote the leisure use of the Settle to Carlisle railway line; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: This is normally a matter for local authorities to determine in the light of their priorities and the resources available to them.

Motorways

Mr. Macfarlane asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with the procedures for alerting and forewarning drivers on motorways by the broadcasting authorities following accidents; and what is the cost to his Department of this service.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We cannot compel radio stations or other media to broadcast traffic news. We do seek to persuade them that regular traffic bulletins and up-to-date traffic reports are of great value to their listeners. We also encourage them to liaise closely with the police who are usually the first source of information about accidents and their effects on traffic.

The Department of Transport presently contributes towards the operating costs of the BBC's motoring and travel unit which co-ordinates travel information broadcast on national networks and local programmes. The cost to the Department in the current year is £78,000.

We are constantly seeking to encourage an improved flow of traffic information to BBC and ILR radio stations, much of which is provided by the AA. Recent improvements in the AA's roadwatch unit should help to improve the quality and immediacy of that information.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates of hourly traffic flow at peak periods were made by his Department when preparing for the direct link between the M1 and M25 motorways; what has been the actual outturn; and to what extent his traffic forecasts assume uninterrupted traffic flow at normal motorway speeds during peak periods.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to the reply*, 4 December 1986, c. 724]: The traffic predictions were based on 16-hour annual average weekday flows; from which peak hour flows were derived. The forecasts, made in 1979 for the design year 1998, were:

	Peak-hourly flow in both directions (vehicles)
M25 (west of M1) to and from M1	2,700 to 3,900
M25 (east of M1) to and from M1	1,900 to 2,800

Traffic counters on the connecting roads between the M1 and M25 will be fully in operation early in 1987. The connecting roads were designed to provide the capacity for the predicted peak hourly traffic flows assuming a design speed of 80 kph (50 mph) and normal motorway operating conditions.

M5 (Roadworks)

Mr. Macfarlane asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the emergency services and his Department took to forewarn drivers using the M5 in Somerset of roadworks on 25 October; and if he will list the radio stations that were notified.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A press notice was issued on 20 October 1986 to local radio and television stations, motoring organisations, the BBC motoring unit and newspapers circulating between Bristol and Exeter, warning of the contraflow starting in late October on the M5 in Somerset between junctions 24 and 25.

Press notices are not normally issued for smaller works of shorter duration such as those scheduled to take place between junctions 21 and 23.

The police sent out a telex at 11.45 am on 25 October warning of a three-mile tailback due to roadworks between junctions 21 and 22, advising drivers to take alternative routes to avoid the delays. This was sent to the following radio stations:

BBC motoring unit
Radio Bristol
GWR (independent radio)

Motorways (Traffic Flows)

Mr. Macfarlane asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will define the factors his Department takes into account when assessing peak hours on all motorways in England.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department, when estimating the benefits of road improvement schemes, calculates them separately for the traffic flows at peak times and other periods of the day. The peak time calculations are based on the predicted traffic flows during the 380 hours of the year when experience generally indicates the highest traffic levels are experienced: this represents the worst weekday morning and evening peaks of approximately 45 minutes duration. For urban roads the peak calculation covers 500 hours because the peak period is generally longer.

M25 (Contractors)

Mr. Macfarlane asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with the performance of all the contractors used during the construction of the M25.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are satisfied in general that high standards have been achieved by the many contractors involved in this massive project. The condition of the motorway will be regularly monitored. Where problems arise, these are investigated.

M25 (Safety)

Mr. Macfarlane asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of the safety of the dual carriageway sections of the M25; and whether any accidents have occurred in that stretch on the northern orbital.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The M25 is two lanes in each direction through junction 5 (with A21) in the south and junctions 25 (A10) and 27 (M11) in the north. Traffic flows now and in the foreseeable future do not justify three lanes.

Between July 1983 and June 1986 there were one fatal and two serious accidents at junction 27. Between January 1980 and August 1986 there was one slight injury accident at junction 25.

Motorways are our safest roads. The M25 compares well with other motorways.

SCOTLAND

Chapelcross

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when the calculations of radiation doses affecting the critical group of members of the public near the British Nuclear Fuels Limited Chapelcross site were last reviewed or revised; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: The most recent assessment of annual dose levels affecting the critical group was made on the basis of monitoring results for 1985, which showed that radiation exposure of the public arising from operations at Chapelcross has remained well within internationally recommended dose limits. Information so far available for 1986 does not suggest any change in that position.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a list showing for each of the last four years the *(a)* calculated critical group exposures associated with radioactive discharges from British Nuclear Fuels Limited, Chapelcross and *(b)* proportion that such discharges bear to the maximum authorised limit in each year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: The information is published by the Scottish Development Department in statistical bulletins which are placed in the Library. The most recent information, which is being prepared for publication, confirms that disposals of waste from Chapelcross have been within the authorised limits and that any radiation exposure of the public arising from the disposal has continued to be well within the internationally recommended dose limit.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will describe the certificates of authorisation for radioactive discharges from British Nuclear Fuels Limited, Chapelcross, identifying the date of authorisation of each certificate; whether each such certificate specifies numerical limits for each type of discharge; and when each such certificate is next due to be reviewed.

Mr. Ancram: The nature and content of authorisation certificates is described in Scottish Development Department statistical bulletin No. 1/1986 which is available in the Library. Revised certificates for Chapelcross were issued in April 1986: they impose numerical limits on both liquid and gaseous discharges. Authorisations for all nuclear installations in the United Kingdom are currently subject to a programme of review which is due to be completed by 1989.

Bus Deregulation

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the answer of 2 December, *Official Report*, column 570, if he will now make it his policy to collect directly from regional councils in general and the Central regional council in particular, information about savings made and additional routes established since bus deregulation.

Mr. Ancram: I do not consider that it would be productive, or merit the interruption to ongoing work which would be involved, to remove the responsibility for collecting compatible information on the financial effects of deregulation from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. As regards changes in the route network, it would not be practicable at this stage to add new areas to those already selected for comparative pre- and post-deregulation study.

Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments which are not listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publication issued by the Management and Personnel Office of the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Rifkind: Committees (other than committees of officials) set up to advise me or my Department and having a life of more than 12 months are listed in "Public Bodies". Records are not maintained centrally of committees set up to consider specific topics and which have a life of less than 12 months.

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* all advisory committees to which he makes appointments and which have not been listed in the annual "Public Bodies" publications of the Management and Personnel Office; and which have been abolished since the beginning of 1982.

Mr. Rifkind: Advisory committees with a life of more than 12 months to which I make appointments are listed in "Public Bodies". No central record is maintained of committees with a life of less than 12 months, but among those not listed in "Public Bodies" which have been wound up since 1982 are as follows:

Museums Advisory Board
Denny and Bonnybridge Morbidity Review
Committee of Inquiry into the Pay and Conditions of Teachers in Scotland
Working Group on Suicide Precautions at Glenochil
Committee for Clinical Nursing Studies

The Committee for Clinical Nursing Studies did not appear in "Public Bodies" because it was wound up before NHS bodies were first included in that publication (1983 edition).

Capital Projects

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the operation of section 94, controls on expenditure on capital projects undertaken by councils where long leaseback arrangements are made with *(a)* private sector organisations, *(b)* public sector bodies and *(c)* limited companies in which the local authority has a majority interest.

Mr. Ancram: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges of Education

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland under what statutory regulations, and under what Scottish Joint National Council (Further Education), procedures it is proposed that the two Boards of Governors of Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges of Education should appoint Mr. D. Adams as principal designate of the college proposed in the final report on the proposed merger of Aberdeen and Dundee colleges of education.

Mr. John MacKay: The identification of a principal designate of the proposed merged college would be entirely a matter for the governing bodies of the two existing colleges.

Nuclear Installations

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what sections of the Torness emergency plan were approved by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate before fuelling of the reactor was started; and if he will arrange for a copy of these sections to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 November 1986, c. *411-12*]: The fuel load stage of commissioning at Torness nuclear power station has not started. A limited number of channels have been loaded with fuel for the purpose of gas flow tests and interim emergency arrangements specific to this phase were approved by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate beforehand. These comprise section B of the "Interim Emergency Manual, Issue 1." The South of Scotland Electricity Board has undertaken to place a copy of that section in the Library.

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what sections of the Torness emergency plan are required to be approved by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate before commissioning procedures beyond the fuelling of the reactor; when these sections were or are likely to be approved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 November 1986, c. *411-12*]: Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate requires that the South of Scotland Electricity Board has an emergency plan commensurate with the requirements of each particular stage of commissioning. At each stage the board has had and will have suitable emergency arrangements as required by HMNII.

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects the full emergency plan for Torness nuclear power station to be approved by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 November 1986, c. *411-12*]: The full emergency plan for Torness nuclear power station will be approved when Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate is fully satisfied with the plan and the demonstration of its application. I cannot say at present when that will be.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Investment Depreciation

Mr. Budgen asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the effect on revenue which would follow from replacing the present 25 per cent. reducing balance method of depreciating investment for tax purposes by a 25 per cent. straight line system as urged on him by the Confederation of British Industry.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday to my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann).

Departmental Manpower

Mr. Key asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of staff in post in central Government Departments at 1 October.

Mr. MacGregor: At 1 October 1986 there were 598,782 staff in post in central Government Departments. Of these 504,521 were non-industrials and 94,261 industrials.

West Midlands Freeport

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what investment there has been of public money in the west midlands freeport either *(a)* by the West Midlands county council or *(b)* by any other public body; how that investment is supervised by public representatives on the board; and if he will name these representatives indicating the size and sources of their emoluments.

Mr. MacGregor: West Midlands county council and Solihull borough council have invested £1,000 and £500 respectively in purchasing shares in West Midlands Freeport Ltd. (total share capital £10,000) which is the designated freeport authority. Presently Councillor G. W. R. Boakes of Solihull metropolitan borough council is a director of the company and Councillors J. A. W. Bird and C. J. Kirk (West Midlands joint committee) have been designated to replace Councillors B. Smith and C. Beardwood (West Midlands county council) as directors. Members of the board of West Midlands Freeport Ltd. receive no emoluments or expenses.

No public funds have been used to develop the freeport site.

Local Authorities (Capital Projects)

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the financial effects of local authorities undertaking capital projects and arranging leaseback deals with other public sector organisations or companies in which they have a majority interest.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he makes of *(a)* the share of public spending going to the north-west region, *(b)* the per capita share of public spending going to the north-west region, and *(c)* the per capita share of public spending for the nation as a whole.

Mr. MacGregor [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: Apart from expenditure which is the responsibility of the territorial departments, most public expenditure is planned on a national basis and it is not possible to identify separately expenditure in the English regions. Per capita public spending for the United Kingdom in 1985-86 was £2,359.

Money Transactions

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what circumstances a financial institution is obliged by regulation to inform the police of international money transactions.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: There is no obligation on financial institutions to take the initiative to inform the police in legislation for which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible, although the Bank of England, the director of savings and the Building Societies Commission have powers to disclose information to the police in certain circumstances.

Friendly Societies

Sir Peter Hordern sked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received the report from the steering group of friendly societies: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986]: A copy of the Report entitled "The Friendly Societies in the Welfare State", prepared by Professor E. V. Morgan for the Steering Committee of the National Conference of Friendly Societies was received on 27 November. Professor Morgan's report makes a number of recommendations for change which will be considered carefully.

DEFENCE

NATO

4. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met the secretary general of the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organisation; and if he discussed the role of United States bases in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Younger: I met the NATO Secretary General at the meeting of the defence planning committee last Thursday and Friday. A copy of the communiqué issued after that meeting has been placed in the Library. There was no discussion specifically of the role of US bases in the United Kingdom.

Polaris

15. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has commissioned studies on the safety of Polaris nuclear warhead convoys in the event of accident.

Mr. Stanley: As I have started previously, the arrangements for the safe transport of nuclear weapons remain constantly under review.

Strategic Defence Initiative

16. **Mrs. Shields** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the total value of strategic defence initiative contracts won by United Kingdom departments and companies to date.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I am pleased to announce that the overall value of SDI research awards to the United Kingdom has now risen to $34 million. It is a year ago almost to the day since the US/UK SDI memorandum of understanding was signed and I believe that this figure represents a solid beginning to the United Kingdom's involvement in this important research programme.

39. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will now publish in full the memorandum of understanding on the agreement reached between Britain and the United States of America on participation in the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No. The United States/United Kingdom memorandum of understanding on United Kingdom participation in the United States SDI research programme is classified.

Trident

17. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the number of jobs which will be created during the construction and operation of the Trident programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is estimated that the Trident programme will create an average of 8,000 direct and 7,000 indirect jobs in United Kingdom industry throughout its procurement period. The number of jobs needed to operate the Trident programme is not readily available.

19. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the implications of the radar under construction at Krasnoyarsk for the effectiveness of the Trident system.

Mr. Stanley: No developments in Soviet defences are currently foreseen which are likely to negate the deterrent effect of the Trident force within the lifetime of the system.

22. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the latest progress of the Trident programme.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. Hamilton).

33. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will estimate the number of jobs directly and indirectly dependent in the northern region on the Trident programme.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Estimates of the total number of United Kingdom jobs dependent on the Trident programme are not made on a regional basis. However the building of the first-of-class Trident submarine, HMS Vanguard, is expected to provide direct employment for about 4,000 people in Barrow.

47. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received regarding the use of the Holy Loch by Trident 1(C-4) armed United States nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines.

Mr. Stanley: A number of questions have been asked on this matter by hon. Members. I am not aware of any representations in recent public correspondence that is readily available.

Royal Navy

18. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many frigates, corvettes and minesweepers are currently in service with the Royal Navy.

Mr. Stanley: The Royal Navy currently has 52 frigates and destroyers in service and 42 mine counter-measures vessels. The Royal Navy has had no corvettes for some years.

Military Installations (Cumbria)

20. **Mr. Maclean** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to close down any military installations in Cumbria; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: No. We have no plans to close any installations in Cumbria.

Warship Procurement

21. **Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement outlining his plans for the future of warship procurement for the next 10 years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We intend to maintain a substantial warship procurement programme as we have done over the last seven years.

Bigeye Bomb

23. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if equipment for use in storing the Bigeye nerve gas bomb is now stationed at Royal Air Force, Welford.

Mr. Stanley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 4 December.

Falkland Islands

24. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the deployment and role of Her Majesty's forces in the south Atlantic.

Mr. Stanley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 6 November at columns *576-7*.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the value and amount and type of Government equipment sold recently in the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Archie Hamilton [*pursuant to his reply* 3 December 1986, c. *664*]: Details of Ministry of Defence surplus equipments sold locally in the Falkland Islands between 1 April and 30 November 1986 are as follows:

Items	Amount received
2 Naval Fleet Tenders 2 Naval Ammunition Barges 1 HMP Falkland Sound Vessel 1,000 metres Cable 2 Water Tanks Cast vehicles (various)	
Miscellaneous items: Fenders Tool kits Girders Inner tubes Cotton rags Batteries Light unit Boots	£45,399·00

Note: Details of individual prices are commercial in confidence.

Defence Requirements

25. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received regarding the implications for British defence requirements of the Reykjavik summit.

Mr. Stanley: My Department has received 15 letters calling for the abandonment of the Trident programme and other nuclear weapons since the Reykjavik summit. At Camp David on 15 November the President of the United States reaffirmed the United States' intention to proceed with its strategic modernisation programme, including Trident. He also confirmed his full support for the arrangements made to modernise Britain's independent nuclear deterrent with Trident.

Frigates

26. **Mr. Nicholas Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the frigate ordering programme.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given earlier today by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Chemical Weapons

27. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Government's policy in respect of chemical weapons.

Mr. Stanley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) on 28 April at column 665.

32. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's Government have made provision at Royal Air Force, Welford for the storage of chemical weapons in times of crisis.

Mr. Stanley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 4 December.

European Fighter Aircraft

28. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is satisfied with progress on the European fighter aircraft project; and if he will make a statement.

36. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress so far achieved in construction of the European aircraft project.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The European fighter aircraft project is making satisfactory progress. In October my right hon. Friend signed the general memorandum of understanding for the programme with his fellow Defence Ministers from Germany, Italy and Spain. The international project definition phase ended in September and the nations are currently evaluating the outcome, with a view to deciding whether to proceed to full development, which is currently planned to begin in the latter half of next year. In the meantime industry is continuing to work on risk-reducing activities with the aim of refining the design of the aircraft and engines.

Bramley Camp, Basingstoke

29. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department will cease to have any further use for Bramley camp, near Basingstoke; and if he will make a statement about the future of the camp and his Department's housing in the area.

Mr. Freeman: The final review of possible further defence use of Bramley camp is nearly complete, but I regret that none seems likely. I expect a final decision to be made early in the New Year, when I will write to my hon. Friend. Because of increased requirements for accommodation in the area, no MOD housing will be declared surplus on the closure of the depot.

Arms Sales

30. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria Her Majesty's Government use to make decisions on arms sales.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: All arms sales require an export licence. Before this is granted a wide variety of considerations is taken into account. These considerations will vary depending on individual circumstances but they will always include the need to safeguard the United Kingdom's political, strategic and security interests, the possible effect a sale might have on the stability of a region and the likelihood of the equipment being used to violate human rights.

Territorial Army

31. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the most recent position on his proposals to increase the strength of the Territorial Army.

Mr. Freeman: The Government's proposals for the phase II expansion of the TA were set out in defence open government document 84/02 entitled "Territorial Army Expansion 1986-90". Phase II formally commenced on 1 April 1986 and has begun well, with many of the new units already formed and recruiting.

Petty Officer John Black

34. **Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on the departmental review into the death of Petty Officer John Black, unlawfully killed by person or persons unknown in Spain over the Christmas holiday period in 1983.

Mr. Freeman: The Departmental review of the documents in our posession relating to the death of Petty

Officer Black is nearing completion. I will inform my hon. Friend of its outcome as soon as I am in a position to do so.

Crown Proceedings Act 1947

35. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions his Department has received representations regarding section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947 from each of *(a)* hon. Members, *(b)* members of the public, *(c)* members of the armed forces and *(d)* the organisation The Section Ten Abolition Group; and if he will make a statement on his policy regarding this matter.

Mr. Freeman: For practical reasons I shall confine my answer to written representations received this year. Representations from hon. Members total 141 and those from other sources total approximately 325. It is not possible to allocate the 325 to the categories requested since it is frequently unclear whether an approach is from a member of the Section Ten Abolition Group or simply someone sympathetic to its demands. In addition two petitions have been received—one each from the Section Ten Abolition Group and the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association. The hon. Member will be aware from the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence to my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Brinton) yesterday that the Government have decided that section 10 should be repealed.

Single Role Mine Hunter

37. **Sir David Price** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to be able to announce the next round of orders for the single role mine hunter.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave on 28 October at column 76.

Defence Vote

40. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many people are estimated to be employed under the Defence Vote; in what categories; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to section 4 of volume II of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1986" (Cmnd. 9763-II) and in particular to tables 4.4, 4.7, and 4.9 for details of MOD manpower.

Exports

41. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the level of defence exports in 1985.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Exports of British defence equipment have risen strongly in recent years, at a rate of about 12 per cent. per annum in real terms. Orders reached £2·9 billion in 1985, representing over 5 per cent. of British manufacturing exports and accounting for some 120,000 jobs in many of the most advanced technologies. Action by the Government has helped to improve the competitiveness of the industry and performance is continuing to improve; including the sale of aircraft to Saudi Arabia, the value of contracts signed in 1986 is currently expected to be in the region of £5 billion.

42. **Mr. Hayward** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the level of defence exports in the current year.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) earlier today.

44. **Sir Antony Buck** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement regarding the future of the defence export sales organisation.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The future of the Defence Export Services organisation is as bright as its past. Since it was set up in 1966 by the then Labour Government it has provided invaluable support to defence exports which sustain some 120,000 direct and indirect jobs in this country and which achieved overseas contracts worth some £3 billion last year. This figure does not include the massive Tornado contract in Saudi Arabia in which the DESO played and continue to play a crucial role. It would in the view of this Government be economic madness to do other than to continue with this organisation and its good work.

Excercise Monkfish

43. **Mr. Ron Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the recent army exercise known as Monkfish.

Mr. Stanley: A routine training exercise, known as Monkfish, to test emergency planning was held in October at RAF Machrihanish and involved military units from all three services.

Hong Kong (Gurkha Troops)

45. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if there are any plans to increase the number of Gurkha troops in Hong Kong.

Mr. Stanley: There are no plans to increase the number of Gurkhas stationed in Hong Kong above the present number of about 5,000 including trainees.

Submarines

46. **Mr. Franks** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many submarines are under design or construction in the United Kingdom for the Royal Navy by *(a)* type and *(b)* shipyard.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Submarines under construction for the Royal Navy are as follows:

Number	*Type*	*Shipyard*
1	Trident class SSBN (05)	VSEL Barrow
4	Trafalgar class SSNs (16-19)	VSEL Barrow
1	Upholder class SSK (01)	VSEL Barrow
1	Upholder class SSK (02)	VSEL/CL Birkenhead

In addition, two further Upholder class SSKs are on order from the VSEL/CL Group but construction has not yet started. Also, VSEL have been invited to tender for the second Trident class SSBN and have a number of contracts covering preliminary design work for future submarines.

Amphibious Capability

48. **Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received to improve the amphibious capability of the British forces; and if he will make a statement.

50. **Sir Patrick Wall** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now make a statement on amphibious shipping and the future of Her Majesty's Ships Fearless and Intrepid.

Mr. Younger: I refer to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) earlier today.

Defence Contracts

49. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will review the arrangements for post costing defence contracts.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There is no need for a further review. As explained in the answer given on 11 February 1986, the arrangements for post costing are already subject to review by the independent review board for Government contracts and by the Committee of Public Accounts.

Cleveland

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state *(a)* on how many occasions since 1980 there has been a period of seven consecutive days, commencing on a Monday and ending of a Sunday, when the average temperature in Cleveland, or at the nearest meteorological office, recorded over such a seven-day period was minus 1·5 degC or less and *(b)* on how many occasions during the last 50 years such an average temperature for such a period has been recorded either for Cleveland or by the nearest meteorological office.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The only location within Cleveland for which the Meteorological Office receives temperature data is the voluntary climatological station at Hartburn Grange, near Stockton-on-Tees. At this location there has been a total of five weeks since 1980 during which the average temperatures were below −1·5 degC. The only nearby station with records going back 50 years is the voluntary climatological station at Durham University. Here there has been a total of 26 weeks with average temperatures −1·5 degC or lower since 1936.

Chemical Agents and Munitions

Mr. Neil Thorne asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to which chemical agents and munitions the Warsaw pact could deploy against United Kingdom targets.

Mr. Stanley: An unclassified description of the Soviet Union's chemical warfare capability, including the chemical agents known to have been developed by the Soviets is to be found on pages 72-76 of "Soviet Military Power 1986" published by the United States Department of Defence, a copy of which is in the Library. We cannot rule out the possibility that the Soviet Union might use its longer range chemical weapons capability against targets in the United Kingdom.

Married Quarters

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats and maisonettes are available for use as married quarters for service men and their families in the Woolwich area; and how many of these were occupied at the most recent convenient date.

Mr. Freeman: There are currently 783 married quarters in the Woolwich area provided by the Ministry of Defence, of which 462 are houses and 321 are flats. As at 31 July 1986, 59 houses and 59 flats were vacant, but of these, 37 houses and 20 flats were allocated to incoming families. A further 22 houses and 22 flats were empty while undergoing repairs, and the balance of 17 flats were being held against future requirements. The hon. Gentleman will wish to know that 21 flats were let to the local council in June 1986 on a short term renewable lease.

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats and maisonettes are currently owned or leased by his Department for use as married quarters; and how many of these were occupied at the most recent convenient date.

Mr. Freeman: As at 31 July 1986, the stock of married quarters owned by the Ministry of Defence in the United Kingdom totalled 82,777 and a further 144 were leased as hirings; of this total, 14,381 were vacant. Of the vacant married quarters, 5,030 were undergoing or awaiting repair, 2,617 were allocated to incoming families, 1,999 were held against future requirements and 842 were being processed for disposal. The remaining 3,893 houses are surplus to requirements and will be passed in due course to the Property Services Agency for disposal.

The Ministry of Defence also has a stock of 47,359 married quarters overseas, of which 5,264 are owned and the balance are either leased as hirings or are made available by the host nation.

I regret that to break the figures down into the categories requested by the hon. Gentleman would require a disproportionate amount of effort.

Naval, General and Air Staff Target 1236

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if naval, general and air staff target 1236 in relation to the long-range stand-off missile includes a requirement to carry a nuclear warhead; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The NATO staff target to which studies are being directed is for a conventional weapon and does not include a nuclear option.

RAF Tornado Squadrons

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those Royal Air Force Tornado squadrons which have been strike-declared to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 404 and Annex E of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1986" (Cmnd. 9763-1). These Tornado squadrons, together with a number of aircraft on the Tornado weapons conversion unit, are strike-capable and assigned to SACEUR. Since the statement was published, one of the United Kingdom squadrons (9 Squadron) has deployed—as planned—to RAF Germany.

SP-70 Howitzer

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if *(a)* the SP-70 howitzer and *(b)* its possible replacement will have a nuclear capability in British Army service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Yes.

Harrier GR5

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if the Harrier GR5 will have a nuclear as well as a conventional role in Royal Air Force service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We have no plans to give Harrier GR5 a nuclear strike role.

Nuclear Tests

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many nuclear weapon tests by *(a)* the United States of America, *(b)* France and *(c)* China have been recorded by his Department so far in 1986.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: One of Her Majesty's Government's principal objections to a comprehensive test ban treaty is the lack of an effective procedure to discriminate between small natural seismic events, chemical explosions and nuclear explosions. It is consequently not possible to say how many of the seismograms recorded by MOD are produced as a consequence of nuclear weapons tests.

Tomahawk Sea-launched Cruise Missile

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if Her Majesty's Government treat the United States Navy Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missile as a new class of nuclear weapon for the purpose of prior consultation regarding its deployment in United Kingdom-based facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: As I replied to the hon. Member on 19 November, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence would expect to be consulted by the United States authorities should they wish to base a new class of nuclear weapon in Britain. In this context, the United States navy Tomahawk sea-launched Cruise missile would be considered a new class of nuclear weapon.

Warsaw Pact (Nuclear Weapons)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence what evidence he has that Warsaw treaty organisation air forces are constructing underground storage vaults for air-delivered nuclear weapons beneath hardened aircraft shelters on airfields in Eastern Europe.

Mr. Stanley: It is not our normal practice to comment on our intelligence assessments.

NATO Infrastructure Programme

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the military construction projects undertaken in the United Kingdom since 1979 which have been partially or wholly funded by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation infrastructure programme.

Mr. Freeman: The United Kingdom has, since 1979, undertaken approximately 170 military construction projects which have been partially or wholly funded by the NATO infrastructure programme. It is not the practice to publish details of operational facilities provided at individual locations. However, listed below, against the appropriate NATO Infrastructure category, are the main types of infrastructure funded military construction projects, which have been implemented in the United Kingdom in the period in question.

NATO Category	*Projects*
1. Airfields	Airfield Survival Measures Conversion Works for various Aircraft. Provision of Essential Operating Facilities. Provision of Physical Protection Facilities. Fuel Storage Facilities. Restoration/Construction of Taxitracks/Roads. Construction of Avionics Workshops
2. Communications	Erection of control buildings and aerial masts. Cabling works. Construction of Ground Terminals.
3. War Headquarters	Restoration/New Construction at Allied War Headquarters
4. POL (Petrol Oil Lubricants)	Provision/restoration of fuel pipelines
5. Naval Bases	Restoration/New Construction at Naval Bases to provide storage of POL/Ammunition/Weapons Processing Facilities. Jetty improvements/restriction
6. Training Installations	Provision of facilities in support of training for NATO forces.
7. Radar Warning Installations	Provision of radar installations.
8. Surface to surface Missile Installation	Ground Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM).

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for defence whether any civilian facility is eligible for funding under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation infrastructure programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: No. The NATO infrastructure programme is established to provide military facilities to fulfil the defined minimum operational requirements of the NATO military authorities.

Binary Chemical Weapons

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has received any request from the United States authorities for the basing of handling or storage equipment for binary chemical weapons or their components at RAF Welford, Berkshire.

Mr. Stanley: No.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if the Government's policy towards the deployment of United States binary chemical weapons in Britain applies to storage and handling equipment for these weapons as well as to the weapons themselves.

Mr. Stanley: Yes.

RAF Welford

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the purpose of construction work carried out at RAF Welford since 1982.

Mr. Freeman: The purpose of construction work carried out at RAF Welford since 1982 has been to enhance the station's effectiveness as an ammunition storage facility made available for use by the United States forces in the United Kingdom.

US Weapons (Deployment)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence if there are any formal agreements or provisions between the United States Government and Her Majesty's Government which set out the definitions of new classes of United States weapons whose deployment on British territory or in British territorial waters requires prior consultation with Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Stanley: The basing of United States weapons in this country is covered by a wide range of agreements and understandings between the United Kingdom and United States Governments, the details of which are confidential.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 10 December 1986

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

"The Poor Man's James Bond"

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Attorney-General whether he intends to recommend to the Director of Public Prosecutions that any action be taken against the sale of "The Poor Man's James Bond" in the United Kingdom.

The Attorney-General: The investigation of any alleged criminal offence is a function of the police. If the hon. Member considers that any offence may have been committed, the proper course is for him to refer the matter to the police so that if, after proper investigation, it is appropriate, a report may be submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service.

TRANSPORT

Heavy Vehicles (Overturning)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information his Department holds on the percentage of heavy freight vehicle accidents which involve overturning.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Injury accidents involving heavy goods vehicles: GB: 1983 to 1985:

	1983	*1984*	*1985*
Number of accidents	12,328	12,950	13,073
Percentage where an HGV overturned	4·5	4·6	4·5

M25 (Lighting)

Mr. Macfarlane asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects completion of overhead lighting for the whole of the M25.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are no plans for lighting the whole of the M25. I expect completion of lighting of junction 6 by late 1988. Lighting for junction 11, which was planned for completion by late 1988, is now being considered in conjunction with widening proposals between junctions 11 and 13.

The need for further lighting on M25 will be kept under review. The proportion of M25 lit is higher than for an average motorway (43 per cent. compared with 25 per cent.).

Lorries (Nuisance)

Mrs. Golding asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps he is taking to seek to reduce noise, dust and vibration from heavy lorries using narrow roads in built up areas;

(2) whether he will introduce legislation to extend compensation for excessive noise levels to residents living in narrow streets and roads subject to noise, dust and vibration from lorries carrying industrial loads; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: New noise limits for lorries were agreed in the European Community in 1984 (as set out in column 419 of the *Official Report* on 22 October 1984). The limits are to be made compulsory from the earliest dates permitted by the directive. Current regulations require loads to be so secured that they are not likely to cause nuisance by being blown from the vehicle. The Department's code of practice gives detailed advice on this. Local authorities already have — and make extensive use of — powers to control the routeing of lorries in built-up areas. A study of the effects of traffic vibration on buildings is nearing completion. We shall consider the implications of the report as soon as it is available.

In the light of all the measures taken to mitigate the environmental effects of lorries, we are not convinced that it would be appropriate to go for an extension of current rights to compensation.

Coaches (Pollution)

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to monitor the pollution levels caused by coaches in London parked without their driver but with engine running; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have no plans to do so. The question of avoidable pollution from parked coaches in London has been raised at the coaches working party, chaired by Westminster city council. We shall urgently consider any recommendations that it makes to deal with this question.

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to control pollution by motor vehicles in general and coaches in particular.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Emissions from motor vehicles are controlled by regulations which require new vehicles to comply with European Community directives. Large diesel-engined vehicles, including coaches, have to comply with a directive which regulates smoke emissions, and the Community is now considering Commission proposals for gaseous emission limits for large diesel-engined vehicles. Smoke from heavy vehicles, including coaches, is checked as part of the annual test.

Road Congestion

Mr. Robert Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates he has of the costs of road congestion to the state and to the community as a whole.

Mr. Moore: There are no estimates of the costs of road congestion in general terms of the type requested. Estimates of the cost to road users of delays to traffic are generally made only in the context of specific proposals which will affect traffic conditions. Such proposals include road improvement schemes and arrangements during major maintenance. For proposed trunk road and motorway schemes, estimates are therefore made of the benefits from faster and safer journeys compared with conditions which would have existed had the improvement not been built.

Roads

Mr. Robert Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list all those road schemes, for which he has issued contracts, but which are either incomplete, or have not begun, showing the cost of each scheme.

Mr. Moore: The information requested for schemes costing more than £1 million is as follows:

Route	*Title*	*Works cost estimate £ millions*
A1	Baldersby Junction improvement	2·5
A1	Clifton to Stannington bridge	4·8
A1	Wetherby bypass	9·7
A10	Buntingford bypass	4·0
A11	Wymondham to Cringleford	8·3
A12	Martlesham bypass	9·1
A19	Riccall and Barlby bypass	5·2
A1M	Hatfield tunnel electrical and mechanical works	7·3
A2	Barham crossroads grade separated junction	2·5
A2	London boundary to M2 improvement	1·4
A20	Sidcup bypass main contract	32·1
A21	Pembury bypass	12·9
A27	Havant to Chichester bypass	33·1
A30	Exeter to Okehampton stage 3	15·0
A30	Okehampton bypass	17·0
A303	Furze Hedge improvement	1·2
A303	South Petherton to Broadway	14·1
A303	Thruxton to Amesbury	10·0
A34	East Ilsey to Chilton improvement	4·0
A35	Bridport link road	3·4
A36	Warminster bypass	9·1
A38	Belvedere cross	1·3
A38	Saltash bypass	9·6
A39	Bideford bypass	16·0
A406	South Woodford to Barking ancillary works	10·7
A406	South Woodford to Barking contract 1	11·4
A406	South Woodford to Barking contract 2	22·1
A406	South Woodford to Barking contract 3	18·6
A406	South Woodford to Barking contract 4	12·4
A422	Stratford northern bypass	12·3
A43	Brackley bypass	10·0
A43	Towcester bypass	6·3
A435	Evesham bypass	7·7
A47	Peterborough, Westwood junction	1·5
A47	Peterborough, Longthorpe junction	1·2
A47	Wardley Hill improvement	1·7
A48	Chepstow bridge	4·8
A483	Chester southern bypass to Welsh border	6·6
A483	Oswestry bypass and A5 improvements	17·4
A52	Barthomley link to M6	6·6
A595	Thursby bypass	1·3
A6	Chapel-en-le-Frith bypass	27·7
A616	Stocksbridge to M1	17·5
A629	Kildwick to Beechcliffe	22·7
A64	Seamer/Crossgates bypass	5·0
A65	Settle to Giggleswick bypass	5·5
A69	Eighton Lodge junction improvement	4·0
A69	Newcastle western bypass advance works	8·0
M5	Rashwood to Catshill	22·3
M5	Warndon to Catshill ancillary works	9·1
M5	Warndon to Rashwood	16·6
M5/M42	M42 and M5 contract 1	4·8
M63	Stretford to Eccles improvement stages 1 and 2	18·8
M63	Stretford to Eccles improvement stage 3	2·5
M63/M66	Portwood to Denton	55·5

Note:

The works cost estimates shown above are estimates of total scheme costs in cash terms and in most cases include some non-contract items such as statutory undertakers' fees and other ancillary works items. In the case of some larger schemes, ancillary items are the subject of a separate works contract.

Mr. Robert Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report* all those road schemes which his Department has planned and budgeted, showing the cost of each scheme, the anticipated commencement date, and the duration of the project.

Mr. Moore: Details of the Department's national construction programme are given in "National Roads England 1985". Four schemes have been added since publication of the report in June 1985.

Route Number/Scheme		*Estimated Works cost (£ million)*	*Programmed Start*
M20	Widening Junctions 5-8	14·0	April 1989 onwards
M25	Widening Junctions 11-13	18·0	Autumn 1987
A69	Haltwhistle Relief Road	4·0	April 1989 onwards
A259	New Romney Bypass	3·0	April 1989 onwards

The periods for construction of the works will be specified in individual contracts, although there are many variables which can affect the final duration of the works.

Mr. Robert Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department in fees to private consultants for road building in each year since 1979; and how much each company providing these services has received in total since that date.

Mr. Moore: The total amount paid in fees to private consultants engaged in the design and supervision of new motorway and trunk road schemes in each year since 1979 is as follows:

	£ millions
1979-80	24·7
1980-81	22·5
1981-82	34·1
1982-83	57·4
1983-84	62·0
1984-85	73·6
1985-86	84·2
1986-87[1]	94·1

[1] Provisional

It is not possible to give details of total fees paid to individual consultants except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Forman asked the Secretary of State for Transport when the reports on the London assessment studies will be published; and whether he is prepared to review his present proposals for trunk road improvements elsewhere in the light of the report's findings.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: These reports, which will be published shortly, deal with only the first stage of the assessment studies covering the gathering of factual information and opinions relating to the areas studied. The reports will not affect road schemes in other areas.

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much the London corridor assessment studies have cost so far.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: £3 million. Two thirds of this has been spent on extensive data collection and on public consultation about problems. These data will provide a firm basis for the next stage of the work and will be made available to local authorities in the areas concerned to assist them in their planning.

Vehicles (Thief-proof Locks)

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce amendments to the vehicle construction and use regulations requiring the fitting of more effective thief-proof locking systems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Part I of a new British standard on "Vehicle Security BSAU 209" was published in November. It covers mechanical locking systems for passenger cars and car-derived vehicles. Parts II and III covering in-car entertainment equipment and identification etching on glazed surfaces should be published next spring. Further parts dealing with central-power door-locking systems and the general security of glazing are expected to be completed before the end of 1987.

Car buyers and users are increasingly conscious of the need to keep their vehicles secure and the manufacturers are responding to that in the design of their vehicles. Any regulatory action would need to be taken in agreement with the European Community, and we shall be keeping the Community informed of developments here.

Merchant Fleet

Mr. Sayeed asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government propose to take to help ensure the availability of adequate manpower on British merchant vessels in time of war or emergency.

Mr. Moore: I am opening consultations with shipowners and representatives of seafarers about ways in which the Government might help with training and with the cost of transporting crews to and from vessels operating away from this country. These measures would contribute to the retention of British nationals on board British vessels. In an emergency it might be necessary to replace foreign seafarers on some ships with United Kingdom nationals, and to facilitate this the Government propose to create a Merchant Navy Reserve of trained personnel willing to return to the sea if needed. I envisage a small annual payment to those who are prepared to register.

Following consultation, it would be my intention to seek the necessary powers from Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Scott: The following changes have been made by the Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office.

(i) Department of Finance and Personnel

1. 1979 — The Northern Ireland Family Expenditure Survey discontinued as an Her Majesty's Stationery Office publication.

2. 1980 — Revised estimates of Gross Domestic Fixed Capital Formation for private sector introduced.

3. 1981 — Northern Ireland Family Expenditure tables published in Northern Ireland Annual Abstract of Statistics.

4. The "Digest of Statistics Northern Ireland" discontinued in 1981 and replaced by the "Northern Ireland Annual Abstract of Statistics" in 1982. In the interim a publication entitled "Social and Economic Trends in Northern Ireland" was produced.

5. 1982 — Estimates of Consumers' expenditure introduced.

6. 1983 — Estimates of number of operatives in Construction Industry by type of work discontinued.

7. 1983 — Estimates of value of output and of new orders in Construction Industry discontinued.

8. 1984 — Monitors reporting preliminary results of newly instituted Continuous Household Survey (NI) published. Also a specific monitor on Religion. Data from the Continuous Household Survey has, since becoming available, been incorporated in the Northern Ireland Annual Abstract of Statistics.

9. 1984 — Revised index of Construction Industry output introduced, old index discontinued.

10 1984 — Level of detail in Personal Income Statistics increased.

11. 1984 — Industrial data released on new Standard Industrial Classification.

12. 1985 — Revised estimates of Consumer expenditure introduced.

13. 1986 — The first in a quarterly series of House Price Monitors published. It reports changes in house prices on a quarterly and annual basis.

(ii) *Department of Economic Development*

UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

1. 1981 — Changed benefit regulations mean that June school leavers cannot claim benefit until September when they are included in the count. For June, July and August each year a special count of school leavers registered at Jobmarkets is provided.

2. 1981 — Introduction of long-term rate of supplementary benefit for males aged 60+ on supplementary benefit for over 1 year reduced the unemployment count.

3. 1982 — Changes of basis for unemployment statistics from registrants at Employment Service Offices (including full-time non-claimants and excluding severely disabled) to claimants of benefit at DHSS Social Security Offices

4. 1983 — 1983 budget measures gave males aged 60 and over:—

(a) the long term rate of supplementary benefit without waiting for 1 year

(b) automatic National Insurance credits without signing on. Such persons were therefore excluded from the unemployment count.

5. 1984 — Unemployment figures for the revised Travel-to-Work areas produced.

6. 1985 — Reconciliation of Department of Economic Development computer records with DHSS Social Security Office manual records reduced the unemployment count.

7. 1986 — Unemployment figures compiled each month 2 weeks later than previously.

8. 1986 — Additional unemployment rate introduced based on employees in employment, unemployed, self-employed and armed forces ("the working population").

PRODUCTION STATISTICS

9. 1980 — The collection of information on Northern Ireland exports to overseas markets, as part of the Annual Census of Population, discontinued.

10. 1981 — The Northern Ireland Index of Production produced on a quarterly instead of a monthly basis, at the same time the production and publication of quarterly Production Sales information ceased.

11. 1983 — The Northern Ireland Index of Production published with 1980 as the base year.

REDUNDANCY STATISTICS

12. 1983 — Statistics on redundancy rebate payments ceased to include redundancies in respect of which rebate was not payable

13. 1984 — Confirmed redundancy series introduced.

JOB VACANCY STATISTICS

14. 1981—Seasonally adjusted series introduced.

15. 1984—Series for unfilled vacancies published.

EMPLOYEES IN EMPLOYMENT

16. 1983 — Northern Ireland Training executive reclassified to Public Sector.

17. 1983 — Quarterly estimates of employees in employment revised back to September 1979 following production of results from the 1981 Employment Census.

18. 1984 — British Telecom and Ulster Polytechnic reclassified from Public to Private sector.

NEW EARNINGS SURVEY

19. 1983 — Since 1982 gross weekly and hourly earnings results have been published for males and females on adult rates. Prior to this results were published for men aged 21 and over and women aged 18 and over.

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

20. 1979, 1981—In these years full-time students and those on Government Training Schemes were shown as economically inactive.

21. 1981, 1983, 1984—Labour supply estimates have been revised as Labour Force Survey Results became available.

22. 1984 — Labour Force Survey changed from a biannual to annual survey.

23. 1985—Persons on government training schemes shown as employees, and students aged 16 and over recorded as employees if they did any paid work and unemployed if they were seeking work and were available to start within two weeks.

(iii) Department of Health and Social Services

1. 1981—"Hospital Statistics" first published.

2. 1981 — "Trends in Health and Personal Social Services" first published.

2. 1983 — "Northern Ireland Social Security Statistics" first published.

3. 1983 — "Health and Personal Social Services Statistics for Northern Ireland" — contents reduced to exclude statistical material published elsewhere.

(iv) *Department of Education*

1979: — The single annual publication of statistics covering Northern Ireland education sectors abolished and replaced by a series of discrete statistical bulletins issued either on an annual basis or bi-annual basis.

(v) *Department of Agriculture*

1980: — Basis for increasing farm size from "standard man-days" to "European Size Units".

1981: — The December Agricultural Census moved from a full census to a sample basis — the practice of publishing preliminary results discontinued and only final figures made available. The publication of County results discontinued.

Information on "minor" holdings began to be published. Information on poultry ceased to be collected in the April and August sample Censuses.

1982: — Details regarding forestry in the "Annual Abstract of Statistics" expanded to include additional information on state and private forestry.

1983: — Information on inputs, outputs and net farm income from the Farm Management Survey began to be published in the form of a Press Release.

1986: — Aggregate Farming Income data began to be published separately.

(vi) *Northern Ireland Office*

1981 — Statistics covering terrorist activity and the persons convicted of scheduled offences in Northern Ireland changed from quarterly to bi-annual publication in Hansard.

1985: — "A Commentary on Northern Ireland. Crime Statistics" first published.

The following future changes are proposed:

(i) Department of Finance and Personnel

1. Presentation of Northern Ireland central government expenditure conforming with National Accounting conventions.

2. Revised estimates of value of output in Construction Industry to be introduced.

3. The Publication of Continuous Survey Reports.

4. The extension of monitors to cover Northern Ireland Family Expenditure Survey data.

(ii) Department of Economic Development

1. The "Employees in Employment" series for Northern Ireland to be revised back to 1981 in the light of the results of the 1984 Census of Employment.

2. It is intended to revise the allocation of agricultural workers between self-employment and employees in employment so that the methodology used in Northern Ireland conforms more closely with that in Great Britain.

(iii) Department of Health and Social Services

It is intended to change from a calendar year to a financial year basis for the presentation of health and social services statistics within the next 2 years.

(iv) Department of Agriculture

The Annual Report on the Sea and Inland fisheries of Northern Ireland to be amalgamated with the Annual General Report of the Department.

Francis Bradley

Mr. Freeson asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he is yet able to say what has been the result of investigation into the events leading to the shooting of Francis Bradley in County Derry on 18 February; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: On completion of its inquiries into Mr. Bradley's death the Royal Ulster Constabulary submitted a file to the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland. On 29 July he directed that none of the soldiers involved should be prosecuted. A date for an inquest has not yet been arranged.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Student Grants

Mrs. Peacock asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the current level of student grant; and what plans he has to alleviate the problems students currently face.

Mr. Walden: The level of grant reflects the necessity for the consideration of student needs to be balanced by an assessment of what taxpayers can reasonably be expected to contribute. My right hon. Friend will announce rates of grant for the academic year 1987-88 shortly.

Future arrangements for students' financial support are the object of a comprehensive review.

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mrs. Rumbold: Regarding changes to the presentation of statistics by my Department, I refer the hon. Member

to my reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on 5 December, at columns 839-40. Further changes may result from Government policy needs, quinquennial reviews of regular statistics or for statistical and technological reasons.

Educational Change (White Paper)

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he expects to publish a White Paper setting out his latest proposals for educational change.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government's policies for improving school education were set out in the White Paper "Better Schools" (Cmnd. 9469). Those are now being implemented.

Initial Teacher Training

Mr. Franks asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students entered courses of initial teacher training in 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: About 16,945 students entered courses of initial teacher training in 1986, an increase of some 220 over 1985. Recruitment to primary teacher training increased, while recruitment to secondary training remained stable. It is clear that many people, particularly graduates, perceive teaching to be an attractive career: entry to PGCE courses increased by 4 per cent. compared to 1985.

I particularly welcome the 24 per cent. increase in recruitment to one and two-year courses in mathematics, physics and craft, design and technology. The availability of the Government bursary for these students will have been an incentive. We will continue with our efforts to eliminate these long-standing shortages.

PRIME MINISTER

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister for what reason the Cabinet Secretary believed that the particular person to whom he went first in his preliminary inquiries had passed information about the Solicitor-General's letter of 6 January to the Press Association.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November, at columns 49-50.

Gas Appliances

Sir William Clark asked the Prime Minister what steps she proposes to take to remove the present overlap in responsibilities for the safety of gas appliances between the Secretary of State for Employment and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The Prime Minister: I have decided that from today the responsibilities for safety in the construction and design of gas appliances not intended for use at work which are now exercised by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment should be transferred to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. These responsibilities include the development of national and European Community standards.

Overseas Visits

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton asked the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* the official visits she has made overseas since January 1984 to date, and the total costs of each visit to public funds.

The Prime Minister: My official visits overseas since January 1984 and their cost to my Office[1] are:

Year	*Destination*	*Cost* £
1984		
January	Italy	8,817
January	France	3,038
February	Hungary	12,469
February	Soviet Union	28,767
March	Belgium	14,982
April	Portugal	22,276
May	France	3,000
June	France	12,369
November	India	81,441
November/December	France	13,016
December	Hong Kong/China/USA	106,024
December	Republic of Ireland	12,509
1985		
January	Germany	6,556
February	United States of America	50,113
March	Belgium	8,990
March	Soviet Union	28,669
April	South East Asia/Saudi Arabia	108,341
May	Germany	13,615
June	Italy	43,755
July	United States of America	33,530
September	Egypt/Jordan	37,761
October	Bahamas/United States of America	168,539
November	Belgium	3,945
December	Luxembourg	20,934
		Estimated Cost £
1986		
January	France	4,820
March	Italy	5,340
May	Japan/Korea	120,360
May	Israel	47,090
June	Netherlands	21,100
July	Canada	32,300
September	Germany	12,220
September	Norway	14,350
November	France	3,690
November	United States of America	46,830
December	France	8,500

Notes:

[1] The costs given are the costs charged to the Prime Minister's Office. These include, for example, travel and subsistence costs for the No. 10 party, but exclude recoveries made from other Departments and from journalists travelling with the party.

Research and Development

Mr. Lawler asked the Prime Minister what measures the Government are adopting to improve the exploitation by industry of publicly funded research and development.

The Prime Minister: It is essential that advances in science, whether they occur in universities, Government laboratories or industry, are rapidly exploited to develop new products and improved services for sale by British industry and commerce in world markets. To this end we are giving particular priority to the development of improved partnership arrangements between industry, Government Departments and research institutions of all kinds. I attach great importance to this work, which will receive further impetus under an initiative called LINK.

Under LINK, the Government will spend £210 million over the next five years on research programmes which will bring together industry and publicly funded scientists on a collaborative basis. Industry will meet at least half the cost of these programmes, which will cover a wide range of new science and technology. All Government Departments with a significant R and D expenditure will take part in LINK, but the principal sponsors will be the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Education and Science, which will be announcing today further details of the programme.

The total of Government expenditure on R and D is very substantial, both absolutely and as a proportion of the national income, and bears comparison with all other technologically advanced countries. But the excellence of British science has not been matched by a rapid pace of application by British industry of the newly emerging technologies. Nor is the private sector investing as much of its own resources in R and D in this country as are our more successful competitors. For their part the Government are therefore actively reviewing their R and D programmes across all Departments, defence as well as civil, with the objective of increasing their contribution towards improving the efficiency, competitiveness and innovative capacity of British industry. Both the Advisory Council on Applied Research and Development (ACARD) and the Advisory Board on the Research Councils (ABRC) are assisting in this exercise and an assessment office on science and technology has been established in the Cabinet Office under the chief scientific adviser.

Mr. Sumberg asked the Prime Minister when the 1986 "Annual Review of Government Funded (R & D)" will be published.

The Prime Minister: "The Annual Review of Government Funded R & D 1986", the fourth in the series, will be published through Her Majesty's Stationery Office on Thursday, 11 December. I am arranging for copies to be placed in the House of Commons Library.

"The Annual Review of Government Funded R & D" was first announced in the Government's response (Cmnd. 8591) to the House of Lords Select Committee report "Science and Government" in 1982. The review is prepared annually by the chief scientific adviser, Cabinet Office under the guidance of the interdepartmental committee of chief scientists.

Telephone Tapping

Mr. Fletcher asked the Prime Minister whether there has been any change in the Government's policy towards the tapping of telephones of Members of Parliament since her answer on 31 October 1983, *Official Report*, c. *255*; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: As I made clear in my letter to Mr. Speaker of 8 December 1986, I can confirm that the Government's policy on the interception of the communications of Members of Parliament remains as stated in the undertaking given by the then Prime Minister, Lord Wilson of Rievaulx, on 17 November 1966, at columns 834-41, and reaffirmed by me on 6 February 1980 and on 31 October 1983 and by my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary on 11 December 1984.

WALES

Sheep (Radioactivity)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing each of the readings of radioactive caesium found in sheep and lambs in Wales since 1 May, which were over 3,000 bequerels per kilogram, together with the date, the precise radioactivity levels, and the approximate location.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The information requested, up to 4 November 1986, is given in the following table:

Date	*District*	*Total radiocaesium level (Bq/Kg)*
10 June 1986	Aberconwy	4,216
2 July 1986	Meirionnydd	3,704
11 July 1986	Montgomery	3,951
22 July 1986	Aberconwy	3,246
21 August 1986	Aberconwy	3,492
21 August 1986	Aberconwy	4,862
21 August 1986	Aberconwy	4,950
5 September 1986	Aberconwy	3,646
5 September 1986	Aberconwy	3,325
8 September 1986	Meirionnydd	3,999
8 September 1986	Meirionnydd	4,233
8 September 1986	Meirionnydd	3,317
11 September 1986	Aberconwy	4,166
12 September 1986	Montgomery	4,163
24 September 1986	Aberconwy	3,517
24 September 1986	Aberconwy	3,432
24 September 1986	Aberconwy	3,025
24 September 1986	Aberconwy	3,174
24 September 1986	Aberconwy	3,234
16 October 1986	Meirionnydd	3,060
17 October 1986	Meirionnydd	3,048
21 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,375
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,492
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,510
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,303
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,043
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,222
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,528
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,627
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,519
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,645
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,204
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,303
30 October 1986	Aberconwy	3,069
4 November 1986	Arfon	3,645
4 November 1986	Arfon	3,267
4 November 1986	Arfon	3,213
4 November 1986	Arfon	3,906
4 November 1986	Arfon	3,042

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Recent changes in statistical presentation of information will be dealt with when I write in response to a question of 3 December, at column *662*, from the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould). I will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

There are no plans to make major alterations to the present statistical coverage, though we shall of course continue to review the quality and breadth of presentation and to produce occasional papers on matters of interest as appropriate.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give for each health authority the hospital out-patient waiting list in each health authority in 1978 and each succeeding year.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The numbers of persons on hospital out-patient waiting lists at 30 June of each year since 1978 are given in the following table:

	1978	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Clwyd	4,597	5,072	5,211	4,832	5,604	6,415	7,368	8,204	8,822
East Dyfed	4,285	4,757	5,154	4,899	3,896	5,087	5,476	6,170	5,648
Pembrokeshire					1,806	1,732	2,545	2,352	2,156
Gwent	10,542	8,924	7,756	8,318	8,278	8,849	11,142	12,124	11,359
Gwynedd	2,916	3,198	2,922	2,943	3,520	3,027	3,620	3,909	4,145
Mid Glamorgan	12,475	14,629	14,737	12,945	15,835	15,975	17,757	19,967	18,393
Powys	289	169	159	231	223	325	314	363	654
South Glamorgan	10,366	13,096	11,128	12,067	15,183	15,295	15,079	16,169	16,239
West Glamorgan	12,200	12,378	13,003	13,029	14,530	12,803	15,254	17,339	16,296
WALES	57,670	62,223	60,070	59,264	68,875	69,508	78,555	86,597	83,712

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out the urgent hospital in-patient waiting list for each health authority, together with the number of urgent cases waiting more than one month, the percentage the latter represents of the former and their ranking in Wales by that percentage.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The latest available information relates to 31 March 1986, and is given in the following table:

Urgent cases on hospital in-patient waiting lists

	Total Number	*Number waiting for more than 1 month*	*Number waiting for more than 1 month as a percentage of the total*
East Dyfed	14	—	—
Powys	—	—	—
Gwynedd	22	5	22·7
Clwyd	256	91	35·5
West Glamorgan	647	411	63·5
South Glamorgan	1,300	913	70·2
Mid Glamorgan	412	301	73·1
Gwent	1,029	760	73·9
Pembrokeshire	456	388	85·1

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out the non-urgent hospital in-patient waiting list for each health authority, together with the number of non-urgent cases waiting more than one year, the percentage the latter represents of the former and their ranking in Wales by that percentage.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The latest available information relates to 31st March 1986, and is given in the following table:

Non-urgent cases on hospital in-patient waiting lists

	Total Number	*Number waiting for more than 1 year*	*Number waiting for more than 1 year as a per centage of total*
Powys	46	2	4·3
Gwynedd	2,021	142	7·0
Clwyd	4,532	409	9·0
East Dyfed	2,179	220	10·1
West Glamorgan	4,453	469	10·5
Gwent	7,813	1,812	23·2
South Glamorgan	6,644	1,953	29·4
Mid Glamorgan	8,634	2,636	30·5
Pembrokeshire	1,991	1,121	56·3

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out the total hospital in-patient waiting list for each health authority, the total population living in that area of that authority, the percentage the former represents of the latter and their ranking in Wales of that percentage.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The latest available information relates to 30 June 1986, and is given in the following table:

	Cases on hospital in-patient waiting lists	*Estimated population mid-1985 (thousands)*	*Number of cases waiting per 1,000 population*
Powys	70	111·4	0·6
Gwynedd	2,013	233·6	8·6
East Dyfed	2,101	226·6	9·3
Clwyd	4,872	397·9	12·2
West Glamorgan	4,955	364·1	13·6
Mid Glamorgan	9,090	533·9	17·0
Gwent	7,998	440·2	18·2
South Glamorgan	7,764	394·8	19·7
Pembrokeshire	2,794	109·3	25·6

THE ARTS

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Minister for the Arts if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Luce: There have been no significant changes during that period in the presentation of statistical information for which my Department is responsible, and none is currently being planned.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Visas

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visas have been issued in *(a)* Ghana, *(b)* Bangladesh, *(c)* India and *(d)* Pakistan since the scheme began; and how many of these were issued without an interview.

Mr. Waddington: The information currently available centrally on entry clearances issued is given in the following table. It is usual practice to interview applicants for an entry clearance for settlement. It is estimated that in November the proportion of visitors, students and transit passengers dealt with who were not interviewed was about half in Ghana, negligible in Bangladesh, two thirds in India and over three quarters in Pakistan.

Persons issued with an entry clearance[1] to the United Kingdom in October-November 1986

Number of persons[6]

Country	*Purpose*			*Total*
	Settlement[2]	*Other purposes*		
	October 1986	*October 1986*	*November 1986[3]*	*October 1986*
Ghana	—	[4]320	[5]1,600	—
Bangladesh	250	660	630	900
India	290	8,100	5,600	8,400
Pakistan	400	3,600	3,300	4,000

— Not available

[1] Entry certificates were issued to Bangladeshi and Indian citizens prior to 15 October, and to Ghanaian citizens prior to 23 October, otherwise the data relate to visas issued.

[2] Wives, children, persons for immediate settlement, husbands and fiance(e)s.

[3] Visitors, students and transit passengers.

[4] For period 1 to 22 October.

[5] For period 23 October to 30 November.

[6] Provisional data.

Police Manpower

Mr. Richard Page asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for reports from the relevant chief constables as to the total number of police in Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent and Buckinghamshire, respectively, and as to what numbers of those are engaged on traffic duties in each county.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information is as follows:

Police Force	*Police strength on 31 October 1986*	*Number of police officers allocated to traffic divisions on 31 October 1986*
Surrey	1,624	214
Sussex	2,809	258
Essex	2,699	276
Hertfordshire	1,591	155
Kent	2,893	278
Thames Valley[1]	3,424	325

[1] Buckinghamshire is part of the Thames Valley police area and it is not possible to provide figures for Buckinghamshire alone.

Prisons (Fire-Fighting)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how often a fire-fighting exercise takes place at each prison in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is his policy towards the presence in each prison in the United Kingdom of a prison officer with special fire-fighting responsibilities; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether fire-fighting equipment is kept in each wing of prisons in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Mellor: Governors of penal establishments in England and Wales nominate a prison officer known as the fire officer to be responsible to them for all fire matters. Arrangements are made for him to receive training as necessary with the local fire brigade. It is the fire officer's duty to familiarise himself with the fire precautions in

force at the establishment and to develop such fire precautions as are considered necessary. He also trains other prison officers in the use of fire-fighting equipment.

Subject to any overriding security or control considerations a full fire pratice, which include a drill with fire-fighting equipment, should be held at least every six months. Where practicable, the exercises also includes the evacuation of selected buildings and calling the local fire brigade. Fire fighting equipment is located according to advice given by local fire authorities, which would normally result in equipment being placed in each prison wing.

Responsibility for penal establishments in Scotland and Northern Ireland rests with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Prisoners (Central Criminal Court)

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will seek to reduce traffic disruption by arranging for high security prisoners held in remand, who are on trial at the Central Criminal Court, to be lodged during the period of their trials at a secure place close to the court in place of Brixton prison.

Mr. Mellor: In the longer term the new prison and adjacent Crown court at Woolwich should reduce the need for high security escorts. In the meantime there is no suitable accommodation nearer to the Central Criminal court than Brixton prison.

Buckinghamshire (Councillors)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Thames Valley police on the progress of inquiries into allegation of a failure to declare pecuniary interests by Buckinghamshire county councillors.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable of Thames Valley police that an investigation into this matter is continuing; a report will be submitted to the DPP in due course.

Wheel Clamping

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications of the new contract wheel clamping service for the level of illegal parking by coaches; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Commissioner has informed me that wheel clamps suitable for fixing to coaches are available to all the wheel clamping teams. As with any vehicle, where the driver is present the police will normally direct the driver to move the vehicle rather than fixing a wheel clamp.

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Hurd: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given today to a question from the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould).

Changes now being considered or planned include:

A survey of the ethnic origin of clients of the probation service on 31 March 1987; publication of regular statistics on the segregation of prisoners under Rule 43; alterations to the returns on experiments on animals to reflect the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act; revised returns on the operation of immigration control at the ports; and monitoring of the operation of new visa arrangements.

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, in respect of the statistics kept and published by his Department, he will publish in the *Official Report* any changes since 1979 in *(a)* the statistical series which are published, including those which have been introduced and those which have been dropped, *(b)* the basis on which any elements in the statistics are estimated, calculated or presented, *(c)* the periods over which, and the dates on which the series are collected or published and *(d)* any other respects in the ways and if he will explain the reasons for any such changes.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 December 1986, c. 633]: Changes in the basis of compilation, presentation and publication of statistical series are made from time to time in response to the Government's requirements for statistical information, changes in legislation and in the administrative systems on which some series are based, the development of new statistical techniques and technological developments affecting the compilation and dissemination of statistical data. When such changes are made they are fully documented in the relevant statistical publications.

The main changes which have been made since 1979 to the statistics regularly collected and published by the Home Office include the following:

1980

Regular collection and publication of deaths in police custody.

Frequency of collection of statistics on liquor licensing changed from annual to triennial.

Compilation of statistics of passenger arrivals for EC nationals discontinued with the abolition of landing cards.

1981

Collection of information on those arrested during incidents of public disorder; repeated in 1985.

Collection of more detailed information on immigration from the Indian subcontinent.

Discontinuation of collection of statistics of deaths from drownings.

Introduction of annual statistical bulletin on deaths reported to coroners.

1982

Returns on domestic proceedings in magistrates' courts dropped.

First British Crime Survey carried out; repeated in 1984.

Publication of Bulletin in statistics of mentally disordered offenders; repeated in 1985.

1983

Publication of ethnic crime statistics for the Metropolitan Police District; repeated in 1984.

Regular publication of statistics on deportations began.

Publication of new analyses on causes of accidental fires.

1984

New returns on domestic proceedings in magistrates' courts.

Collection of information on the ethnic origin of prisoners established; first results published June 1985.

Basis of collation of statistics on prison medicines changed from doses dispensed to number administered.
Publication of long-term projections of the prison population.
Publication of statistics on decisions on variation of leave and on appeals dealt with by immigration appellate authorities commenced in the Immigration and Nationality Department Report.

1985

New returns on waiting times in magistrates' courts.
Analysis of reconvictions and recalls of life licensees.
Collection began of information on nationality of prisoners.
New returns on special service calls to fire brigades and incidents involving dangerous substances.
Prison medical statistics improved and extended.

1986

Returns on the operation of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984; returns on the operation of Section 62 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 discontinued.
First annual Statistical Bulletin on refugee statistics.

Vehicles (Theft)

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many reported crimes in 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985 involved theft of vehicles or theft from vehicles.

Mr. Hurd: Numbers of offences of theft from vehicles, theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles and theft of pedal cycles recorded in the last 10 years were published in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 1985" (Cmnd. 10, table 2.12).

Industrial Counterfeiting

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the levels of fines imposed or cases involving industrial counterfeiting.

Mr. Hurd: In 1985, the average fine imposed on offenders convicted under section 1 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 was £203, broken down as follows:

	Magistrates' Court £	*Crown Court* £
Males	172	242
Females	79	135
Companies	227	1,129

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the level of penalties available for industrial counterfeiting.

Mr. Hurd: Offences under the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, to whom representations about the Act are normally made. I hope to reply shortly to my hon. Friend's letter to me on 11 November on this subject.

Police Consultative Committee (Camden)

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the first meeting is due to be held of the new statutory police consultative committee in Camden; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand that a meeting is being arranged for 22 January.

State Security

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his statement of 3 December, *Official Report*, column 939, in what form he gives direction and guidance to the director general of MI5 as to how the Security Service goes about its business.

Mr. Hurd: I have nothing to add to the full account I gave on 3 December of my responsibility for the Security Service, at columns 937-45.

Heroin Addicts

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the Government's estimate of the number of herion addicts in each year since 1979.

Mr. Hurd: Because of the nature of the activity, it is not possible to make any reliable estimate of the total number of heroin addicts in the United Kingdom. Information on addicts notified to the Home Office in the years 1979 to 1984 who were reported as addicted to heroin, alone or in combination with other notifiable drugs, is given in table 11 of "Statistics of the Misuse of Drugs in the United Kingdom, 1984", (Home Office statistical bulletin 23/85). Corresponding figures for 1985 will be published shortly. Some research carried out in 1981 in two urban areas in England suggested that the number of notified addicts was about one fifth of the actual number of opioid addicts in the local population at that time. Researchers believe that there are considerable local variations in such "multipliers" and that they may also change rapidly over time.

SCOTLAND

Tourism

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Scotland which local authorities in Scotland have published tourism strategies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is not available centrally. I understand from the Scottish tourist board that all area tourist boards, which include local authority representation, are in the process of producing local tourism strategies. These will complement the board's national business and marketing plans.

Migrant Workers (Dundee)

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Dundee, West on 25 November, *Official Report*, column *176*, how many of the migrant workers in Dundee are reported to be working overseas or at sea.

Mr. Lang: From the 1981 census of population, it is estimated on the basis of a 10 per cent. sample that about 200 people whose area of residence was in the city of Dundee were working overseas or at sea.

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will instruct the local authorities in Glasgow

and Edinburgh to produce detailed evacuation plans for a maximum credible accident under adverse meteorological conditions at the nearest nuclear power station.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has no powers to direct local authorities on these matters. It is for the authorities concerned to draw up contingency plans for responding in the unlikely event of an accident at a civil nuclear installation, including arrangements for assisting with evacuation where this is considered advisable. The plans should be compatible with those prepared by nuclear site operators and other appropriate bodies, including the emergency services.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans there are in existence for the emergency supply of water following a nuclear accident for Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Mr. Ancram: Government plans for civil nuclear emergencies, and those of nuclear site operators, include arrangements for notifying water authorities whose supplies may be affected, for monitoring these supplies and for advising authorities accordingly. While drinking water would rank very low as a health risk following a nuclear accident, if monitoring results indicated a need for action the responsible water authority would implement plans to introduce alternative supplies.

Fast Reactors

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will list in tabular form the sums paid by the South of Scotland Electricity Board and the North of Scotland Hydro Electricity Board in each year since 1973 for research, design and demonstration of fast reactors; and for each year and for each category who are the recipients of such funding.

Mr. Lang: I shall ask the chairmen to write to the hon. Member.

Motor Accidents

Mr. Eadie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were injured, where motor accidents were involved, in the parliamentary constituency of Midlothian in the years 1983, 1984, 1985 and to the nearest available date in 1986; and if he will give the figures in calendar months of the respective years.

Mr. Ancram: The numbers of people injured in, on or by motor vehicles in Midlothian district were as follows:

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	[1]*1986 (6 months)*
January	26	25	11	24
February	28	35	30	27
March	16	31	25	40
April	23	22	27	31
May	22	20	46	44
June	26	32	23	25
July	21	18	32	—
August	20	19	35	—
September	32	34	49	—
October	34	42	30	—
November	24	19	26	—
December	15	33	27	—
TOTAL	287	330	361	191

[1] Provisional.

Mr. Eadie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many motorists were killed in driving accidents in the parliamentary constituency of Midlothian in the years 1983, 1984, 1985 and to the nearest possible date in 1986; and if he will give the figures in the calendar months of the years referred to.

Mr. Ancram: The numbers of car drivers killed in road accidents in Midlothian district were as follows:

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	[1]*1986 (6 months)*
January	—	—	—	—
February	—	—	—	—
March	1	—	1	—
April	—	—	1	—
May	—	—	—	—
June	—	—	—	—
July	—	—	1	—
August	1	3	—	—
September	—	1	—	—
October	—	—	—	—
November	1	—	—	—
December	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	3	4	3	Nil

[1] Provisional.

Figures include drivers of taxis, estate cars, three and four wheeled cars, minibuses and motor caravans.

Mr. Eadie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many motorists were killed or injured in driving accidents in Scotland in the years 1983, 1984, 1985 and to the nearest available date in 1986; and if he will give the figures for the calendar months of the years mentioned.

Mr. Ancram: The numbers of car drivers killed or injured in road accidents in Scotland were as follows:

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986 (6 months)*[1]
January	23	13	21	13
February	10	16	3	12
March	16	12	17	7
April	7	5	10	12
May	14	2	12	12
June	9	10	17	8
July	6	9	12	—
August	10	14	15	—
September	14	19	20	—
October	20	13	10	—
November	6	14	13	—
December	11	23	23	—
TOTAL	146	150	173	64

[1] Provisional.

Figures include drivers of taxis, estate cars, three and four wheeled cars, minibuses and motor caravans.

Mr. Eadie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give an estimate of the costs involved of every fatality in a motor accident and of every injury in such accidents; and how such estimates are calculated.

Mr. Ancram: The average costs per accident, at 1985 prices, are estimated as follows:

	£
Fatal	204,200
Serious injury	11,420
Slight injury	1,550

A single accident may involve the death of, or injury to, more than one person. A description of the way in which these costs are estimated is contained in "Road Accidents, Scotland, 1985" a copy of which is in the Library.

New Towns

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is now able to respond to the submissions from district councils with new towns concerning an end to the housebuilding moratorium; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. and learned Friend to the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on 5 December at column 755. The submissions from district councils, which were taken into account in reaching decisions, were discussed when I met representatives of the local authorities, together with the hon. Members for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and for Cunninghame, South (Mr. Lambie), on 3 October 1986.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what advice he has given to new town development corporations concerning communicating the decisions of development corporation boards to the press and public.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend continues to encourage the development corporations to take whatever steps they consider appropriate to provide the press and public with as much information as possible about the decisions of the boards and about the corporations' activities generally.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will set out the urgent hospital in-patient waiting list for each health board, together with the number of urgent cases waiting more than one month, the percentage the latter represents of the former and their ranking in Scotland by that percentage.

Mr. John MacKay: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will set out the non-urgent hospital in-patient waiting list for each health board, together with the number of non-urgent cases waiting more than one year, the percentage of the latter represents of the former and their ranking in Scotland by that percentage.

Mr. John MacKay: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will set out the total hospital in-patient waiting list of each health board, the total population living in each health board area, the percentage the former represents of the latter and their ranking in Scotland by that percentage.

Mr. John MacKay: The information requested is as follows:

	Waiting list as at September 1985	*Population as at June 1985*	*Waiting list as per cent. of population*	*Ranking*
Argyll and Clyde	7,209	446,637	1·61	7
Ayrshire and Arran	5,120	375,212	1·36	8
Borders	318	101,705	0·31	13
Dumfries and Galloway	2,687	146,562	1·83	1
Fife	5,816	344,019	1·69	4
Forth Valley	2,593	272,426	0·95	11
Grampian	8,641	500,566	1·73	3
Greater Glasgow	16,006	968,801	1·65	5
Highland	2,543	198,617	1·28	9
Lanarkshire	6,605	568,077	1·16	10
Lothian	13,381	745,229	1·80	2
Orkney	58	19,351	0·30	14
Shetland	145	23,440	0·62	12
Tayside	6,494	394,322	1·65	6
Western Isles	61	31,545	0·19	15
Scotland	77,677	5,136,509	1·51	—

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the hospital out-patient waiting list in each health board in 1978 and each subsequent year.

Mr. John MacKay: This information is not available centrally.

Torness Power Station

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for East Lothian on 26 November *Official Report* column *274*, if he will publish the formal comments of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate on the exercise that was conducted at Torness power station on 18 September, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *451*]: No. It is not the policy of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate to publish correspondence with licensees. I am aware, however, that following the demonstration of the South of Scotland Electricity Board's emergency arrangements for Torness nuclear power station on 18 September 1986, a number of adjustments and improvements have been required and these are being implemented. The inspectorate requires a satisfactory demonstration of the emergency arrangements before fuel loading is permitted.

Local Authorities (Capital Projects)

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the operation

of section 94, controls on expenditure on capital projects undertaken by councils where long leaseback arrangements are made with *(a)* private sector organisations, *(b)* public sector bodies and *(c)* limited companies in which the local authority has a majority interest.

Mr. Ancram [*pursuant to his reply*, 9 December 1986]: While we keep their operation under review, my right hon. and learned Friend and I are content that the controls on Scottish local authority capital expenditure operate satisfactorily in relation to projects of the kinds described in my hon. Friend's question.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Exports

4. **Mr. Soames** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the export performance of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Channon: Non-oil exports have been at their highest ever level in recent months. The volume of non-oil exports should rise further in 1987 reflecting faster growth in the United Kingdom's overseas markets and our improved competitiveness.

44. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to the current level of exports from the north-east region.

Mr. Alan Clark: This information is not available as export figures are not collected on a regional basis.

Cement Industry

15. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures he proposes to take to protect the United Kingdom cement industry from unfair overseas competition.

64. **Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what active steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to protect the British cement industry from the effects of the dumping of subsidised Greek cement in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Alan Clark: My Department will continue to monitor very closely the trend in imports of cement and take action where the threat of unfair competition emerges. In the case of subsidised Greek cement my continuous pressure for action has brought results. I expect the European Commission to reach agreement before Christmas on the phasing out of Greek export subsidies with a safeguard clause enabling immediate action to be taken in special cases such as cement. The Greek Government have also recognised the need to ensure that cement exports do not unfairly disrupt our market and I hope that complementary discussions will also be concluded before Christmas.

Shipbuilding

16. **Mr. Dixon** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress of discussions in the European Economic Community on shipbuilding.

Mr. Giles Shaw: As I told the House in the debate on the new draft directive on shipbuilding on Monday, we already have the prospect of a regime which will allow our builders to compete more fairly, and to do so within an overall level of subvention that is greater than present arrangements permit. These are already considerable improvements on the present fifth directive. We shall seek agreement on the new directive at the Industry Council arranged for 22 December. With the support of this House, we shall continue to press the Commission for a higher aid ceiling than the 26 per cent. of cost which it has proposed.

23. **Mr. Millan** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proposals on aids to shipbuilding he will be putting to the next meeting of the European Community Council of Industry Ministers on 22 December.

Mr. Giles Shaw: May I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I have just given to the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon). I stress that we shall spare no effort in pressing for a higher aid ceiling than the Commission has proposed.

Manufacturing Industry

17. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the most recent figure for output in manufacturing industry; and what was the comparable figure for the same month seven years ago.

Mr. Pattie: The hon. Member will appreciate that monthly data can be erratic. However, since the trough of the recession in 1981, manufacturing output has increased by over 13 per cent. to reach a level of 105·6 in September 1986, based on 1980 equal to 100. This was some ½ per cent. lower than the level of output in September 1979.

28. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make a statement on the current level of investment in manufacturing industry.

Mr. Pattie: Investment in manufacturing rose by nearly 6 per cent. in 1985, and was 25 per cent. higher than in 1983. In the first three quarters of this year it was slightly lower (2½ per cent.) than in the same period last year. But the underlying determinants of manufacturing investment —continuing growth in the economy, buoyant profits, improved profitability and a low rate of inflation— remain favourable. Most forecasters expect a significant increase in manufacturing investment next year.

40. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he proposes to take to encourage regeneration of the manufacturing industry and an increase in output.

Mr. Pattie: We shall continue to pursue policies which encourage sustained economic growth, falling inflation and competitive enterprise. And we shall continue to monitor and adjust where necessary the comprehensive range of support which my Department makes available to help industry develop its competitive strength.

47. **Mr. O'Brien** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on investment in manufacturing industry.

Mr. Pattie: Investment in manufacturing rose by nearly 6 per cent. in 1985, and was 25 per cent. higher than in 1983. In the first three quarters of this year it was slightly lower (2½ per cent.) than in the same period last year. But

the underlying determinants of manufacturing investment —continuing growth in the economy, buoyant profits, improved profitability and a low rate of inflation — remain favourable. Most forecasters expect a significant increase in manufacturing investment next year.

60. **Mr. Kenneth Carlisle** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the most recent statistics for capital investment by manufacturing industry; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: Investment in manufacturing rose by nearly 6 per cent. in 1985, and was 25 per cent. higher than in 1983. In the first three quarters of this year it was slightly lower (2½ per cent.) than in the same period last year. But the underlying determinants of manufacturing investment —continuing growth in the economy, buoyant profits, improved profitability and a low rate of inflation — remain favourable. Most forecasters expect a significant increase in manufacturing investment next year.

61. **Mr. Wrigglesworth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his estimate of the cumulative deterioration in the balance of trade in manufacturing since 1978.

Mr. Alan Clark: In the first 10 months of 1986 trade in manufactures was in deficit by £4·6 billion compared with a surplus of £5·1 billion in 1978 as a whole.

Research and Technology Programme

18. **Mr. Grylls** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the objectives and progress so far of his Department's small firms merit award for research and technology programme; if he is considering any changes to the programme for the future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: The small firms merit award for research and technology is intended to encourage new and innovative companies in research and development initiatives. The first 20 awards were made in October and all the winning projects will be monitored and considered for further support next October. I consider that the scheme has been very successful in stimulating good innovative projects, although it will be some time before their commercial prospects become clear. I shall consider how the scheme might be developed in the light of experience of this pilot scheme.

41. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the current situation for research and development funding from his Department.

Mr. Pattie: My Department plans to spend £415 million in 1986-87 on support for research and development.

Monopolies and Mergers Commission

19. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the average interval between reference of a merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and submission of a report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in (i) 1982-83 and (ii) the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Howard: The average period taken by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for investigation into mergers referred in the years 1982 and 1983 was about six months. The average for mergers referred in 1986 has so far been about five months.

Rover Group

20. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the state of the Government's proposals for the privatisation of the Rover Group.

Mr. Channon: I refer the hon. Member to the statement that I made on 2 December.

25. **Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government have any plans to give further financial support to Rover plc; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The question of any further financial support for Rover Group operations will be addressed in the context of the 1987 corporate plan which the Government expect to receive around the end of the year.

52. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of Rover Group plc.

Mr. Giles Shaw: As my right hon. Friend explained in his statement on 2 December, Mr. Day's review of the plans of all Rover Group operating companies will form the basis of the 1987 corporate plan. My right hon. Friend will announce the Government's response when Mr. Day's recommendations have been received and fully considered.

Manufactured Goods

21. **Mr. Clelland** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the Confederation of British Industry to discuss the trade deficit in manufactured goods.

Mr. Pattie: My right hon. Friend meets the CBI regularly at the National Economic Development Council and on other occasions. At present he has no plans for a special meeting on this subject.

Leicester

22. **Mr. Greville Janner** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps taken by Her Majesty's Government have stimulated a revival in the traditional industries of the city of Leicester.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This Government's economic and industrial policies are creating the right conditions for sustainable growth in jobs and output. The traditional industries of Leicester have also benefited from the wide range of schemes operated by my Department to assist industry in adjusting to the needs of today's market.

Compulsory Training Levies

24. **Mr. Gerald Bowden** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has had any recent discussions with the Confederation of British Industry about the implications for industry of compulsory training levies.

Mr. Pattie: No.

Takeovers

26. **Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will seek to amend companies legislation

in order to provide safeguards against takeovers leading to asset-stripping exercises which involve the closure of branch factories.

Mr. Howard: No. Current legislation enables my right hon. Friend to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission any merger which qualifies under the provisions of the Fair Trading Act and which he considers raises questions of public interest which deserve further consideration. The question of changes to the legislative controls over mergers falls for consideration in the review of mergers and restrictive trade practices. If the hon. Gentleman has any particular points which he would like the review to consider, I invite him to put them to my Department.

Invisible Trade

27. **Mr. Leighton** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the trend of Great Britain's invisible trade; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The surplus on invisible trade has increased in the three years to 1985 and the figures in respect of the first three quarters of 1986 indicate that this trend is continuing.

59. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the method of calculation invisibles in the balance of trade.

Mr. Alan Clark: None. The method of calculating the balance on invisible trade has not been changed for many years.

Rolls-Royce

29. **Mr. Stan Thorne** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the proposed privatisation of Rolls-Royce.

Mr. Pattie: Work is continuing on preparations for the privatisation of Rolls-Royce. Further announcements will be made in due course.

Confederation of British Industry

30. **Mr. Charles Wardle** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the director general of the Confederation of British Industry; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Channon: I last met Sir Terence Beckett at the National Economic Development Council on 23 September. I have since met the CBI's overseas committee, on 16 October, to discuss the launch of the new GATT round.

32. **Mrs. Shields** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the director general of the Confederation of British Industry.

Mr. Channon: I meet the director general regularly at the National Economic Development Council and on other occasions. The next meeting of NEDC is on 7 January 1987.

Lawnmowers

31. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he has taken to ensure compliance with the European Economic Community's Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations 1986.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Under section 7 of the Lawnmower (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations 1986 the Secretary of State has powers to carry out periodic checks, but it is envisaged that these powers will be exercised only when there are grounds for thinking that a manufacturer or importer is failing to comply with the directive. In such circumstances the inspection would be carried out by officials of the Department of Trade and Industry, assisted if necessary by suitable technical experts.

Regional Policy

33. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will define the Government's regional policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The aim of the Government's regional industrial policy is to reduce on a stable long-term basis regional imbalances in employment opportunities. This is achieved through encouraging the indigenous potential of the assisted areas particularly by generating wealth creating schemes in areas of high unemployment.

Textile Industry

34. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next proposes to meet the Trades Union Congress's textile committee to discuss prospects for the textile industry.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I have no plans to do so at present. My hon. Friend the Minister for Trade met the committee on 5 March and 25 July to discuss the position on the multi-fibre arrangement. Officials dealing with textiles and clothing matters also hold periodic meetings with the committee and have kept in regular touch with it on the progress of the MFA and related issues.

Bankruptcies

35. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many bankruptcies there have been in the last 12 months.

Mr. Howard: The provisional estimate is 7,129 bankruptcies in England and Wales in the 12 months to 31 October.

Counterfeiting

36. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to announce the Government's proposals following consultations with the automotive spare parts industry on the White Paper, "Intellectual Property and Innovation".

Mr. Pattie: The Government are currently looking at ways in which legislation implementing the unregistered design right proposed in the White Paper might be drafted to ensure that competition in spare parts is not prevented. I cannot, however, promise an early announcement of our conclusions because of the need to consider the consequential effects on all sectors of industry.

M. P. B. Russell and Company Limited

37. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will appoint inspectors under the sections 431 and 432 of the Companies Act 1985 to look into the affairs of M. P. B. Russell and Co. Limited; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: No. The company is in compulsory liquidation. Investigation is a matter for the Official Receiver at Atlantic house, Holborn viaduct, London EC1N 2HD.

Inward Investment

38. **Mr. Galley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's estimate of the number of jobs resulting from inward investment since 1979.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Department's estimate of the number of jobs resulting from inward investment since 1979 is over 222,000.

Training Facilities

39. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department is doing to encourage industry to provide more facilities for training.

Mr. Pattie: My Department encourages industry to increase its investment in training by providing a range of assistance for training development, particularly in the field of new technology. For example, my Department offers learning packages on the application of a range of microelectronics-led technologies, supports the development of distance learning video courses and assists interactive video projects which result in new training or educational programmes to be used in industry and commerce. My Department is also involved in joint projects with the Department of Employment, the Manpower Services Commission and the Department of Education and Science in the training field.

Steel Industry

42. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure that European competition with the public and private sectors of the British steel industry is fair.

Mr. Giles Shaw: An essential condition for fair competition is strict control over subsidies. The Government therefore supported the agreement in the Council of Ministers in October 1985 to stop nearly all state aids to the Community steel industry from January 1986. I was pleased that the Council which I chaired on 20 October this year confirmed unanimously its agreement to the strict new code on subsidies now in force, and urged the Commission to enforce it strictly.

Development Agencies

43. **Mr. Hicks** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his policy for the establishment of development agencies in England; and if he will agree to the formation of a development agency for Devon and Cornwall.

Mr. Giles Shaw: In the particular circumstances of England I see no overall advantage in the establishment by central Government of regional development agencies. I do, however, welcome local initiatives aimed at creating regional development companies—such as that recently created in the north of England by employers, employee representatives and local authorities there—where local interests feel that such companies would be appropriate and successful.

South Africa

45. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the latest information on the balance of trade between the United Kingdom and South Africa; and what were the comparable figures in 1979.

Mr. Alan Clark: United Kingdom trade with the Republic of South Africa for the nine months ending September 1986 showed a crude balance of trade deficit of £27·1 million. For the same period in 1979 there was a crude balance of trade surplus of £36·5 million.

51. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to publish an annual list of wage levels in South Africa relevant to the European code of conduct for companies with interests in South Africa.

Mr. Alan Clark: I am placing in the Library of the House the table published by the University of South Africa of supplemented living level (SLL) requirements for August 1985 and Februry 1986. These are the figures relevant to the latest completed reporting period for which companies are now submitting their returns under the code. It is, of course, stated clearly in the code that pay based on the SLL for an average sized family must be considered the absolute minimum and further explanatory guidance to British companies is contained in Cmnd. 9860.

58. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is satisfied with progress by companies reporting under the European Community code of conduct for companies with interests in South Africa in eliminating segregation at the work place; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: In the 1984-85 reporting period, for the fourth successive year, companies continued to make encouraging progress in this respect. But desegregation at the workplace was not yet universal and there is accordingly still some scope for improvement by a small minority of the companies concerned.

Austin Rover

46. **Mr. Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to meet the chairman of Austin Rover to discuss that company's future.

Mr. Giles Shaw: My right hon. Friend and I meet Mr. Day, the chairman of Austin Rover and Rover Group from time to time to discuss matters of mutual interest. As my right hon. Friend told the House on 2 December we expect the 1987 corporate plan to set out a positive course for the continuation of Austin Rover as a major producer and leading exporter of cars made in Britain. It is due to be received around the turn of the year.

Airbus

48. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received regarding launch aid for the A330 and A340 Airbus projects.

Mr. Pattie: My Department has received representations in favour of launch aid being provided for the A330/A340 from a number of hon. Members and from others with an interest in these projects.

50. **Mr. Jim Callaghan** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on Government support for Airbus.

Mr. Pattie: The Government support, in principle, the development of the Airbus family of aircraft to cover a wider market range and hope that British Aerospace will participate in the new Airbus projects which prove to have strong prospects of commercial viability. The importance to the United Kingdom civil aircraft industry of participation in the Airbus programme is also recognised by the Government. British Aerospace's application for launch aid, which was submitted on 17 October, is being carefully considered. The Government will announce their decisions on BAe's application in due course.

"Eighth Company Law Directive"

49. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has so far received on his Department's consultation paper on the "Eighth Company Law Directive"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: As of this morning, my Department had received 17 responses to the consultative document. My officials have also had a number of useful discussions with representatives of the professional bodies. Further discussions are planned.

Copyright

53. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to protect British copyright industries.

Mr. Pattie: The Government have already announced their proposals for the reform of the United Kingdom copyright law in the White Paper "Intellectual Property and Innovation" (Cmnd. 9712) and intend to legislate when the parliamentary timetable permits.

With regard to protection overseas the Government continue to press upon countries where protection is inadequate the need for comprehensive and enforceable copyright law. The United Kingdom will also be giving its full support to the objective recently agreed by the contracting parties to the GATT that the new round of international trade negotiations should address the need to promote effective and adequate protection of intellectual property rights.

Imperial Chemical Industries

54. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to meet either the present or future chairmen of ICI or both.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I have no plans to meet either Sir John Harvey-Jones or Mr. Denys Henderson in the near future, although my Department has frequent contact with ICI at all levels of the company.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

55. **Mr. James Lamond** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the bilateral negotiations arising from the multi-fibre arrangement to be concluded.

Mr. Alan Clark: Bilateral agreements have now been initialled with all the Community low-cost suppliers under the multi-fibre arrangement, as I explained to the House in the debate on 2 December 1986. Details of the quota levels negotiated both for the Community as a whole for the whole five year period and on a provisional basis for individual member states for 1987, have been placed in the Library of the House.

Industrial Training

56. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what initiatives he has taken to encourage industrial firms to step up their training programmes.

Mr. Pattie: My Department encourages industry to increase its investment in training by providing a range of assistance for training development, particularly in the field of new technology. For example, my Department offers learning packages on the application of a range of microelectronics-led technologies, supports the development of distance learning video courses and assists interactive video projects which result in new training or educational programmes to be used in industry and commerce. My Department is also involved in joint projects with the Department of Employment, the Manpower Services Commission and the Department of Education and Science in the training field.

Foundry Industry

57. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the current position of the foundry industry.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Demand for castings continues at a depressed level and output in many sectors is running lower than in previous years. The foundry industries, however, continue to modernise and to take steps to increase both productivity and competitiveness.

BTR-Pilkington

62. **Sir Anthony Meyer** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he proposes to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the bid by BTR for Pilkingtons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: The proposed acquisition of Pilkington Brothers plc by BTR plc is being considered by the Director General of Fair Trading. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will make his decision on whether to refer the proposed acquisition to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the light of the director general's advice.

Package Holidays

63. **Mr. Phillip Oppenheim** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received during 1986 concerning people who had booked package holidays with reputable British travel firms and were then forced to share their hotel room because of overbooking.

Mr. Howard: I have received one such representation, regarding a relatively small travel firm which is not a member of ABTA.

United States (Formal Protest)

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what were the points of principle he raised in his formal protest to the United States on 26 June; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Government's protest was concerned with our objections to United States extraterritorial re-export regulations and the action taken against Systime plc under those regulations.

EC (Third World Imports)

Mr. Deakins asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will specify in detail Her Majesty's Government's proposals to the European Economic Community for improved access to the European Economic Community for Third world products in the forthcoming general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations.

Mr. Alan Clark: The declaration of GATT Ministers on opening the Uruguay round, agreed on 20 September, establishes the basis of negotiations for all 92 contracting parties to GATT. The declaration provides, inter alia, that the negotiations shall aim to bring about further liberalisation and expansion of world trade to the benefit of all countries, especially the less developed, including the improvement of access to markets; also to improve the multilateral trading system, and to bring about a wider coverage of world trade under GATT disciplines. The declaration records the developing countries' expectation that as their economic and commercial situations improve they will participate more fully in the framework of rights and obligations under the general agreement. All the major concerns of both developed and developing countries will therefore be addressed. A copy of the declaration has been placed in the Library.

Kangaroo Skin

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if Her Majesty's Government will take steps to require goods containing kangaroo skin to carry a mark to distinguish them from products devoid of such skin; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I have no present plans to do so.

Transworld Festival Company

Mr. Allan Roberts asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will institute an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the liquidation of Transworld Festival Company.

Mr. Howard: Transworld Festival Company was a trading style used by Transworld Leisure plc against which a winding-up order was made in the Liverpool district registry of the High Court of Justice on 10 October 1986. Accordingly, the Official Receiver, who is also liquidator of the company, is under a statutory duty to investigate its affairs and his inquiries are continuing.

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Butcher: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Counterfeiting

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has about the trend in the use of the United Kingdom as a base for the production of counterfeit goods; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Pattie: The production in the United Kingdom of counterfeit goods is a covert activity on which there is no firm information. I have received representations alleging that such production is increasing and am considering these representations carefully.

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to increase the penalties for offences of industrial counterfeiting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

EEC Trade Statistics

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total value of the manufactured goods which the United Kingdom sent to and imported from the European Economic Community in the most recent annual period for which figures are available; and what were the comparable figures for the rest of the world.

Mr. Alan Clark: In the year ending October 1986, United Kingdom exports of manufactures to the European Communities totalled £23½ billion and imports £34 billion. Exports to the rest of the world were £30 billion and imports £26¼ billion. These figures are on the overseas trade statistics basis.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Small Businesses (VAT)

65. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of small businesses likely to be subjected to the new non-mitigable penalties for late submission of value added tax returns; if he will arrange a review of the effects of such penalties on small businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: Following a recent substantial improvement in VAT compliance I expect only a minority of all

registered businesses to become liable to surcharge. I regret that it is not possible to make separate estimates in regard to small businesses. Otherwise, I refer the hon. Member to my reply today to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown).

66. **Mr. Ashdown** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the likely effects on small businesses of the new non-mitigable penalties for late submission of value added tax returns; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: A number of representations have been received from trade associations and individual businesses about the effects on cash flow of adhering to the due date for the payment of VAT on Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

The recent consultation paper, "VAT: Small Business Review" makes a number of important proposals for assisting small businesses in regard to the accounting requirements for the tax. The Government are also committed to a full review of the operation of the new penalties and default surcharge system before the 1988 Budget.

Black Economy

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the current size of the black economy *(a)* overall and *(b)* in the construction industry;

(2) what information he has concerning the size of the black economy in each of the last 10 years;

(3) if he will estimate the total cost to the Exchequer in lost revenue of the black economy in each of the last 10 years;

(4) if he will estimate the total cost to the Exchequer in lost revenue as a result of the black economy in the construction industry in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Norman Lamont: By its nature, it is not possible to form any reliable estimate of the size of the black economy, or whether it is growing or contracting, either overall or in relation to the construction industry. I regret, therefore, that it is not possible reliably to estimate the cost in lost revenue attributable to the black economy.

Construction Industry (VAT)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in view of the level of value added tax evasion in the construction industry, he will introduce a nil value added tax threshold for that industry.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Gross National Product

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of gross national product will be taken up by public expenditure in the current financial year; and what are the comparable percentage figures for the United States of America, Germany, and Japan in the most recent annual period for which figures are available.

Mr. MacGregor: General Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP is expected to be 43¼ per cent. in 1986-87, as published in Table 2.1 of the autumn statement. In 1983-84 it was 45¾ per cent. The internationally comparable measure calculated by the OECD, general Government outlays as a percentage of GDP, was 48 per cent. in the United Kingdom in 1984. The comparable figure for Germany was 48 per cent. and for Japan 33 per cent. The 1984 figure for the United States is not yet available; the 1983 figure was 38 per cent.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his answer of 25 November, *Official Report*, c. *240-2*, if he will give a breakdown between all Government Departments and agencies of the figures given in that answer; and whether all expenditure on behalf of Government Departments and agencies on advertising was made through the Central Office of Information.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

ENVIRONMENT

Local Authority Rents

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest available figures on the arrears of rent outstanding to each local authority in England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I have today arranged for the information to be placed in the Library. The figures were, in the majority of cases, supplied to the Department by the local authorities in their subsidy claim forms. They show, disappointingly, that at 1 April 1986 rent arrears in England amounted in total to over £210 million. This is about 5·7 per cent. of the total annual rent roll and there has been no reduction overall in this proportion since 1985.

In the worst individual case, an authority has reported to us figures which show arrears equal to almost two thirds of its annual rent roll. The 20 worst authorities have each reported arrears above 8 per cent. and together have a debt burden of over £100 million. Arrears on this scale are damaging to both tenants and ratepayers. It cannot be good for the wellbeing of individual tenants who owe rent to allow them to go on incurring further debts without seeking lasting solutions to their problems. The majority of tenants who are not in debt have to make good the interest charged, and ratepayers bear the costs if the debts are written off. Rents forgone in this way reduce the resources available to local authorities for vital maintenance and repair work.

Over 300 local housing authorities have managed to keep their arrears below 5 per cent. of their annual rent roll and well over 100 of these authorities have arrears below 2 per cent. There are authorities with social and economic characteristics similar to those among the worst performers which yet have much lower proportions of arrears. This demonstrates that there is a clear failure on the part of a minority of authorities to face up to their responsibilities, both to their tenants and to their ratepayers.

I recognise that there are doubts about the accuracy of some of the figures supplied by authorities. When I met representatives of the local authority associations earlier in the year to discuss the 1985 figures, we agreed that our

officers should get together with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting to develop a system of returns to provide more accurate information. That work is under way.

I am looking to the associations to develop also, with officers of my Department, an improved basis for comparing authorities with similar problems. By that means, the factors that cause large levels of arrears can be better identified and guidance developed on good practice in controlling the levels. Advice is, of course, already available from specialists in the Department and our aim is to develop that in the light of this exercise.

Inner Area Programme

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* those local authorities involved in the inner area programme giving classification and date of admission to the programme.

Mr. Tracey: The table shows the local authorities in England which currently submit inner area programmes as urban programme partnership or programme authorities, and other districts designated under the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978.

Authority	*Present status*	*When admitted*
Barnsley	Designated	September 1978
Birmingham	Partnership	December 1978
Blackburn	Programme	April 1983 (designated September 1978)
Bolton	Programme	September 1978
Bradford	Programme	September 1978
Brent	Programme	April 1983 (designated September 1978
Burnley	Designated	April 1983
Coventry	Programme	April 1983
Doncaster	Designated	September 1978
Ealing	Designated	September 1978
Gateshead	Partnership	December 1978
Greenwich	Designated	September 1981 (part of Docklands Partnership 1979-81, first designated September 1978)
Hackney	Partnership	January 1979
Hammersmith and Fulham	Programme	September 1978
Haringey	Designated	September 1978
Hartlepool	Designated	September 1978
Islington	Partnership	January 1979
Kingston upon Hull	Programme	September 1978
Knowsley	Programme	April 1983
Lambeth	Partnership	January 1979
Langbaurgh	Designated	April 1983
Leeds	Programme	September 1978
Leicester	Programme	September 1978
Lewisham	Designated	September 1981 (part of Docklands Partnership 1979-81, first designated September 1978)
Liverpool	Partnership	December 1978
Manchester	Partnership	December 1978
Middlesbrough	Programme	September 1978
Newcastle	Partnership	December 1978
Newham	Designated	September 1981 (part of Docklands Partnership 1979-81, first designated September 1978)
North Tyneside	Programme	September 1978
Nottingham	Programme	September 1978
Oldham	Programme	September 1978
Rochdale	Programme	April 1983 (designated September 1978)
Rotherham	Designated	September 1978
St. Helens	Designated	September 1978
Salford	Partnership	December 1978
Sandwell	Programme	April 1983 (designated September 1978)
Sefton	Designated	September 1978
Sheffield	Programme	September 1978
South Tyneside	Programme	September 1978
Southwark	Designated	September 1981 (part of Docklands Partnership 1979-81, first designated September 1978)
Sunderland	Programme	September 1978
Tower Hamlets	Designated	September 1981 (part of Docklands Partnership 1979-81, first designated September 1978)
Walsall	Designated	April 1983
Wandsworth	Programme	April 1983 (designated September 1978)
Wigan	Designated	September 1978
Wirral	Programme	September 1978
Wolverhampton	Programme	November 1978

Marine Pollution

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the incidence of new synthetic substances being discharged into Britain's rivers, estuaries and coastal waters; and what is his policy towards taking decisions on whether such xenobiotic substances should be discharged on the basis of technically available reduction options.

Mr. Waldegrave: New synthetic substances can only be placed on the market following notification to the Government and presentation of environmental information to enable an assessment to be made of their potential hazards, including those to the aquatic environment.

There exists limited information on discharges of synthetic substances to waters either from manufacture or from use, or from point and diffuse sources. Decisions on the control of discharges are taken on the basis of the quality objective approach and may require substitution or control of use as well as discharge controls.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has any plans to revise and update the estimated loads of contaminants carried by British rivers into the North sea quoted in the final report prepared for his Department by the Institute of Offshore Engineering (May 1984) entitled "Input of Contaminants to the North Sea from the United Kingdom"; what assessment has been made of the reliability of the 1984 calculation techniques and of the river monitoring programme on the basis of which the load estimates were made.

Mr. Waldegrave: The loads of contaminants entering the North sea via rivers and by direct discharge have been re-estimated as part of the preparations for the forthcoming North sea conference. This re-assessment has been based on a better method of calculation and on more sensitive analyses.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance Her Majesty's Government issue to industry about measures to prevent pollution of sediments at source or prior to discharge.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Government do not issue advice to industry concerning measures to prevent the pollution of sediments by discharges. Discharge consents for aqueous effluent are set by water authorities and in setting these consents they consider the effects of the discharge on the aqueous environment—including sediments.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies Her Majesty's Government have conducted into the technical and economical feasibility of reducing hydrocarbon discharges into the freshwater, marine and estuarine eco-systems to 5 ng/L. from oil refineries operating within the United Kingdom.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Government have conducted no such studies. It is possible, but very expensive, to reduce the oil content of refinery discharges to 5mg/l, but there are no good environmental reasons to require such a standard in all cases. I am assuming that "5ng" in the hon. Member's question is a misprint for "5 mg". The difference is a factor of a million.

Publicly Owned Land

Mr. Fallon asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many acres of publicly owned land are currently underused or underdeveloped.

Mr. John Patten: The register of unused and underused publicly owned land maintained by my right hon. Friend under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 showed 101,000 acres of such land in England on 30 November 1986. Since the registers were first established in 1981, some 45,000 acres of land have been removed from the register, most of which through being sold or brought back into use by the owner.

Liverpool Garden Festival Site

Mr. Allan Roberts asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will discuss with Merseyside development corporation and the local authorities on Merseyside the reopening under public management of the Liverpool garden festival site in 1987.

Mr. John Patten: Merseyside Development Corporation has already decided that the riverside park and festival hall will open to the public next summer. Almost certainly this will be managed by the corporation. The detailed arrangements have yet to be sorted out. The corporation plans to dispose of the former theme gardens on the other side of the spine road, preferably for a horticultural business in a garden setting.

Mr. Allan Roberts asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much public subsidy was received by the Transworld Festival Gardens Company, now in the hands of the receiver.

Mr. John Patten: The decision to release the garden festival site to Transworld Leisure plc was made on commercial grounds by Merseyside Development Corporation and no public subsidy was involved.

Mr. Allan Roberts asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how Transworld Festival Gardens Company was selected to manage the Liverpool garden festival site.

Mr. John Patten: Merseyside Development Corporation negotiated with over 80 prospective operators of the garden festival site. Only Transworld offered to take over and operate the site commercially. The financial package was carefully vetted. In the corporation's view, Transworld submitted a well developed business plan and, on this basis Transworld's bid was accepted.

Local Authority Finance

Mr. Pike asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when he proposes to make announcements regarding allocations for local authority capital programmes for 1987-88;

(2) when he proposes to announce the housing investment programme allocations for local authorities for 1987-88.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend announced the level of public expenditure provision for 1987-88 for the services covered by the main local authority capital cash limit in England in his reply of 6 November to my hon. Friend the

Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) at column 499. He will shortly be letting authorities know their individual allocations in respect of the services for which he is responsible.

Conservation Areas

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish figures showing the area of each national park in England and Wales;

(2) if he will give the approximate length of each heritage coast in England and Wales;

(3) if he will give the approximate area of each confirmed area of outstanding natural beauty and each area of great landscape value, respectively, in England and Wales.

Mr. Waldegrave: Details of national parks, confirmed areas of outstanding natural beauty and heritage coasts as at 31 March 1986 are provided in the Countryside Commission's "Annual Report 1985-86", copies of which are available in the Library. There have been no changes since that date.

Areas of great landscape value are proposed by local authorities in their development plans, and contain policies to protect rural areas not defined under any statutory provision. There is no common approach to the definition of these areas and each local authority is free to propose its own set of particular types. No figures are available for the amount of land covered.

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many conservation areas there are in each county, London borough and metropolitan borough in England.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am afraid that this information could be obtained only by inquiring of individual local authorities. Designation of conservation areas does not require my right hon. Friend's approval. We believe that about 5,000 areas have been designated in England overall.

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the approximate area of each established green belt in England and the percentage of the area of each county, London borough and metropolitan borough, which the green belt covers.

Mr. Waldegrave: I regret that information in the form requested is not available. The approximate areas of approved green belts in England are as follows.

Green Belt	*Area thousand acres*
Metropolitan	1,200
West Midlands	650
Greater Manchester, Central Lancashire / Merseyside/Wirral G.B.	750
Tyne and Wear	200
Nottingham/Derby	200
York	50
South and West Yorkshire	800
Oxford	100
Avon	150
Gloucester Cheltenham	20
Stoke-on-Trent	125
Cambridge	27
South West Hampshire/South East Dorset	220
Burton/Swadlincote	2
Lancaster and Fylde Coast	6

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total number and approximate area of each site of special scientific interest in each county, London borough and metropolitan borough in England.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information requested by my hon. Friend is being compiled and I shall write to him as soon as it is available.

Listed Buildings

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give his estimate of the total number of listed buildings by each grade in each county, London borough and metropolitan borough in England.

Mr. Waldegrave: Although this information is available within my Department, it needs to be specially compiled in the form requested. I shall write to my hon. Friend shortly.

National Tree Week

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about events and activities sponsored by his Department relating to National Tree Week from 29 November to 7 December.

Mr. Waldegrave: One major event was the planting of the first trees following the Department's initiative on forestry in the Black Country. Other activities were organised by local authorities and various voluntary bodies with the Tree Council, which is supported by my Department.

Planning Appeals

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will give guidance to local planning authorities aimed at speeding up the planning appeals process.

Mr. Waldegrave: Our policy is to speed up the planning appeals process and make it more efficient, without any loss of quality of decision. We can achieve this by cutting out unnecessary delay, by encouraging better communication between planners and the public, and by setting and achieving targets for handling times.

In a circular to local authorities published today we have set out guidelines for the handling of the 85 per cent. of appeals decided on the basis of written representations and a site visit. It includes a revised timetable for the handling of these appeals and as a further measure we intend to publish shortly a consultation paper on proposals for regulations to help speed up written representations appeals. To facilitate earlier decisions the regulations would in particular enable time limits to be prescribed for the various stages of the procedures. In this way we can reduce the period of uncertainty for all who may be affected by an appeal decision.

Today's circular also sets out to revise procedures under which the planning inspectorate will fix earlier inquiry dates for those appeals where a public local inquiry or hearing is to take place.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave on 3 December 1986 to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould).

Further changes to statistical information published by my Department will be documented as they arise.

ENERGY

Severn Barrage

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will publish details of the research programme into the proposed Severn barrage; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will outline the proposed consultation procedures with conservation and other interests while the research into the proposed Severn barrage proceeds;

(3) if he will make it his policy that the study team on the Severn barrage will, in connection with the construction of a lock or locks for shipping, consult with port authorities, existing port users, major industries already established in the region and potential users of the Severn estuary on an international basis;

(4) if he will place in the Library a list of the interested parties with whom it is intended that consultation should take place on the lock or locks necessary for ships in the proposed Severn barrage.

Mr. David Hunt: Discussions with the Central Electricity Generating Board and the Severn tidal power group on the work programme and consultation arrangements for the Severn estuary studies are expected to be completed shortly. It is intended that the work programme should be widely circulated for comment initially and that there should be ongoing consultation with all interested parties. I shall place copies of the work programme and the proposed arrangements for consultation in the Libraries of both Houses as soon as they are available.

Nuclear Accident

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will instruct the local authorities within Durham, Cleveland, Tyne and Wear, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Greater London, East Sussex, Dorset, Somerset, Avon, Gloucestershire, Gwent, South Glamorgan, Gwynedd, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Lancaster, and Cumbria to prepare detailed emergency evacuation plans to deal with a maximum credible accident under adverse meteorological conditions at their nearest nuclear power stations; and whether he will issue the same instruction to all local authorities in major population centres within a 50 mile radius of a nuclear plant.

Mr. Goodlad: No. The precautions taken in the design and construction of nuclear installations, and the very high safety standards applied in operating them make it highly unlikely that accidents could occur which might affect the public. But however remote the risks, all operators of nuclear installations are required to prepare emergency plans for dealing with an accidental release of radioactivity. These plans cover both the emergency procedures at the site and the off-site arrangements to protect the public, including monitoring out to about 20 miles and evacuation up to 1·5 miles. Local authorities, the police and emergency services are closely involved in the preparation of these plans, and they are tested regularly in exercises which are monitored by the nuclear installations inspectorate. In the extremely improbable event of proving necessary, evacuation and other measures would be extended to a wider area around the site.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what assessment he has made of the extent to which the movement of radiation plumes following a major nuclear accident would be predictable with sufficient accuracy for decisions to be made on which areas should be evacuated;

(2) what studies have been undertaken by his Department on the movement of radiation plumes.

Mr. Goodlad: No such studies have been undertaken by my Department. Experimental work on the movement of radiation plumes is carried out by a number of institutions and organisations, including the CEGB. Work on modelling such movements is co-ordinated by the National Radiological Protection Board.

The results of this research are taken into account by the operators in formulating their site emergency plans, and by HMNII in its assessments of those plans.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will list all studies commissioned or undertaken by his Department on emergency plans for nuclear installations within the last five years; and if he will place copies of all such studies in the Library.

Mr. Goodlad: Emergency plans are subject to continuous review. Papers connected with such reviews are confidential.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) whether the capacity to extend the emergency plan detailed in "Emergency Plans for Civil Nuclear Installations" has ever been tested by a full-scale exercise at any of the nuclear installations at Dounreay, Hunterston, Chapelcross, Windscale, Wylfa, Trawsfynydd, Oldbury, Berkeley, Hinkley Point, Winfrith, Dungeness, Bradwell, Sizewell, Torness or Hartlepool;

(2) whether he will list the dates on which the emergency plans have been exercised for the nuclear installations at Dounreay, Hunterston, Chapelcross, Windscale, Wylfa, Trawsfynydd, Oldbury, Berkeley, Hinkley Point, Winfrith, Dungeness, Bradwell, Sizewell, Torness or Hartlepool; and, in each exercise, whether all aspects of the plan were exercised;

(3) what assessment his Department has made of the validity of assessments of the worth of nuclear power station emergency plans in the absence of full scale exercises.

Mr. Goodlad: Each year site emergency plans must be exercised as realistically as possible to the satisfaction of the nuclear installations inspectorate. These plans are drawn up in consultation with local authorities and the

emergency organisations responsible for public protection, who have their own contingency plans and participate in exercises. The dates of the most recent exercises are:

Nuclear installation	*Date of exercise*
Wylfa	26 November 1986
Trawsfynydd	17 September 1986
Oldbury	9 July 1986
Berkeley	1 October 1986
Hinkley Point	11 December 1985
Dungeness A	4 June 1986
Dungeness B	20 May 1986
Bradwell	18 June 1986
Sizewell A	27 August 1986
Hartlepool	19 March 1986
Chapelcross	19 February 1986
Sellafield	4 November 1986
Hunterston	20 November 1986
Torness	19 September 1986
Dounreay	9 June 1986
Winfrith	16 March 1986

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether any assessment has been made by his Department since 1979 of the implications for the United Kingdom of the maximum credible accident at the Superphenix fast reactor at Malville.

Mr. Goodlad: I am advised by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate that the containment at the Malville Superphenix fast reactor is designed to withstand the effects of at least a design-based accident.

The maximum radioactive release levels offsite associated with a design-based accident would be below emergency action reference levels, and would therefore have no implications for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what studies have been commissioned or undertaken by his Department or the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate into accident sequences at nuclear power stations involving external impacts or missiles, and terrorist explosions; and whether he will make a statement;

(2) what information is available to him on the safety assessment of Magnox nuclear power reactors in relation to external impacts, missiles or terrorist explosions in the vicinity of fuel cooling ponds; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: The nuclear installations inspectorate or, in the case of the UKAEA, its safety and reliability directorate, requires a detailed safety analysis to be carried out for all nuclear power stations as a prerequisite to the issue of a nuclear site licence. The risk of gas cloud explosions and crashing aircraft are assessed during the design of new reactors and during the safety reviews of old ones.

The assessment of external impacts and missiles in the vicinity of fuel cooling ponds of Magnox nuclear power stations are included as part of the investigations referred to above.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment he has made of the ability of the containment of United Kingdom nuclear reactors to withstand all foreseeable internal accident conditions.

Mr. Goodlad: Reactor containments have to meet HMNII safety assessment principles, which are designed to ensure that releases to the environment are limited to internationally agreed levels for all foreseeable internal accident conditions.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment his Department has made of the extent to which all possible accident sequences in nuclear reactors can be predicted, the extent to which full theoretical analysis of these conditions can be carried out, and the extent to which such theoretical analysis can be experimentally verified.

Mr. Goodlad: Sequences which embrace the full range of possible accidents can be predicted. The analysis of these sequences is based on computer models that use well established theoretical principles, and are verified by experimental testing and reactor commissioning tests.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy what steps are taken to ensure that all possibilities of system failure, human error and mismanagement of United Kingdom atomic reactors are anticipated and taken into account.

Mr. Goodlad: A prime aim in United Kingdom design is to make the plant tolerant to system failures and human errors by either inherent features or automatic safeguards. Systematic studies are carried out to ensure that the consequential effects of such failures are acceptable. The site licence contains mandatory operating rules and written procedures the application of which by licensees is supervised by HMNII, which can require changes in operating practices at any time, and can if necessary revoke operating licences.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his Department's latest assessment of the possibility of a Chernobyl-scale accident occurring in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Goodlad: The Chernobyl accident occurred because of a combination of design weaknesses in the reactor system, as the Russians themselves have acknowledged, and deliberate failures by staff to observe prescribed safety procedures. The reactor was of a completely different design to any operating in, or proposed for the United Kingdom, and would not have been licensed here.

The United Kingdom has a rigorous system of nuclear safety licensing which is administered by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate. The highest standards of safety are used in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of all our nuclear plants, and give confidence that a similar accident could not happen in the United Kingdom.

Fast Reactors

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will list, for each year since 1973, the sums paid by the Central Electricity Generating Board for research, design and demonstration of fast reactors to each of the National Nuclear Corporation, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and Schnellbriter-Kemkraftwerks gmbH.

Mr. Goodlad: I shall ask the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to write to the hon. Member.

Aircraft Flight Restrictions (Violations)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what equipment is installed at civil nuclear installations to

detect any violations of aircraft flight restrictions that apply to such installations; and if he will make a statement:

(2) how many representations his Department has received about incidents in the past 10 years concerning violation of aircraft flight restrictions in the vicinity of nuclear power facilities.

Mr. Goodlad: There is no installed equipment at United Kingdom nuclear installations to detect any violations of aircraft flight restrictions that apply to such installations. Reports of visual sightings are made direct to the Civil Aviation Authority or the Ministry of Defence, as appropriate. The number of such instances is small, and it would be possible to extract details from archive records only at disproportionate cost.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Patchett asked the Secretary of State for Energy what was the annual expenditure on research and development in renewable sources of energy in each year since 1970.

Mr. David Hunt: Expenditure by my Department on research, development and demonstration in renewable sources of energy since the programme's inception in 1974 to 1985-86 is given in the table below:

	£ million
1975-76	0·5
1976-77	1·0
1977-78	2·5
1978-79	3·6
1979-80	8·9
1980-81	12·3
1981-82	19·2
1982-83	17·9
1983-84	13·7
1984-85	18·2
1985-86	15·3

Notes:

1. Where available figures include expenditure on waste as a fuel and passive solar under the energy efficiency demonstration scheme, contributions from external contractors and the European Commission.

2. Information on spend by contractors is estimated from the contractual link with departmental spend in many cases and thus may not be exact. In particular it may be a few months out in its allocation and therefore spend from one year may have been moved to another year.

Nuclear Civil Research

Mr. Patchett asked the Secretary of State for Energy what was the expenditure on nuclear civil research in each year since 1970.

Mr. Goodlad: Since 1970-71 the Department of Energy — and its predecessors — has funded civil nuclear research through the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority by grant (up to 1983-84), grant-in-aid (1984-85 and 1985-86) and under programme letters (from 1986-87). The funding in each year is as follows:

	£ million (cash)
1986-87[1]	180·5
1985-86	189·6
1984-85	196·2
1983-84	203·8
1982-83	214·8
1981-82	205·4
1980-81	186·2
1979-80	145·5
1978-79	127·4
1977-78	100·1
1976-77	110·0
1975-76	93·4
1974-75	61·6
1973-74	47·5
1972-73	47·4
1971-72	45·0
1970-71	37·1

[1] Provision.

In addition the Department of the Environment funds civil nuclear research in the area of radioactive waste management. Its total funding since 1978-79, including provision of £11·5 million for 1986-87, is £73·9 million. Details of its funding prior to this period are not readily available.

Other organisations such as the electricity generating boards and BNFL also carry out or provide funding for civil nuclear research. Details of their expenditure are not held centrally.

Coal Industry (Investment)

Mr. Patchett asked the Secretary of State for Energy what was the annual investment in the coal industry in each year since 1970.

Mr. David Hunt: Investment in the coal industry since 1970 was as follows:

	£ million
1970-71	73
1971-72	[1]79
1972-73	89
1973-74	[1]79
1974-75	145
1975-76	217
1976-77	279
1977-78	350
1978-79	481
1979-80	661
1980-81	807
1981-82	812
1982-83	842
1983-84	702
1984-85	[1]371
1985-86	660

Source: NCB Report and Accounts.

[1] Years in which significant industrial action took place.

Energy Preservation

Mr. Patchett asked the Secretary of State for Energy what was the annual expenditure on energy preservation in each year since 1970.

Mr. David Hunt: Such statistics do not exist. However, expenditure by my Department, since its creation in 1974, on promoting energy efficiency is given in the table below:

	£ million
1975-76	0·5
1976-77	1·0
1977-78	2·5
1978-79	1·0

	£ million
1979-80	4·0
1980-81	6·6
1981-82	8·3
1982-83	9·6
1983-84	11·8
1984-85	17·5
1985-86	22·5

Note

1. Prior to 1978-79 the energy efficiency programme formed part of the renewable energy sources programme. Separate figures for energy efficiency are not available.

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of today to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould). As in the past the necessary information about future changes will be given when they are implemented.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Energy further to his answer of 27 November, *Official Report*, column *301*, what theatre groups were involved in public relations activities on behalf of his Department; when and where.

Mr. Peter Walker: Five theatre groups have been sponsored by my Department since 1979. During Energy Efficiency Year the groups have played to 90,000 children. Their plays have been highly successful in motivating teachers and pupils to develop project work on energy and related topics. They have visited virtually every part of the United Kingdom.

Exploration Licences

Mr. Powley asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has made any licence awards following the invitation to existing exploration licensees announced in the House on 22 July.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I have today announced the conditional award of seven new-style exploration licences, for blocks in England and Scotland until now covered by the old style exploration licence. These new licences will enable operators to proceed to the drilling stage. However, the licences do not give an automatic right to drill any well. Precise plans for a well are subject to planning permission and to my consent, which will not be given unless the operator provides evidence that planning permission has been obtained.

Details of the awards made today have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Nuclear Fuel

Mr. Beith asked the Secretary of State for Energy what volume of spent fuel and what quantity of plutonium have been subjected to safeguards oversight by Euratom inspectors during reprocessing since March.

Mr. Goodlad [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 November 1986, c. *351-2*]: The volume of civil reprocessing work which has been subject to safeguards oversight by Euratom at Sellafield and Dounreay since March 1986 is broadly in line with the total of 707 tonnes of spent fuel, containing approximately 2 tonnes plutonium, reprocessed at both sites in the financial year 1985-86.

Statistics

Mr. Gould asked the Secretry of State for Energy if, in respect of the statistics kept and published by his Department, he will publish in the *Official Report* any changes since 1979 in *(a)* the statistical series which are published, including those which have been introduced and those which have been dropped, *(b)* the basis on which any elements in the statistics are estimated, calculated or presented, *(c)* the periods over which, and the dates on which the series are collected or published and *(d)* any other respects in the ways in which the statistics are collected, recorded, presented, evaluated or published; and if he will explain the reasons for any such changes.

Mr. Peter Walker [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 December 1986, c. *674*]: My Department publishes energy and fuel statistics in "Energy Trends" each month, in the "Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics" annually and in my annual report on the "Development of the Oil and Gas Resources of the United Kingdom"—the Brown Book. The most important changes to the published series since 1979 are set out below, but there have been many other small changes.

Fuel Prices

Introduction of a new industrial price series for electricity. Changes to the domestic electricity price series to cover different consumption levels. New price series introduced for petrol and DERV motor fuels. Industrial fuels price series revised on two occasions following changes to the survey panel.

Oil

New statistics and changes to existing statistics of North sea activity to reflect growth in North sea trade and operations. Detailed monthly statistics of oil stocks introduced.

Gas

Some statistics of town gas manufacture deleted. Revisions to gas production statistics. Introduction of stock change statistics following the use of the Rough gas field as a storage facility.

Electricity

Revisions to some annual electricity tables to simplify presentation and avoid duplication with other sources. Series for foreign trade in electricity re-introduced.

Solid Fuels

Reduction in the statistics for coal industry operations and finance. Coal stocks data deleted from annual publication to eliminate duplication with similar data published monthly. Analysis of external trade in coal by grade introduced.

Energy

Revisions of format of annual energy balances with addition of greater detail. Foreign trade in electricity introduced. Certain graphs presented as tables to save space.

Where necessary these changes were mentioned in the relevant publications at the time of the change. Changes in the basis of compilation, presentation and publication of statistical series are made in response to the Government's requirements for statistical information, changes in the statistics provided by the fuel industries and the administrative systems on which some series are based. Changes also result from the development of new

statistical techniques, revisions to systems of classifications and technological developments affecting the compilation and dissemination of statistical data.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Telephone Calls

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Lord Privy Seal, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby of 5 December, what information on telephone calls from hon. Members offices in the Palace of Westminster is logged.

Mr. Biffen: The logging equipment stores the date and time of each call made from a given extension on telephones connected to the Palace of Westminster telephone exchange. It also stores the number dialled, the duration of the call, and its cost. As I made clear in the reply to which the hon. Gentleman refers, there are no facilities for recording telephone conversations.

Details of international calls, which must be routed through the Palace of Westminster operators, are not covered by the logging equipment.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Lord Privy Seal, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 5 December, who has access to the logged information on telephone calls in the Palace of Westminster; and who gives access to it.

Mr. Biffen: Within the Staff of the Palace of Westminster, only the Communications Manager and her Deputy have access. In addition, the managing director and four senior staff of the firm which supplied the logging equipment have access for engineering reasons.

The Serjeant at Arms and his Deputy exercise very close control over the accessing of the information stored by the equipment.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Pensions

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those below pensionable age the estimated number of taxable incomes by range of income, distinguishing between single persons, married couples without wife's earned income and married couples with such income; and if he will provide an estimate of the amount which would be collected in each instance in the current financial year by way of national insurance contributions for employees and employers, respectively, if the upper limit to the employee's contribution were abolished;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* tables showing for those below pensionable age the estimated number of taxable incomes by range of income, distinguishing between single persons, married couples without wife's earned income and married couples with such income; and if he will provide an estimate of the amount which would be collected by way of national insurance contributions from employees if the rate of contribution were to be reduced as follows *(a)* single persons — 5 per cent. of earnings above £2,000, *(b)* married couples — 4 per cent. of earnings over £5,000, assuming *(c)* a transferable allowance in the case of two-earner households paying contributions and *(d)* the abolition of the upper earnings limit and the reduced rate for married women and widows.

Mr. Major: I have been asked to reply.

The information on incomes is as follows:

Estimated number of total earned incomes received by persons aged less than 65 by range of income: 1986-87 (Thousands)

Range of Total Earned Income (lower limit)	*Single Persons*	*Married Couples without Wife's Earned Income*	*Married Couples with Wife's Earned Income*
£3,000	768	89	58
£4,000	956	120	55
£5,000	985	186	65
£6,000	845	252	89
£7,000	775	232	123
£8,000	554	334	200
£9,000	531	391	273
£10,000	523	651	653
£12,000	327	616	1,105
£15,000	190	377	1,132
£20,000	88	234	830
Total	6,544	3,481	4,582

The Government Actuary's Department estimates that for 1986-87:

(1) £13·1 billion will be due from employers and £11·75 billion from employees for class 1 national insurance contributions taking account of the reduced rates for those in contracted out employment. If the upper earnings limit were abolished, an extra £0·8 billion would be due from employees, assuming that the contracted out rebate continued to apply only to earnings between the lower and present upper earnings limits. It is not possible to break down estimated contributions liability by the groups in the table.

(2) Assuming that the rates and other changes to employees' class 1 contributions were as described in the second of the hon. Member's questions, and contributions liability were assessed on annual rather than weekly or monthly earnings, the gross yield from employees' contributions would be £4·7 billion. It is not possible to estimate the effect of the contracted out rebate and this figure therefore compares with an estimated notional gross yield under the existing rates structure of £13·2 billion.

DEFENCE

Education (Research)

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the main area of interest of his Department's funded research in universities and institutes of higher education.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The defence research establishments commission work with universities and other institutes of higher education across the full range of their research programmes. The largest value of such agreements is currently in major field A which covers air vehicles, aerodynamics, structures and materials.

Nimrod

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to whether a replacement airframe would be required for the export of the Nimrod early warning system.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: This is really a question for the company but GEC Avionics Ltd. does see an export market for the Nimrod mission system avionics in alternative airframes. Together with the Lockheed Georgia Company it has announced plans to develop and market jointly an AEW version of the Lockheed C-130 aircraft using a variant of the Nimrod AEW MSA.

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the cost of developing a Nimrod system in an alternative airframe.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: None.

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the scope for enhancement with *(a)* the Nimrod system and *(b)* the E3A airborne warning and control system, to meet evolving requirements through the lifetime of the systems.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The potential for enhancement to meet evolving requirements is one of the factors we shall consider when reaching a decision on the outcome of the competition to meet the Royal Air Force's airborne early warning requirement.

Equipment (Exports)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those countries in respect of which Her Majesty's Government have refused applications for the selling of military, security or police equipment on account of the human rights record of the Government concerned.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It has been the practice of this and previous Governments not to disclose information concerning individual defence exports or their consideration.

1939-45 Medal

Mr. Holt asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to provide Dunkirk clasps to the 1939-45 medal for surviving veterans of that event; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: No. All significant operations and battles of the 1939-45 war were carefully considered by the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals in 1946. The importance of the Dunkirk operations was recognised by waiving for those involved the normal qualifying period for the 1939-45 star. It has remained the policy since 1946 that no further awards should be introduced in respect of service in the 1939-45 war.

United States Aircraft

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence what United States aircraft are located at Royal Air Force Woodbridge and Royal Air Force Bentwater; and whether such aircraft use training ranges located in the United Kingdom for firing guns or cannons, missiles or for dropping bombs.

Mr. Stanley: A-10 Thunderbolt mark II aircraft are based at both RAF Woodbridge and RAF Bentwater. HC-130 Hercules aircraft and HH-53 helicopters are also based at RAF Woodbridge. Only the A-10 uses ranges located in the United Kingdom for weapons training.

Mr. Strang asked the Secretary of State for Defence what information is available to him about violations of flight restrictions by United States aircraft in the vicinity of civil nuclear installations; and what arrangements exist to enforce the observance of such flight restrictions.

Mr. Freeman: The United States Air Force based in the United Kingdom is bound by the same strict low flying regulations as the Royal Air Force. These exist to eliminate any unnecessary activity and to control the flying that must take place. Military pilots are instructed to avoid civil nuclear installations although aircraft may still be seen in the general surrounding areas. The information available to me about breaches of the restrictions in the vicinity of civil nuclear installations is similar to that on breaches concerning any other part of the United Kingdom low-flying regulations.

We conduct covert surveys of low-flying aircraft activity taking place and disciplinary action may be taken when a serious breach of the regulations is established. I am always prepared to investigate specific incidents which suggest that low-flying regulations have been broken and if the hon. Member has such an incident in mind he is welcome to write to me about it.

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Stanley: Before 1980 information on the strength of the armed forces, defence budget expenditure and defence balance of payments was presented in annexes to the "Statement on the Defence Estimates". Additional information on accommodation, aircraft accidents, health, land holdings and qualifications was published in the "Annual Abstract of Statistics" by the Central Statistical Office.

In 1980 defence statistics were published for the first time in a separate volume (volume II) of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates" and the coverage was extended to include data on accommodation, aircraft accidents, civilian manpower, defence services, education, entertainment, equipment, fishery protection, health, HM

dockyards, hydrographic services, land holdings, Meteorological Office activities, royal ordnance factories, research and development, salaries and trade. The range of statistical information published has been broadly the same since 1980, but amendments to the detailed tables have been made, reflecting changes in the administrative systems on which the data are based, editorial decisions, and suggestions for improvements including those contained in the reports of the House of Commons Defence Committee.

The content of the quarterly tri-service manpower press release was changed in June 1979 to include outflow data and to provide a uniform coverage of all categories of service personnel, since when there has been little amendment.

No major changes in presentation are planned.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated total spending by his Department on press and public relations in the current year.

Mr. Freeman: It is estimated that total spending on MOD press and public relations in the current year will be in the region of £7·9 million. This figure includes estimated staffing costs together with likely expenditure on films, exhibitions, publications, equipment, and so on.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what will be the estimated spending by his department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year;

(2) what will be the estimated spending by each of the armed forces on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Freeman [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *226*]: The information for 1985-86 and 1986-87 (estimated) is as follows:

£ million

	TV/Film etc		*Radio*		*Newspapers*		*Promotional Literature*	
	85/86	*86/87*	*85/86*	*86/87*	*85/86*	*86/87*	*85/86*	*86/87*
Royal Navy/Royal Marines	0·044	0·005	Nil	Nil	1·460	1·420	0·030	0·030
Army	0·578	0·528	0·005	0·004	2·762	3·508	0·490	0·742
Royal Air Force	0·198	0·201	0·014	0·015	2·120	2·288	0·501	0·419
Others	—	—	—	0·004	0·480	0·696	0·011	0·027

With regard to total spending in the years from 1979-80 to 1984-85 (inclusive) I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers given to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 8 May 1984 at column *299-300* and on 28 January 1986 at column *450*.

Additionally, the following information is also available on amounts spent on promotional literature and radio:

£ million

	Armed Forces		*Others*
	Radio	*Promotional Literature*	*Promotional*[1] *Literature*
1979/80	0·040	0·128	0·009
1980/81	0·168	0·842	0·009
1981/82	00·42	1·027	0·010
1982/83	0·071	1·016	0·016
1983/84	0·072	1·880	0·024
1984/85	0·023	1·501	0·013

[1] No radio expenditure.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Services (Capital Allocation)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the capital allocation to the social services block for (i) London borough of Waltham Forest and (ii) all local authorities in each financial year since 1979-80; and if he will provide an additional list indicating the subsequent years' allocation at 1979-80 prices.

Mr. Newton: Information on personal social services capital expenditure allocations and actual net capital spending is set out in the table. Figures for 1979-80 and 1980-81 are not directly comparable with those for subsequent years because a different capital control system was adopted in 1981-82. The level of allocations nationally was reduced in 1985-86 to reflect the significant underspend of personal social services provision in previous years.

£ thousands

	London borough of Waltham Forest				*All English local authorities*			
	Allocations[1]		*Actual net spending*[1]		*Allocations*[1]	*Actual net spending*[1]		
	Cash	*1979-80 prices*	*Cash*	*1979-80 prices*	*Cash*	*1979-80 prices*	*Cash*	*1979-80 prices*
1979-80	463	463	491	491	46,369	46,369	57·284	57·284
1980-81	728	614	521	439	47,848	40,334	73·371	61·848
1981-82	572	439	699	536	88,644	68,014	70·488	54·083
1982-83	1,171	838	1,087	778	103,832	74,295	67·481	48·285
1983-84	849	581	792	542	109,156	74,749	72·993	49·985
1984-85	702	461	82	54	115,988	76,169	77·621	50·974
1985-86	516	320	1,021	633	69,992	43,361	[2]75·504	46·775
1986-87	345	208	not yet available		73,007	43,911	[3]86,000	51,726

[1] The actual net spending figures include personal social services urban programme capital expenditure. Allocations for this category of expenditure are issued by the Department of the Environment and are not included in the allocation figures shown above.
[2] Provisional.
[3] Estimated.

The figures do not fully reflect the funds available for capital expenditure on personal social services, which include the prescribed proportion of capital receipts. In addition local authorities are free to make use of capital allocations made in respect of other service blocks. The figures also exclude any contribution made by health authorities under the joint finance arrangements.

Private Patients

Mr. John Browne asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish for each health authority in England the number of cases and the average length of stay for each of private patients and National Health Service patients for each specialty covered by National Health Service statistical returns.

Mr. Newton: I shall let my hon. Friend have such information as can be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost as soon as possible.

Physiotherapists

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he has made of the demand for physiotherapists in the National Health Service in *(a)* 1990, *(b)* 1995, and *(c)* 2000; and if he will take steps to ensure that adequate training facilities will be available to meet that demand.

Mr. Newton: The demand for physiotherapists and the necessary training facilities are matters for health authorities to determine in the light of local circumstances. The manpower component of their strategic plans, which address the demand and training implications for physiotherapists up to the year 1994, are currently subject to discussion and refinement between regional and district health authorities. The strategies will of course be monitored through the planning and review process.

Speech Therapists

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make a statement on the level of provision of speech therapists;

(2) what plans he has to increase the number of practising speech therapists.

Mr. Newton: It is for individual health authorities to determine the level of provision of speech therapy in the light of local circumstances, their assessment of priorities and the available resources. The number of speech therapists employed by health authorities in England increased from 1,500 (wte) in 1979 to 2,340 (wte) in 1985.

Wte = Whole time equivalent.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, what plans he has to improve the quality of available data on which to base the planning of speech therapy services.

Mr. Newton: Improved information to assist health authorities plan their speech therapy services will be available after 1 April 1988 following the implementation of the recommendations of the Korner steering group on health services information. It will relate to patients treated by NHS speech therapists in all NHS premises, at schools and in patients' homes instead of the purely hospital based information provided at present. Details of the sex, age group and the source of referral (e.g. general practitioner, community nursing, social services or a "self-referral") of patients will also be available, together with the number of episodes of care completed in each year and their duration.

Communication Disorders

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the number of people who suffer from severe communication disorders and from moderate language handicap.

Mr. Newton: Information is not collected on the number of people in the population suffering from communication and language disorders and therefore it is not possible to make any reliable estimate of the numbers of sufferers.

Diet

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to examine the cost of healthy eating and its effect on low-income families.

Mrs. Currie: This matter is kept under continuous review. I am advised that at any point along the normal range of family expenditure on food it should not be difficult to devise a healthy diet. The effect on low income families should be to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

Doctors (Spouses)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department proposes to introduce a scheme, in conjunction with the General Medical Council, to extend the ancillary staff reimbursement scheme to spouses of general practitioners; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend, the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton), on 30 October at columns *237-38*.

Hypothermia

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many deaths have been recorded *(a)* nationally and *(b)* for the county of Cleveland, during each of the past five years where (i) hypothermia was given as the reason for death and (ii) hypothermia was noted as a contributory factor resulting in death for each of the following age-bands: 0 to 2 years, 3 to 5 years, 6 to 16 years, 17 to 64 years and 65 years and over.

Mrs. Currie: The table shows at *(a)* the number of deaths in England and Wales, and for usual residents of the county of Cleveland, where hypothermia was assigned as the underlying cause of death. At *(b)* is given, for the same areas and age-groups, the number of deaths with any mention of hypothermia on the death certificate, irrespective of whether it did or did not appear as the underlying cause of death.

Number of deaths (a) with hypothermia as underlying cause of death and (b) with any mention of hypothermia on death certificate, England and Wales, usual resident of County of Cleveland; persons by age-group 1981 to 85

	Age-group					
	0 to 2	*3 to 5*	*6 to 16*	*17 to 64*	*65+*	*Total*
(a) Underlying cause ICD (9)[1] 778.3 and 991.6						
1981						
England and Wales	2	2	—	48	224	276
Cleveland	—	—	—	1	1	2
1982						
England and Wales	2	—	1	65	258	326
Cleveland	—	—	—	2	2	4
1983						
England and Wales	2	—	—	40	179	221
Cleveland	—	—	—	—	—	—
1984						
England and Wales	2	1	3	45	215	266
Cleveland	—	—	—	—	2	2
1985						
England and Wales	3	—	—	63	374	440
Cleveland	—	—	—	1	2	3
(b) Any mention						
1981						
England and Wales	9	2	—	100	574	685
Cleveland	—	—	—	1	2	3
1982						
England and Wales	19	—	2	102	541	664
Cleveland	1	—	—	3	2	6
1983						
England and Wales	9	—	—	79	450	538
Cleveland	—	—	—	—	1	1
1984						
England and Wales	3	1	4	85	462	555
Cleveland	—	—	—	1	4	5
1985						
England and Wales	11	—	4	103	709	827
Cleveland	1	—	—	1	5	7

[1] International Classification of Diseases 9th revision.

Elderly People

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to issue further guidance to local authorities about the recommendations contained in the document enitled "Staying at Home — Helping Elderly People"; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We and the Department of the Environment (DOE) held a series of meetings, and a

seminar in March of this year, with health, social services and housing authorities and voluntary bodies to discuss how the recommendations could be taken forward by them. Further joint guidance to local authorities is now under consideration with DOE.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his latest estimate of the cost of implementing each of the recommendations contained in the document "Staying at Home — Helping Elderly People".

Mrs. Currie: The recommendations set out broad principles for the planning of schemes to provide community support for elderly people rather than suggesting that services should be developed in a particular way. The report suggests that community care with innovatory schemes and a package of other support services costs less to public funds in all cases than hospital care and in nearly every case less than residential care or sheltered housing.

Benefits

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures for the estimated take-up of supplementary benefit derived from the 1984 family expenditure survey on the same basis as his reply of 30 November 1983 to the hon. Member for Mitcham and Morden (Mrs. Rumbold), *Official Report*, columns *532-34*.

Mr. Lyell: Estimates of take-up of supplementary benefit based on the family expenditure survey are produced biennially. The latest available figures are for 1983. For those I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) on 30 October at columns *231-34*.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims for sickness benefit were submitted in each quarter since 1979.

Mr. Lyell: The information is available for broad quarters — 12 to 16 weeks — only. Numbers include claims for invalidity benefit and, up to April 1983, for non-contributory invalidity pensions. Numbers are affected by self certification for the first week of sickness, introduced in June 1982, and statutory sick pay which was introduced in April 1983 for periods of up to eight weeks, extended to 28 weeks in April 1986.

Year	*First quarter*	*Second quarter*	*Third quarter*	*Fourth quarter*
1979	2,160,620[1]	2,738,139[2]	2,106,298[2]	3,086,454[3]
1980	2,402,766[2]	2,368,149[2]	1,975,074[2]	2,613,817[3]
1981	1,939,192[2]	1,873,705[2]	1,514,038[2]	2,297,542[3]
1982	1,937,728[2]	1,926,029[2]	1,347,311[2]	1,824,185[3]
1983	1,581,272[2]	1,443,071[4]	300,280[2]	344,326[2]
1984	490,434[3]	294,610[2]	289,854[2]	338,463[2]
1985	483,606[3]	315,542[2]	302,953[2]	344,024[2]
1986	479,895[3]	222,055[2]	203,572[2]	—

[1] 10 week period only (December 1978 data not available).
[2] 12 week quarter.
[3] 16 week quarter.
[4] 20 week period (to bring in change to counting period).

Orthopaedic X-rays

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidance he gives to health authorities in England and Wales on the advisability of retaining orthopaedic X-rays for future reference.

Mrs. Currie: X-rays are regarded as part of the personal health records held by National Health Service hospitals. Health authorities were advised in 1980 that personal health records should be retained for at least a minimum of eight years after the conclusion of treatment.

Guidance to health authorities is contained in DHSS Circular HC(80)7 and Welsh Office Circular WBC(80)9. Copies of both circulars are available in the Library.

Abortions

Mr. Merchant asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last issued guidance to the Northern regional health authority concerning the implementation of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act of 1929 in regard to late abortions; and what was that guidance.

Mr. John Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last issued guidance to the North West Thames regional health authority concerning the implementation of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act of 1929 in regard to late abortions; and what was that guidance.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last issued guidance to the North-East Thames regional health authority concerning the implementation of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act of 1929 in regard to late abortions; and what was that guidance.

Mr. Benyon asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last issued guidance to the Oxford regional health authority concerning the implementation of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act of 1929 in regard to late abortions; and what that guidance was.

Mr. Newton: Specific guidance about the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 has not been issued to health authorities. However, encouraged by the Department, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists established a working party which recommended in its 1985 report, "Fetal Viability and Clinical Practice" that the reference to 28 weeks gestation in the 1929 Act was now out of date in view of advances in medical techniques. In the light of this recommendation the report was sent in October 1985 to all regional health authorities and drawn to the attention of regional medical officers.

Mr. Grylls asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information health authorities are required to provide to his Department about its role in the implementation and enforcement of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act of 1929 in regard to late abortions.

Mr. Newton: The Department does not require health authorities to provide information of the kind specified in the question. Abortions are monitored through scrutiny of the abortion notification forms which the individual doctor performing an abortion is required under the abortion regulations to submit to the chief medical officer. Any notification giving a gestation period which suggested that an offence under the Infant Life (Preservation) Act might have occurred would be followed up.

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Fowler: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Disabled People

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what further representations his Department has received from the chairman of the Social Services Committee of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities about implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986; what reply he is sending; what action he is taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I received a letter dated 24 November from the chairman of the social services committee of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities asking for an early meeting to discuss the implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986. I have replied today agreeing that such a meeting would be useful when officials from the Department have met officials from the local authority associations to clarify some outstanding issues on the costing of the various provisions of the Act, and indicating that I would be asking my office to make the necessary arrangements.

Benefits (Costs)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much of the additional £1·7 billion allocated to social security expenditure for 1987-88 in autumn statement was in respect of the estimated cost of *(a)* real increases in benefit rates, *(b)* increase in number of retirement pensioners, *(c)* increase in number of unemployed people claiming benefit, *(d)* increase in number of people claiming because of long term sickness disability, *(e)* increase in the number of single parents claiming benefit, *(f)* increased cost of administering a larger number of claims specifying how much is due to the expected increase in the number of staff, *(g)* increased cost of implementing the Social Security Act specifying how much is in respect of (i) replacement staff to enable permanent staff to be trained in the changes and (ii) extra staff costs in respect of conversion to income support and *(h)* other factors.

Mr. Major: A detailed explanation of the changes to the programme will be published in the 1987 Public Expenditure White Paper in the normal way.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give region by region the hospital out-patient waiting list for each district at 31 March and 30 September in 1978 and each succeeding year.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry that I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks. Information on numbers awaiting out-patient appointments is not held centrally.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will set out region by region district health authority in-patient waiting lists, the total populations living in each district, the percentage which the former represents of the latter and their national ranking by that percentage;

(2) if he will set out region by region the hospital urgent in-patient waiting list in each health district, together with the number of urgent cases waiting more than a month, the percentage the latter represents of the former and their national ranking in England by that percentage;

(3) if he will set out region by region the hospital non-urgent in-patient waiting list in each health district, together with the numbers of non-urgent cases waiting more than a year, the percentage the latter represents of the former and their national ranking in England by that percentage;

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will place in the Library the replies he received from health authorities to his request for information on their proposals to reduce hospital in-patient waiting lists.

Mr. Newton: No. These were working documents which now require further development as a result of the increased resources which the Government are making available. Announcements on further action to reduce waiting lists will be made as soon as possible.

Hospital Specialties

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the Government's policy on the hospital specialties which should be provided by each health district.

Mr. Newton: The Government's policy is that all patients should have access to the services they need; and that services should be provided in the most effective way, bearing in mind that for the more highly specialised services some degree of centralisation may be needed to maintain levels of clinical expertise or to make efficient use of costly equipment. The majority specialties, such as general medicine, general surgery, paediatrics, geriatrics, and mental illness, would be expected to be provided in every health district.

At the opposite extreme, some services, such as heart and liver transplantation have been designated as supra-regional services and will be provided only in a small number of national centres. In between it is for regional and district health authorities to determine the best way to provide services in the light of the general principles set out above and of local geographical factors.

Drug Addicts

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the Government's estimated number of heroin addicts using National Health Service drug rehabilitation centres in each year since 1979 and the number who have ceased to be addicts.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many in-patient beds for heroin addicts are available in the National Health Service region by region.

Mrs. Currie: In-patient beds are not set aside for the treatment of heroin addicts and most people admitted for drug misuse are treated in general psychiatric wards. The table contains the latest information on the number of beds available in special in-patient units exclusively for the treatment of drug misusers.

Beds available in special in-patient units for drug misuse at 31 December 1985: Mental Illness hospitals and units in England

Region	*Beds available*
South East Thames	48
Wessex	1
Oxford	11
North Western	6
Special Health Authority	21
TOTAL	87

Midwives

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many midwives are currently employed in each district health authority area; and how far short this is of full establishment in each area.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Nurses

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many nurses have been employed directly by the National Health Service; and how many have been hired as agency nurses, in each year since 1979.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is given in the table:

National Health Service nursing and midwifery staff: 30 September England

	Whole-time equivalents[1]	
	Nursing and midwifery (including Agency)	*Agency staff*
1979	358,450	4,030
1980	370,080	4,220
1981	391,770	3,760
1982	397,080	3,040
1983	397,120	2,440
1984	397,490	3,750
1985	401,150	4,120

Source: DHSS annual census of non-medical manpower.
[1] All figures are independently rounded to the nearest 10 whole-time equivalents. No adjustment has been made for the reduction in the working week introduced during 1980.

X-ray Mammography

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many health authorities have the radiographic resources to provide X-ray mammography for 100 per cent., 50 per cent., and 25 per cent, respectively of women over 50-years-old and over 30-years-old, respectively;

(2) how many health authorities currently provide any X-ray mammography for all women aged over 50 years, and all women aged over 30 years respectively.

Mrs. Currie: There is at present no national programme for screening symptomless women by mammography, so information on the useage of mammographic machines is not collected centrally. Most existing machines are used in the diagnosis of women of all ages with breast symptoms. In January 1986 117 health authorities had such machines.

Embryo Research

Mr. Galley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a consultation document on the issues on which the Warnock committee considered legislation was necessary or desirable.

Mr. Newton: The Government have published today a consultation document "Legislation on Human Infertility Services and Embryo Research" (Cmnd. 46) which is being sent to interested bodies for comment. The views of individuals and other organisations will also be welcome —particularly on the issues highlighted in the document which have not, so far, been much debated in public. The comments and views received will assist the preparation of legislation for introduction in the next Parliament. I hope that those who are interested in these important and sensitive issues will make full use of this opportunity to let us have their views. Comments should reach us by 30 June next year.

Health Authorities (Staff)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many non-medical staff are employed by each regional health authority and each health district.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 25 November 1986, c. *213*]: Tables giving the information requested have been placed in the Library. The figures shown are the latest available to this level of detail and relate to 30 September 1985.

AIDS

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he is satisfied that all blood supplies used for transfusion purposes are free from the acquired immune deficiency syndrome virus; whether some acquired immune deficiency syndrome viruses are not detectable in blood supplies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 November 1986, c. *405*]: The virus known to cause AIDS is HIV but there have been recent reports suggesting that the disease may also arise from other strains of virus.

The safety of the blood supply in the United Kingdom is maintained in two ways. The first is that those who may have been exposed to known particular risks of infection are asked not to donate blood. This covers those who may have been exposed to HIV or other viruses linked to AIDS. The second is that all donations are tested.

No cases of HIV transmission through blood transfusion have been reported since testing was introduced. Although there is as yet no corresponding test for new strains, there is no evidence from preliminary monitoring to suggest that these are prevalent in the

United Kingdom. Thus there is no reason to believe that blood supplies are at risk from this source although we are keeping the matter under close review.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

Mr. Amess asked the Paymaster General how many people are *(a)* employed and *(b)* unemployed in Basildon.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the Basildon parliamentary constituency was 6,159.

Employment statistics for local areas are not available except for dates when censuses of employment are taken. The latest available figures are from the 1981 census of employment when there were 39,000 employees employed in the constituency. More up-to-date employment estimates, relating to September 1984, will become available early in the new year. Between censuses, employment estimates are based on small scale sample inquiries which cannot produce reliable results for areas smaller than the standard economic regions.

Mr. Amess asked the Paymaster General how many jobs have been *(a)* created and *(b)* lost in Basildon for each year of the past three years.

Mr. Lee: I regret that the information requested is not available. Net changes in the numbers of jobs may be calculated by comparing employment figures at different dates, but these are not available for areas smaller than regions except from censuses of employment. The latest available figures are from the September 1981 census of employment. More up-to-date employment estimates, relating to September 1984, will become available early in the new year.

Mr. Dubs asked the Paymaster General what is the latest figure for the number of unemployed in Inner London.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986 the number of unemployed claimants in the boroughs[1] that make up Inner London was 201,161.

[1] Camden, City of London, City of Westminster, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth.

Strikes

Mr. Lawler asked the Paymaster General if he will give a breakdown of the number of strikes and days lost by region for each year since 1979, indicating separately those attributable to the miners' dispute.

Mr. Lee: The information requested for all industries and services is given in tables 1 and 2 below.

The miners' dispute over pit closures which began in March 1984 and ended in March 1985 is counted as one stoppage in the total for the United Kingdom and as one in each of the regions in which it occurred.

The distribution of working days lost through the dispute by region is given in table 3.

In 1984 the dispute accounted for 82 per cent. of the total 27·1 million days lost and in 1985 for 63 per cent. of the total of 6·3 million days lost.

Table 1
Working Days Lost Through Industrial Disputes

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
				Thousand			
All industries and services							
South East	4,487	439	843	1,220	962	1,522	492
East Anglia	548	58	80	109	57	87	43
South West	2,423	117	171	170	88	393	87
West Midlands	4,199	838	613	471	289	1,368	275
East Midlands	2,351	725	116	319	196	2,908	475
Yorkshire and Humberside	3,115	2,832	449	575	415	9,354	2,076
North West	4,516	533	692	989	765	1,381	403
North	2,164	2,006	341	447	241	4,211	890
Wales	1,642	2,918	292	283	353	3,527	940
Scotland	3,298	1,447	599	634	308	2,333	681
Northern Ireland	730	49	69	97	79	52	40
United Kingdom	29,474	11,964	4,266	5,313	3,754	27,135	6,402

Table 2
Stoppages of Work Due to Industrial Disputes

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
			Stoppages in progress in year				
All industries and services							
South East	306	179	183	224	202	247	173
East Anglia	45	34	26	19	17	28	25
South West	125	68	48	39	34	45	33
West Midlands	270	127	101	137	120	158	94
East Midlands	111	67	95	96	95	68	75
Yorkshire and Humberside	340	283	291	359	325	171	171
North West	301	141	177	223	164	161	122
North	159	107	121	119	99	80	97

	Stoppages in progress in year					
	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Wales	191	116	127	107	108	89	86
Scotland	266	197	160	201	164	168	112
Northern Ireland	62	44	32	33	42	41	42
United Kingdom[1]	2,125	1,348	1,344	1,538	1,364	1,221	903

[1] The number of stoppages by region may not sum to the total for the United Kingdom as some disputes which affect more than one region have been counted once only in the United Kingdom total.

Table 3
Working days lost through miners' dispute[1]

	Working days lost thousand March 1984 to March 1985
South East	494
East Anglia	—
South West	—
West Midlands	856
East Midlands	3,109
Yorkshire and Humberside	10,461
North West	591
North	4,592
Wales	4,112
Scotland	2,174
Northern Ireland	—
United Kingdom	26,391

[1] Includes days lost through supporting action by workers in industries other than coal extraction.

Overseas Nationals

Mr. Fallon asked the Paymaster General whether he will estimate the number of *(a)* European Economic Community nationals and *(b)* foreign nationals working in London and the south-east.

Mr. Lee: Estimates from the 1985 labour force survey of the number of European Community and other foreign nationals in employment, resident in Greater London and the south-east region are as shown in the following table:

European Community[1] *and other foreign nationals in employment*
Thousands: Spring 1985

Area of residence	European Community[2] nationals	Other foreign nationals[3]
South-East region[4]	223	379
Greater London	135	243

[1] European Community 12, including Spain and Portugal.
[2] Excluding United Kingdom nationals.
[3] Including British Overseas and Dependent Territories Citizens.
[4] Including Greater London.

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Paymaster General if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Changes in the presentation and publication of statistical series produced by the Department of Employment have always been made from time to time, before and after 1979. These are in response to the requirements of Government and other users of statistical information, changes to the administrative system on which some series are based and the development of new statistical techniques. When such changes are made they are fully documented, usually in the *Employment Gazette*.

The main changes since 1979 are as follows. They have been grouped by subject matter: minor amendments to *Employment Gazette* tables and notes have been omitted. The overall effect of these changes has been to increase the amount and extend the range of statistical information given by my Department.

Price Indices

There have been no changes in the presentation of information on the general index of retail prices and price indices for pensioner households since 1979. Following recommendations of the retail prices index advisory committee presented to the House in July 1986 (Cmnd. 9848) some technical changes will be made early next year. The reference base of the index will be changed to January 1987 and there will be some changes in the way the details of index are structured and presented.

The publication of indices of movements in additional costs for people working in inner and outer London was discontinued in 1982.

Employment

In April 1981 part-time female employees were separately identified in the quarterly estimates by industry.

A service industry total—both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted was introduced in September 1982.

In June 1983 the Department introduced an additional "supplementary" series of employment estimates, for very broad industry aggregates at national level only, which included an adjustment intended to compensate for the persistent undercounting which had been observed in the employment estimates. In July 1984, after data from the labour force survey had confirmed that the "supplementary" estimates were more accurate, the adjustments for under-counting were spread across industries and regions, and the Department ceased publishing estimates which did not include the adjustment. Employment estimates classified by the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification (replacing the 1968 classification) were first published in December 1983. Labour turnover figures were converted to the new industrial classification in February 1984 and the number of industries for which these estimates were available was reduced from 78 to 21. We will re-examine the industrial detail published regularly in *Employment Gazette* in the light of the results of the Census of Employment for 1984.

Unemployment

Following the introduction of the computerised count of unemployment benefit claimants in 1982, a greater amount of information flows on and off the count has become available and been published regularly in the *Employment Gazette*. In September 1984, ward based figures for unemployed benefit claimants were introduced. This change enabled accurate figures to be produced for local authority districts, counties and parliamentary constituencies, as well as the revised travel-to-work areas. The former figures for jobcentre areas were discontinued.

In July 1985, a consistent series of seasonally adjusted adult unemployment according to the current coverage was first introduced, allowing for previous discontinuities in the claimant count.

In July 1986, new regional and national unemployment rates were introduced showing the numbers as a percentage of the whole working population including the self-employed and HM Forces. The previous narrower based rates, however, continue to be available for the purpose of comparison with rates for travel to work areas for which data on self-employment are not available.

Vacancies

In October 1985 some revisions were made to the series of vacancies reported to jobcentres to bring the figures into line with those used by MSC for operational purposes. In addition, community programme vacancies were shown separately and excluded from the seasonally adjusted series.

Tourism

In March 1980 the quarterly inquiry on catering turnover was discontinued.

In April 1980 a new monthly series was indtroduced on visits to/from the United Kingdom by foreign and United Kingdom residents respectively, based on the international passenger survey. This replaced the discontinued quarterly series of "foreign arrivals in the United Kingdom" derived from Home Office information.

In November 1984 a quarterly series of 'employment in tourism — related industries' was introduced. This was originally included in *British Business* but was transferred to the *Employment Gazette* in 1986.

Earning

Seasonal adjustment of the average ernings index (new series) was introduced in Juoy 1980 and separate series for manufacturing and production were first published in October 1980, with the old series average earnings index being discontinued in February 1981.

The index of underlying increases in average earnings was introduced in April 1981. The base date of the indices was changed to January 1980 = 100 in October 1983 at which time the industry classification was revised from SIC (1968) to SIC (1980). A service industries index was introduced in September 1986.

As a result of a Rayner review a number of regular surveys on earnings were discontinued frm 1980. These included all but one of the April surveys on manual employees, in May 1980. Together with the January occupation survey. The October non-manual surveys and the June occupation surveys were discontinued in April 1981. The one remaining April survey, on aerospace employees, was discontinued in May 1986.

From October 1980 the results of the October manual survey was changed from an age-related basis to employees on adult rates and the industry classification of this survey was changed from SIC (1968) to SIC (1980) in October 1984.

General and publications

In October 1980, the layout of the *Employment Gazette* was improved, with the introduction of the "yellow pages" section on labour market data.

January 1983. The publication, "Time Rates of Wages and Hours of Work" was changed from an annual bound volume to a loose-leaf publication updated on a monthly basis. The associated leaflet, "Changes in Rates of Wages and Hours of Work" was discontinued.

In February 1984 the average earnings index notice was expanded to include employment, hours and unit wage costs. The basic wage rates series was discontinued at this time.

In April 1986, a new combined press notice containing all the latest labour market data was introduced. This was made possible without undue delay to the statistics, as a result of the change in timing of the compilation of the unemployment figures.

Facilities for analysing labour market data including local employment, unemployment and vacancy figures have been enhanced, using a new computerised data base, which has been available to hon. Members since 1984.

Greater Springburn Enterprises Ltd.

Mr. Martin asked the Paymaster General what public funds have been made available from the Manpower Services Commission to Greater Springburn Enterprises Ltd. in each of the past two years; what Manpower Services Commission schemes it has been involved in; and how many people have taken part in the schemes.

Mr. Lee: Since November 1985 Greater Springburn Enterprises Ltd. has sponsored four projects under the community programe. The projects, two of which are still current, are part of the community programme agency run by the Glasgow council for voluntary service. Details of the projects including their estimated cost are:

CP project	*Year*	*Numbers involved*	*Estimated cost* £
Home visiting	November 1985-November 1986	1 supervisor; 12 participants	55,500
Home visiting	November 1986-November 1987	2 supervisors; 26 participants	118,500
Gardening	June 1986-28 November 1986	1 supervisor; 17 participants	34,000
Local history	June 1986-29 May 1987	11 participants	43,000

The community programme is the only scheme administered by the Manpower Services Commission in which Greater Springburn Enterprises Ltd. has been involved.

Training Schemes (Income)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Paymaster General, pursuant to his reply of 28 November, *Official Report*, column *390*, whether providers of practical work experience will make payment to job training scheme managing agencies for the work done and any consequent income generated by trainees; and whether he can give any indication of the likely level of such payments.

Mr. Trippier: Job training scheme managing agents will expect providers of practical experience to pay a fee which will be used to help meet the costs of the training provided. There is no set rate for the fee which will be negotiated between the parties concerned.

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Paymaster General whether, pursuant to his reply of 28 November, *Official Report*, column *390*, he will make it his policy that participation in the job training scheme after pilot stage will continue to be voluntary and that benefit sanctions will not apply to persons who do not accept offers or who leave courses prematurely.

Mr. Trippier: I cannot anticipate whether the job training scheme pilots will be extended, or the terms on which that extension would take place.

Skillcentres

Ms. Richardson asked the Paymaster General what steps the Government are taking to encourage manual and technical skills training courses for women in skillcentres; and how many women-only manual and technical skills courses in skillcentres there are nationally.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986, c. *835-37*.]: Single-sex training courses which prepare people to enter occupations in which their sex is seriously under-represented can lawfully be run under the provisions of section 47 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The Government encourage training providers, including the Skills Training Agency, to make use of these provisions where they will help to overcome relevant skill needs in the economy.

Women-only courses in manual and technical skills are currently being run in four skillcentres. The Skill Training Agency has embarked on a programme to improve access to skillcentre training by introducing modularisation and open learning methods which should be of particular benefit to women.

Ms. Richardson asked the Paymaster General, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Barking on 28 November, why the closure of the women's introduction to manual skills courses at Deptford skillcentre was carried out without consultation with the London boroughs of Southwark, Lewisham and Greenwich, and whether the Manpower Services Commission has received representations alleging racism and sexism at Deptford skillcentre.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986, *835-37*]: Consultation took place prior to the decision to move the course, at a meeting with representatives of the three London boroughs on 24 July 1986.

The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) has received representations alleging racism and sexism at Deptford skillcentre. All representations have been investigated and responded to by MSC management.

Ms. Richardson asked the Paymaster General if he will instruct the Manpower Services Commission to co-operate with the inquiry sponsored by the London boroughs of Southwark, Lewisham and Greenwich to look into the allegations of racism and sexism at the Deptford skillcentre.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986, c. *835-37*]: The Manpower Services Commission investigates any allegation made of discriminatory behaviour by its staff, and co-operates fully with all inquiries in respect of racial and sex discrimination initiated by statutory bodies with legal responsibilities.

Ms. Richardson asked the Paymaster General how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men are currently undergoing training courses at skillcentres in the Greater London area; how many are currently undergoing courses at the Deptford skillcentre; and which courses they are taking.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December, 1986 c. *835-37*]: There are 108 women and 768 men currently undergoing training courses at skillcentres in the Greater London area, of whom 48 and 170 respectively are at the Deptford skillcentre. Numbers currently on courses at the Deptford skillcentre are shown on the following table.

Course	*Women*	*Men*
Bricklaying	0	11
Carpentry and Joinery	3	20
Engineering Production	0	7
Heating and Ventilation	0	12
Heavy Vehicle Repair and Maintenance	1	9
Industrial Electronics	1	7
Light Fabrication and Welding	0	9
Motor Vehicle Body Repair and Maintenance	0	9
Motor Vehicle Repair and Maintenance	2	9
New Technology Access	20	4
Office Machinery and Servicing	0	9
Painting and Decorating	0	3
Plastering	1	11
Plumbing	1	12
Radio and TV Service and Maintenance	0	8
Sheet Metal Working	0	8
Silk Screen Printing	4	6
Specialist Woodworking	2	11
Women's Introduction to Manual Skills	3	0
Work Related Skills Assessment	10	5
TOTALS	48	170

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General (1) if he will make a statement regarding the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed;

(2) if he will make a statement about representations made to him from community leaders regarding the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed;

(3) if he will make a statement about representations made by local community relations councils regarding the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed;

(4) if he will make a statement about representations made to him by local black and Asian representatives regarding the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed;

(5) whether the proposed ethnic monitoring of the unemployed will be entirely voluntary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986, c. *15-16*]: The collection of ethnic minority unemployment statistics was a regular practice from 1963 to 1982 and gave rise to no complaint. However ethnic monitoring of unemployed people was discontinued in August 1982 following the introduction of voluntary registration for employment at jobcentres. We are now going to undertake pilot tests early in the new year to assess the best method of resuming the collection of these statistics.

I believe that it is desirable to resume the collection of such statistics in order to measure the extent of relative disadvantage amongst different groups seeking jobs in each locality. The figures will be used to target more effectively schemes aimed at improving the employment prospects of ethnic minorities and measuring the comparative success or failure of policies in this area over a number of years. The collection of such statistics should be welcomed by anyone interested in genuine equality of opportunity in employment.

The pilot tests will take place in the unemployment benefit offices in Leeds, Handsworth and Nottingham for a period of two weeks from Monday 12 January 1987. The ethnic origin of the unemployed people will be classified under one of three broad categories—Afro-Caribbean, Asian and others. Participation will be voluntary. Two

methods of assessment will be piloted—one involving visual assessment by benefit office staff, and the other involving self-assessment by claimants. Posters will be prominently displayed to ensure that individuals are aware that the exercise is taking place and that they can opt out if they wish.

I undertook a series of visits last month to the three pilot areas where I met local community representatives. At the meetings I gave details of the method and purpose of the proposed pilots and invited questions and comments. Some reservations were expressed but there were no fundamental objections to the pilots. My officials undertook to keep representatives informed and invited them to attend the pilot offices during the tests.

Inner City Initiatives

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to pilot any specific inner city employment initiatives directed at disadvantaged residents and their communities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986, c. *16*]: We have been piloting numerous employment initiatives in our eight inner city task force areas which we set up in April 1986. Our task forces operate in areas where the problems of the residents are typical of the disadvantages faced by people, many from the ethnic minority communities, who live in our inner cities.

Through these task forces we are pressing ahead with a wide variety of projects to stimulate employment and enterprise, and are ensuring that department's national programmes are focused on the ground on helping overcome the employment disadvantages of the people living in these areas.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 12 December 1986

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Students

Mrs. Kellett-Bowman asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students were in *(a)* higher education and *(b)* universities in each of the years 1979 to 1986.

Mr. Walden: Information for home full-time and sandwich and part-time students are shown in the following table. Figures for 1986 are not yet available.

Home student numbers in higher education, Great Britain

Thousands

Academic year beginning	*Full-time and sandwich*		*Part-time*	
	University	*All Higher education*	*University*[1]	*All Higher education*[1]
1979	255·1	451·2	99·6	268·0
1980	262·9	465·5	99·7	288·2
1981	265·6	488·9	104·2	297·1
1982	262·1	504·9	108·0	302·6
1983	257·9	517·9	110·9	311·7
1984	256·0	524·9	113·3	312·6
1985 (provisional)	255·0	528·0	114·0	328·0

[1] Including the Open University.

Higher Education

Mr. Dover asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures the Government are taking to bring about a reduction in the per capita cost of higher education; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: Since 1979 the number of home students in higher education in Great Britain has increased by 18 per cent. Over the same period total public expenditure on higher education has remained roughly constant in real terms. For the university sector, my right hon. Friend has agreed a programme of action with the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the University Grants Committee so as to sustain and improve quality and cost-effectiveness; that programme is detailed in letters dated 4 and 5 November from the chairmen of the two committees, copies of which are in the Library. For the public sector, my right hon. Friend's predecessor invited the national advisory body for public sector higher education (NAB) to undertake a study of good management practice, which will be completed in the new year; that invitation was contained in a letter of 8 May 1985, a copy of which is being placed in the Library.

Pupils (Statistics)

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many pupils stayed on at school after 16 years; how many passed A-levels in each year since 1979 to 1985; what were the numbers of pupils in the respective age groups over the same period.

Mr. Dunn: The information for maintained secondary and independent schools in England is given below:

Thousands

	School leavers with one or more "A" level passes[1]	*Number of pupils aged*[2]			
		16	*17*	*18*	*19 and over*
1979	113·5	202·1	129·5	11·6	1·0
1980	117·0	210·6	133·8	12·5	1·4
1981	120·8	221·4	140·2	13·6	1·4
1982	127·9	240·9	149·8	16·0	1·7
1983	131·2	238·2	155·0	17·5	1·8
1984	129·8	224·2	149·2	18·6	2·1
1985	125·8	215·8	142·3	18·0	2·0

[1] Relates to academic years 1978-79 to 1984-85.
[2] Numbers in January of year shown with ages at 31 August of preceding year.

Welsh Language

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what funds have been made available specifically for teaching through the medium of Welsh in each of the constituent colleges of the University of Wales in each year since 1979.

Mr. Walden: The University Grants Committee does not identify separately the different elements in block grant to individual institutions.

Special Schools (Waltham Forest)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to make a decision on the re-organisation of special schools in Waltham Forest.

Mr. Dunn: The Waltham Forest local education authority has proposed to cease to maintain Grosvenor house and Waltham Forest special schools in 1989, and to reorganise Whitefield school from September 1987. My right hon. Friend hopes to be able to announce decisions on the proposals very soon.

Drug Misuse

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what advice and guidance is offered by his Department to local education authorities on the training of teachers to counter the misuse of drugs.

Mr. Dunn: Local education authorities have been sent copies of the Department's booklet "Drug Misuse and the Young" which provides information about the drugs problem and how the world of education can help to tackle it. All the local education authorities in England are taking part in the Department's two main initiatives in this area, by appointing drugs co-ordinators funded through the education support grant, and by applying for money from the new in-service training grant which enables teachers to learn about the dangers of drug misuse and how they can help those pupils at risk.

The Department has issued a newsletter for the drug co-ordinators advising them of all the initiatives being taken in the education service aimed at tackling drug misuse. I have also commended to the local education authorities the DHSS sponsored video, "Double Take" and the Health Education Council's "Drugwise" teacher training materials.

Various HMI publications have also made reference to the drugs problem.

Mr. Corbett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will detail projects currently wholly or partly funded by his Department to enhance the training of teachers to counter the misuse of drugs.

Mr. Dunn: £1·5 million has been allocated from the new in-service teacher training grant scheme to be spent by local education authorities on training teachers about the dangers of drug misuse and how they might help those young people at risk. £4 million from the education support grant has been made available over two financial years to fund the appointment of drug co-ordinators, whose role involves providing advice, support and training for teachers. The Department funded "Drugwise"—the Health Education Council's training and educational package for teachers and other professionals—at a cost of £86,000. This is now generally available.

School Meals

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to provide nutritional guidelines for private caterers tendering for school meal contracts in the form recommended by COMA.

Mr. Dunn: The responsibility for the provision of school meals rests with local education authorities and not with the Government. It will be for each LEA to stipulate in its invitation to tender and in the final contract what nutritional standards it requires.

Appointments

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about appointments to the governing body of the centre for information on language teaching and research.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have appointed Sir Hugh Campbell Byatt, KCVO, CMG, MA as chairman of the governing body of the centre for information on language teaching and research. He will succeed Dr. Albert Sloman, CBE, to whose long and dedicated service on the centre's behalf I gladly pay tribute. I intend to announce the appointment of new members to the governing body of CILT in the near future.

Secondary Schools

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will state, for each year since 1964, for the whole of the United Kingdom *(a)* the percentage of secondary schools accounted for by grammar schools, *(b)* the average pupil-teacher ratio in secondary schools, *(c)* the level of per capita expenditure in secondary schools at constant 1986 prices and *(d)* the number of pupils achieving five or more higher grade passes at O-level or certificate of secondary education; and if he will give his assessment of the impact on these figures of the raising of the school-leaving age.

Mr. Dunn [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 December 1986, c. 626]: The available data for England are given in the table below. The effect of the raising of the school leaving age on these indicators is confounded with a multiplicity of other factors. It would not be possible to make any simple statement but I note with satisfaction the continuing increase in the proportion of pupils gaining qualifications.

Figures for schools in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Maintained Secondary Schools—England[1]

	Percentage which were grammar schools[2]	*Pupil/teacher ratio within secondary schools*[2]	*Net institutional recurrent expenditure per pupil*[3] £	*Percentage of school leavers with five or more higher*[4] *grade passes at "O" level or CSE*
1966	22	18·3	815	21·1
1967	21	18·1	825	22·0
1968	21	18·1	855	22·5
1969	20	17·9	845	22·7
1970	19	17·7	850	23·1
1971	18	17·9	865	23·5
1972	17	17·6	905	23·5
1973	16	17·1	965	[5]
1974	14	17·5	965	23·0
1975	12	17·2	1,115	22·6
1976	10	17·0	1,105	22·9
1977	8	17·0	1,085	23·5
1978	7	16·9	1,025	23·7
1979	5	16·7	1,040	23·7
1980	5	16·6	1,010	24·0
1981	4	16·6	1,070	25·1
1982	4	16·6	1,105	26·1
1983	4	16·5	1,102	26·2
1984	4	16·2	1,155	26·7
1985	4	16·1	1,185	26·9

[1] Includes middle deemed secondary schools from 1969 onwards.
[2] From the census of schools held in January of each year. From 1971 the pupil/teacher ratios take account of qualified teachers only.
[3] The cash figures for each financial year ending in the years shown have been repriced to 1986-87 using the Gross Domestic Product (Market Prices) deflator.
[4] Percentage of school leavers in academic year ending in years shown. From 1974-75 onwards "O" level grades A-C, CSE grade 1. Prior to 1974-75 "O" level examinations were graded pass or fail.
[5] The raising of the school leaving age in 1973 affected the total number of school leavers, which was unusually low in 1972-73. Percentages are, therefore, unrepresentative and have been omitted.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Portaferry-Strangford Ferry

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has for the provision of a passenger waiting room at Portaferry for the Portaferry-Strangford ferry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland is planning to provide a shelter for the use of Strangford Lough ferry service passengers convenient to the boarding point at Portaferry.

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why the new mooring rings were not provided in September 1986 at the Portaferry terminals of the Portaferry-Strangford ferry; where these mooring rings are; when it is proposed to place them in position; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland proposes to place new mooring rings in position at the Portaferry slipway next week. It was not practicable to install them in September 1986.

Rates

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many ratepayers had not paid their rates on 31 October.

Mr. Needham: Statistics are not available on the number of ratepayers who had not paid their rates at 31 October 1986.

Legislation

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make it his policy to tabulate in explanatory memoranda attached to draft orders the differences between such orders and parallel legislation in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Tom King: The purpose of explanatory memoranda is to give a clear and non-technical statement of the background to, scope, and effect of draft Orders in Council under the Northern Ireland Act 1974. Where appropriate these already include a description of any differences which might exist between legislation in Northern Ireland and Great Britain. But the cost of the preparation of a comprehensive table for each order could not be justified.

Flags and Emblems Act 1954

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prosecutions have been taken out to date under the Flags and Emblems Act 1954.

Mr. Scott: Records are only available from 1969 to date. No prosecutions have been brought in this period.

International Fund for Ireland

Sir John Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress with the International Fund for Ireland; and if he plans to bring forward any further statutory instruments to give legal effect to the fund.

Mr. Scott: The agreement to set up the international fund was signed by the United Kingdom and Irish

Governments on 18 September, and was laid before the House on 1 October in accordance with usual practice. Notifications of acceptance were subsequently exchanged in Dublin on 1 December and the fund will be brought into being on 12 December.

The draft International Fund for Ireland (Immunities and Privileges) Order given the fund a legal personality and exemption from direct taxation was laid before the House on 27 October, as required under the International Organisations Act 1968. It was approved before a House of Commons Standing Committee on 4 November and the House of Lords on 5 November, and was made by the Queen in Council on 25 November. No further statutory instruments are necessary to give legal effect to the fund. The board to administer the fund will be formally appointed on 12 December and will begin its work immediately.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Greg Knight asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the allocations to programmes in Northern Ireland of the public expenditure plans announced on 12 November.

Mr. Tom King: The autumn statement laid before the House by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 12 November announced total public expenditure planning figures for the Northern Ireland programme as follows:

	£ million
1987-88	4,810
1988-89	4,980
1989-90	5,150

The figure for 1987-88 represents an increase of some £230 million on the forecast outturn for 1986-87 and £120 million on the previously planned total for 1987-88 in the 1986 Public Expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 9702), adjusted for Budget measures. The figure for 1988-89 represents an increase of some £160 million on previously published plans. Because of minor adjustments which will not affect the spending plans of Departments the planned figure for 1989-90 now rounds to £5,140 million.

I have decided on the following cash allocations to individual programmes (rounded to the nearest £5 million for 1987-88 and to the nearest £10 million for 1988-89 and 1989-90. Figures may not sum to totals because of roundings).

£ million

Programme	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry	90	90	90
Industry, energy, trade and employment	445	420	400
Transport	130	130	130
Housing	365	380	380
Environmental and miscellaneous services	215	220	240
Protective Services	25	30	30
Education and science, arts and libraries	735	780	810
Health and personal social services	795	840	880
Social Security	1,445	1,520	1,570
Other public services	50	60	60
Total NI Departments	4,295	4,460	4,610
NIO—Law, order, protective and miscellaneous services	515	520	540
Total Northern Ireland	4,810	4,980	5,140

The planning figures for 1987-88 will form the basis for preparation by Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office of Main Estimates for the coming year, which will be presented to Parliament in due course.

The allocations reflect my assessment of how best to distribute the Northern Ireland public expenditure total in response to local needs and circumstances. Copies of a more detailed statement on these allocations have been placed in the Library of the House of Commons.

PRIME MINISTER

Budgetary Control

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister if he will propose to the next meeting of the European Council that a report be prepared by the Commission on the implementation of the 4 December 1984 agreement of the Council on Budgetary Control; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No. The Commission has already announced that it is preparing an ex novo review provided for in the Fontainebleau conclusions. These specify that the result of budgetary discipline should be covered.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Cohen asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on co-ordination between Her Majesty's Treasury, the Home Office and the Department of the Environment in the funding of the Metropolitan police.

The Prime Minister: I am satisifed with the arrangements for co-ordination between Her Majesty's Treasury, the Home Office and the Department of the Environment on matters relating to the funding of the Metropolitan police.

Miss Colette Bowe

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister on what basis the Cabinet Secretary had reason to believe that Miss Colette Bowe would ask him about the position regarding the possible granting of immunity from prosecution.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November at columns 49-50.

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Prime Minister if she will make representations to General Secretary Gorbachev for the extension of the current Soviet moratorium on nuclear weapons tests beyond 31 December; and if she will take steps to initiate a reconvening of the trilateral talks between the United States of American, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom on the verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

The Prime Minister: No. As we have repeatedly stated, the resumption of negotiations for a nuclear test ban treaty would be premature before progress has been made on the outstanding issues, particularly verification.

State Security

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Prime Minister in what form and on what authority, approval was given by Her Majesty's Government to Mr. Chapman Pincher or his publishers for the publication of the book "Their Trade is Treachery".

The Prime Minister: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters which may arise in the proceedings concerning the Peter Wright case in Australia while those proceedings continue. I also intend to follow the precedent set by previous Prime Ministers of not commenting on security matters.

Mr. Marlow asked the Prime Minister if, as part of the security briefings provided from time to time to the Leader of the Opposition, she will supply him with such information as is available to Her Majesty's Government's lawyers about the progress of the Wright case in Australia; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have confirmed that, as far as this side of the House is concerned, the normal courtesies on security matters will continue to be observed. The contents of such exchanges must remain confidential.

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if she will define the nature of the inquiries by the Cabinet Secretary of other Departments on 10-11 January about the leak of the Solicitor-General's letter.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November at column 49-50.

Ministers (Publications)

Mr. Madden asked the Prime Minister what is the practice of the Government regarding the submission prior to publication of manuscripts of books by Ministers.

The Prime Minister: Ministers contemplating the publication of material based upon their recollection of the conduct of Government business in which they took part are expected to submit their manuscript to the Secretary of the Cabinet and to conform to the principles and procedures set out in the report of the Committee of Privy Counsellors on Ministerial Memoirs, 1976 (Cmnd. 6386).

European Community (Rebate)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to her statement of 8 December, if it remains the position of Her Majesty's Government that the United Kingdom's rebate entitlement under the Fontainebleau agreement of June 1984 is secured, irrespective of any increases in expenditure of the Community, by the arrangement to deduct the appropriate sums of rebate from the United Kingdom's value added tax contribution; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Yes. The Community has an obligation enshrined in a document of treaty status to make available to the United Kingdom abatements of VAT calculated according to the Fontainebleau formula. As my hon. Friend is aware, the Community budgetary process means that the figures may need to be corrected several times before the true entitlement is reached. The normal method of making these corrections is by supplementary budgets, and a refusal by the United Kingdom to agree to such a supplementary budget could lead to a delay in the uprating of our abatement. It could not affect the final entitlement.

Libya (Exports)

Mr. George Robertson asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement regarding the export from Britain of syncrolift equipment to Libya.

The Prime Minister: Syncrolift systems are widely used throughout the world by port authorities in place of conventional dry dock facilities. They are used to lift vessels from the water to the ground level of a shipyard. It is not military equipment and is not subject to export licensing under the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985. There is no ban on the export of non-military goods to Libya.

Civil Servants (Training Costs)

Dr. Hampson asked the Prime Minister what, in 1985-86, was the total cost of courses of post-entry training undergone by members of the non-industrial Civil Service; and what proportion by cost of that training was given *(a)* at the Civil Service college and *(b)* at other schools, colleges and institutes outside the Civil Service.

The Prime Minister: The total cost of formal post-entry training in the non-industrial Civil Service during this period was £208 million; of this £118 million constituted the salaries, travel and subsistence paid to the trainees, and £90 million the direct cost of the training.

The proportion by total cost which took place at the Civil Service college was 8 per cent, and at sources outside the Civil Service 14 per cent. The remaining 78 per cent. was provided within individual Government Departments.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 11 December.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 11 December.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 11 December.

Mr. Wareing asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 11 December.

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 11 December.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 11 December.

Mr. Pike asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 11 December.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with Ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be travelling to Manchester where I shall be attending the annual Chamber of Commerce dinner.

Research and Development

Mr. Sumberg asked the Prime Minister when the 1986 annual review of Government funded research and development (R and D) will be published.

The Prime Minister [*pursuant to her reply*, 10 December 1986]: I am now able to further announce the publication of the second joint report from the chairmen of the Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development (ACARD) and the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (ABRC) on 12 December as Cmnd. 34.

ENERGY

Power Stations (Radioactivity)

Mr. Moynihan asked the Secretary of State for Energy how the level and type of radioactivity emissions from coal-fired power stations compare with those from nuclear power stations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: The major discharge mechanism in both cases is aerial. For coal-fired power stations the collective committed dose equivalent is about five mansieverts per gigawatt-year of electricity generated and for nuclear stations it is under two mansieverts per gigawatt-year. The overall dose from either source is very small by comparison with the dose to the population from natural background radiation.

Nuclear Power Reprocessing

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy what reprocessing plant capacity exists in the United Kingdom which has a head end which will accept radial breeder fuel subassemblies or mixer breeder sections from any fast reactor.

Mr. Goodlad: The only plant in the United Kingdom with an appropriate head end for irradiated fast reactor fuel is the prototype fast reactor (PFR) fuel reprocessing plant at Dounreay. None of the radial breeder or mixer breeder sections from th PFR has yet been reprocessed.

Plutonium

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will ensure that British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. publishes the text of the management agreement it has with the Central Electricity Generating Board and the South of Scotland Electricity Board for the ownership and control of stocks of plutonium for civil purposes.

Mr. Goodlad: No.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, further to his replies to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) of 6 November, *Official Report*, column *547*, and to the hon. Member for Meironnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) of 21 July, *Official Report*, column *10*, he will indicate whether the figures given for plutonium exports for civil purposes other than to the United States of America is net of import; and if he will set out in table form the gross exports of plutonium to, and gross imports of plutonium from, each country, including the United States of America, up to 31 March.

Mr. Goodlad: The figure given in my reply of 21 July 1985 is a net figure. It represents gross exports of plutonium produced in the magnox reactors of the CEGB and SSEB less returns of previously exported material. The basis of the calculation was set out in BNFL's written evidence to the Sizewell inquiry, BNFL/P/1 (Add 10)

Figures for gross exports and imports of plutonium were given in my replies of 25 July, at column 602, and 6 November respectively.

Information relating to individual countries is commercially sensitive.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Energy pursuant to his reply of 6 November, *Official Report*, c. 547, if he will specify (i) what proportion of the 230 kg of plutonium imported since May 1979 was fabricated into fuel pins after entry of separated plutonium into the United Kingdom, (ii) what quantity of plutonium was subsequently re-exported, (iii) what proportion of the re-exports left the United Kingdom as spent fuel (iv) what quantity of plutonium was re-exported as spent fuel in the same fuel pins as those in which it was imported, (v) to what use any plutonium which had entered the United Kingdom outside fuel pins, and was not subsequently manufactured into fuel pins, was put, (vi) what quantity of plutonium was not combined into fuel rods and (vii) in which reactors fuel rods incorporating the imported plutonium were used; and if he will deposit in the Library the text of any safeguard agreements which related to the import of plutonium fuel.

Mr. Goodlad: With the exception of 6g of separated plutonium imported by BNFL for use as calibration standards, all of the material referred to in my answer of 6 November has been imported by the UKAEA. I am asking the chairman of the authority to write to the hon. Member on the detailed points he raises. Each country listed in my reply of 6 November has a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. There are no specific safeguards agreements which relate to the import of plutonium fuel. However all civil nuclear material in the United Kingdom is subject to the provisions of the UK/Euratom/IAEA tripartite agreement and the Euratom Treaty. These are in the Library of the House.

Torness and Heysham II

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he now expects the advanced gas-cooled reactor power stations at Torness and Heysham II to be commissioned; what progress is currently being made in the fuelling and preparation of these two reactors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I have asked the chairman of the CEGB to write to the hon. Member about Heysham II. Electricity matters in Scotland are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Sizewell (Inquiry)

Mr. Jack Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to reach a decision on the recommendations contained in the report of the Sizewell public inquiry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The inspector has delivered the bulk of his report to me. He has told me that he expects to let me have the remaining sections by the middle of January. Once I have the full report I intend to reach my decision as soon as I possibly can.

Energy, Research and Technology Committee

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 2 December, column 544, whether he received an invitation to meet the European Parliament Energy, Research and Technology Committee in November or December in the current year; whether he has recently received any communication from the chairman of that Committee, Mr. Poniatowski; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I was invited to meet the Energy, Research and Technology Committee on 15 or 16 December. Neither date was feasible. I have commitments in this House on 15 December, and am travelling to the Soviet Union on 16 December at the invitation of the Soviet Government. Alternative dates were suggested to the Committee but these were unacceptable. My right honourable Friend the Minister of State for Energy offered to appear before the Committee in my stead but this was also refused. Following this the chairman of the Committee indicated that he did not wish to proceed with a meeting.

Sellafield

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, (Mr. Beith) on 27 November, *Official Report*, column 302, if he will state what proportion of the total low-level nuclear waste arising from electricity board magnox reprocessing at Sellafield is accounted for by the 12,200 cubic metres referred to in his answer.

Mr. Goodlad: Solid low level radioactive waste attributable to the reprocessing of spent Magnox nuclear fuel from Italy and Japan accounts for less than 10 per cent. of the total solid low level wastes attributable to date to magnox reprocessing by BNFL.

Civil Nuclear Power (Publicity)

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, 27 November, *Official Report*, column 301 *(a)* what was the increase in his Department's publicity expenditure on civil nuclear power issues and *(b)* what proportional increase over preceding years this constituted.

Mr. Goodlad: As I explained in my reply to the hon. Member on 26 June, (c. 270) the Government are making £3·09 million available to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) in the current financial year to prepare and produce information on civil nuclear power. This is the first year in which payments have been made to the authority on a trading fund basis. I am advised by the UKAEA that the current year's programme is broadly consistent with their expenditure in previous years.

Electricity (Demand)

Mr. Jack Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will seek from the Electricity Council its revised assessment of the demand for electricity in the medium term and place a copy in the Library.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer to my answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil on 11 December.

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will state the latest Electricity Council *(a)* medium-term forecast of demand and *(b)* long-term forecast of demand; and if he will place copies in the Library.

Mr. Goodlad: The medium and long-term demand forecasts adopted by the Electricity Council in October are as follows:

Year	*Unit requirement on the CEGB (terawatt hours)*	*Unrestricted maximum demand (gigawatts)*
1992/93	260·0	50·4
1995-96	271·3	52·4

The Electricity Council may review and if necessary revise these estimates before the 1987 medium term development plan is finalised.

Superphenix Project

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has given his permission to the Central Electricity Generating Board during the last six months to increase its shareholding in the SBK consortium within the Superphenix fast breeder reactor project.

Mr. Goodlad: No.

Energy Savings

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Energy what are his policies for securing energy savings on a sector by sector basis.

Mr. David Hunt: The EEO supports, through its schemes and services, many initiatives aimed at securing energy efficiency improvements in all sectors.

In particular its monitoring and targeting (M and T) programme seeks to establish M and T systems across the major non-domestic energy consuming sectors. Forty sectoral systems will eventually be included in this programme—25 of which have already begun.

Evidence from sectors where M and T has been fully developed show typical improvement of 10 per cent. The programme directly aims to save industry and commerce some £300 million per annum. Total penetration in the longer term could lead to energy efficiency improvements worth £1 billion per annum.

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the estimated capital investment required to make the energy saving per annum which the Government believe is attainable.

Mr. David Hunt: A substantial proportion of the energy savings can be achieved simply through better management, and with little or no investment. The rest of the savings, perhaps just over half, require investments with a relatively short payback period. Given payback periods ranging from a few weeks to five years, an associated once-and-for-all investment of some £6 billion to £9 billion might be required.

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Energy what would be the effect on the supply industries if the whole of the saving on energy which the Government believe is attainable was achieved in four years.

Mr. David Hunt: In the transport sector, the obvious effect would be a significant reduction in demand for automotive fuels. In the domestic sector, the effects on the supply industry will depend on how much of the improvements in energy efficiency are taken in improved comfort standards and how much in reduced energy demand.

In the industrial and commercial sectors also, the improved energy efficiency will not necessarily lead to reduced energy demand because, at the higher level of energy efficiency, businesses will be more competitive and hence able to increase their output. Additional energy will be needed to meet this increase in output.

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Energy how the percentage of energy which the Government estimate can be saved is divided between *(a)* industry, *(b)* domestic transport and *(c)* other and, for energy supply, from (i) coal, (ii) gas, (iii) oil, (iv) nuclear and (v) hydro-electricity.

Mr. David Hunt: The Government believe that about £7 billion worth of savings are available to the nation. This represents about one fifth of the nation's energy bill. In percentage terms, the available sectoral breakdown of these savings is:

	per cent.
Domestic	27
Industry and Commerce	27
Public Services	6
Transport	40

The breakdown of total United Kingdom energy consumption by fuel on a primary energy input basis for 1985 is:

	Primary energy input MTCE	*per cent.*
Coal	105·3	32
Gas	82·3	25
Oil	115·0	35
Nuclear	22·1	7
Hydro-electricity	2·1	1

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Yeovil on 3 December, *Official Report*, c. 676, (1) whether the nuclear installations inspectorate work on the review of Bradwell is now complete with the exception of a few issues; if the nuclear installations inspectorate still expects to meet the announced target of spring 1987 for publication of its conclusions on the review; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will name each issue unresolved in the nuclear installations inspectorate assessment of reviews of Calder hall and Chapelcross as at March 1983; which of these issues has since been satisfactorily cleared; what number of meetings there has been between the nuclear installations inspectorate and the Central Electricity Generating Board on unresolved issues in the last year; whether the nuclear installations inspectorate has commissioned consultancy assistance on issues still unresolved; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what work the nuclear installations inspectorate has done since March 1983 on improvements or modifications identified by reviews of Calder hall and Chapelcross as being reasonably practicable; what improvements of modifications for each power station have been formally approved since March 1983; what improvements or modifications identified in the completed body of these reviews as being reasonably practicable remain unapproved at present; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

British Gas

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many letters have been received by his Department opposing the sale of British Gas.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: One hundred and seventy five individuals and organisations have written to my Department, either directly or through their Member of Parliament, opposing the sale. This compares with the 5 million people who have applied for shares in British Gas.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Energy what was the total cost of the pre-flotation publicity for British Gas shares.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples).

Mr. Maples asked the Secretary of State for Energy what were the proceeds and costs of the British Gas sale.

Mr. Peter Walker: The total proceeds to the Government from the sale of British Gas plc are some £7,750 million. The cost to the Government in 1986-87 of the sale is provisionally estimated as follows.

	£ million
United Kingdom sale—	
advisers fees	3
marketing: pre-flotation	29
flotation	12
receiving bank registration	20
underwriting and selling commissions	75
Overseas sales	25

This represents around 2 per cent. of the total proceeds.

Heysham II

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 3 December, *Official Report*, c. 675, (1) what importance alternative siting costs have in considering investment approval for Heysham II nuclear power station; what were the major factors in giving that investment approval; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether information submitted to his Department by the Central Electricity Generating Board in seeking investment approval for Heysham II nuclear power station included *(a)* financial information on alternative siting options for the same design of power station, *(b)* information of any possible alternative plans for a coal-fired power station and *(c)* information of the geographical pattern of other prospective power station developments in medium term; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: Consent under section 2 of the Electric Lighting Act 1909, as subsequently amended, already

existed for a second nuclear station at the Heysham site. Choices had thus already been made at the time of investment approval for Heysham II.

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 3 December, *Official Report*, c. 674, if he will publish a list of the titles of papers or documents submitted to his Department by the Central Electricity Generating Board in seeking investment approval for Heysham II nuclear power station.

Mr. Goodlad: No, sir.

CEGB (Expenditure)

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Energy at what time annually he gives approval to capital expenditure by the Central Electricity Generating Board for the following three-year period; whether he is currently considering such approvals; when he next expects to consider investment approval for a coal-fired power station; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: As explained in my answer of 25 November to the hon. Member at column 154, capital expenditure approvals are given following the conclusion of the annual investment and financial review. My Department has not received an application for investment approval to construct a new coal-fired power station.

Capital Requirements

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 3 December, *Official Report*, c. 676, whether the latest detailed six-year forecast of capital requirements supplied to his Department has been superseded by later studies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: As explained in my answer of 25 November to the hon. Member at column 154, detailed forecasts of capital requirements are provided to my Department by the Central Electricity Generating Board annually.

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether incidents and accidents at unlicensed nuclear sites operated by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority are reported to Her Majesty's nuclear installation's inspectorate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority is subject to the same requirement as licensed operators to report incidents under the arrangements announced to the House by my right hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, Central (Mr. Moore), then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy, on 26 July 1982, at column 374. Any incident falling within the agreed criteria is reported to Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate and details of it are published in regular bulletins issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

Magnox Nuclear Reactors

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any plans to review his policy of commitment to openness in relation to information on the production, reprocessing, storage and use of civil plutonium arising from civil Magnox nuclear reactors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: It is my policy to be as open as possible on these matters.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Slaughterhouses

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what information he has on the present number of unlicensed slaughterhouses in the United Kingdom; and what checks are made on such premises;

(2) what meat slaughtered in the United Kingdom is not subject to inspection before it is sold to the general public.

Mr. Donald Thompson: In Great Britain all red meat slaughterhouses are subject to licensing by local authorities, other than those operated by local authorities themselves. All red meat, excluding game, for sale for human consumption is routinely inspected.

No central record is kept of the number of unlicensed poultry slaughterhouses. All premises where meat is produced for sale for human consumption are subject to checks by local authority officials who are responsible for ensuring that appropriate hygiene and welfare legislative requirements are being met.

Officials of the Agriculture Departments monitor enforcement.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate he has made of the annual cost of a deficiency payment system to cover foodstuffs at present covered by the common agricultural policy and at present produced in the United Kingdom, on the assumption that deficiency payments would be offered for standard quantities related to the United Kingdom's material needs, that world food prices remained at current levels and the United Kingdom's farmers' net incomes were maintained.

Mr. Jopling: I have made no estimate on such an array of assumptions. But I have indicated in broad terms that were deficiency payments operated now, for the main commodities, they could cost around £4 billion.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy towards the future of the common agricultural policy in the light of the recent estimate by the EEC-funded European Union of Consumers that the net cost of the policy per average family is £13 per week; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Farm Quotas

Mr. Robert Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will set out such information as he has on the number and nature of recorded instances of French farmers contravening European Economic Community farm quotas and regulations.

Mr. Gummer: It is the responsibility of the European Commission to take infraction proceedings against those who contravene the Community's agricultural legislation. Additionally, alleged French contraventions may be pursued in their domestic courts and in the European Court of Justice.

Council of Agriculture Ministers

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Council of Agriculture Ministers' meeting held in Brussels on 8 to 10 December.

Mr. Gummer: I represented the United Kingdom at this meeting, which was chaired by my right hon. Friend the Minister.

The main items before the Council were the Commission's proposals for reform of the support arrangements for milk and beef, intended to tackle the surplus situation in these sectors, and the Commission's proposals for a number of socio-structural measures.

There remain differences of view about the best method of reducing the milk surplus. The key issues still under discussion are the extent of the quota cut which can be made for the year beginning 1 April 1987, whether the whole cut should be permanent or partly achieved through suspension, and the question of the compensation to be offered to farmers affected by these cuts. There remain differences too on the role which weakening the intervention mechanisms should play in the measures to be adopted.

On beef, discussion concentrated on the extent of the weakening of the intervention levels and on the role of a premium scheme, and whether the suckler cow subsidy should be improved.

After the views of member states had been clarified, the United Kingdom Presidency, in close collaboration with the Commission, tabled a paper on milk and beef in an endeavour to make progress. There was a general willingness to work for a positive conclusion, but a number of delegates sought further improvements.

The socio-structural proposals were conceived by the Commission as a means of helping farmers to adapt to changing economic circumstances. Discussion on these focused primarily on the extent to which these measures should reinforce action to reduce surpluses.

The Council discussed each of these three items extensively over three days, and adjourned until Saturday 13 December in order to give the Presidency and Commission the opportunity to reflect on the possibilities for reaching conclusions on these complex issues.

In addition to the existing proposals for devaluations of the green pound and green French franc for beef and sheepmeat, the Commission proposed green rate devaluations for the sheep sector for Greece, and for sheepmeat and structures for Portugal. Discussion on these proposals will also be taken up again when the Council resumes.

THE ARTS

Cork Report

Mr. Robert Atkins asked the Minister for the Arts when he expects the Arts Council to implement the recommendations contained in the Cork report, "Theatre is for All", concerning the earnings from the commercial theatre of artistic directors of Arts Council-subsidised theatres.

Mr. Luce: I understand that the Arts Council has accepted these recommendations. From now on, new contracts for directors will be expected to contain the provisions proposed in the report for sabbatical leave and for the distribution of earnings from plays transferred to the commercial theatre.

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Minister for the Arts whether he will announce funding for museums and galleries in 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. 29]: I am now able to announce the allocations to museums and galleries within the arts budget for 1987-88.

Overall provision for museums and galleries in 1987-88 will be £107·78 million. This is an increase of £3·896 million or 3·8 per cent. over the present year.

Subject to parliamentary approval of the Supply Estimates, I propose that the allocations to specific institutions shall be as indicated in the following table.

The allocations provide for a general, basic increase in running costs of 3·5 per cent. above the current year's grant. In the case of those museums and galleries whose building and maintenance programmes will be untied from the PSA from 1988-89, I am providing additional funds specifically to deal with the transitional costs of preparing for that change. I am further increasing the provisions of three institutions to take account of the opening next year of major gallery extensions: the Tate gallery's Clore gallery, the Victoria and Albert museum's theatre museum, and the National museums and galleries on Merseyside's maritime museum.

Given the pressing requirement to meet these specific needs, I have found it necessary to maintain in cash terms in 1987-88 the 1986-87 levels of purchase grants. Twenty seven million, four hundred and fifty thousand pounds will be devoted to the building and maintenance programme at present managed by the Property Services Agency and carried on their Vote. That represents an increase of 1·9 per cent. over the current year's provision.

I propose that the method of financing the Museums and Galleries Commission should be changed from direct Vote provision to grant-in-aid from the financial year 1987-88. I shall consult the Education, Science and Arts Select Committee on this, and also the Public Accounts Committee and the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee. Subject to their views the main Supply Estimates will be presented to Parliament on a grant-in-aid basis.

The provision of £6·111 million for the Museums and Galleries Commission in 1987-88 represents an increase of some 3·4 per cent. over the grant allocation for 1986-87. Within this total, the Museums and Galleries Commission intends to introduce a scheme to encourage touring exhibitions, including those which involve the loan of items from national collections for display in other museums and galleries. I am anxious to encourage greater access to collections for people in all areas, and I welcome the Museums and Galleries Commission's initiative in this regard.

The national museums and galleries make a splendid contribution to conserving and displaying our national heritage. With the provision I am making for next year and with the strengthened incentive to maximise receipts provided by the recent change to grant-in-aid status, I am confident that they will continue to do so.

£ million

	1986-87	*1987-88*	
	Running costs	*Running costs*	*Purchase Grant*
Votes 1-9			
British Museum	11·945	12·538	1·400
Imperial War Museum	4·397	4·627	0·100
National Gallery	4·021	4·267	2·750
National Maritime Museum	4·257	4·472	0·205
National Portrait Gallery	1·504	1·589	0·310
Science Museum	8·796	9·214	0·375
Tate Gallery	3·967	4·682	1·815
Victoria and Albert	9·878	10·535	1·145
Wallace Collection	0·906	0·939	n/a
Vote 10(i)			
Sir John Soane's	0·250	0·259	
Museum of London	2·250	2·329	
National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside	8·745	9·414	
Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry	1·075	1·252	
Museums and Galleries Commission	5·909	6·111	

Notes:
(i) includes provision for purchase grants, building and maintenance.

HOME DEPARTMENT

"Light Against Crime"

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the crime prevention project "Light Against Crime".

Mr. Douglas Hogg: "Light Against Crime" is the title of a video produced by the Home Office crime prevention centre which has been distributed to police forces in England and Wales. It is intended for use as a teaching aid by the centre and by police crime prevention officers in providing advice on the part which lighting can play in crime prevention and security. A number of companies and organisations which manufacture, supply or install lighting equipment and services have adopted "Light Against Crime" as a slogan or logo.

Community Language Programmes

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria he uses in determining whether an application for the funding of community language programmes under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 meets the special needs of Commonwealth immigrants.

Mr. Waddington: In considering whether to approve grant under section 11 in repect of mother tongue or community language teaching posts—and all other posts for which grant application may be made — we have regard to the criteria set out in paragraph 14 of Home Office circular No. 72/1986.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what priority he attaches in reaching decisions on applications for the funding of programmes under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 to the contribution of such programmes to primary education and the improvement of English learning as a by-product.

Mr. Waddington: At present, all applications for grant under section 11 which are judged to meet the criteria for grant will be funded. We are not, therefore, attaching any higher priority to one sort of proposal than any other.

Police (Statistics)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total establishment of each police force in England; what is the recommended full-strength establishment of each police force; and what was the establishment of each police force in 1974 and 1979.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information for police forces in England is as follows:

Police force	*31 October 1974*		*31 October 1979*		*31 October 1986*	
	Authorised establishment	*Actual strength*	*Authorised establishment*	*Actual strength*	*Authorised establishment*	*Actual strength*
Avon and Somerset	2,868	2,573	2,953	2,851	3,020	3,010
Bedfordshire	890	792	947	904	1,000	1,001
Cambridgeshire	1,023	959	1,140	1,086	1,140	1,153
Cheshire	1,770	1,590	1,805	1,787	1,845	1,835
Cleveland	1,411	1,273	1,418	1,387	1,474	1,473
Cumbria	1,074	1,010	1,113	1,077	[2]1,130	1,129
Derbyshire	1,559	1,420	1,712	1,700	[2]1,767	1,767
Devon and Cornwall	2,573	2,558	2,673	2,650	[2]2,757	2,775
Dorset	1,088	1,036	1,164	1,157	[2]1,211	1,207
Durham	1,371	1,257	1,349	1,305	1,357	1,305
Essex	2,436	2,151	2,525	2,513	[1]2,697	2,699
Gloucestershire	1,007	941	1,116	1,096	1,164	1,160
Greater Manchester	6,600	5,504	6,766	6,566	6,943	6,770
Hampshire	2,844	2,614	2,954	2,960	3,105	3,088

Police force	31 October 1974		31 October 1979		31 October 1986	
	Authorised establishment	Actual strength	Authorised establishment	Actual strength	Authorised establishment	Actual strength
Hertfordshire	1,472	1,300	1,533	1,470	1,596	1,591
Humberside	1,910	1,673	1,939	1,887	1,972	1,969
Kent	2,454	2,207	2,820	2,815	[1]2,875	2,893
Lancashire	2,880	2,803	3,118	3,072	3,158	3,106
Leicestershire	1,603	1,534	1,706	1,707	1,733	1,733
Lincolnshire	1,174	1,113	1,182	1,171	1,183	1,161
Merseyside	4,317	3,825	4,451	4,476	4,679	4,606
Norfolk	1,218	1,140	1,265	1,232	1,318	1,297
Northamptonshire	844	791	950	927	1,054	1,050
Northumbria	3,322	3,080	3,325	3,332	3,378	3,380
North Yorkshire	1,277	1,193	1,328	1,341	1,368	1,363
Nottinghamshire	2,056	1,981	2,145	2,134	2,259	2,218
South Yorkshire	2,752	2,318	2,752	2,625	2,881	2,866
Staffordshire	2,064	1,903	2,066	2,011	2,131	2,090
Suffolk	1,077	968	1,123	1,099	1,186	1,138
Surrey	1,438	1,274	1,602	1,448	1,639	1,624
Sussex	2,618	2,471	2,803	2,795	2,830	2,809
Thames Valley	2,960	2,721	3,005	2,692	[3]3,367	3,424
Warwickshire	876	762	876	877	967	968
West Mercia	1,650	1,456	1,834	1,808	1,953	1,924
West Midlands	6,471	5,244	6,509	6,156	6,684	6,614
West Yorkshire	5,097	4,373	5,104	4,786	5,154	5,142
Wiltshire	979	869	1,032	1,009	1,049	1,046
City of London	1,028	782	1,022	830	798	777
Metropolitan	26,055	20,585	26,589	22,468	27,515	26,681
Total: England	108,106	94,044	111,714	105,207	115,337	113,842

[1]Further increases of 25 posts for Essex and 36 for Kent have been approved with effect from 1 November 1986.
[2]Further increases of 14 posts for Cumbria, 26 for Derbyshire, 17 for Devon and Cornwall and 15 for Dorset have been approved with effect from 1 January 1987.
[3]Further increases of 50 posts for Thames Valley have been approved with effect from 1 November 1986 and 50 with effect from 1 April 1987.

Emergency Fire Service (London)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is satisfied with the 999 fire service in Greater London.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Yes.

Police (Emergency Service)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware of any threat to the capacity of police outside the Metropolitan police district to maintain a prompt 999 service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We are not aware of any such threat, but if the hon. Member has any particular difficulties in mind perhaps he would let me know of them.

Mr. Ammanullah Khan

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning Mr. Ammanullah Khan, awaiting deportation in Brixton prison; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: A number of representations have been received from right hon. and hon. Members and others. Having considered the advice of the independent panel of advisers to which the case was referred in accordance with the procedures described in rule 150 of the immigration rules, my right hon. Friend maintained his decision to deport Mr. Khan on ground of national security. A deportation order was accordingly signed and served on Mr. Khan, together with notification of his right of appeal against Pakistan as country of destination. Mr. Khan has now waived that right of appeal and arrangements will be made for his deportation as soon as possible.

Visitors

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* passengers in total and *(b)* people seeking admission as visitors who arrived at Heathrow from the Indian subcontinent on any of the days from 11 to 15 October for which figures are available were (i) granted admission, (ii) refused entry and detained, (iii) refused entry and granted temporary admission, (iv) returned to the Indian subcontinent within that period and (v) are still waiting for a decision on whether to grant leave to enter;

(2) how many passengers from the Indian subcontinent who were detained or granted temporary admission pending further examination between 11 and 16 October were subsequently (i) refused entry but granted temporary admission, (ii) refused entry without the grant of temporary admission, (iii) granted leave to enter and (iv) still await decisions on whether to grant leave to enter the United Kingdom;

(3) how many of those who sought entry to the United Kingdom as visitors between 11 and 16 October are *(a)* still in detention, *(b)* still on indefinite temporary admission and *(c)* still awaiting an interview before a decision on whether to grant leave to enter;

(4) how many people *(a)* in total and *(b)* from the Indian subcontinent, sought leave to enter the United Kingdom as visitors on the days from 11 to 16 October for which figures are available;

(5) how many passengers *(a)* in total and *(b)* from the Indian subcontinent, arrived at Heathrow airport on any of the days from 11 to 15 October for which figures are available.

Mr. Waddington: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Police Levels (Solihull)

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on police manning levels in Solihull.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable of the west midlands that on 8 December 1986 there were 127 police officers in the Solihull sub-division.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the spending of his Department on fees to outside consultants in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Hurd [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. 204]: The 1986-87 estimate for payments by the Home Office to outside management and computer consultants is £2,650,000. Equivalent estimates for payments for 1984-85 and 1985-86 were £879,000 and £1,495,000 respectively. These payments include expenses and VAT as well as fees. Separate information on fees alone or for the years prior to 1984-85 is not readily available.

Prison Sentences

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish in the *Official Report* such information as is available as to how the average time actually served in prison by offenders sentenced to a term of three years' imprisonment, seven years' imprisonment, 10 years' imprisonment, 15 years' imprisonment, 20 years' imprisonment, 30 years' imprisonment and life imprisonment, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986, c. 80]: Information on the distribution of time served under sentence by life sentence prisoners received since 1965 is published in Table 4(e) of "Prison Statistics, England and Wales 1985", Cmnd. 9903. Information on time served under determinate sentence is given in Table 4(f) of the same publication. Information on time served for the lengths of sentence specified is given in the following table. Time served under sentence is reduced by remission, parole and time spent in custody on remand.

Length of sentence and average time served by persons discharged in 1985; selected sentence lengths—England and Wales

Length of sentence (years)	*Average time served*[1] *(months)*
3	16
7	46
10	72
15	109
20	[2]190
30	[2] . . .

[1] Based on those discharged on completion of their sentence or on parole; excludes those discharged following a recall from parole or for other reasons, eg successful appeal, transfer out of prison department establishments.

[2] In 1985 only two prisoners were discharged from sentences of 20 years and none from sentences of 30 years.

Mass Media Policy

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the outcome of the conference of European Ministers on mass media policy.

Mr. Mellor: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Prisoners (Costs)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, further to his answer of 4 December, *Official Report*, column *711*, he will publish the per capita costs per prisoner for the three years and five prisons referred to therein.

Mr. Mellor: The information requested is provided in the following table:

Penal establishments having the highest and lowest per capita costs

Year	*Highest*	*£/per inmate week*	*Lowest*	*£/per inmate week*
1983-84	Albany	[1]915	Kirkham	125
1984-85	Parkhurst	656	Rudgate	144
1985-86	Lindholme	[2]942	Rudgate	120

[1] A substantial proportion of this cost was a direct result of the riot which took place in June 1983. Because of the damage caused to cells in the prison, some prisoners had to be transferred to accommodation elsewhere, but prison staff remained at much the same level as before to provide escorts for contractors carrying out remedial work on which considerable additional expenditure was incurred.

[2] This figure is not representive of the running costs of the establishment. A major element of the cost was for equipping what was a new establishment with a certified normal accommodation of 600. As the establishment did not start receiving prisoners until November 1985 the average inmate population during the year was only 62, which distorted the figures for average inmate costs.

State Security

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration he gave prior to his speech in the House on 3 December to the efficacy of arrangements for supervision of the security services in *(a)* Canada and *(b)* Israel.

Mr. Hurd: As part of my responsibility for the security service in this country I am naturally interested in how other countries arrange these matters. As I indicated in the House on 3 December at column 941, each country has devised its own system to suit its own constitutional circumstances.

NATO Crisis Management Committee

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the posts, ranks and responsibilities of officials from his Department who represent the United Kingdom on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation crisis management committee and its sub-committees.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am aware of no such committee.

Civil Defence

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department which grants were made to local authorities in the United Kingdom under the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations 1983 for 1985-86; and what are projected for these authorities in 1986-87.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Civil Defence (Grant) (Amendment) Regulations 1983 set out those expenses incurred by local and police authorities in the discharge of their civil defence functions which are completely reimbursed by way of grant. Civil defence expenses other than those specified in the 1983 regulations are subject to 75 per cent. reimbursement under the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations 1953. The total grant payable in 1985-86 to authorities in England and Wales under the 1953 regulations has not yet been finalised, but the provisional figure is £11,726,208. The projected figure for 1986-87 is £13,775,250.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will identify the terms of reference and frequency of meetings of *(a)* the Police War Duties Committee and *(b)* the Standing Working Party of Police Staff Officers on home defence planning;

(2) if he will identify the relationship between his Department and the Police War Duties Committee; and the extent and mechanisms for liaison between his Department and that committee.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Police War Duties Committee (PWDC) is a committee of the central conference of chief constables. It meets as necessary, currently on an annual basis, to discuss developments in civil defence and police war duties planning. Detailed co-ordination of planning is undertaken by the standing working party of police staff officers, which meets three times a year and reports to PWDC. Both are chaired by a Home Office official.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he anticipates work on the home defence headquarters for regional 81, north Wales, to begin; what is the projected cost of the construction work *(a)* in total, *(b)* in the financial year 1986-87 and *(c)* in the financial year 1987-88; and how much work he expects construction to generate locally.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Arrangements for construction work are under consideration, but a start is unlikely to be made in the next two years.

EMPLOYMENT

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Paymaster General if he will give an estimate of the costs incurred by his Department as a result of the work of the Environment Committee on its consideration of the question of reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel.

Mr. Trippier: The estimated costs incurred by my Department in giving oral and written evidence to the Environment Committee were £3,200. The Committee's recommendations are being considered.

Simplified Planning Zones

Mr. Adley asked the Paymaster General what steps he is taking to generate employment in areas designated as simplified planning zones.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I understand that my hon. Friend is referring to the Government's inner cities initiative. The principal aim of the initiative is to encourage enterprise and employment in the inner city. A growing number of steps are being taken, many of them piloting new approaches to the employment problems of residents. Among these, as examples only are:

—support by our inner city task force for 50 projects to date, committing £2·2 million, including, training and enterprise training, employment of local labour, help towards the purchase and refurbishment of community facilities, support for ethnic minority enterprise, support for community groups, help with consultancy services and fostering of schools/industry links.

—improved co-ordination between different Departments of Government in delivering national programmes in inner city areas which produced, for example, the recent £1·5 million contract in Handsworth, Birmingham, combining physical refurbishment of housing with employment and training for local residents.

—discussions which I have with the insurance industry to help tackle the insurance problems faced by some inner city businesses, with the result that I announced on 29 October the setting up of inner city insurance contact points manned by staff from the Association of British Insurers.

— discussions which I am having with the banks to encourage the development of their services to inner city business, including the better provision of loan finance.

—agreement by the Manpower Services Commission to review the operation of its programme in the inner city areas so that it can better meet the employment needs of people living there, including close liaison between the Commission's officials and task force leaders.

I am confident that these efforts will address our aim of generating employment in the inner city, encouraging the enterprise of people living there, and making the inner city a better place to do business in.

North-West

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the provision for industrial training and re-training in the north-west.

Mr. Trippier: The main responsibility for the provision of employee training rests with employers. The great majority of industries have recognised industry training organisations that are able to offer advice to employers, and grants to promote the development of better training arrangements. In the north-west, the Manpower Services Commission plans in 1986-87 to assist with the training of some 45,300 adults and some 65,100 young people on YTS, at a cost of £29·9 million and £118·4 million, respectively.

Batley and Spen

Mrs. Peacock asked the Paymaster General how many applications his Department has received in Batley and Spen under *(a)* the new workers scheme, *(b)* the mobility scheme and *(c)* the enterprise allowance.

Mr. Trippier: We do not have separate figures for Batley and Spen for the new workers scheme. At the end of November 546 people were supported by the scheme in Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees area which includes Batley and Spen. Since its introduction on 16 June 1986, Batley and Spen valley jobcentres have taken 20 applications under the travel to interview scheme. Sixteen were accepted.

Records are not available on the number of applications made under the enterprise allowance scheme, but since the scheme's inception in August 1983, 272 people from Batley and Spen have joined the scheme.

Mrs. Peacock asked the Paymaster General if he will list the help being provided by his Department for *(a)* the young unemployed and *(b)* the long-term unemployed in Batley and Spen.

Mr. Trippier: All the schemes listed in the "Action for Jobs" booklet, with the exception of career development loans and the travel to interview scheme which are operating on a pilot basis, are available in Batley and Spen.

The schemes specifically designed to help young people are:

—YTS
—new workers scheme
—community industry

The schemes specifically designed to help the long-term unemployed are:

—restart
—the community programme
—jobclubs

Job Training Scheme

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General from what parts of the Department of Employment's and the Manpower Services Commission's budgets funding for the job training scheme will come.

Mr. Trippier: The current job training programme is funded from the Manpower Services Commission's grant-in-aid for adult and occupational training. The new job training scheme, which is currently being piloted in nine areas, is being funded from within that grant-in-aid.

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General what are the implications of the job training scheme for the future of skillcentres.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. and noble Friend announced plans for the new job training scheme pilots on 9 October. We review frequently current provision for vocational education and training to ensure that it both meets the needs of the labour market and represents good value for money. I have no plans to announce changes to the MSC's skills training agency.

Adjudication (Birmingham)

Mr. Terry Davis asked the Paymaster General how many claims under consideration at the adjudication office in Birmingham on 31 October 1985 had been held there for more than a month.

Mr. Trippier: Information is not readily available about the number of cases outstanding for more than one month prior to 31 October 1985 and could only be obtained at disproportionate expense.

Restart Scheme

Mr. Fields asked the Paymaster General how many unemployed people have been offered jobs as a result of restart training schemes in the *(a)* Liverpool travel-to-work area and *(b)* Broadgreen constituency area; how many people have had benefit suspended having failed to attend restart interviews in (i) Liverpool travel-to-work area and (ii) Broad green constituency area; and how many people have had benefit suspended for not meeting the requirements of the new availability for work test in (1) Liverpool travel-to-work area and (2) Broadgreen constituency area.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Lindane (Bats)

Mr. Hardy asked the Paymaster General whether he will ban the use of Lindane for the control of bats.

Mr. Trippier: The use of Lindane for the control of bats is already effectively banned because Lindane is not approved under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 for this purpose.

Voluntary Projects

Mr. Corbett asked the Paymaster General what has been the annual budget for the voluntary projects programme; and what plans he has to increase it.

Mr. Trippier: The budget for the voluntary projects programme for the last three financial years was:

	£ million
1984-85	9·6
1985-86	12·1
1986-87	14

There are no plans at present to increase it.

Debts

Mr. Ottaway asked the Paymaster General what assessment he has made of the impact on small businesses of establishing a statutory right to interest on the late payment of debts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I am not convinced that a statutory right to interest on overdue debts would in practice improve small firms' ability to secure payment on time. It is already open to businesses to include provision for payment of interest in the terms of a contract.

Nuclear Energy Inspectors

Mr. Wigley asked the Paymaster General what is the approved establishment of nuclear energy inspectors employed by the Health and Safety Commission; what is the total actual number currently employed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The planned number of nuclear installations inspectors approved by the Health and Safety

Executive for the current financial year is 105. On 1 December 1986 there were 98 nuclear installations inspectors in post.

A recruitment competition for up to 20 more nuclear installations inspectors is at present under way.

NATIONAL FINANCE

"The Poor Man's James Bond"

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Customs and Excise intend to take any action against the importation of "The Poor Man's James Bond" into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Brooke: Customs have no record of having dealt with any video cassettes, books, magazines or films of this title. Should they be imported at any future date they will be treated under the normal import rules.

Performance-related Pay

Mr. Deakins asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take full account of the experience in operation of performance-related pay in the National Audit Office in the further development of performance-related pay in the Civil Service.

Mr. Brooke: Yes, so far as it is relevant.

Charitable Giving

Mr. Alan Howarth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has yet decided whether the Government's employees should be able to participate in tax-relieved schemes for charitable giving.

Mr. Peter Brooke: I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him in reply to a similar question on 20 November at column 314.

Official Secrets Act

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer under what circumstances a person who is required to sign the Official Secrets Act can subsequently lose his retirement pension rights.

Mr. Brooke: The general effect of existing legislation, as applied to public service pension schemes, is that public servants are liable to pension forfeiture if they are convicted of treason, of a serious offence (with imprisonment exceeding 10 years) under the Official Secrets Acts, or of an offence in connection with their employment, committed before the benefit becomes payable and subsequently certified by a Minister as either

"gravely injurious to the state"

or

"liable to lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public services."

Privatisation

Mr. Eadie asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has about the proportion of shares held by private individual shareholders in formerly publicly-owned industries privatised since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 17 November 1986, at column *82*.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Pike asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the relationship between the present exchange rate and the balance of payments.

Mr. MacGregor: The relationship between the exchange rate and the balance of payments is complex. The adjustment in the exchange rate which has occurred in response to the fall in the price of oil has been accompanied by an improvement in competitiveness, which should in time benefit the non-oil current account on condition that the improvement is sustained. This has to be secured by industry's control of its costs, especially unit labour costs. Industry should plan on the basis that we shall maintain a firm exchange rate as we have done before.

Departmental Expenditure

Dr. Bray asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what basis the central team of Treasury and other officials reported on page 37 of the "Executive Summary of their Multi-Departmental Review of Budgeting," published by the Treasury in March, that there is no evidence that Departments produce a record of expenditure committed but not yet incurred.

Mr. MacGregor: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Leasehold Rental Payments (Taxation)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the revenue in 1985-86 from tax on domestic leasehold rental payments.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to prevent traders who sell goods below the cost of supply being able to reclaim more value added tax than they charge on the sale of these items under the procedure known as loss leading; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: No. VAT registered traders can generally recover the VAT that they have paid on their business purchases. There is no reason to suppose that this gives rise to problems of distortion if the goods are sold as loss leaders, but, if my hon. Friend knows of difficulties, perhaps he will write to me.

Inflation

Mr. Parry asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the current level of inflation.

Mr. MacGregor: The retail price index increased at an annual rate of 3 per cent. in the 12 months to October.

Keith Committee Report

Mr. Robert B. Jones asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when it is intended to publish draft proposals for implementing the Inland Revenue aspects of volumes 1 and 2 of the Keith committee report.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Inland Revenue is, with my approval, today issuing a consultative document, entitled

"The Inland Revenue and the Taxpayer" containing detailed proposals in response to the income tax, capital gains tax and corporation tax recommendations of the Keith committee. These proposals follow detailed consultations with a number of representative bodies over the last two years.

The extent of the committee's review, which covered the whole range of the Inland Revenue's powers, is reflected in the 46 draft clauses and two schedules included in the consultative document. It would not be feasible to implement changes of this magnitude in a single Finance Bill.

Subject to reactions to the proposals, the Government are considering giving priority to those clauses which streamline the administration of corporation tax and improve the effectiveness of the PAYE and sub-contractor deduction schemes. The corporation tax proposals are part of a wider programme of reform, including new computer systems which will not be operational for some years. Further details are given in an Inland Revenue press release issued today.

Construction Industry (VAT)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in view of the level of value added tax evasion in the construction industry, he will introduce a nil value added tax threshold for that industry.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 December 1986]: No such plans have been made, but all representations concerning the level of the VAT registration threshold will be taken into account in the annual review before my right hon. Friend's Budget.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Rolls-Royce Plant, Hatfield

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he has met the management of Rolls-Royce to discuss the proposed closure of the Rolls-Royce plant in Hatfield; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if his Department has been notified of the expected number of jobs that will be lost following the closure of the Rolls-Royce plant in Hatfield; and how many of these the company expects to lose through compulsory redundancy.

Mr. Pattie: This is a matter for the board of Rolls-Royce plc. I understand however that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the integration of the Hatfield test facility in the Leavesden site.

Greece (Alcoholic Beverages)

Mr. Sims asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations Her Majesty's Government are making to the Greek Government in respect of the value added tax scheme they are introducing on 1 January relating to alcoholic beverages.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Government have made firm representations to the Greek authorities about the different rates of value added tax to be applied with effect from 1 January 1987 to certain alcoholic beverages. We have also drawn the European Commission's attention to our concerns that the proposed rates discriminate against imported spirits and may contravene Community law. The Commission is at our request actively pursuing this issue with the Greek Government.

Land-Rovers

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) into which group of the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985 Land-Rovers fall;

(2) what consideration is given to the status of the intended purchaser, and the nature of his activities, when the export of Land-Rovers is being considered under export licensing procedures.

Mr. Alan Clark: Civilian Land-Rovers are not subject to export control.

Non-Life Insurance (EC)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the position regarding free trade in non-life insurance within the European Economic Community, following the ruling of the European Court of Justice.

Mr. Howard: The European Court of Justice gave judgment in the four important insurance cases, which had been brought by the Commission against Germany, France, Denmark and Ireland, on 4 December. These judgments will represent an important landmark in the development of the Community's internal market in the field of trade in services in general and in insurance services in particular. The main immediate impact is likely to be on the proposed Council directive to facilitate the provision of non-life insurance services. I hope that discussion of this directive will resume as quickly as possible, in the light of the conclusions of the recent meeting in London of the European Council, which called for decisions during 1987 to open up the market in financial services, including insurance.

Ailsa Shipyard

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department has taken regarding the offers to purchase the Ailsa shipyard; when he expects an announcement on the future of the yard; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The decision on the sale of the Ailsa shipyard is a matter for British Shipbuilders. It has received bids and is in touch with interested parties. I am sure its decision will be based on a careful assessment of the employment and commercial aspects of the bids, before it invites my comments. I in turn am consulting my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland. I hope that it will be possible to make an announcement about the future of the yard shortly.

Submarine Syncrolift Equipment

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if syncrolift equipment for submarines is classified as military equipment under the ban on such material to Libya; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Syncrolift equipment is designed for civilian uses and is not subject to export licensing under the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985.

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what guidance was given to Northern Engineering Industries regarding the export to Libya of submarine syncrolift equipment.

Mr. Alan Clark: Following a approach from the company, the Department of Trade and Industry confirmed that the syncrolift shiplift was not subject to export licensing under the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985.

BAOR (Electrical Equipment Standards)

Miss Boothroyd asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to which United Kingdom standards are regarded as being equivalent *(a)* to the European standard and *(b)* to the West German standard for the purposes of supplying non-military electrical equipment to British Army of the Rhine installations.

Mr. Chope: I have been asked to reply.

Contracts in Germany for the supply of non-military electrical equipment are placed on our behalf by the German construction administration under the terms of the NATO status of forces agreement. The contract instructions conform to German law and state that standard trade terminology should be used to specify the services; relevant (DIN) standards can be quoted. In practice DIN or VDE standards are quoted.

West Bank and Gaza Strip (Tariff Measures)

Mr. Hind asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the adoption of tariff measures for the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza strip.

Mr. Alan Clark: I wish to explain the agreement by the Government to the adoption of a Council regulation on the tariff arrangements applicable to imports into the Community of products originating in the "occupied territories" before the Select Committee has an opportunity for scrutiny and the reason for the delay in reporting the matter for scrutiny.

The regulation reflects the Community's concern to take practical steps to improve economic conditions for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip. It is also intended to bring the preferential trade arrangements for the occupied territories into line with the terms given to neighbouring countries. The United Kingdom's direct interest in the products covered is negligible.

Because of the need for confidentiality in consideration of the tariff treatment to be given to particular products, the Commission's proposal was given a confidential classification, as were the subsequent Council negotiations. I hope, therefore, that the House will understand why it was not possible for the full scrutiny processes to be followed.

The regulation was adopted at the Foreign Affairs Council on 27 October 1986 and entered into force on 16 November. I regret that because of an oversight the scrutiny committees were not informed of the adoption of the regulation until 25 November. I can assure the House that no discourtesy was intended.

Nominee Accounts

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to prohibit the use of nominee accounts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *21*]: If the hon. Member is asking whether we will introduce legislation to prohibit the use of nominee shareholdings, we have no plans to do so. Nominee shareholdings often play a useful role in meeting legitimate business needs, for example, in facilitating the discretionary management of shareholdings by stockbrokers and other professionals. The law already provides for the beneficial ownership of shares to be disclosed to those who have a need to know.

Statistical Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list all the changes that have been made since 1979 in his Department in the presentation of statistical information; and what further changes are now planned.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 December 1986, c. *86*]: Major statistical changes in the period since 1979 were listed in my reply to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) on 8 December 1986 at column 22-26. Further changes planned, or under serious consideration, are shown in the tables.

In addition to these changes, the Department is going ahead with plans, as part of the Government's initiative on tradeable information, to disseminate in computer-readable format a wide range of its existing statistical series. In 1988 a wide variety of indices and constant price series will be rebased to reflect the pattern of production and prices in 1985 rather than 1980.

Table 1

Changes already decided

Statistical series/inquiry	*Nature of change*
Credit press notice	The inclusion of figures from banks for the amounts outstanding on personal accounts in the United Kingdom, excluding bridging and house purchase finance and Access and Visa cards, where the amount of the individual loan is £15,000 or less, divided between fixed sum and running account credit.
Overseas Trade Statistics	The adoption by the United Kingdom of the third revision of the Standard International Trade Classification from the beginning of 1988.
Company Accounts Analysis	The introduction of a quarterly Business Monitor to give more up-to-date results.
Companies' rates of return	Publication of quarterly estimates.
Computer Services Inquiry	Revised questionnaire and a substantially altered and enlarged panel of respondents.
Engineering Sales and Orders	Annual publication to be introduced in a new Business Monitor PA 1008.

Statistical series/inquiry	*Nature of change*
Annual Census of Production (Manufacturing)	Use of the company (rather than the establishment) as the main basis for reporting from 1988.
Retailing Inquiry	The pattern will be revised, with "full" inquiries conducted in respect of 1986 and 1990, and intermediate inquiries in the intervening years.
Service Trades Inquiry	The inquiry will be extended to cover legal and certain health and educational services.

Table 2

Changes under consideration

Statistical series/inquiry	*Nature of change*
Quarterly Sales Inquiry	A review is nearing completion and may recommend some restructuring of the quarterly, and monthly, sales inquiries.
Value Added and Data Services	Collection and possible publication of statistics from VADS licence holders.
Computer-held Databases	Collection and publication of statistics on revenue from computer-held databases from database hosts.
Information Technology	Publication of an IT products Business Monitor.
Cinema	Collection and publication of cinema statistics.
Trade Performance Ratios	Production and publication of early estimates of trade performance ratios.

Industrial Counterfeiting

Mr. Iain Mills asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to increase the penalties available for offences of industrial courterfeiting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 December 1986]: Much industrial counterfeiting is already an offence under the Trade Description Act 1968 which provides penalties of up to two yers in prison, or an unlimited fine, or both. Moreover, clause 12 of the Criminal Justice Bill will be applicable in certain cases and will provide penalties of up to 10 years in prison, or an unlimited fine, or both. In these circumstances, I do not think that increases in the available penalties are necessary.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Antarctic Treaty System

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of the Government towards the recent United Nations resolution on South Africa and the Antarctic treaty system in the context of the support given to that resolution by several of Britain's fellow consultative parties.

Mr. Eggar: We have repeatedly emphasised our abhorrence of South Africa's racial policies and the repressive measures which enforce them. However, those policies are unconnected with either the Antarctic treaty's purposes or South Africa's Antarctic activities. Since the General Assembly resolution in question potentially prejudiced the Antarctic treaty system's peaceful operation, the majority of treaty consultative parties, including Britain, registered disapproval by not participating in the vote. Those consultative parties who voted in favour indicated that this would have no practical effect on their treaty obligations vis-a-vis South Africa.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the Government's policy on Antarctica and the Antarctica treaty system in the light of the recent session on Antarctic minerals at Tokyo and the United Nations debate on the question of Antarctica.

Mr. Eggar: We remain committed to supporting the Antarctic treaty system, which has kept Antarctica free of conflict for so long. We therefore welcomed the further progress achieved within this framework at the recent Antarctic minerals negotiating round at Tokyo. Regrettably, recent General Assembly resolutions have sought to interfere with the Antarctic treaty's operation and membership. In addition these actions set an unwelcome precedent for other international treaties negotiated outside the United Nations orbit. Accordingly, we and most of our treaty partners have registered our disapproval by not participating in the 1986 General Assembly voting.

British Council

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money is spent by the British Council on its work in the Caribbean countries; and how many permanent staff they have to undertake work in those countries.

Mr. Eggar: In 1985-86 the British Council spent £37,000 of its own resources in the Caribbean countries. It also handled £1,591,000 on behalf of the FCO, ODA and others. The Council has no permanent staff working in the Caribbean.

Radio Active Material

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has had fom the Irish Government expressing opposition to the dumping of radio active material in the Irish sea.

Mr. Eggar: None; but the Irish Prime Minister expressed concern about the dischage of radioactive material from Sellafield when he met my right honourable Friend the Prime Minister in the margins of the European Council on 6 December.

Disarmament

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list his Department's principal achievements in working towards disarmament since 1983.

Mr. Eggar: We have continued to participate directly and constructively in all the active multilateral negotiations and discussions on arms control and disarmament. We maintain close and regular contacts with the United States on the bilateral United States/Soviet talks on nuclear and space arms and agree that priority should be given to an INF agreement with restraints on shorter range systems and a 50 per cent. cut over five years in United States and Soviet strategic offensive weapons. British Ministers have also maintained a dialogue on arms control with representatives of the Soviet Union.

We have played a leading role at the conference on disarmament in Geneva, in particular in the efforts to achieve a world-wide permanent and verifiable ban on chemical weapons. The United Kingdom has tabled five detailed proposals to this end in Geneva since 1983. The conference's ad hoc negotiating committee, which has been under United Kingdom chairmanship for 1986, has made encouraging progress this year.

We played a prominent and positive role at the third review conference on the non-proliferation treaty in August-September 1985 in Geneva, which produced a final document strongly endorsing this important treaty.

We took the lead in formulating the West's constructive and innovative proposal for verification of troop reductions at the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in December 1985, which remains on the table.

We were instrumental in the establishment of the high level task force on conventional arms control set up by the North Atlantic Council ministerial meeting in Halifax, Canada, in May this year, which is continuing to examine opportunities to make progress in the elimination of conventional force disparities on the basis of the Brussels declaration.

We made a significant contribution to the negotiation of the package of confidence and security-building measures agreed by the conference on disarmament in Europe in Stockholm in September, which promises to bring about a greater degree of openness and predictability about military activities in the whole of Europe.

We also made a substantial contribution to the successful outcome of the biological weapons convention review conference in Geneva in September.

At the United Nation's General Assembly's first committee, we have continued to work towards a better understanding of our policies and at this year's session the United Kingdom was the principal sponsor of resolutions on the bilateral arms negotiations, objective information about military budgets and United Nations disarmament studies, all of which were carried. In addition we co-sponsored several other constructive resolutions on disarmament matters.

Nuclear Tests

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union to the effect that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics extend its moratorium on nuclear tests beyond 31 December; and if he will initiate discussions with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the outstanding problems of verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Mr. Eggar: No. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister earlier today. The United Kingdom, together with other western countries, proposed in 1984 a mandate for an ad hoc committee at the Geneva conference on disarmament which would have allowed discussion of outstanding problems, including verification. It is a matter of regret that the Soviet Union has not agreed to this western mandate.

Indonesia

Mr. Terry Davis asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all the official delegations or Government-sponsored individuals or parties from Indonesia who have visited the United Kingdom since January 1985, stating in each case the purpose of the visit.

Mr. Eggar: The principal visits have been as follows:

April 1985

Admiral Romly, Chief of Naval Staff, and party; to attend commisioning of an ex-RN frigate sold to Indonesia.

Professor Sukardji, Director-General of Higher Education; to visit academic institutions.

Mr. Umar Ali, Secretary-General, Department of Trade; to discuss trade co-operation with United Kingdom firms and officials.

May 1985

General Supardi, Secretary-General, Department of Defence; for discussions on defence equipment matters.

June 1985

Mr. Abdul Kadir, Secretary-General, Ministry of Information; to visit BBC, COI, British Council.

July 1985

General Surono, Minister for Political and Security Affairs, and Professor Habibie, Minister of Research and Technology; for talks on industrial co-operation and signature of science and technology agreement.

Air Chief Marshal Sukardi, Chief of Air Staff; to visit United Kingdom defence manufacturers.

August 1985

General Awaloedin, Chairman of Indonesian Government Social Insurance Agency; to study United Kingdom social services and training facilities.

Miss Simandjuntak, Chief Librarian, Indonesian Parliament; to study parliamentary and other library services.

October 1985

Rear Admiral Kasenda; to attend the commissioning of an ex-RN frigate.

January 1986

Mr. Rahardi Ramelan, Deputy Chairman, Technology Assessment Agency; to see United Kingdom advances in engineering and electronics.

May 1986

Professor Zen, Deputy Chairman, Technology Assessment Agency; to discuss seabed resources mapping project with United Kingdom firms and officials.

Mr. Anton Lesiangi MP, Head of Parliamentary Committee for Mining and Energy; to visit United Kingdom companies in mining sector.

June 1986

Professor Fuad Hassan, Minister for Education and Culture; to study English language training and library services.

Mr. Prijono, President for State Mining Corporation; to visit United Kingdom coal mining industry.

A party of senior officers visited the British Army equipment exhibition.

July 1986

Rear Admiral Basoeki, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Logistics); for talks relating to Indonesia's purchase of ex-Royal Navy frigates.

August 1986

Professor Winarno, Ministry of Agriculture; to discuss food processing and food standards.

September 1986

Mr. Ramto, Deputy Governor of Jakarta; to see London docklands and light railway. Air Vice Marshall Hartono, Director of Air Defence Headquarters; visit to RAF Lossiemouth.

Mr. Angus Ardie, Deputy Chairman, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce; led a party of business men and officials to attend annual meeting of United Kingdom-Indonesian joint working party.

A party of senior officers visited the Farnborough air show.

October 1986

Lt. General Sanoesi, Head of Indonesian police; to visit New Scotland Yard and view police training facilities.

El Salvador

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the nature of the on-the-spot training being offered to El Salvadorean armed forces under the technical co-operation programme agreed with President Duarte during his visit to Britain in 1984.

Mr. Eggar: No training has been offered to the Salvadorean armed forces under the technical co-operation programme, which consists wholly of civilian assistance.

Mr. Mordechai Vanunu

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further approach to the Israelis in order to secure an explanation as to how Mordechai Vanunu left the United Kingdom.

Mr. Eggar: We have at present no plans to do so.

Falkland Islands (Fisheries)

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have been held between Her Majesty's Government and representatives of the Argentine Government, directly or through intermediaries, concerning policing of the part of the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone which touches or overlaps with the fishing zone claimed by Argentina and affected by its agreement with the Soviet Union.

Mr. Eggar: No specific discussions have been held; but as my right hon. and learned Friend said in his statement to the House on 29 October, he has put a suggestion to the Argentine Foreign Minister to

"review how Britain and Argentina can co-operate to support conservation on a regional basis."

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is now in a position to state the names, ownership, age and gross registered tonnage of the two fishing vessels which are to be employed in the policing of the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone.

Mr. Eggar: The Falkland Islands Government have chartered two vessels from J. Marr and Son of Hull, the GA Reay and the Seisella. The former, GRT 928 tons, was built in 1968 and the latter, GRT 1,144 tons, in 1969.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the anticipated total annual cost of chartering the two fishing vessels which are to police the Falkland Islands fisheries zone; and if he will break down this overall cost into its component elements;

(2) if he is in a position to state the total complement, including relief crews, of the two fishing vessels which are to be employed in the policing of the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone; and by whom they will be employed;

(3) what will be the complement of each of the two fishing vessels which are to police the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone; how long each ship will be expected to remain on station; if relief crews will be recruited from the United Kingdom or the Falkland Islands community; and if United Kingdom based leave entitlement is a condition of employment for the United Kingdom crew members.

Mr. Eggar: The contracts for these vessels have just been signed. The details are not yet available. Subject to the considerations of commercial confidence I shall write to the hon. Member once these are known.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what training has been undertaken by those persons employed on the two fishing vessels chartered to police the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone; and whether any trades unions were involved in the negotiations concerning terms and conditions of employment.

Mr. Eggar: Advisors from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, fisheries inspectorate have been in regular contact with the owners and crew of the two protection vessels chartered by the Falkland Islands Government to ensure that their levels of training are adequate for the task. Terms and conditions are a matter for agreement between owners and crews or their representatives.

Mr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is now in a position to state the anticipated annual cost of the chartering of the civilian aircraft which is to be employed in the policing of the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone; and if he will break down the cost into its component parts.

Mr. Eggar: The contract for the civilian aircraft is being negotiated and the details are not yet available.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is able to state when the two fishing vessels, which are to police the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone, will arrive on station.

Mr. Eggar: The two fisheries protection vessels will be in place shortly before the Falkland Islands conservation zone (FICZ) comes into effect on 1 February 1987.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if it is Her Majesty's Government's intention to replace, at some future date, the two fishing vessels chartered to police the Falkland

Islands fishery conservation zone by newly constructed fisheries protection vessels of the kind employed on such work in United Kingdom waters.

Mr. Eggar: This is a matter for the Falkland Islands Government who are responsible for administering the Falkland Islands conservation zone (FICZ). No decision has yet been taken about the possible replacement of the two chartered fisheries protection vessels.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number and countries of origin of the applications for licences to fish in the Falkland Islands fishery conservation zone, the criteria by which such licences are awarded to successful applicants and the price of these licences.

Mr. Eggar: Applications for licences for the Falkland Islands conservation zone (FICZ) have been received from most of the fleets which in the past have fished in Falklands waters and are still being processed. The number of vessels to be licensed will take account of conservation requirements. The cost of the licences will vary according to the size of the vessel and method of fishing, period and area to be fished, and target species: I shall write to the hon. Member with the details of licence fees.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what applications were received for licences to fish in the Falkland Islands fishing zone at the closing date, relating to applicant, country of application and nature of application; and how this compares in the case of each country to the position over the past year.

Mr. Eggar: Applications are now being processed. Applications have been received from most of the fleet active in the fishery last year, but also from others. The overall picture is not yet clear.

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria will be used in deciding whether to award licences to applicants wishing to fish in the Falkland Island fisheries zone; what quota restrictions will be applied; and what restrictions on fishing gear will be imposed to conserve fish stocks.

Mr. Eggar: The Falkland Islands Government are considering all licence applications and will allocate licences in accordance with the limits imposed by conservation requirements. The licensing arrangements will take account of the more intensive fishing methods employed by the squid jigging vessels.

Spain and Spanish Territories (British Citizens)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) in how many cases of British citizens being killed or injured whilst travelling or visiting Spain, the Canary Islands, Tenerife or other Spanish territories over the last seven years, inquiries are still being conducted by the Spanish authorities; and if he will give the date of each death or injury suffered;

(2) what information he has as to how many British tourists have died or suffered permanent physical injury as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning or similar side effects from gas poisoning whilst travelling in Spain, the Canary Islands, Tenerife and Spanish territories over the past seven years;

(3) what information he has as to how many British tourists have been positively identified to have suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning whilst travelling in Spain, the Canary Islands, Tenerife and Spanish territories in each of the last seven years;

(4) how many British tourists died whilst travelling or holidaying in Spain, the Canary Islands, Tenerife and Spanish territories in each of the past seven years.

Mr. Eggar: The figures and information in the form requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The available information, as reported by consular posts, is:

1985

Deaths of British tourists in the relevant areas: 102, of which two were from carbon monoxide poisoning. One British tourist suffered severe physical injury as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning.

1986

(To date) Deaths of British tourists in relevant areas: 147, of which one was due to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Canary Islands

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his estimate of the number of British tourists visiting the Canary Islands in each year since 1979.

Mr. Eggar: Based on information provided by the Spanish authorities, the estimated number of British tourists to the Canary Islands for the past four years is:

	Number
1983	517,000
1984	689,500
1985	744,000
[1]1986	763,000

[1] To September.

Earlier figures are not available.

South Korea

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British citizens are living in South Korea at the latest date.

Mr. Eggar: There are estimated to be about 750 British citizens living in South Korea.

Jehovah's Witness Sect, Greece

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise with the Greek Foreign Minister the persecution of the Jehovah's Witness sect of the Christian Church in Greece and the restrictions on their freedom of worship in parts of Greece and Crete; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We have not heard of systematic persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece, although are aware of a number of cases of imprisonment for refusal to perform military service, to which Greek law provides no civilian alternative.

Although the right of conscientious objection is not, as such, covered by the European convention on human

rights, there is a draft recommendation currently under consideration in the Council of Europe. This draft, which recommends that member states recognise conscientious objection to military service, was adopted at the May meeting of the Council of Europe's steering committee for human rights on which the United Kingdom and Greece were represented. It will be considered by Ministers Deputies of the Council of Europe early next year.

TRANSPORT

Estuarial Crossing (Tolls)

Mr. Henderson asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give guidance to the boards responsible for the administration of tolls on estuarial crossings on the adoption of common standards of accounting to facilitate more accurate comparisons of their efficiency and their costs of toll collection.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The tolled estuarial crossings are managed by different authorities under legislation specific to each undertaking. Ministers have no general power to direct the form of their accounts. Details of toll collection costs are already available. These costs are not necessarily an indicator of efficiency. Much depends on the volume and composition of the traffic at each crossing and on the levels of toll charged. In each case it is for the tolling authority to strike the right balance between the needs of traffic and the cost of collection.

M4 (Works)

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the remedial safety works undertaken on the M4 in Berkshire and Wiltshire since 23 June.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In Berkshire, central reserve safety barriers between junctions 8/9 and 11 have been raised and adjusted following earlier resurfacing. In Wiltshire, barriers between junctions 16 and 17 have been raised as part of major maintenance.

Settle-Carlisle Line

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the Settle-Carlisle line.

Mr. David Mitchell: I am not in a position to do so. I have not yet seen either the report of the TUCCs—although I understand this will be published on 17 December—or BR's financial case.

London Road Assessment Studies

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he now expects to publish the consultants' reports on the four London road assessment studies.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) earlier today.

Woolwich Ferry

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce the results of the review of the Woolwich ferry.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: After I have had an opportunity to consider the consultant's findings and recommendations from the London Borough of Greenwich which I expect to receive by the turn of the year.

Motorway Crash Barriers

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many fatalities have been caused in motorway accidents due to sections of crash barriers parting on impact with the result that displaced sections of barrier have pierced the impacting vehicle.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In the five cases where the angle beam parted on impact, there were two instances where a section of the barrier pierced the impacting vehicle.

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Transport what evidence he has about the incidence of motorway crash barriers parting on impact as a result of faulty welds at sectional joints.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are aware of five fatal accidents on the motorway network where welds have parted on impact. Two were cases of single welds and three were in respect of double welds.

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many motorway crash barriers currently exist which are joined together by the single weld galvanised over technique introduced in 1976.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Few if any single weld angle pieces have been installed since 1976 and from 1985 only double welds have been specified. The 2,000 or so single welds out of a total of 14,000 on motorways date almost entirely from installations originally provided before 1976.

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Transport if the welding specification of motorway barrier connections has been changed since April 1985.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. Revised details for tensioned corrugated beam safety fences were issued in June 1985. These specified that angle beams should have double sided butt welds to the requirements of BS 5135:1985 "Process of Arc Welding of Carbon and Carbon Manganese Steels".

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Transport what evidence his Department has collected about deteriorations in the single weld, galvanised joints on sections of motorway crash barriers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have no evidence of such deterioration and it is very unlikely that a galvanised weld in this position would deteriorate significantly over a period of 15-20 years.

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Transport if there has been any change in the welding specification of motorway crash barrier joints since 1976.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. In March 1976 the welding specification for tensioned corrugated beam safety fencing was altered to require either a strengthened single sided butt weld or a double-sided butt weld. Since June 1985 only the double-sided butt weld has been permitted.

European High-Speed Train Network

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the financing, development and operation of the proposed new

European high-speed train network; what is its estimated cost; if magnetic levitation technology will be incorporated into the high speed trains; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Governments of France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands have been examining a possible European railway network serving Paris, Brussels, Cologne and Amsterdam, with a possible spur to Calais to allow a link with the United Kingdom system via the Channel tunnel. French Government estimates put the total cost of such a network on the Continent within the range FFr19-21 billion for trains using steel wheels on rail, and at about FFr35 billion for trains based on magnetic levitation. These figures exclude the costs of the spur to the tunnel, for which no estimate has been made with magnetic levitation technology.

The proposals will be discussed at a ministerial meeting at The Hague on 22 December involving the four countries mentioned, together with the United Kingdom and Luxembourg. Possible means of financing and operating such a system are among the matters to be covered at that meeting.

Driving Tests, Cleethorpes

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the present waiting time for driving tests at the Cleethorpes test centre; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The present waiting time for a driving test at Cleethorpes is 23 weeks. This is too long. The delay was caused mainly by staff sickness. We are detaching examiners temporarily from other centres. We aim to post another permanent examiner to the area.

Public Transport (Christmas Holidays)

Mr. Eastham asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give guidance to passenger transport authorities on the provision of public transport after 8 pm on Christmas eve and new year's day, in the light of his campaign against drinking and driving.

Mr. David Mitchell: This is a matter for the judgment of individual authorities in the light of local circumstances. It is certainly open to them to decide that the provision of services during the Christmas and new year period should be given priority.

MV Kowloon Bridge

Mr. Stott asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make public the inspector's report on the damage sustained to the MV Kowloon Bridge.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the statement that I made earlier today.

A180 (Emergency Telephones)

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is now in a position to make an announcement regarding the possibility of installing emergency telephones on the A180 between Barnetby top and Grimsby.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Not yet; I am considering the question in the context of a wider look at the case for making limited provision of emergency telephones at selected locations on trunk roads.

London-Glasgow Trains (Re-routing)

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his discussions with British Rail on re-routing London-Glasgow trains via Edinburgh-Fauldhouse-Shotts or Linlithgow-Polmat-Falkirk High.

Mr. David Mitchell: British Rail has commenced some studies which are at an early stage and I have received no proposals.

Woolwich Ferry

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for the future of the Woolwich ferry in the event of the east London river crossing being constructed.

Mr. John Moore: If the east London river crossing were constructed the operation of the Woolwich ferry would be reviewed in the light of the volume of traffic then using it.

Blackwall Tunnels

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has received any requests from the London Docklands Development Corporation for improvements to the Blackwall tunnels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Spent Nuclear Fuel

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Transport if pursuant to his answer of 25 July to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, column *518*, he will identify those ports besides Barrow through which pass consignments of spent nuclear fuel from overseas.

Mr. David Mitchell: Spent nuclear fuel is transported from Switzerland via Dunkerque/Dover and from the Netherlands via Rotterdam/Immingham. Exceptionally one flask entered the United Kingdom via Ipswich during 1986, because of industrial action at Immingham.

Humberside Airport

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to require Humberside county council to privatise Humberside airport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend does not have the powers to require the privatisation of Humberside airport. Our present intention is to direct Humberside county council in the next financial year to form a Companies Act company and transfer the airport business to it, thereby facilitating the partial or full-scale privatisation of the airport.

Road User Behaviour

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what conclusions were reached by the recent gathering of behavioural scientists in Oxford for determining priorities for research into road user behaviour; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: After the meeting the chaiman, Dr. D. E. Broadbent, FRS, reported his conclusion that recent advances in psychological knowledge, which had

been applied to fields other than road safety would enable research to hold out the prospect of new policies and actions which could reduce road accidents by the end of the 1990s. There was some supportive detail.

Accordingly, a behavioural studies unit has been set up within the transport and road research laboratory. It is drawing up plans for a research programme internally, at United Kingdom universities and elsewhere of the kind envisaged at the meeting in question.

Parkway, Cleveland (Central Reserve Barriers)

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider providing central reserve barriers on the Parkway in Cleveland.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The A174 Parkway is a principal road for which Cleveland county council as the local highway authority has the statutory responsibility.

It is for the council to consider whether or not safety fences should be provided on the central reservation.

London Corridor Assessment Studies

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to publish the consultants' report on the London corridor assessment studies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: These reports are being published today. They analyse the problems in the four areas concerned on the basis of extensive traffic surveys and public consultation. They provide for the first time a full and factual picture as a basis for looking at long-term measures to improve conditions.

Copies of the full reports and their technical appendices are being sent to boroughs and to libraries in the study areas. They are also available for purchase from the Department. Since these are bulky documents, we are also making available free leaflets setting out the main findings from each of the reports.

The work disussed in these reports represents the first stage in addressing long-term issues in these major traffic corridors. We shall be consulting boroughs about the terms of reference for the next stage with a view to starting that phase of work in the early summer. We aim to find the solutions that meet Londoners' needs up to the end of the century and beyond whilst making sense in terms of requirements today. I shall be asking the boroughs concerned to co-operate with us in this work.

Copies of the reports are being placed in the Library.

Aircraft Noise

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to encourage the use of quieter aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Non noise-certificated aircraft on the United Kingdom register have been banned in the United Kingdom since the beginning of this year. The ban will apply to foreign registered aircraft from 1 January 1988. We are pursuing, in international negotiations, the question of phasing out United Kingdom and foreign chapter 2 aeroplanes in the longer term. Under restrictions announced in 1981 routine night operations by noisier aircraft will be banned at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted from 1 April next year.

ENVIRONMENT

Rag, Flock and Other Filling Materials Act 1951

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to seek to introduce amendments to the Rag, Flock and Other Filling Materials Act 1951.

Mr. Chope: We have no plans at present to introduce amendments to this Act. The safety of imported stuffed articles will in future be controlled by the proposed general safety requirement provisions of the Consumer Protection Bill which is currently before Parliament.

Homes (Repossessions)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of people who have had their homes repossessed by building societies and other providers of mortgages during the year to date; and what was the number of such cases in each of the last five years.

Mr. John Patten: For the latest available figures, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Fulham on 25 November at column 232.

Widdicombe Report

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the recommendations of the Widdicombe report on the conduct of local government that have been implemented by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Boyson: As my right hon. Friend made clear when the Widdicombe report was published on 19 June, the Government intend to weigh the public response to the report before drawing their own conclusions. Consultation on the report is still continuing; interested parties have until the end of the year to submit their views.

Residential Development (Planning Conditions)

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to prevent local planning authorities, having granted outline consent for residential development, imposing onerous conditions in association with their approval of reserved matters.

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall answer this question shortly.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Raynsford asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what guidance was given by his Department before July to Eurotunnel as to the merits on environmental grounds of exploration of sites other than Shakespeare cliff for disposal of spoil from the Channel tunnel;

(2) whether *(a)* Land Use Consultants or *(b)* any other independent consultants was invited by his Department to make an appraisal of the environmental consultants' report recommending Shakespeare cliff as the site for disposal of spoil from the Channel tunnel.

(3) whether Land Use Consultants were invited by his Department to undertake further studies on the feasibility of spoil disposal at Lappel bank consequent on their report in July indicating that Lappel bank was a preferable spoil disposal site to Shakespeare cliff.

Mr. Waldegrave: Following indentification in the White Paper "The Channel Fixed Link" in February 1986 of spoil disposal as an important environmental issue, the Government welcomed, through the medium of the Kent joint consultative committee, the proposal that a surplus tunnel spoil working group should conduct a thorough examination of potential disposal sites. The working group, which included Eurotunnel, local authority and DOE representatives, short listed a number of alternatives to Shakespeare cliff but in June indicated that it could not complete its work in time for the Commons Select Committee hearing.

In order to assist the Select Committee considering the Channel Tunnel Bill, the Department of the Environment commissioned Land Use Consultants (LUC) to carry out a rapid review of Eurotunnel's proposals for disposal at Shakespeare cliff and of seven alternative sites identified by the working group. In its report, which the Government made available to the Select Committee, LUC recommended that Lappel bank should be

"adopted as the preferred alternative location to Shakespeare cliff"

but stressed that, in view of the short timescale within which the study was conducted, there were many issues which would

"require detailed consideration should the Government decide to consider this option further".

The LUC report was received in July and Eurotunnel was asked for a formal response. This response reaffirmed its preference for Shakespeare cliff: but it indicated its willingness to make every effort to modify its proposals to meet the Government's requirement that environmental damage should be minimised.

Having considered very carefully all the available evidence — including the LUC report, Eurotunnel's comprehensive response, and the views of other interested parties—the Government concluded that neither Lappel Bank nor any of the other potentially viable "remote" disposal sites offered a clearly preferred alternative to the proposals included in the Bill.

In reaching this conclusion, the Government were satisfied that the information available was sufficient to enable a judgment to be made. They also considered, and informed the Select Committee that they did not consider that further technical studies to evaluate the viability of alternative sites would provide conclusive information pointing to a clear-out decision. In the circumstances, the Government did not require LUC or any other consultants to appraise Eurotunnel's proposals or to undertake further studies of the feasibility of disposal at Lappel Bank.

The decision to endorse disposal of Shakespeare cliff was made on the ground that, taking the project as a whole and recognising the environmental consequences, it remained the solution with the fewest technical and operational problems.

Mr. Raynsford asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was paid to Land Use Consultants by his Department to carry out a survey on alternative spoil disposal sites to Shakespeare cliff as part of the Channel tunnel scheme.

Mr. Waldegrave: It is not my Department's practice to reveal the level of fees paid for consultancy work, on the ground of commercial confidentiality.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many Greater London council mortgages have been transferred to the London residuary body; and what information he has regarding the current number of such mortgages.

Mr. John Patten: A total of 43,618 residential mortgages were taken over by the London residuary body on abolition. At the end of October, 39,150 remained with the LRB.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations his Department has received from ex-Greater London council mortgagors in respect of the letter to them from the London residuary body dated 7 November.

Mr. John Patten: One former GLC mortgagor has telephoned the Department, and two have made representations through their Members of Parliament. All those making representations have been informed that the offer contained in the LRB's letter of 7 November is entirely voluntary; that any mortgagor who does not wish to accept need take no action; and that any transfer of the mortgage on the winding up of the London residuary body will be at no cost to the borrower.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements he intends to make to protect former Greater London council mortgagors following the abolition of the London residuary body.

Mr. John Patten: The Local Government Act 1985 requires the residuary bodies to complete their work within five years of the abolition date. They are also required to submit, within four years of the abolition date, a scheme for their winding up, and for the disposal of any remaining property, rights and liabilities. My right hon. Friend will consider any scheme or proposal made by the LRB in due course, and will make suitable provision for remaining LRB mortgages to be transferred to another body.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will direct the London residuary body to compensate mortgagors for any additional expense arising from the transfer of their mortgages from the London residuary body to a building society; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The London residuary body, in conjunction with five building societies, wrote to 5,000 ex-GLC mortgagors on 7 November to offer them the opportunity to refinance their mortgages. The letter explained that anyone who accepts the offer may have to pay certain fees. But the offer is entirely voluntary, and any mortgagor who does not wish to incur expense need take no action. Any mortgages remaining with the London residuary body when it is wound up will be transferred to another body at no cost to the mortgagor.

Home Security (Leicester)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to the answer of 4 December to the hon. Member for Leicester, East, he will publish details of funding made or to be made available in Leicester for home security measures in 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: It has not been possible to identify expenditure on home security measures in Leicester in 1985-86.

For 1986-87, the Department is making available £242,000 on an estate action project at St. Peter's, Leicester in 1986-87. Of this, over £61,000 will go on security measures related to home security.

In 1987-88, Leicester city council will be able to bid for a share of estate action's increased resources. The size of its eventual allocation, and the proportion of that allocation devoted to security related measures will depend on the specific projects which it puts forward.

I do not know how much of its own resources Leicester has chosen to devote to home security measures.

Building Land

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what processes his Department adopts to monitor the amount of residential building land currently available and capable of immediate development.

Mr. Waldegrave: My Department obtains information from local planning authorities about the amount of residential land with outstanding planning permission, indicating whether the permission is outline only or full permission. Most of the latter is likely to be available for immediate development.

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give, on a county to county basis, the amount of underdeveloped building land currently benefiting from outline planning consent expressed in acres or hectares.

Mr. Waldegrave: Returns from local authorities indicate that the area of land with planning permission for residential development in March 1986 was as set out in the following table:

Area of land (in hectares) with planning permission for private sector residential development at March 1986

County	*Basis of return*	*Outline permission*	*Full permission*
Avon	L	126	356
Bedfordshire	L	114	41
Berkshire	M	412	566
Buckinghamshire	M	206	190
Cambridgeshire	L	193	213
Cheshire	A	383	424
Cleveland	M	386	164
Cornwall	M	290	194
Cumbria	M	95	155
Derbyshire	M	399	454
Devon	M	282	495
Dorset	M	197	211
Durham	M	153	179
East Sussex (E)	L	212	221
Essex	M	445	600
Gloucestershire	L	69	239
Hampshire	A	562	1,072
Hereford and Worcestershire	M	177	208
Hertfordshire	A	158	134
Humberside	M	316	291
Isle of Wight	L	13	28
Kent (E)	A	454	2,110
Lancashire	M	207	327
Leicestershire	M	198	159
Lincolnshire	M	242	424
Norfolk	M	233	510
North Yorkshire	L	171	234
Northamptonshire	M	336	279
Northumberland (E)	A	134	156
Nottinghamshire	M	192	303
Oxfordshire	A	202	343
Shropshire (E)	A	188	220
Somerset	A	214	271
Staffordshire	M	496	291
Suffolk	M	362	245
Surrey (E)	A	323	443
Warwickshire	A	106	190
West Sussex	A	147	141
Wiltshire	L	236	132
Greater Manchester	M	369	422
Merseyside (E)	M	219	251
South Yorkshire	M	163	343
Tyne and Wear	A	77	99
West Midlands	M	277	187
West Yorkshire	M	230	452
London (E)	L	84	111

These figures are based on returns from districts. They include estimates for non response where necessary. Where a whole county has not responded, this is shown by a letter (E).

Returns are not all made on the same basis. In some counties all districts make returns for all sites (A), in others returns relate to sites more than 10 dwellings (L). M denotes where there is a mixture of returns.

Council House Sales

Mrs. Peacock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the number of applications for the purchase of council houses in Batley and Spen and as to the number of council houses sold for each year since 1979.

Mr. John Patten: This information is not collected for individual constituencies.

Circular 22/80

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps his Department takes to consult the construction and development industry and relevant professional advisers on the operation of circular 22/80;

(2) whether he is satisfied with the operation of circular 22/80.

Mr. Waldegrave: Circular 22/80 contained two main messages: the need to secure a general speeding up of planning decisions, and the importance of ensuring that development is only prevented or restricted when this serves a clear planning purpose and the economic effects have been taken into account.

From time to time we receive representations about the application of policies outlined in circular 22/80, including representations from developers and from the construction industry. In the light of these, we believe that the main messages of the circular remain valid. In particular, there is still a need for greater efficiency in the handling of planning applications by local planning authorities. Certain aspects of the policies set out in the circular have since been reiterated — for example in circular 14/85 (development and employment) and in circular 31/85 (aesthetic control).

Housing Investment Programme

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the percentage change in the housing investment programme allocation for England between the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. John Patten: I shall answer this question shortly.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make it his policy in future to announce the final rate support grant settlement for England earlier in the financial year than December; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will take steps to ensure hat there will be three full months between his announcement of the final rate support grant settlement for England for 1987-88, and the date by which councils have to set a rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I shall answer these questions shortly.

Community Charge

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the likely annual cost for England of administering the community charge that is proposed in the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government."

Mr. Chope: We will publish an estimate of the cost of the new system when decisions have been taken about the detailed arrangements in England.

Urban Development Corporation

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he is giving to the proposal from black country chambers of commerce and industry that the Urban Development Corporation should be two tiered and with an advisory council; and when he expects to announce his decision.

Mr. John Patten: I shall be replying to the chambers shortly.

Local Authorities (Ministerial Meeting)

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about his meeting with representatives of local authorities and chambers of commerce and industry held on 8 December.

Mr. Ridley: The meeting which was to discuss the proposal for an urban development corporation in the black country was helpful and positive. My hon. Friend, the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction, will be holding a further meeting with local authority representatives on 16 December.

Rating System

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to introduce legislation to reform the rating system in England during the current Parliament; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend gave on 27 November to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) at column *317*.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Northampton General Hospital

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the level of capital expenditure at Northampton general hospital between 1974 and 1979 and 1979 and 1985.

Mrs. Currie: The Northampton general hospital is the responsibility of Northampton district health authority, which advises me that the appropriate figures are £16,188,000 and £18,670,000 at 1986-87 price levels. These figures exclude expenditure on major medical equipment or computer equipment which cannot readily be identified separately. My hon. Friend might therefore like to contact the chairman of Northampton health authority on these particular points.

Under-fives Initiative

Mr. Galley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the future of the under-fives initiative which is due to end in March 1987.

Mr. Newton: I have today given approval to two schemes costing a total of £550,000 in 1987-88 to help families with children under five.

The first scheme will provide tapering grants up to a planned total of £400,000 in 1987-88 to help the projects which have been set up under the under-fives initiative to secure alternative funding after the ending of the initiative. Of the 110 projects being funded under the initiative, nearly half are already financially secure for next year. The future of the remainder is still under discussion and the purpose of the tapering grants is to give local authorities or other local bodies some extra time to take on financial responsibility for particular projects. It is hoped that by making these arrangements all the projects started with initiative money will be secure after central Government money comes to an end.

The second scheme will enable selected national voluntary bodies to give small grants to local groups. It is planned that £150,000 should be available for this scheme in 1987-88 and it is hoped to be able to extend it for a further two years. The small grants scheme operated by three national voluntary bodies with initiative money was innovative and enabled them to give their local groups one-off grants which are often crucial to the continued existence of the particular service. We want to build on the lessons learned from this scheme which is good value for money and showed how the Government and the voluntary sector can work as partners in meeting social needs. Details are being worked out in consultation with the national voluntary bodies concerned.

Maternity Grant

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the precise sum to be paid to mothers eligible for the means-tested maternity grant to be introduced on 6 April 1987; and if he will give details of the information published by his Department which informs women about this new benefit and how to claim.

Mr. Major: I expect to make an announcement shortly.

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the net annual cost of increasing the maternity grant to £165.

Mr. Major: The gross annual cost of increasing maternity grant to £165 would be about £95 million. There would be a consequent saving on supplementary benefit expenditure for single payments for maternity needs. In 1984, the latest year for which records are available, these payments amounted to nearly £13 million.

Benefits

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many new claims for supplementary benefit were received in *(a)* 1985 and *(b)* 1986 by his Department's Camberwell office between 18 May and 18 August and between 18 August and 18 November.

Mr. Lyell: Information is not available in the precise form requested. The table shows that the numbers of new and repeat claims for supplementary benefit received by Camberwell office in the periods 8 May to 27 August and 28 August to 19 November in 1985 and 7 May to 26 August and 27 August to 18 November 1986 were:

	1985	*1986*
May – August	3,432	3,016
August – November	2,622	2,788

Source: 100 per cent. count of claims received.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate, for supplementary benefits claimants in receipt of needs allowance, the percentage increase in meals consumed outside the home from 1982 to 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986; if he will provide separately figures for Scotland, and England and Wales; whether there are any regional variations in the cost of meals taken outside the home; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I assume the hon. Member is concerned with the appropriate retail prices index for meals bought and consumed outside of the home, for which information is given in the table. Information for 1985-86 is not yet available; and separate figures for Scotland, England and Wales are not available as official price indices are not compiled on a regional basis.

Retail prices index for meals bought and consumed outside the home

	Annual average percentage increase
1982-83	6·5
1983-84	7·4
1984-85	5·8

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing, for the financial year 1986-87, the entitlement to standard housing benefit (excluding rate rebate or allowance), for a one-child family with one working partner and paying £16 per week rent, for the following income bands; £3,000 per year, £4,000 per year, £5,000 per year, £6,000 per year and £7,000 or more.

Mr. Lyell: The information requested is set out in the table:

Weekly Rent Rebate of Allowance payable to a one-child family with one working partner

Annual Income £	*Weekly Rent Rebates or Allowance* £
3,000	16·00
4,000	16·00
5,000	11·25
6,000	5·94
7,000	Nil

Notes:
(1) Income is assumed to consist of gross earnings including child benefit (but not one-parent benefit).
(2) Family Income Supplement is assumed not to be in payment.
(3) July 1986 benefit levels and rules have been used throughout.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how, pursuant to the reply of 24 November, *Official Report*, columns *147-8*, the figures given for real terms percentage increases in expenditure relating to *(a)* real increases in benefit levels and eligibility and *(b)* increases necessitated by increased numbers of claimants are made up for each year from 1979-80 to 1986-87.

Mr. Major: The table shows the percentage of the real increase in benefit expenditure attributable to the reasons given.

Social security programme 1981-82 to 1986-87

	1981-82	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Percentage of increase in benefit expenditure over previous year due to						
(a) Real increase in average amount of benefit paid to						
elderly people	25	30	20	—	35	35
sick and disabled people	—	—	15	—	—	10
unemployed people	5	15	—	10	20	—
families	10	25	30	30	15	10
(b) Increased numbers of						
elderly people	10	10	20	20	10	20
sick and disabled people	—	5	−10	30	20	20
unemployed people	40	15	30	15	—	10
(c) Others	10	—	−5	—	—	−5

Note: Due to rounding figures may not sum to totals in the previous answer.

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate *(a)* the gross and *(b)* the annual net cost of each extra £1 on (i) unemployment benefit, (ii) sickness benefit, (iii) invalidity pension, (iv) severe disablement allowance and (v) maternity allowance.

Mr. Major: The table gives the estimated costs in 1987-88 of increasing the basic rate of the stated benefits for a single person by £1 per week. The costs are given gross, and net of offsetting savings on supplementary benefit and housing benefit, and assume that the rates for a couple would go up pro rata to existing rates.

Great Britain

£ million

	Gross	*Net*
(i) Unemployment benefit	50	30
(ii) Sickness benefit	5	3
(iii) Invalidity benefit	60	50
(iv) Severe disablement allowance	10	5
(v) Maternity allowance	2	2

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will estimate the annual cost of each extra £1 on *(a)* the basic rate and *(b)* the long term rate of supplementary benefit for single householders;

(2) if he will estimate the annual cost of each extra £1 on the children's rates of supplementary benefit for children aged under 11 years and between 11 and 15 years.

Mr. Major: The estimated cost of the increases to current supplementary benefit recipients would be as follows:

	£ million
(a) Ordinary rate for single householders:	30
(b) Long-term rate for single householders:	90
(c) Children aged under 11:	70
(d) Children aged 11 to 15:	30

Source: Annual statistical inquiry 1984.

These estimates do not take account of the extra cost arising from the additional claims to benefit that would result from the higher rates of benefit.

Board and Lodging Allowance

Mr. Conlan asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people in Gateshead, living as board and lodgers, have had their supplementary benefits reduced under the board and lodging supplementary regulations since the passage of these regulations.

Mr. Major: The Department's local offices do not keep separate statistics on the number of people living in board and lodging, nor do they identify those who have had their supplementary benefit reduced under the Supplementary Benefit (Requirements and Resources) Miscellaneous Provisions Regulations 1985.

This information is not therefore readily available and could be obtained only by a special exercise which would be disproportionately costly.

Electoral Statistics

Mr. Hayward asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of constituencies to which each county of England was entitled on the basis of the electoral quotas given in his answer of 26 November, *Official Report*, column *286-7*, in *(a)* 1976 and *(b)* 1986.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is given in the table. The number of constituencies to which a county is theoretically entitled has been obtained by dividing the electorate of the county by the electoral quota.

County	*Number of constituencies: theoretical entitlement*	
	1976	*1986*
Greater London	79·97	74·45
Greater Manchester	29·69	28·48
Merseyside	17·68	16·41
South Yorkshire	14·71	14·60
Tyne and Wear	13·48	12·98
West Midlands	30·30	29·10
West Yorkshire	22·92	22·61
Avon	10·29	10·54
Bedfordshire	5·08	5·52
Berkshire	7·01	7·83
Buckinghamshire	5·47	6·54
Cambridgeshire	5·93	6·72
Cheshire	9·86	10·49
Cleveland	6·13	6·13
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	4·67	5·04
Cumbria	5·42	5·49
Derbyshire	10·08	10·34
Devon	10·50	10·99
Dorset	6·68	7·32
Durham	6·88	6·78
East Sussex	7·82	7·94
Essex	15·78	16·89
Gloucestershire	5·43	5·76
Hampshire	15·38	16·77
Hereford and Worcester	6·55	7·27
Hertfordshire	10·28	10·80
Humberside	9·42	9·54
Isle of Wight	1·35	1·43
Kent	16·06	16·58
Lancashire	15·47	15·37
Leicestershire	9·22	9·57
Lincolnshire	5·82	6·28
Norfolk	7·57	8·11
Northamptonshire	5·50	6·04
Northumberland	3·30	3·38
North Yorkshire	7·32	7·74
Nottinghamshire	10·89	11·18
Oxfordshire	5·50	5·95
Shropshire	3·89	4·29
Somerset	4·56	5·01
Staffordshire	10·95	11·38
Suffolk	6·21	6·68
Surrey	11·21	11·50
Warwickshire	5·09	5·35
West Sussex	7·25	7·92
Wiltshire	5·43	5·94

Public Health Laboratory Service

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many staff vacancies there are in the public health laboratory service: how long they have been vacant; and when he expects them to be filled.

Mrs. Currie: At 1 October, the latest date for which information is available, there were 115 vacancies in the public health laboratory service out of a total of 2,287 posts (5 per cent.). The majority of these had been vacant for less than three months. Current vacancies will be filled as soon as suitable candidates become available.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella (Vaccine)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to introduce a triple vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella, for children aged 15 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: This proposal is under consideration.

Diabetics

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many sufferers from diabetes there are currently estimated to be in England and Wales.

Mrs. Currie: It is estimated that the prevalence of diabetes is between 1 and 2 per cent. of the population, between half a million and one million people in England and Wales.

Medical and Nursing Schools (Intakes)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he takes to ensure that the intake of medical and nursing schools is fair to ethnic minorities.

Mrs. Currie: The intake of medical schools is the concern of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science. I understand, however, that universities, of which medical schools form a constituent part, are autonomous institutions under the terms of their charters, and as such are responsible for their own admission arrangements.

The selection of candidates for nursing schools is for individual health authorities, which are advised to comply with the code of practice prepared by the Commission for Racial Equality.

Colposcopy Facilities

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list those district health authorities which have full colposcopy facilities of all women needing treatment;

(2) which district health authorities do not have a colposcope.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not held centrally.

Physical Disability (RCP Report)

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what response he has sent to the Royal College of Physicians' report to him on physical disability in 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: My right hon. Friend did not commission the report and has not been invited formally to respond to it. We nevertheless welcome the report, which will make an important contribution to the discussion of how services for disabled people can be better co-ordinated and integrated. Officials of the Department have had informal discussions with the report's authors, and we are now considering how best to develop the ideas which it has put forward.

Contracts (Arthur Andersen Tender)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras on 9 December, whether Arthur Andersen and Co. submitted the lowest tender for each of the contracts referred to.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Sick Pay

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate *(a)* the gross and *(b)* the net cost of paying statutory sick pay at 100 per cent. of earnings for (i) six weeks and (ii) three months.

Mr. Major: The gross costs requested are estimated as (i) £2·5 billion and (ii) £2·75 billion. On each of these amounts employees would pay approximately £1 billion in income tax and national insurance contributions (NICs). However, an unknown proportion of this revenue would replace tax and NIC already payable on occupational sick pay schemes. It is therefore not possible to calculate the extra revenue with sufficient reliability to produce worthwhile estimates of net cost. The estimated cost of SSP in 1986-87 is £688 million.

Nursing Establishment

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total nursing establishment for the National Health Service; and by how many the establishment is under strength at the present time.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that detailed information of this nature is not available centrally. However, I am aware of the results of a survey of a sample of health authorities in England conducted for the Review Body for Nursing Staff, Midwives and Health Visitors which showed that at 31 March 1985 about 2·5 per cent. of whole-time equivalent funded posts for all nursing and midwifery staff had remained vacant for over three months.

Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929

Mr. Bendall asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action has recently been taken by his Department to ensure the implementation of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 in regard to late abortions.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply from my hon. Friend the Minister for Health to my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls) on 10 December.

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last issued guidance to the South East Thames regional health authority concerning the implementation of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act of 1929 in regard to late abortions; and what that guidance was.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friends the Members for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Merchant), for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) and for Milton Keynes (Mr. Benyon) on 10 December.

Wessex Health Authority (Computer Contracts)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all those who advised Wessex health authority on any aspect of the prospective computer contracts before tenders were invited; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Midwives

Mrs. Ann Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has concerning the total number of qualified midwives who are currently resident in the United Kingdom; how many of these are employed in the National Health Service; how many are employed in the private sector; and how many are unemployed.

Mr. Newton: Information supplied by the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting shows that 164,000 midwives were included on the register of midwives at April 1986. However, this is not a live register and will therefore include some midwives who are not resident in the United Kingdom, have retired, are not in the employment field or obtained the qualification for another purpose. 32,000 midwives notified their intention to practise during the year ending March 1987 but not necessarily in the National Health Service.

There were 18,260 whole-time equivalent (WTE) midwives employed in the NHS in England at September 1985. At December 1985 there were 134 full-time and 58 part-time registered midwives employed in nursing homes in England registered under the Nursing Homes Act.

The Department of Employment is the source of statistical information on the unemployed, but I understand that information by occupation has not been available since the introduction of the voluntary registration procedure in October 1982.

Mrs. Ann Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has concerning the average length of time spent in their current job by midwives within the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton: Information is not available in the form requested but a study of a sample of hospital-based midwives in England by the Department's central management services in 1982 provided the following information:

Years since qualifying

per cent.

	Under 5	*5-10*	*10-15*	*15-20*	*20 and more*
Proportion of practising midwives by years since qualifying	46	18	13	9	14

Mrs. Ann Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has concerning the number of established midwifery posts which are currently unoccupied in each region; and what percentage this represents of the total midwifery establishment in each of those regions.

Mr. Newton: I regret that detailed information of this nature is not available centrally. However, I am aware of the results of a survey of a sample of health authorities in England, conducted for the Review Body for Nursing Staff, Midwives and Health Visitors, which showed that at 31 March 1985 only about 3 per cent. of whole-time equivalent funded posts for midwives remained vacant for over three months, compared with the average of 2·5 per cent. for all nursing and midwifery staff.

Mrs. Ann Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a breakdown by region of the numbers of midwives employed by the National Health Service; and if in each case he will give the rate of employment of midwives per 1,000 women in their main childbearing years in each of those regions.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is given in the table.

Midwifery staff per thousand women of main childbearing age

By region and England at September 1985	*Whole-time equivalents* *Midwifery staff*[1,2]	*Midwifery staff*[3] *per 1,000 women age 16 to 44*
Northern	1,500	2·4
Yorkshire	1,800	2·4
Trent	2,200	2·2
East Anglian	1,000	2·4
North West Thames	1,500	2·0
North East Thames	1,900	2·3
South East Thames	1,800	2·4
South West Thames	1,200	2·0
Wessex	1,300	2·3
Oxford	1,200	2·2
South Western	1,300	2·0
West Midlands	2,600	2·4
Mersey	1,200	2·4
North Western	2,400	2·9
England[4]	23,100	2·3

[1] Figures are whole-time equivalent independently rounded to nearest 10.
[2] Includes midwifery agency staff.
[3] Ratio calculated on unrounded figures.
[4] Includes London post-graduate (teaching) hospitals (SHAs).

Mrs. Ann Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has concerning the average remuneration of a midwife in *(a)* the National Health Service and *(b)* the private sector.

Mr. Newton: With effect from 1 July 1986 the basic salary scales of staff midwives and midwifery sisters employed in the National Health Service are as follows:

	£
Staff midwife	6,475 to 7,750
Midwifery sister	8,070 to 10,800

In addition, midwives in these grades are eligible for premium payments mainly for night and weekend work and overtime. Average earnings of such staff are estimated to be about 15 per cent. greater than basic pay.

Comparable information for the private sector is not collected centrally.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the cost of regarding all midwives as midwifery sisters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The precise cost of regarding all staff midwives as midwifery sisters would depend on detailed arrangements for such an upgrading but is probably of the order of £10 million to £20 million per annum at July 1986 pay and national insurance levels in Great Britain.

Medicines (Safety)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to extend the guidelines for child-resistant tops on tablet containers to cover liquid medicine bottles.

Mrs. Currie: The guidelines that all solid dose oral medicines should be dispensed in child resistant containers (CRCs) unless the patient is elderly, handicapped or requests that they should not be were issued by the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain to its members. In addition, the Medicinces (Child Safety) Regulations require CRCs for solid dose aspirin or paracetamol sold over the counter. We have no plans to amend these guidelines or regulations.

I understand that there is no British standard for a CRC effective for liquid medicines because of the problem of residues from dried-up liquids impeding CRC mechanisms. We are keeping in close touch with the Pharmaceutical Society on this problem. All medicines should in all circumstances be kept away from children.

Blind People (Form BD8)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what bodies he has consulted in his Department's review of form BD8 for blind people;

(2) what progress has been made in the review of form BD8;

(3) when the review of form BD8 began; and when he expects to be able to announce conclusions;

(4) what representations and recommendations he has received from the Royal National Institute for the Blind about the review of the form BD8.

Mr. Major: In August 1983 we issued a consultation document to the relevant statutory, professional and voluntary bodies, including the Royal National Institute for the Blind, which have since pressed for a decision. Work is proceeding within the Department and we will announce a decision as soon as possible. The full list of organisations consulted is:

Association for the Education and Welfare of the Visually Handicapped
Association of County Councils
Association of Directors of Social Services
Association of District Medical Officers
Association of Metropolitan Authorities
Association of Nurse Administrators
Association of Optical Practitioners

British Association of Social Workers
British College of Ophthalmic Opticians
British Medical Association, General Medical Services Committee
British Medical Association, Ophthalmic Group Committee
British Paediatrics Association

Community Medicine Consultative Committee

Disabled Living Foundation

Faculty of Ophthalmologists

Health Visitors Association
Hospital for Sick Children Special Health Authority

Joint Consultants Committee

London Boroughs Association

Medical Research Council
Moorfields Eye Hospital Special Health Authority

National Association of Orientation and Mobility Instructors
National Association of Technical Officers for the Blind
National Federation of the Blind
National League of the Blind and Disabled
North Regional Association for the Blind

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

Partially Sighted Society

Regional Health Authorities
Residential Care Association
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal College of Nursing
Royal National Institute for the Blind

Society of Nurse Advisers (Child Health)
Southern and Western Regional Association for the Blind

Visual Impairment Association

Mr. and Mrs. J. Hemborough

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on what date the case of Mr. and Mrs. J. Hemborough was referred to him by his Department's office; on what date a decision was made on this case; and if he will make a statement on the Government's position following the supplementary benefit commissioner's decision R(SB)21/85 concerning the restriction of interest payments to claimants who have remortgaged their homes.

Mr. Major: I shall write to the hon. Member.

AIDS

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has concerning the incidence of AIDS by ethnic grouping.

Mr. Newton: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the latest figures for the number of cases of AIDS within the United Kingdom; and how many have so far died.

Mr. Newton: The figure at the end of November 1986 was 599, of whom 296 had died.

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether anti-viral lubricant agents will be made freely available for use in conjunction with condoms as an added measure to prevent the spread of the AIDS virus;

(2) whether in the Government's advertising campaign to promote safer sex and the prevention of the spread of AIDS virus he will be advising people to use anti-viral lubricant agents in conjunction with condoms.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will update the table on page 4 of the proposals for regulations to provide a new scheme of supplementary benefit for exceptionally severe weather payments (CM 18) in the light of the decision by his Department to re-locate a number of weather stations.

Mr. Major: Three changes have been made to the table. Tummel bridge and Cranwell stations have been deleted,

and a new station (Kirkwall) has been added. The number of years since 1979 when the mean weekly temperature recorded at the Kirkwall station reached or was lower than minus 1·5 deg Celsius is nil.

Condom Imports

Mr. Stuart Holland asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make it his policy to ensure that all imported makes of condoms available for sale in the United Kingdom are subject to a British standards test for safety.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Nurses

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what recommendations have been made by the National Health Service Management Board concerning the recruitment and retention of nurses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: In the light of the projected decline in the number of suitably qualified school-leavers over the next decade who might be expected to enter the nursing profession and the projected increase in demand for nursing staff, the NHS management board has asked health authorities to devise recruitment strategies. In particular, health authorities have been asked to give careful consideration to skill mix, increased male recruitment, attracting mature recruits, "Back to Nursing" campaigns, nurse banks and more opportunities for part-time working and job sharing.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate how many qualified nurses leave the profession each year; how this compares with the number of nurses qualifying each year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Handicapped Children

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from Mrs. Peggy Jay, of EXODUS, about handicapped children in long-stay institutions; and what reply he has sent.

Mrs. Currie: My noble Friend wrote to Mrs. Jay on 27 November in reply to representations she made to my right hon. Friend about mentally handicapped children in hospital. Her letter and my reply to the right hon. Member on 4 November at columns *402-3* made it clear that my noble Friend will discuss the points raised by Mrs. Jay at a meeting with EXODUS and others concerned with the question of provision for mentally handicapped children to be arranged shortly.

Highland Region

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the total number of claimants applying to each of his Department's offices located within Highland region, for each year from 1979 to 1986, respectively.

Mr. Lyell: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will detail the total number of staff employed in each of his Department's offices located within Highland region for each year from 1979 to 1986, respectively.

Mr. Lyell: The total number of staff in post on 1 December for each year 1979 to 1986 in each of the Department's social security local offices within Highland region is as follows:

	Integrated local office		
	Fort William	*Inverness*	*Wick*
1979	32	123	51
1980	33	133	53
1981	34	132	57
1982	39	126	53
1983	35	126	53
1984	40	136	62
1985	38	129	65
1986	41·5	132	70

Since September 1984 staffing figures for Wick ILO have included staff employed in Kirkwall linked office which is not in Highland region. There were 10 staff in post in this office on 1 December 1984, and 11 staff on both 1 December 1985 and 1986.

Blind-Deaf Persons

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many blind-deaf children are born each year; how many schools in England and Wales can at present offer suitable education for blind-deaf children either on a day or boarding basis; and what support for families is available when a deaf-blind child is living at home;

(2) what special training is available for teachers and carers, repectively, working with deaf-blind children; and what proposals he has to make such provision freely available for all those who need it;

(3) what training is available at present for young people who are deaf-blind to enable them to develop their skills; and if he will list the training centres at present available with the number of places in each;

(4) if he will make sufficient resources available to ensure that no blind-deaf person will have to enter a mental handicap hospital if his family can no longer care for him at home.

Mr. Major: Statistics are not available in the form requested but there is a copy in the Library of the Department's publication "Registered Blind and Partially Sighted Persons at 31 March 1982 (England)." This contains information, by age band, on people registered blind with additional handicap, including hearing impairment, but the figures are regarded as under-estimates.

The Department has made it clear in guidance issued to health and local authorities, which are the main statutory providers of services for disabled people, that services for the most vulnerable groups in the community, including sensorily impaired people, should have priority. It is for individual health and local authorities to determine local priorities in the light of their statutory responsibilities and local circumstances. The Department

does not routinely collect specific information about resources and facilities provided for particular client groups.

The role of voluntary organisations, such as SENSE, with their family resource centres and training centre for deaf-blind young adults, is of particular importance. Last year the Department gave grants totalling £30,000 towards voluntary activities in this field and further applications are under consideration.

Education and teacher training are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Tinnitus

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many sufferers from tinnitus there are in England and Wales;

(2) what treatment for tinnitus sufferers is available on the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Tinnitus is a buzzing or ringing sound in the ears. It is estimated that some 15 per cent. of the adult population experiences symptoms of varying frequency, degree and duration which might be defined broadly as tinnitus, and that some 2 per cent. of adults experience continuous tinnitus, a proportion of whom would be seriously troubled by the symptom.

Facilities for the treatment of tinnitus sufferers should be available at all hospital ear nose and throat departments. Decisions on the treatment of individual patients are matters for the clinical judgment of the hospital consultant concerned.

Lung Cancer (Report)

Mr. Norris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council's report on occupational lung cancer is to be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council's report on occupational lung cancer is published today. It recommends the prescription of lung cancer in three groups of workers, namely:

those exposed to a chemical known as bis (chloromethyl) ether (BCME) produced during the manufacture of chloromethyl methyl ether (CMME)
those exposed to the dust of zinc chromate, calcium chomate and strontium chromate
tin miners

The Government accept the council's recommendations, and regulations will be laid to bring them into operation next year.

Drug Misuse

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the Government's estimated number of heroin addicts using National Health Service drug rehabilitation centres in each year since 1979 and the number who have ceased to be addicts.

Mrs. Currie *[pursuant to her reply, 10 December 1986]*: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks as it is not collected centrally.

CIVIL SERVICE

Disabled Employees

Mr. Crowther asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will list the Government Departments in which the number of employees who are registered disabled persons is equal to, or more than, 3 per cent. of the total number of employees.

Mr. Luce: The following is the information:

Crown Estate Office
Crown Prosecution Service
Government Actuary's Department
National Investment and Loans Office
National Savings Department
Paymaster General's Office
Privy Council Office
Public Record Office
Royal Mint

SCOTLAND

Women Prisoners

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the longest period that a woman prisoner has been held in police cells in the current year.

Mr. Lang: This information is not kept centrally. Records available in six of the eight Scottish police forces indicate that the longest period over which a woman has been held in a police cell (other than a legalised police cell) this year is about 107 hours. In that case, the woman was arrested on 27 March and kept in custody, as permitted by statute, until the first appropriate court sitting which, because of Easter, was not until 1 April. For legalised police cells the figure is 118 hours. In the other two forces, the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total number of women aged under 21 years who have been held in police cells during 1986.

Mr. Lang: This information is not collected centrally. I understand, however, that in six of the eight Scottish police forces a total of 4,998 women under 21 years of age have been held in police cells (including one in a legalised police cell) in 1986. In the other two forces, the information could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many women with no previous convictions were given a prison sentence during 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985.

Mr. Lang: The only statistical information held centrally on previous convictions is obtained from inmates on reception into the penal establishment and may not be completely reliable. The figures from this source are as follows:

Females received under sentence in penal establishments in Scotland: number admitting no previous convictions

Year	*Direct sentence*[1]	*In default of fine/ compensation order*
1982	29	49
1983	31	37
1984	28	43
1985	69	129

[1] Direct sentence includes persons recalled to a young offenders' institution or borstal.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total number of women remanded in custody during 1985 and subsequently either found not guilty, not proceeded against or given a non-custodial sentence.

Mr. Lang: The number of females received on remand in Scottish penal establishments in 1985 was 897. No information is held centrally on the subsequent disposal of these cases.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what was the total number of women aged less than 21 years sentenced to a period of imprisonment in 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985;

(2) what was the total number of women sentenced to a period of imprisonment for a crime of violence in 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985;

(3) what was the total number of women sentenced to a period of imprisonment in 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985.

Mr. Lang: The figures requested are set out in the table:

Scotland	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Women aged under 21 given custodial sentences	64	80	55	144
Women given custodial sentences for crimes of violence[1]	29	24	15	22
Total number of women given custodial sentences	394	427	382	604

[1] Crimes of violence in this context are defined as those in Group 1 (Non-sexual Crimes of Violence) of the Scottish Home and Health Department crime classification.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total number of women held on remand in Scotland at the latest date available; and what it was on 31 December 1984 and 31 December 1985.

Mr. Lang: The figures are as set out:

Women held on Remand in Scottish Penal Establishments

	Number
31 December 1984	56
31 December 1985	43
25 November 1986	48

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total of women held in prison in Scotland at the latest date available; and what it was on 31 December 1984 and 31 December 1985.

Mr. Lang: The figures are as set out:

Women held in Scottish Penal Establishments

	Number
31 December 1984	130
31 December 1985	173
25 November 1986	199

Greenock and Port Glasgow

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the numbers in each district council ward in Greenock and Port Glasgow classified as economically active in the 1981 census.

Mr. Lang: The numbers of people, aged 16 or over and usually resident in each ward, who were economically active at the time of the 1981 census are as follows:

Numbers usually resident, economically active, aged 16+ Greenock and Port Glasgow district ward

	Number
Bellville	2,236
Blairmore	2,066
Bow	2,131
Broomhill	2,002
Clune Brae	2,635
Gateside	2,110
Gibshill	2,342
Greenock East Central	1,799
Greenock South	2,420
Greenock West Central	2,185
Greenock West End	2,304
Larkfield	2,762
Port Glasgow East	3,011
Port Glasgow South	2,953
Port Glasgow West	1,967
Upper Larkfield	2,664

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association (Dundee)

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to reply to the letter sent to him on 24 November by Mr. Andrew Otley, secretary of the Dundee group of the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association.

Mr. John MacKay: A reply was sent on 8 December 1986.

Murder (Clear-up Rate)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the police clear-up rate for murder cases for *(a)* the northern constabulary, and *(b)* all police forces in Scotland for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Lang: Provisional figures for 1985 indicate that there were 75 cases which Scottish police forces initially classified as murder and all but one of these cases were solved. Of this total, two cases were recorded and solved by the northern constabulary.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate Reports (Release)

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the practice of Her Majesty's Inspectorate on release of its reports to its subjects in relation to the time of release to the press; and why reports were denied to staff at Aberdeen college of education before release to the press.

Mr. John MacKay: The normal practice of providing copies of a report about one week in advance of its general release to those responsible for the management of the establishments concerned was followed. Copies were made available to staff at the same time as the report was released to the press.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate (Colleges and Schools)

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidance is given to Her Majesty's inspectors about correct procedures and recommended approaches for inspections of colleges and schools; and whether this guidance is disclosed to staff selected for inspection.

Mr. John MacKay: Her Majesty's senior chief inspector lays down guidance on the approach to inspection and reporting to be followed in the planning and implementation of all programmes of inspection. Appropriate advice is communicated as a matter of course to management teams in schools and colleges, which are responsible for briefing staff.

Jordanhill College of Education

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the estimated cost of planning for the current programme of inspection for Jordanhill college of education.

Mr. John MacKay: Precise costs are not available but it is estimated that the equivalent of 10 inspector days will be required for this purpose.

Aberdeen College of Education

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the full cost of preparing Her Majesty's inspectors' report on Aberdeen college of education during 1984 to 1986, including costings for all hours worked by the inspectors and their support staff in terms of their salaries and wages, and costings for travel, accommodation, expenses and administration.

Mr. John MacKay: Colleges of education are included in the normal inspection programme of schools and colleges. The disaggregation of the full costs of the inspection of Aberdeen college of education could be undertaken only at disproportionate expense but it required the equivalent of 265 inspector days.

Colposcopy Facilities

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list those health boards which have full colposcopy facilities for all women needing treatment;

(2) which health boards do not have a colposcope.

Mr. John MacKay: The information requested is not available centrally.

General Practitioners (Private Medicine)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many general practitioners are engaged in private medicine in National Health Service hospitals and health centres in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Strathclyde, *(c)* Glasgow, *(d)* the eastern district area of the Glasgow health board and *(e)* the Shettleston constituency.

Mr. John MacKay: Information about the number of general practitioners who are engaged in private practice in National Health Service premises is not available centrally.

School Transport Services

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total value of school transport services put out to tender by each educational authority in Scotland under the Transport Act 1985; and what was the comparable figure in the year preceding the coming into force of the Act.

Mr. Ancram: This information is not available centrally.

Health Centres (Glasgow)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all the health centres in the eastern district of Greater Glasgow health board and the individual cost of providing each one.

Mr. John MacKay: The information requested is as follows except for the cost of the Townhead health centre which forms part of the Glasgow royal infirmary redevelopment and for which a separate cost is not available.

	Capital cost £ million
Baillieston Health Centre	0·7
Bridgeton Health Centre	1·7
Easterhouse Health Centre	1·4
Shettleston Health Centre	1·4
Parkhead Health Centre	1·5
Townhead Health Centre	—

Industry Acts (Payments)

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the amount of money paid to companies under the Industry Acts in Greenock and Port Glasgow since 1983; and how many jobs were either created or defended as a result.

Mr. Lang: In the period between 1 January 1983 and 30 November 1986, total payments of regional selective assistance (RSA) to companies in the Greenock and Port Glasgow parliamentary constituency amounted to £6 million. Comprehensive information on payments of regional development grant (RDG) on a constituency basis is not available. However, since 1 January 1983, payments of RDG exceeding £25,000 to firms in the Greenock and Port Glasgow employment local office area amounted to over £28·4 million. Information on jobs created or safeguarded in the period since 1983 as a result of awards of RDG and RSA and on payments for other forms of assistance under the Industry Acts is not readily available.

Peterhead Prison

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if it is the intention during the investigation at Peterhead prison being carried out by Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons to invite representations from the Peterhead branch of the Scottish Prison Officers Association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons has already interviewed a large number of individual members of staff of Her Majesty's prison Peterhead in connection with his current investigation. It is his intention to meet also representatives of the local branch of the Scottish Prison Officers Association, if they so wish.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the names, qualifications and previous backgrounds of the persons who have been selected to assist Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons in the investigation which is to be carried out at Peterhead prison.

Mr. Lang: Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons is being assisted in his investigation at Her Majesty's prison

Peterhead by Her Majesty's deputy chief inspector of prisons, Mr. W. T. Finlayson, and by Mr. R. R. H. Glen on secondment from his post as governor of Her Majesty's prison Dungavel.

Mr. Finlayson has very wide experience within the Scottish prison service, having joined as an officer in 1953. He has served at a number of establishments and has been governor-in-charge at Longriggend remand unit and Her Majesty's institution Cornton Vale as well as having been principal of the Scottish prison service college. He is a governor class I.

Mr. Glen, who is a governor class III, joined the Scottish prison service as an assistant governor in 1969. He has served at a number of establishments and at headquarters and has been governor-in-charge at Her Majesty's young offenders institution Castle Huntly and at Her Majesty's prison Dungavel, where he is currently serving.

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to add to the team chosen to assist Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons in his inquiry at Peterhead prison a person with no previous association with the prison service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Until he took up his present post, Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons had himself no previous connection of any kind with the Scottish prison service. He is, however, considering whether he should bring in a person or persons from outside the Scottish prison service on an ad hoc basis to assist him with particular aspects of his investigation at Her Majesty's prison Peterhead.

Manufacturing Jobs

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the figures for the average monthly loss of Scottish manufacturing jobs in each year since 1974; and if he will provide the average figure for *(a)* the period 1974 to 1979 and *(b)* 1979 to the present day.

Mr. Lang: Figures relating to the loss of manufacturing employment since 1974 are given in the table provided. It shows that the average monthly fall between 1974 and 1979 was 1,300, and between 1979 and 1986 was 2,150. In the period between 1983 and 1986, the average fall was 650 per month.

Scottish manufacturing employment: average monthly job change

Year (June)	*Total manufacturing employment (000s)*	*Average monthly job change in the year to June (to nearest 100)*
1974	682	
1975	644	−3,200
1976	614	−2,500
1977	621	+600
1978	610	−900
1979	603	−600
1980	566	−3,100
1981	511	−4,600
1982	478	−2,800
1983	447	−2,600
1984	437	−800
1985	437	0
1986	423	−1,200

	Average monthly change (to nearest 50)
1974-79	−1,300
1979-86	−2,150
1983-86	−650

Notes

(i) Employees in employment in manufacturing.
(ii) All figures are unadjusted for seasonal variation.
(iii) The June 1986 figure is provisional.

Ailsa Shipyard

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration his Department has given to the offers to purchase the Ailsa shipyard; what financial applications have been made in relation to any offer; what has been his response; and when he expects an announcement about the future of the yard to be made.

Mr. Lang: The decision on the sale of the Ailsa shipyard is a matter for British Shipbuilders. I am confident that it will make a careful assessment of the employment prospects and commercial aspects of the bids it has received, but in addition I have an opportunity to comment on these before a decision is taken. I hope that it will be possible to make an announcement about the future of the yard shortly. It is not the practice to give information on applications for financial assistance, since these are matters of a commercially confidential nature.

Scottish School of Physical Education

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if the final report of the working party on the proposed merger of the Scottish school of physical education of Jordanhill college with Dunfermline college, Cramord, under Moray house college will include in its findings and recommendations detailed costs relating to its proposals including savings to public expenditure which will arise from the arrangement.

Mr. John MacKay: Following my right hon. and learned Friend's statement on 17 July 1986, at column 1187 a working party was established to report to him and the governing bodies concerned on how best to implement his decisions that the training of physical education teachers (both men and women) will be centralised on the site of the present Dunfermline college of physical education, bringing to an end the training of men PE teachers at Jordanhill college of education, and that Dunfermline college will itself be merged with Moray house college of education under a single governing body. It is for the working party to determine the precise content of its final report, but in reaching his decisions my right hon. and learned Friend did of course take account of relevant financial as well as educational considerations.

Dunbeath Bridge (Road Scheme)

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current proposed starting date for the construction of the new Dunbeath bridge scheme on the A9 trunk road in Caithness; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: I expect the construction of the Dunbeath scheme to begin in late summer 1987. However, this depends on resolving two outstanding objections to the draft road orders and any objections to the draft compulsory purchase order which was published recently.

Torness Power Station

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for East Lothian on 26 November, *Official Report*, column *274*, if he will publish the exercise scenario used at Torness power station on 18 September; if he will describe each accident or fault said to have occurred for exercise purposes; whether any fire or explosion was said to have occurred for exercise purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges of Education

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, before coming to a judgment on the final report of the working party on the merger of Aberdeen and Dundee colleges of education, he will disallow the proposed appointment of the named principal designate on the grounds that the individual named was a member of the working party and that the correct procedure for public appointments has not been followed.

Mr. John MacKay: No. I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 8 December at column *136*.

Voluntary Bodies (Grant Aid)

Mr. Fletcher asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement concerning grant aid to voluntary bodies working in the environmental field in Scotland.

Mr. Ancram: I am pleased to announce the introduction of a new scheme of grants to take effect in the financial year 1987-88, to assist voluntary bodies carrying out environmental conservation or improvement work in Scotland. The scheme is designed primarily to assist central administrative costs of relevant bodies and will be known as the special grants (environmental) programme. Up to £150,000 will be available for grant payments in 1987-88. Further details are available from the Scottish Development Department, and will be circulated shortly to relevant bodies.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Overseas Aid

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list his Department's principal achievements in overseas aid since 1983.

Mr. Chris Patten: Since 1983 the principal achievements of the aid programme include:

(1) A swift and generous response (£190 million to April 1986) to appeals for emergency relief which helped to mitigate the effects of famine in Sub-Saharan Africa.
(2) The completion of many aid projects, large and small, including the Victoria dam in Sri Lanka (£113 million), and the Songea-Makambako road in Tanzania (£90 million).
(3) 118 new project allocations, each worth £2 million or more, with a total value of £1,130 million.
(4) Helping to sustain economic policy reforms, particularly in Africa, through the provision of programme aid (£137 million between 1983 and 1985) in support of IMF/IBRD adjustment programmes.
(5) 17,416 man-years of training of overseas personnel and 10,855 man-years of service by British experts and volunteers in developing countries provided between 1983 and 1985.
(6) Securing contracts for British firms worth £713 million with aid and trade provision support.

At the November 1986 European Community Development Council under Britain's Presidency, agreement in principle was reached on a much needed reform of EC food aid.

El Salvador

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will detail the £100,000 worth of civilian supplies and equipment purchased by the El Salvadorean Government with the help of the grant given under the technical co-operation programme agreed with President Duarte during his visit to Britain in 1984.

Mr. Chris Patten: At a cost of £83,000 we have provided three Bedford lorries for the distribution of food supplies to rural areas and three Land Rovers, with mobile cinema units and ancillary equipment, to assist in the social development programme for poor communities. We await detailed proposals for the use of the balance.

DEFENCE

Military Equipment (Exports)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria are used to assess whether a licence for the export of military equipment should be issued; and what assurances are sought that this equipment will not be used for internal repression in the purchasing country.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Before an export licence is granted for military equipment a wide variety of considerations is taken into account. These considerations will vary depending on individual circumstances, but they will always include the need to safeguard the United Kingdom's political, strategic and security interests, the possible effect a sale might have on the stability of a region and the likelihood of the equipment being used to violate human rights. It is not Government policy to allow sales of equipment which could be used for internal repression to regimes which have a bad human rights record.

Airborne Early Warning

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has been consulted on the interoperability and mutual support aspects of Nimrod and E-3 AWACS, respectively; what weight these factors will be given in the selection of an early warning system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The possibilities for collaboration in support of a United Kingdom E-3A fleet have been discussed with the NATO authorities. Either system would be fitted with the communication links necessary to ensure full interoperability.

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make it his policy in selecting an early warning system, to give the highest priority to operational capability; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will take into account when selecting an airborne early warning system the relative potential for subsequent export orders for United Kingdom industry of the two competing systems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on 25 November at column *181*.

Overseas Personnel (Training)

Mr. Flannery asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* the names of all the countries which have had access to the facilities for training at British military establishments for each year from 1982 to 1986, inclusive.

Mr. Freeman: The tables show the countries which have been provided with training at defence establishments in the United Kingdom for each of the financial years from 1981-82 through to 1985-86.

Financial Year 1985-86

Algeria
Austria
Australia
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Canada
Chile
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
Eire
Fiji
Finland
France
Gambia
Ghana
Greece
Guyana
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Iraq
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lebanon
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Mozambique
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Philippines
Portugal
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Singapore
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Tanzania
Thailand
Trinidad/Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
Uganda
Uruguay
United States of America
Venezuela
West Germany
Yemen
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Financial Year 1984-85

Algeria
Australia
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Canada
Chile
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
Eire
Fiji
Finland
France
Gambia
Ghana
Greece
Guyana
Hong Kong
Iceland
India
Inonesia
Iraq
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lebanon
Libya
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Montserrat
Mozambique
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Philippines
Portugal
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Singapore
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Tanzania
Thailand
Trinidad/Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
UAE
Uganda
USA
Venezuela
West Germany
Yeman
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Financial year 1983-84

Algeria
Australia
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Burma
Canada
Chile
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
Eire
Fiji
Finland
France
Gambia
Ghana
Greece
Guyana
Hong Kong
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lebanon
Lesotho
Libya
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Malta
Mauritius
Montserrat
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Philippines
Portugal
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Singapore
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Kitts/St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Tanzania
Thailand

Trinidad/Tobago
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
Uganda
United States of America
Venezuela
West Germany
Yemen
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Financial year 1982-83

Australia
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Burma
Canada
Chile
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
Eire
Fiji
France
Gambia
Ghana
Greece
Guyana
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lebanon
Lesotho
Libya
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Papau New Guinea
Philippines
Portugal
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Singapore
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Tanzania
Thailand
Trinidad/Tobago
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
Uganda
United States of America
Venezuela
West Germany
Yemen
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Financial Year 1981-82

Argentina
Australia
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Burma
Canada
Chile
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
Eire
Fiji
France
Gambia
Ghana
Greece
Guyana
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lebanon
Lesotho
Libya
Malawi
Malaysia
Mauritius
Moroco
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Peru
Philippines
Portugal
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Singapore
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Syria
Tanzania
Thailand
Trinidad/Tobago
Tonga
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
Uganda
United States of America
Venezuela
West Germany
Yemen
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Mr. Flannery asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* the names of all the countries which have had access to training by members of Her Majesty's armed forces serving overseas on secondment or loan for each year from 1982 to 1986, inclusive.

Mr. Stanley: The following table shows the countries and territories in which members of Her Majesty's armed forces have served on loan or secondment terms from 1982 to 1986—except where a lesser period is indicated:

Country
Australia
Bahamas to 1985
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belize
Bermuda
Brunei
Chile
Dubai only 1982
Ecuador to 1985
Fiji
Gambia from 1984
Ghana
Hong Kong
Indonesia only to 1982
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lesotho
Malaysia to 1983
Mauritius
New Zealand
Nigeria
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Singapore to 1984
Sri Lanka to 1983
St. Lucia from 1986
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
Zimbabwe*

* Since January 1986 a Wing of the British Military Advisory and Training Team in Zimbabwe has been specifically allocated to train *Mozambican* troops within Zimbabwe.

Some of these personnel have filled posts in overseas staff colleges and similar establishments which may have been attended by students from countries other than the host nation. Records of such students are not held centrally and it would require disproportionate cost to establish precise details.

State Security

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the book "Their Trade is Treachery" was referred to the D Notice Committee for consideration by all its members.

Mr. Stanley: I shall answer shortly.

Aircraft Carriers

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much time per year since the Falkland Islands war aircraft carriers in commission have devoted to Her Majesty's Royal Marine assault training exercises.

Mr. Stanley: Full records of aircraft carriers' involvement in assault training exercises are not retained for 1982 and 1983. However, in the time available, the following information can be provided:

Year	Time Spent (approximate)
1984	3 weeks
1985	5 weeks
1986	2 weeks

Gruinard Island

Mr. Charles Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the decontamination exercise on Gruinard Island;

(2) what experiments are being, or have recently been, carried out on Gruinard Island using tissue to culture anthrax spores to test the effectiveness of the decontamination exercise; and if he will give details of any such experiments;

(3) if he will give details of the results of experiments carried out to test the effectiveness of the decontamination of Gruinard Island;

(4) what experiments at Porton Down have been carried out using cultured anthrax spores from Gruinard Island.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave him on 4 November at column *427*.

Studies of the soil samples taken from Gruinard Island in October are still in progress. We will announce the outcome of these studies and the effectiveness of the decontamination exercise when all the tests recommended by the independent advisory group have been completed.

All experiments on soil samples taken from Gruinard Island both now and in the past, have been intended to determine the level and extent of anthrax contamination, if any. The principal technique uses a nutrient gel culture to assess the number of spores in a given sample and avoids the use of large numbers of laboratory animals. However, results obtained by this method will be confirmed by a small number of in vivo tests using about 50 guinea pigs in total. Reports of this work will be published in scientific journals in due course.

Land

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current United Kingdom land holding of his Department in terms of freehold leasehold and access rights; and how many acres have been disposed of and for what purpose in each of the past five years.

Mr. Freeman: Ministry of Defence land and foreshore holdings at 1 October 1986 and over the last five years are set out below.

	Freehold (acres)	Leasehold (acres)	Rights (acres)
1 October 1986	552,942	39,226	89,635
1 October 1985	554,303	39,138	90,030
1 October 1984	562,411	39,836	89,762
1 October 1983	564,496	41,551	88,659
1 October 1982	568,435	41,473	90,732
1 October 1981	573,840	41,534	90,805

It is Ministry of Defence policy to dispose of land which is not essential for the support of the armed forces, but the purpose for which a purchaser buys the land is not known.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those areas of land owned or leased by his Department in the area bounded by the London boroughs; and if he will indentify the purpose to which each site is put.

Mr. Freeman: The following list reflects the main locations owned or leased by the Ministry of Defence in the area bounded by the London boroughs and the purpose to which each site is put:

FREEHOLD

Battersea Simpson street — Air Training Corps unit; St. John's hill—Territorial Army centre.
Biggin hill RAF training facility.
Bromely Golf road—quality assurance directorate.
Chelsea Army barracks; Duke of Yorks HQ — Territorial Army administrative headquarters.
Feltham — Army mapping/charting establishment and storage depot.
Finchley High road—Army careers information office.
Greenwich RN college, cemetery and recreation ground (includes leasehold property).
Harefield—Quality assurance directorate.
Hendon—RAF station.
Hook Mansfield road—hospital facility.
Hounslow—Army barracks; Army camp.
Kenley—RAF station.
Kensington Brompton road — London university air squadron; Brompton road/Cottage place — Army storage accommodation; Queens Gate terrace and Petersham place —RN office accommodation; Iverna gardens—RN office accommodation.
Kidbrooke Army cataloguing authority.
Knightsbridge Army barracks.
Marylebone Cleveland street—RAF medical facility.
Mill Hill Army barracks, postal depot and workshops.
Northolt RAF station.
Penge High street—Army careers information office.
Plumstead Garland road — Army central packaging unit.
Purfleet Army ranges and barracks.
Shepherd's Bush Army central servicing and Territorial Army depot.
Stanmore RAF administrative headquarters.
Stanmore Park RAF administrative headquarters.
Surbiton Claremont road — Army careers information office.
Teddington Bushey park and Queens road—Admiralty research establishment (includes leasehold property).
Twickenham Kneller Hall—Army school of music.
Uxbridge RAF station and school of music.
Wandsworth Kimber road—ex Army forms depot.
Wembley High road—Army careers information office.
West Drayton RAF station; Warwick road—Procurement executive research establishment.
Westminster Army barracks.
West Ruislip RAF office accommodation and recreation ground; USAF depot.
Whetstone Army postal and courier service.
Woolwich Ha Ha road — Quality assurance directorate; Woolwich common — Army barracks, Royal Military Academy and Queen Elizabeth Military hospital.

LEASEHOLD

Acton High street—Army careers information office.
Battersea Nine Elms Lane — Army garaging and office accommodation.
Bermondsey Jamaica road—RN reserve forces unit.
Bloomsbury Capper street — Quality assurance directorate.
Camberwell Camberwell Church street — Army careers information office.
Chelsea Burton's court—Army recreation ground.
Crayford High street—Army careers information office.
Croydon Park street—RN careers information office.
Dulwich Lordship lane—Territorial Army barracks.
Edmonton Green The Market square — Army careers information office.
Eltham Eltham hall—Army institute of education.

Ilford Cranbrook road — RN/RAF careers infomation office.
Marylebone Harley street—RAF dental facility.
Norbury London road — Army/RAF careers information office.
Romford South street—Army careers information office.
St. John's Wood Ordnance hill and Queens terrace — Army barracks.
Wandsworth Strathville road — Army forms depot; Kimber road—Army forms depot.
West Ham Royal Victoria dock—Army storage depot.
Westminster The Strand — Army careers information office; Dean Stanley street — Army office accommodation; Belgrave square—Imperial defence college; Elverton street—Territorial Army centre.
Wimbledon Merton road—Air Training Corps unit.

South Korea

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many British military personnel are based in South Korea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: The position is the same as that set out in the reply that I gave to the hon. Member on 14 April at column *318*.

NATO (Crisis Management Committee)

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state the posts, ranks and responsibilities of officials from his Department who represent the United Kingdom on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation crisis management committee and its sub-committees.

Mr. Stanley: There is no NATO committee with this title. Crisis management in NATO is the responsibility of the North Atlantic council and the defence planning committee. Outside ministerial meetings, the United Kingdom is represented by its permanent representative on both the North Atlantic council and the defence planning committee.

Directorate of Materials Quality Assurance

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will identify the new locations of the high explosives, propellants, initiators, pyrotechnics, chemical defence and atomic weapons branches of E Division under the director materials quality assurance of his Department.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: On 1 April 1984 E Division of the directorate of materials quality assurance became part of the directorte general of defence quality assurance. There have been no changes in location.

Mynydd Epynt, Powys

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will identify the project extent and cost of the town being built by his Department on Mynydd Epynt in Powys, for the purpose of training in fighting in built up areas; whether he anticipates this site being used by troops from overseas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The training complex to be constructed at the Sennybridge training area (Mynydd Epynt) comprises some 32 building representing a part of a village. The buildings will be uninhabitable shells constructed specifically to meet an essential military training requirement. The local planning authority has raised no objection at the outline or detailed stages to our proposals and construction is now expected to start in March 1987 at a cost of some £3 million. There are no current plans for foreign forces to use it.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Legal Aid

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Attorney-General if Her Majesty's Government will introduce legislation to amend the legal aid scheme to remove the right to legal aid of persons wishing to challenge in the courts their expulsion from a political party; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: No. Before legal aid is granted in any case to which the scheme applies all applicants must satisfy the Law Society, which is responsible for administering the civil legal aid scheme, that they have reasonable grounds for taking or defending the proceedings. There is thus no reason to discriminate against those who have been expelled from a political party and have a cause of action in the courts enjoying a reasonable prospect of success.

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Attorney-General if Her Majesty's Government will introduce legislation to extend the legal aid scheme to cover persons wishing to challenge in the European Court its refusal of membership by a political party in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: No. The legal aid scheme in England and Wales is intended to enable persons of small or moderate means to take proceedings before the courts of England and Wales. I understand that both the Commission and the European Court of Human Rights operate legal aid schemes of their own. There is thus no reason to discriminate in favour of those persons who have had the misfortune to be refused membership of a political party.

State Security

Mr. Dalyell asked the Attorney-General, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) on 8 December, why he did not prosecute Granada Television under the Official Secrets Act 1911 *(a)* in July 1984 and *(b)* in December 1986 for broadcasting material confidential to the security services in the "World in Action" programme, "The Spy Who Never Was."

The Attorney-General: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters which are or may be at issue in the proceedings concerning the Peter Wright case in Australia while those proceedings continue.

Mr. Winnick asked the Attorney-General if he is currently considering any other cases of alleged breaches of confidentiality by former members of the security services, in addition to those about which he has already informed the House; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I am not currently considering any such cases in addition to those about which I have already informed the House.

Classified Information

Mr. Dalyell asked the Attorney-General how, in considering possible legal proceedings arising from alleged

breaches of confidentiality in relation to classified information, he distinguishes between his roles as prosecutor in criminal proceedings and as nominal plaintiff in civil proceedings.

The Attorney-General: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) on 8 December at column 2. The distinction between criminal and civil proceedings derives from the general law.

International Garden Festival

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General if he will institute proceedings against Mr. John Anton of Transworld Leisure plc for fraudulent practice in connection with the operation of the International Garden Festival site in Aigburth, Liverpool.

The Attorney-General: The investigation of any alleged criminal offence is a function of the police. If the hon. Member considers that an offence of fraud may have been committed the proper course is for him to refer the matter to the police so that if, after proper investigation, it is appropriate, a report may be submitted to the Crown prosecution service.

Neville Chamberlain (Papers)

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General whether the private papers of Neville Chamberlain relating to 1936 will be made public on 2 January 1987; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Private papers are not public records.

Magistracy

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Attorney-General (1) if he will list all of the *(a)* oral and *(b)* verbal questions which the Lord Chancellor requires to be put to applicants for the magistracy;

(2) what is the status of the question that the Lord Chancellor requires to be put to applicants for the magistracy; and whether candidates may refuse to answer, either in writing on the applications form or verbally at interviews, questions relating to political views, or religious beliefs or other contenitous matters.

The Attorney-General: The only questions which the Lord Chancellor requires to be put to candidates for the magistracy are those contained in the application form, a copy of which is in the Library. I draw the attention of the hon. Member to replies which I gave on 30 January 1984 at column *20* and 9 February 1984, at column *681* which make it clear that a candidate is not obliged to give any information which he does not wish to disclose. Any information provided is treated in confidence and used only for appointment purposes.

Prosecution Policy

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Attorney-General if he intends to change the rules in respect of summary possession proceedings; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The comments on the Lord Chancellor's consultation paper on summary possession proceedings showed general agreement that the minimum period between service of the application and the order should be reduced from five days to two where the defendants are on open land, but there was concern about such a reduction in the case of residential premises.

The Lord Chancellor is inviting the Supreme Court rule committee to reduce the minimum period from five days to two in the case of open land but to retain the five day period in the case of residential premises. A statutory instrument covering this and other matters is expected to be made before Christmas.

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Attorney-General how he exercises his responsibilities in determining the public interest before commencing the injunctive process; and what procedures are followed in each case.

The Attorney-General: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) on 8 December at column *2*.

State Security

Mr. Marlow asked the Attorney-General whether, in view of disclosures of the proceedings of the Peter Wright court case in Australia, he will institute a review of measures applied in British courts for hearing in camera cases relating to national security.

The Attorney-General: No need for such a review in this country has been demonstrated by the proceedings in question.

Complaints Investigation Bureau

Mr. Cohen asked the Attorney-General when the Director of Public Prosecutions first received from the complaints investigation bureau of the Metropolitan police a report on police officers involving the abuse of access to information contained on police national computer files by an alleged homosexual ring; when he received further reports; and when a decision can be expected.

The Attorney-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions first received a report on the case referred to by the hon. Member from the complaints investment bureau of the Metropolitan police on 23 January 1986. Further reports were received from the police on 28 July, 19 September and 20 October. Papers were forwarded to me on 17 November and I consented to the prosecution of three men for offences under the Official Secrets Act 1911 on 19 November 1986 and 26 November 1986.

WALES

Tourism

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Wales which local authorities in Wales have published tourism strategies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This information is not available centrally. Local authorities have, however, been encouraged by the Wales Tourist Board to produce their own strategies which embrace the proposals contained in structure and local plans and also take account of the marketing needs and priorities of each area.

Colposcopy Facilities

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those health authorities which have full colposcopy facilities for all women needing treatment.

Mr. Mark Robinson: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Wales which district health authorities do not have a colposcope.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The information is not available centrally.

WDA Advance Factories

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what is the latest estimate of the number of jobs which will be created in Wales in those advance factories let or sold by the Welsh Development Agency during the period of their most recent annual report;

(2) if he will make a statement on the priorities reflected in the geographic spread across Wales of the factories which have been let by the Welsh Development Agency during the period of its most recent annual report; if he has any plans to vary those priorities; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what plans he has in conjunction with the Welsh Development Agency for the construction of more advance factories in Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Information on the number of jobs associated with the Welsh Development Agency's factory programme in 1985-86 is given in the agency's latest annual report and accounts which has been laid before the House today.

The WDA's programme of factory building is not founded on pre-determined geographic priorities. It relates to the agency's best assessment of need based on close consultation with local authorities and other interested bodies; and I have no plans to change this process. Significant factory construction will be possible within the framework of the substantially higher level of resources I announced for the agency on 8 December.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many letters he has received expressing opposition to the rate support grant allocation for Welsh local authorities for 1987-88 ; and if he will make a statement in relation to determining the appropriate rate support grant strategy for Wales.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I have received a number of letters from one local authority expressing opposition to one element of the proposed Welsh rate support grant settlement for 1987-88.

I shall be making a statement on Welsh rate support grant next week.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether there is to be any reconsideration of the rate support grant for Welsh local authorities for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: My provisional proposals for the 1987-88 Welsh rate support grant settlement were announced in July and have since been the subject of extensive consultation with the local authority associations through the forum of the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance. I shall be making a statement setting out my firm intentions next week.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a list showing the estimated critical group exposures associated with 100 per cent. of authorised radioactive discharges at each licensed nuclear power station in Wales, where such authorisations contain numerical limits; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information requested is not readily available. I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a list showing, for each licensed nuclear power station in Wales *(a)* the calculated critical group exposures associated with actual radioactive discharges in the last year, and *(b)* the proportion that actual radioactive discharges in the last year bear to maximum authorised limits, where such authorisations contain numerical limits; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The estimated doses for the critical groups in 1985 in respect of Wylfa* and Trawsfynydd nuclear power stations were less than 0·1 milli sievert and 0·21 milli sievert respectively. The discharges for 1985 expressed as a percentage of the authorised limits are:

	Gross alpha/ beta	*Tritium*	*Caesium 137*
Wylfa	2	4·7	—
Trawsfynydd	28·8	3·2	24·3

* Mainly due to discharges from Sellafield.

Abortions

Mr. Terlezki asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he last issued guidance to the health authorities in Wales concerning the implementation of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 in regard to late abortions; and what that guidance was.

Mr. Mark Robinson: No guidance has been issued to health authorities in Wales on this subject but the Government financed the publication in 1985 of a document on foetal viability and clinical practice prepared by a working party set up by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. This document contained the considered opinion of the royal college and other relevant professional bodies that the reference to 28 weeks gestational age in the 1929 Act is now out of date in view of advances in medical techniques. With Government financial assistance, this document was circulated to all members of the royal college including those residing in Wales.

School Leavers

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many young people who left school in the summer of 1986 are still looking for work; and what proportion this is of the overall total of Welsh school leavers;

(2) how many school leavers in summer 1986 joined Government training schemes in Wales; and how many found employment independent of Government placings.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to a question by the hon. Member for Neath (Mr. Coleman) on 17 November at column *32*.

Assisted Places

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been *(a)* the numerical and *(b)* the percentage take-up of assisted places at Welsh private or independent schools in each year from 1979 to 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information requested is given in the following table:

School Year

	Number of new places taken up	*Percentage take up of new places*
1981-82	114	76
1982-83	128	86·5
1983-84	120	93
1984-85	118	91·5
1985-86	115	84·6
1986-87	123	90·4

Note: The assisted places scheme did not begin until 1981.

Capitation Allowance

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the average capitation allowance per pupil, in each Welsh local education authority and for Wales as a whole in each year from 1979-80 to 1986-87.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Consistent information on full capitation allowances is not collected centrally. However, the available figures relating to expenditure per pupil in respect of nursery, primary and secondary schools on books and equipment are given in the following table.

Expenditure per pupil in nursery, primary and secondary schools (£'s at outturn prices)

	1979-80	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	[1]*1985-86*
Clwyd	15·3	19·5	24·6	25·6	33·2	31·6	29·2
Dyfed	17·7	19·1	25·1	26·3	26·2	23·1	27·0
Gwent	14·3	18·9	22·0	26·3	27·5	31·0	32·4
Gwynedd	15·5	19·0	20·0	22·6	25·1	30·8	29·4
Mid Glamorgan	17·4	19·3	17·4	22·9	26·2	25·5	29·9
Powys	18·4	17·0	27·1	29·0	28·7	40·5	[2] —
South Glamorgan	18·3	19·8	22·4	24·7	26·1	24·2	29·2
West Glamorgan	22·0	22·2	22·4	30·8	32·3	29·4	31·3
Wales	17·2	19·6	21·9	25·7	28·2	26·8	[2] —

[1] Provisional.
[2] Figures not currently available.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total number of hospital beds in Wales for each year from 1979 to 1986.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Information on the average daily number of beds available in hospitals in Wales is given in the following table for each year from 1979 to 1985. An average for 1986 is not yet available.

Average daily number of available beds

	Number
1979	23,460
1980	23,200
1981	22,940
1982	22,600
1983	22,470
1984	22,310
1985	22,130

Housing

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* council and *(b)* private houses have been completed in Wales in each year from 1979 to 1986 inclusive.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The numbers of council and private houses completed in each year since 1979 (including completions by new towns) are shown in the following table:

Year	*Local Authority and New Town Corporations*	*Private*
1979	2,139	6,660
1980	2,491	5,549
1981	2,278	4,793
1982	1,044	5,040
1983	921	5,314
1984	1,024	6,126
1985	413	5,988
Jan-Sept 1986	326	4,685

Earnings

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has about the average earnings of Welsh 18 to 25 year olds at the latest date for which figures are available; and what information he has about the comparative figure for 18 to 25 year olds in England and Scotland.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The latest available figures are from the new earnings survey and relate to April 1985. The

average earnings for full time employees of 18-24 years of age whose pay was not affected by absence were as follows:

Average Gross Weekly Earnings

	£
Wales	109·3
England	117·0
Scotland	113·5

Unemployment

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the average length of time a person spends unemployed in Wales in each year from 1980 to 1986.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The median* duration of unemployment for Wales, published by the Department of Employment is as follows:

Male and Female	*Weeks*
Completed spells of unemployment (computerised records only)	
July 1983—October 1983	11·8
July 1984—October 1984	11·3
July 1985—October 1985	11·3
July 1986—October 1986	12·1
Uncompleted spells of unemployment (all records)	
July 1983—October 1983	33·9
July 1984—October 1984	35·0
July 1985—October 1985	37·3
July 1986—October 1986	38·1

* The median duration is the length of time spent unemployed, which has been exceeded by 50 per cent. of the unemployed.

Health Services

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has reached decisions about the allocation of resources for hospital and community health service in Wales in 1987-88.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: In 1987-88, I intend to allocate £779·9 million. This represents a cash increase of £57 million over 1986-87 provision or 7·9 per cent.

For current spending this represents additional sums totalling £50·5 million a cash increase of 7·5 per cent. over 1986-87 provision of which £10·6 million will be required for centrally directed developments. The balance of £39·9 million a cash increase of 5·9 per cent. over 1986-87 provision, is being made available to district health authorities.

In addition to this extra funding health authorities will retain the benefit of cash released through their cost improvement programmes, the first 0·5 per cent. of which will as in previous years be for re-investment in priority services. Health authorities will also retain the benefit of income from charges of about £2 million, mainly from private patient treatment. From within these total additional resources health authorities will be expected to meet pay and price increases and to continue to maintain standards of patient care and develop services in accordance with approved policies and priorities.

Capital resources for hospital and community health services will increase by £6·2 million to £52·4 million. As a consequence of the declining requirements of the centrally funded residual all-Wales programme, the funds available to health authorities will increase to £24·5 million. Authorities will also, as before, retain receipts from the sale of surplus land and buildings.

The revenue and capital resources available to individual authorities in 1987-88 will be as shown in the following table. These allocations do not take into account further sums which will be made available following decisions on centrally funded developments for the coming year. These will be announced shortly.

	Revenue Element of Allocation £ million	*Capital Element of Allocation £ million*
Clwyd	88·290	4·086
East Dyfed	55·001	1·831
Pembrokeshire	20·201	0·868
Gwent	106·242	4·277
Gwynedd	52,865	1·501
Mid Glamorgan	124·868	4·680
Powys	24·912	0·885
South Glamorgan	144·988	2·245
West Glamorgan	92·779	4·079

Welsh Language

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the specific Welsh language projects which he has funded since 1979 under section 21 of the Education Act 1980; and what plans he has to fund further such projects.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information is in the following tables. Applications for support in 1987-88 are currently under consideration.

Education Act 1980: Section 21 Grants for Welsh Language Education
Local Education Authorities

Clwyd	*Grant Awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant Awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant Awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant Awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant Awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant Awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant Awarded 1986-87* £	*Total* £
1. Athrawon Bro	8,650	62,253	60,600	68,350	45,000	53,000	58,000	355,853
2. INSET	9,240	5,000	5,000	6,210	7,000	7,000	7,500	46,950
3. Purchase of Welsh medium material	8,910	4,975	—	—	—	—	—	13,885
4. Production and printing of teaching material in Welsh	2,455	4,453	4,453	4,567	—	—	—	15,928
5. Adaption for Welsh medium teaching of Clwyd French Certificate Scheme	1,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,000
6. Immersion courses in Welsh for pupils at Urdd camps	1,800	1,200	—	2,100	3,000	6,000	5,000	19,100

Clwyd	*Grant Awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant Awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant Awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant Awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant Awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant Awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant Awarded 1986-87* £	*Total* £
7. Purchase of language learning equipment	1,620	820	—	—	—	—	—	2,440
8. Purchase of reprographic equipment	8,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	8,000
9. Employment of trainee operator for offset litho equipment	700	5,630	5,630	—	—	—	—	11,960
10. Teaching Welsh to adults	4,000	17,660	26,550	8,000	10,000	10,000	23,000	99,210
11. Mousematics project	—	7,000	7,000	9,987	—	—	—	23,987
12. Resources for small rural schools	—	660	—	—	—	—	—	660
13. Bilingual nursery education project	—	—	9,000	20,600	21,000	20,000	25,000	95,600
14. Joint computer project with Gwynedd—NEWI	—	—	—	10,000	15,000	20,000	20,000	65,000
15. To publish Welsh graded objectives course—'Clebran'—for first year pupils in secondary schools	—	—	—	—	10,000	12,000	2,000	24,000
16. Provision of Welsh books for schools	—	—	—	—	5,000	—	—	5,000
17. Welsh plays in schools	—	—	—	—	1,000	1,500	}	11,500
Welsh performances by 'Outreach' theatre							9,000 }	
18. Residential courses—Cam Ymlaen	—	—	—	—	720	700	950	2,370
19. NEWI Production of microcomputer programmes	—	—	—	—	12,500	—	—	12,500
20. Integration of non-Welsh speaking pupils in rural schools	—	—	—	—	—	2,000	}	
Welsh language education for minority groups in mixed language rural schools	—	—	—	3,350	3,350	3,000	7,000 }	18,700
21. Welsh course for hospital staff: NEWI	—	—	—	—	—	3,220	4,500	7,720
22. Production of dramatised excerpts on tape of Welsh language books	—	—	—	—	—	1,050	—	1,050
23. Bilingual schools Llysfasi agricultural education	—	—	—	—	—	—	6,000	6,000
24. TVEI Humanities related Welsh medium experimental modules	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,500	3,500
Total	46,375	109,651	[1]118,233	[2]133,164	133,570	139,470	171,450	851,913

[1] Supplementary grant to allow for inflation +£5,250 (Total 123,483).
[2] Added allocation £18,527 (Total £151,691).

Dyfed	*Grant awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
1. Athrawon Bro	9,575	51,425	61,690	64,300	70,000	76,944	80,000	413,934
2. Purchase of Welsh language teaching materials	27,120	6,000	2,500	—	—	—	—	35,620
3. Language courses for pupils at Urdd camps	5,000	13,068	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	58,068
4. Language courses for adults	850	1,800	2,000	10,000	10,000	10,800	11,000	46,450
5. Video films for in-service training in Welsh	—	12,515	—	—	—	—	—	12,515
6. INSET	—	8,005	8,500	5,000	2,750	3,056	—	27,311
7. Portable language development unit	—	5,400	—	—	—	—	—	5,400
8. Equipment to enable development of computer programmes in Welsh	—	2,742	—	—	—	—	—	2,742
9. Video equipment for drama in Welsh at Felinfach Theatre	—	1,282	—	—	—	—	—	1,282
10. Training scheme for non-Welsh speaking teachers	—	—	—	—	—	7,500	10,000	17,500
11. Welsh by means of drama (Cwmbran and Coracle Theatre)	—	—	—	—	—	25,000	28,000	53,000
12. Language Centres for Newcomers	—	—	—	—	—	7,500	15,000	22,500
Total	42,545	102,237	82,690	[1]87,300	90,750	138,800	152,000	696,322

[1] Added allocation £17,000 (total £104,300).

Gwent	*Grant awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
1. Full-time tutor organiser for adult courses	—	—	11,350	19,150	20,100	13,073	19,500	83,173
2. Books, materials and equipment for use in adult education service and schools	7,500	8,250	10,000	5,000	3,000	9,500	—	43,250
3. In-service training for teachers of adults	—	—	—	—	—	1,000	3,000	4,000
4. Support for the development of additional Welsh Medium Units	—	—	—	—	—	35,660	50,000	85,660
Total	7,500	8,250	21,350	[1]24,150	23,100	59,233	72,500	216,083

[1] Added allocation £8,845 (total £32,995).

Gwynedd	*Grant awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
1. Printing of Welsh language course materials	4,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,000
2. INSET	1,200	3,200	2,000	—	5,000	4,500	—	15,900
3. Language courses for pupils	12,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	12,000
4. Language courses for adults	7,240	5,500	4,692	5,383	1,500	2,500	8,000	34,815
5. Language learning equipment	6,383	—	—	—	—	—	—	6,383
6. Publication of booklet describing County's bilingual education policy	3,500	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,500
7. Welsh language programme for children newly arrived in Gwynedd	—	50,000	—	—	—	—	—	50,000
8. Teaching materials for Welsh as a first or second language in schools	20,300	30,250	12,000	5,000	—	—	—	67,550
9. Welsh language adviser for infant newcomers to Gwynedd	—	8,700	36,200	7,000	12,500	—	—	64,400
10. Primary sector projects *(a)* Welsh books for schools *(b)* pupils and teacher booklets for second language courses	—	6,000	—	—	—	—	—	6,000
11. Purchase of books for Ysgol Y Creuddyn	—	4,000	—	—	—	—	—	4,000
12. INSET for adult education tutors running intensive Welsh courses	—	3,500	—	—	—	—	—	3,500
13. Initial work to provide a basis for producing music texts in Welsh	—	2,500	—	—	—	—	—	2,500
14. Preparation and publication of Welsh medium booklets for use in secondary schools—Cwrs y Bont I, II, III	—	2,000	—	—	—	2,000	—	4,000
15. Language masters for use in the primary sector	—	1,000	—	—	—	—	—	1,000
16. Production of text book for the National Nursery Examination Board course in Welsh	—	750	—	—	—	—	—	750
17. Crash/residential courses	—	—	40,000	—	—	—	—	40,000
18. Teaching Welsh to children and particularly to non-Welsh speaking newcomers into Gwynedd	—	—	—	40,000	—	—	—	40,000
19. Courses through the medium of Welsh at Colleges of Further Education	—	—	—	20,000	21,500	—	—	41,500
(a) Preparation of shorthand and audio tapes in Welsh for use on secretarial courses in Colleges of Further Education	—	5,600	4,550	—	—	—	—	10,150
(b) Materials for teaching Agricultural Science	—	—	—	—	—	9,445	9,000	18,445
(c) Office Practice Course	—	—	—	—	—	7,050	1,800	8,850
(d) Catering Course	—	—	—	—	—	1,450	—	1,450
(e) Teaching materials/translator for Home Economics Department	—	—	—	—	—	8,000	—	8,000
(f) Preparing teaching resources for a bilingual NNEB course	—	—	—	—	—	8,000	7,500	15,500
(g) Bilingual Business Studies course—Coleg Gwynedd	—	—	—	—	—	—	12,000	12,000
(h) Building Courses	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,500	4,500
(i) Preparation of Teaching Materials for Social Services Courses	—	—	—	—	—	—	5,000	5,000
20. Pre-school liaison officer—special education	—	—	—	14,503	—	—	—	14,503
21. Preparation of material for word processor (Edword)	—	—	—	7,550	8,370	20,000	—	35,920
22. Adapting computer software—in conjunction with Clwyd	—	—	—	10,000	15,000	20,000	20,000	65,000
23. Athrawon Bro	—	—	—	—	31,000	40,000	48,000	119,000
24. Theatre in Education	—	—	—	—	10,000	10,000	5,000	25,000
25. Computer appreciation course for secondary schools	—	—	—	—	6,000	4,419	—	10,419
26. Experimental centres for newcomers	—	—	—	—	10,000	19,000	15,000	44,000
27. Publication of Volume "Britain in the Tudor Age"	—	—	—	—	—	1,500	—	1,500
28. To prepare materials to meet Mode III examination need	—	—	—	—	—	2,000	—	2,000
29. Publication of material 'Welsh in Work and Leisure'	—	—	—	—	—	1,900	—	1,900
30. Learning through Science (5-13)	—	—	—	—	—	—	7,500	7,500
31. Development of potential of 'Logo Chip' in Welsh	—	—	—	—	—	—	7,000	7,000

Gwynedd	*Grant awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
32. Adaptation of Curwen Books (1, 2 & 3)	—	—	—	—	—	—	5,500	5,500
33. Special Needs Resources in Welsh	—	—	—	—	—	—	8,000	8,000
Totals	54,623	123,000	99,442	[1]109,436	120,870	161,764	163,800	832,935

[1] Added Allocation £17,520; Total £126,956

Mid Glamorgan	*Grant awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
1. INSET	38,416	59,731	65,000	63,000	2,500	2,500	3,000	234,147
2. Purchase of Welsh medium teaching materials	11,000	9,679	2,500	—	—	5,000	—	28,179
3. Extension of courses for adults	—	—	3,500	3,860	5,000	5,500	6,000	23,860
4. Welsh learners Saturday Club	—	—	—	1,180	—	—	—	1,180
5. Athrawon Bro	—	—	—	—	48,850	81,620	86,000	216,470
6. Preparation of resources for Welsh medium comprehensive schools	—	—	—	—	2,000	2,000	—	4,000
7. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni: Taped lessons Pilot Scheme	—	—	—	—	—	6,000	9,500	15,500
8. Theatre in Education	—	—	—	—	—	2,000	2,250	4,250
9. Development Officer for Welsh as a second language (Youth and Adult)	—	—	—	—	—	16,000	—	16,000
10. Translation of fire prevention material (Welephant)	—	—	—	—	—	2,000	—	2,000
11. Teacher in the community	—	—	—	—	—	—	18,000	18,000
12. Summer Courses—Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,000	3,000
Total	49,416	69,410	71,000	[1]68,040	58,350	122,620	127,750	566,586

[1] Added allocation £15,660 (Total £83,700).

Powys	*Grant awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
1. Athrawon Bro	5,342	23,289	25,375	28,742	42,000	45,000	51,000	220,748
2. INSET	1,554	2,556	—	—	—	—	—	4,110
3. Language courses for pupils at Urdd camps	3,648	8,689	5,000	9,150	8,000	8,000	10,000	52,487
4. Language courses for adults	4,908	409	—	—	10,000	10,850	11,000	37,167
5. Purchase of language materials and equipment	6,127	4,100	—	—	—	—	—	10,227
6. Development of Welsh medium education	—	7,559	15,601	15,336	—	—	—	38,496
7. Development of second language handbooks to establish threshold levels (primary schools)	—	—	—	—	—	800	—	800
8. Theatre in Education	—	—	—	—	—	12,000	10,000	22,000
9. Agriculture Welsh course (practical and theory)	—	—	—	—	—	950	—	950
Total	21,579	46,602	45,976	[1]53,228	60,000	77,600	82,000	386,985

[1] Added allocation £9,330 (Total £62,558).

South Glamorgan	*Grant Awarded 1980-81* £	*Grant Awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant Awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant Awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant Awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant Awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant Offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
1. Provision of Welsh language text and reference books	25,205	12,000	8,000	5,000	3,000	3,000	—	56,205
2. INSET	8,330	10,115	—	—	—	—	—	18,445
3. Residential language course for 6th form pupils	3,570	4,620	4,500	5,500	3,500	5,000	—	26,690
4. Language courses for adults	2,900	1,400	1,420	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	13,720
5. Provision of language equipment for schools	—	6,400	—	—	—	—	—	6,400
6. Development of secondary school course in Welsh	—	1,500	2,500	3,000	—	—	—	7,000
7. Establishment of a Welsh language resources unit at Mynachdy Road teachers centre	—	1,200	—	—	—	—	—	1,200

South Glamorgan	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	Grant Awarded 1981-82 £	Grant Awarded 1982-83 £	Grant Awarded 1983-84 £	Grant Awarded 1984-85 £	Grant Awarded 1985-86 £	Grant Offered 1986-87 £	Total £
8. Technical equipment to assist in the education of ESN(s) pupils	—	300	—	—	—	—	—	300
9. Drafting secretary for project (6) development of secondary school course in Welsh	—	—	3,200	—	—	—	—	3,200
10. Adaptation of a mathematics course	—	—	7,000	6,500	—	—	—	13,500
11. Appointment of a peripatetic remedial teacher	—	—	10,800	11,560	11,800	12,500	13,000	59,660
12. Provisions of visual aids and resources for the teaching of Welsh history	—	—	1,750	—	—	—	—	1,750
13. Adaption of a science course	—	—	—	2,000	—	—	—	2,000
14. Assistance for pupils to attend Dyffryn and Urdd language camps	—	—	—	6,000	6,000	6,000	5,000	23,000
15. Athrawon Bro	—	—	—	—	15,000	33,250	50,000	98,250
16. Computer Programme for infants	—	—	—	—	10,000	12,000	—	22,000
17. Courses for teachers—oral ability course	—	—	—	—	1,500	1,800	1,500	4,800
18. Welsh language teaching materials (preparation)	—	—	—	—	—	6,000	—	6,000
19. Translation SPMG Mathematics	—	—	—	—	—	2,000	—	2,000
20. Teaching and use of calculators in primary schools (publication of translated work)	—	—	—	—	—	700	—	700
21. Translation of mathematical skills	—	—	—	—	—	300	—	300
22. New Mode 3 - O level exams	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,000	2,000
23. Science Materials—primary schools	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,000	4,000
Total	40,005	37,535	39,170	[1]41,560	52,800	84,550	77,500	373,120

[1] Added allocation £15,330. Total £56,860.

West Glamorgan	Grant awarded 1980-81 £	Grant awarded 1981-82 £	Grant awarded 1982-83 £	Grant awarded 1983-84 £	Grant awarded 1984-85 £	Grant awarded 1985-86 £	Grant offered 1986-87 £	Total £
1. INSET (Primary)	43,000	67,860	67,860	70,694	—	—	2,000	251,414
2. Language course for pupils at Urdd camps	11,150	—	—	—	—	—	—	11,150
3. Provision of Welsh language books and materials	—	9,100	—	—	—	—	—	9,100
4. Athrawon Bro	—	—	11,960	12,236	64,000	90,533	100,000	278,729
5. Courses for teachers of Welsh	—	—	—	—	2,000	—	—	2,000
6. West Glamorgan Institute—Welsh for parents-Sadwrn Siarad	—	—	—	—	1,874	6,500 +c/f 4,046	7,000	19,420
7. Establishment of a Welsh language centre	—	—	—	—	—	8,000	—	8,000
8. Theatre in Education Programme	—	—	—	—	—	8,000	12,000	20,000
9. Development-improved presentation of Welsh language primary course(s)	—	—	—	—	—	350	—	350
10. Margam Park—educational resources programme	—	—	—	—	—	5,000	—	5,000
Total	54,150	76,960	79,820	[1]82,930	67,874	122,429	121,000	605,163

[1] Added allocation £13,499 (total £96,429).

All Local Education Authorities

	Grant awarded 1980-81 £	Grant awarded 1981-82 £	Grant awarded 1982-83 £	Grant awarded 1983-84 £	Grant awarded 1984-85 £	Grant awarded 1985-86 £	Grant offered 1986-87 £	Total £
Grand Total	316,193	573,645	557,681	[1]599,808	607,314	906,466	968,000	4,529,107

[1] Added allocation £115,681 (total £715,489).

Local Authority Higher and Further Education Organisations

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	Grant Awarded 1981-82 £	Grant Awarded 1982-83 £	Grant Awarded 1983-84 £	Grant Awarded 1984-85 £	Grant Awarded 1985-86 £	Grant Offered 1986-87 £	Total £
North East Wales Institute of Higher Education								
1. Production of Welsh Language materials.	1,150	—	6,000	1,200	[1]	[1]	[1]	8,350
2. "Cam Ymlaen" residential course	—	900	900	900	[1]	[1]	[1]	2,700
3. Welsh courses for parents	—	—	750	850	[1]	[1]	[1]	1,600
4. INSET for teachers and adult classes	—	—	700	—	[1]	[1]	[1]	700
Total	1,150	900	8,350	2,950	—	—	—	13,350
Polytechnic of Wales								
1. Intensive Welsh course (support for student parents)	—	1,425	3,350	3,400	3,350	3,750	4,000	19,275
2. Teacher Researcher to extend Welsh language provision in Mid-Glamorgan Valleys	—		4,580	5,000	—	—	—	9,580
3. Development of materials for mother and children learning Welsh	—		1,900	3,000	—	—	—	4,900
4. Tutor for in-service intensive Welsh course (joint with Mid-Glamorgan County Council)	—	—	—	11,236	—	—	—	11,236
5. Investigations into examinations for adult Welsh learners	925	4,033	2,876	—	—	—	—	7,834
6. Training programme for non-Welsh speaking parents	—	—	—	—	—	8,000	9,500	17,500
7. Development of distance learning programme for adults	—	—	—	—	—	10,336	—	10,336
Total	925	5,458	12,706	22,636	3,350	22,086	13,500	80,661
College of Librarianship Wales								
1. The design of microcomputer programmes and games in Welsh	—	—	—	—	8,500	10,000	10,000	28,500
Total	—	—	—	—	8,500	10,000	10,000	28,500
Normal College Bangor								
1. Development of Welsh language teaching materials	3,057	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,057
2. In-service training of teachers in Welsh —continuation of after care service, Cynllun y Porth	—	3,000	3,000	4,000	7,000	7,105	8,500	32,605
3. Extended employment of Development Officer to complete the Schools Council Project—Cynllun y Porth	—	916	—	—	—	—	—	916
Total	3,057	3,916	3,000	4,000	7,000	7,105	8,500	36,578
West Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education								
1. Welsh for parents	—	946	3,500	3,500	[2]	[2]	[2]	7,946
2. Audio visual equipment and tapes	—	4,123	—	—	[2]	[2]	[2]	4,123
Total	—	5,069	3,500	3,500	—	—	—	12,069
Grand Total	5,132	15,343	27,556	33,086	[3]18,850	[4]39,191	[4]32,000	171,158
Total Local Education Authorities					[3]617,664	[4]945,657	[4]1,000,000	
Total Local Education Authorities and Local Education Authority Colleges								4,700,265

[1] Included with Clwyd LEA.
[2] Included with West Glamorgan LEA.
[3] Total LEA for 1984-85: includes Normal College and Polytechnic of Wales.
[4] Total LEA for 1985-86, 1986-87: includes Normal College, Polytechnic of Wales and College of Librarianship.

Welsh Joint Education Committee

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	*Grant Awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant Awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant Awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant Awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant Awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant Offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
1. Welsh Text Book Schemes	104,500	50,273	133,551	119,047	[1]230,000			
a. WJEC Scheme						a. 48,100	a. 50,000	1,040,471
b. Aberystwyth Project Material						b. 135,000	b. 170,000	
2. Equipment for the Examinations Department to prepare examination papers in Welsh	10,500	—	—	—	—	—	—	10,500
3. Officer for teaching of Welsh to adults	—	—	—	15,986	16,000	32,000	18,000	125,953
4. Second language research officer (Secondary)	—	—	—	13,967	14,000		16,000	
5. Support for the development of Welsh medium software	—	—	—	—	—	—	23,000	23,000
Total	115,000	50,273	133,551	149,000	[1]260,000	215,100	277,000	1,199,924

[1] Includes £60,000 additional allocation.

Higher Education Organisations

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	*Grant Awarded 1981-82* £	*Grant Awarded 1982-83* £	*Grant Awarded 1983-84* £	*Grant Awarded 1984-85* £	*Grant Awarded 1985-86* £	*Grant Offered 1986-87* £	*Total* £
University college, Cardiff—extra mural department								
1. Welsh course for parents in Gwent	—	—	—	3,000	—	—	—	3,000
2. Tutor for the training of adult teachers in Welsh (liaison with South Glamorgan LEA)	—	3,000	—	—	—	—	—	3,000
Total	—	3,000	—	3,000	—	—	—	6,000
University college of Cardiff—department of education								
1. In-service training for science teachers from Welsh medium secondary schools	—	452	491	520	—	—	750	2,213
Total	—	452	491	520	—	—	750	2,213
University college Swansea—extra mural department								
1. Progression in course teaching suitable for a university department of adult and continuing education	3,650	5,263	6,300	6,600	5,000	6,000	7,000	39,813
Total	3,650	5,263	6,300	6,600	5,000	6,000	7,000	39,813
University college of Wales Aberystwyth—extra mural department								
1. Teaching of Welsh to adults	3,400	5,913	7,000	8,000	8,500	9,000	9,000	50,813
Total	3,400	5,913	7,000	8,000	8,500	9,000	9,000	50,813
University college of Wales Aberystwyth—registry								
1. Development of academic techiques related to the teaching of Welsh to adults (Welsh Department)	2,810	10,392	17,600	17,636	[1]13,750	10,000	11,000	83,188
2. Appointment of officer to collect and edit teaching materials in Welsh	—	5,965	—	—	—	—	—	5,965
3. Development of Welsh language teaching materials (Resource Centre—Education Department)	5,530	—	13,730	20,844	[1]14,692	42,000	35,000	131,796
4. Welsh/French, French/Welsh Dictionary	—	—	—	—	5,150	5,150	—	10,300
Total	8,340	16,357	31,330	38,480	33,592	57,150	46,000	231,249

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	Grant Awarded 1981-82 £	Grant Awarded 1982-83 £	Grant Awarded 1983-84 £	Grant Awarded 1984-85 £	Grant Awarded 1985-86 £	Grant Offered 1986-87 £	Total £
University college of North Wales—extra mural department								
1. Programme of instruction for adult learners of Welsh	3,075	8,000	9,000	11,000	12,000	10,000	20,000	73,075
2. Purchase of language laboratory equipment	—	2,750	—	—	—	—	—	2,750
3. Extension of Welsh language provision for adults in West Clwyd	—	—	—	—	—	6,000	—	6,000
4. Welsh courses for Gwynedd AHA staff	—	—	—	—	—	—	6,000	6,000
Total	3,075	10,750	9,000	11,000	12,000	16,000	26,000	87,825
University college of North Wales—Department of social theory and institutions								
1. Establishment of Practice Centre to adapt Social Work Education and Training	—	—	—	—	5,000	12,000	12,000	29,000
Total	—	—	—	—	5,000	12,000	12,000	29,000
University college of North Wales—education department								
1. Implementation of a Welsh version of LOGO	—	—	—	—	—	2,400	—	2,400
Total	—	—	—	—	—	2,400	—	2,400
University of Wales registry								
1. Residential course to provide post-qualifying educational opportunities for social workers through the medium of Welsh	—	615	—	—	—	—	—	615
2. Purchase of language learning equipment	10,835	—	—	—	—	—	—	10,835
3. Purchase of reprographic equipment	3,800	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,800
4. Purchasing of a word processor for the Welsh Teaching Centre	—	—	—	—	4,500	—	—	4,500
5. Short resiidential course to give paramedical workers an educational opportunity through the medium of Welsh	—	—	—	860	—	—	1,500	2,360
6. Full-time term's course for learners in Cardiff	—	—	—	1,680	—	—	—	1,680
7. Transfer of teaching materials to word processor	—	—	—	—	—	370	—	370
8. Establishment of intensive (continuation) course for learners	—	—	—	—	—	515	1,000	1,515
9. Full time course for learners (beginners)	—	—	—	—	—	1,635	1,000	2,635
10. Purchase of new cassette copying system	—	—	—	—	—	980	—	980
Total	14,635	615	—	2,540	4,500	3,500	3,500	29,290
Trinity college, Carmathen								
1. Preparation and production of classroom materials in religious education for the junior age group	—	—	—	5,973	—	—	—	5,973
2. Second language teaching aids—language games	—	2,800	8,000	—	—	—	—	10,800
3. In-service training of bilingual LEA teachers on curriculum development and production of necessary materials	—	6,000	—	—	—	—	—	6,000
4. Microcomputers for use in Welsh medium primary schools	—	—	—	—	—	16,200	17,500	33,700
Total	—	8,800	8,000	5,973	—	16,200	17,500	56,473
North Staffordshire polytechnic								
1. Survey of attitudes of past students from Welsh medium secondary schools	—	576	—	—	—	—	—	576
Total	—	576	—	—	—	—	—	576

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	Grant Awarded 1981-82 £	Grant Awarded 1982-83 £	Grant Awarded 1983-84 £	Grant Awarded 1984-85 £	Grant Awarded 1985-86 £	Grant Offered 1986-87 £	Total £
Cardigan technical college								
1. Provision of language laboratory equipment	—	6,500	—	—	—	—	—	6,500
Total	—	6,500	—	—	—	—	—	6,500
Carmarthen technical college								
1. Provision of language laboratory equipment	—	6,500	—	—	—	—	—	6,500
Total	—	6,500	—	—	—	—	—	6,500
Gwynedd further education colleges								
1. Provision of books and equipment at four further education colleges	—	6,000	—	—	—	—	—	6,000
Total	—	6,000	—	—	—	—	—	6,000
Ystrad Mynach college								
1. Provision of books and equipment for further education students	—	5,444	—	—	—	—	—	5,444
Total	—	5,444	—	—	—	—	—	5,444
Radnor college of further education								
1. Provision of language laboratory equipment	—	15,249	—	—	—	—	—	15,249
Total	—	15,249	—	—	—	—	—	15,249
South Glamorgan institute of higher education								
1. Provision of books, equipment and materials for the teaching of Welsh	—	2,365	—	—	—	—	—	2,365
Total	—	2,365	—	—	—	—	—	2,365
Grand total: Higher education organisations	33,100	93,784	62,121	76,113	68,592	122,250	121,750	577,710

[1] Includes £3,750 additional allocation.
[2] Includes £4,000 additional allocation.

Other organisations

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	Grant Awarded 1981-82 £	Grant Awarded 1982-83 £	Grant Awarded 1983-84 £	Grant Awarded 1984-85 £	Grant Awarded 1985-86 £	Grant Offered 1986-87 £	Total £
Schools Council Committee for Wales								
1. Diagnostic and teaching materials for slow learners	—	5,000	30,023	29,758	—	—	—	64,781
Total	—	5,000	30,023	29,758	—	—	—	64,781
Workers Educational Association North Wales District								
1. "Practice your Welsh" classes	—	—	—	3,450	3,500	3,500	3,000	13,450
Total	—	—	—	3,450	3,500	3,500	3,000	13,450
Gwynedd Health Authority								
Teaching Packs								
1. "My Body" Project								
2. Alcohol Education			10,000	10,000	9,395			29,395

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	Grant Awarded 1981-82 £	Grant Awarded 1982-83 £	Grant Awarded 1983-84 £	Grant Awarded 1984-85 £	Grant Awarded 1985-86 £	Grant Offered 1986-87 £	Total £
3 Safety Education	—	—	—	—	—	10,000	—	10,000
4 Drug Education	—	—	—	—	—	—	7,000	7,000
5 Food and Health	—	—	—	—	—	—	7,000	7,000
Total	—	—	10,000	10,000	9,395	10,000	7,000	46,395
Welsh National Centre for Religious Education								
1 Production of materials for religious education in the infants and junior school and also "O" level text books for secondary schools	—	—	—	6,500	—	—	—	6,500
Total	—	—	—	6,500	—	—	—	6,500
National Scientific Association								
1. Science Society Conference Scholarship (includes production of posters portraying Welsh Scientists[1])	—	12,000	—	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	6,000
2. Welsh software in schools	—	—	—	1,000	—	—	—	1,000
Total	—	2,000	—	2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	7,000
Christian Education Movement in Wales								
1. Preparation of pupil/teacher pack on the theme of "Discovering the Bible"	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
			5,000					5,000
National Language Unit								
1. Officer for second language courses	—	—	7,391	—	—	—	—	7,391
2. Production of Welsh language course	—	4,000	—	—	—	—	—	4,000
3. Classified dictionary for the teaching of Welsh in Schools	—	2,000	—	—	—	—	—	2,000
4. Publication of Welsh language teaching materials	18,500	2,000	—	—	—	—	—	20,500
5. Equipment for preparing language courses	3,500	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,500
Total	22,000	8,000	7,391	—	—	—	—	37,391
Yr Academi Gymreig								
1. English/Welsh Dictionery	—	5,000	7,000	—	—	—	—	12,000
Total	—	5,000	7,000	—	—	—	—	12,000
Welsh Books Council								
1. Conversion of a van to a mobile exhibition unit for display of Welsh books	—	16,195	—	—	—	—	—	16,195
2. Equipment for the design of educational books	—	7,815	—	—	—	—	—	7,815
3. To assist with provisions of services resulting from purchase of van	—	—	5,000	—	—	—	—	5,000
4. Clwb Llyfrau Spondonics—Welsh books club	—	—	—	—	12,500	—	—	12,500
Total	—	24,010	5,000	—	12,500	—	—	41,510
Welsh National Centre for Children's Literature								
1 Establishment of Centre on an independent basis; to increase the collection of Welsh books and related materials; to take measures to stimulate children's interest in Welsh books and reading	—	11,575	12,244	—	—	—	—	23,819
Total	—	11,575	12,244	—	—	—	—	23,819

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	Grant Awarded 1981-82 £	Grant Awarded 1982-83 £	Grant Awarded 1983-84 £	Grant Awarded 1984-85 £	Grant Awarded 1985-86 £	Grant Offered 1986-87 £	Total £
Cyhoeddiadau Mei								
1. Assistance towards publicity costs of a bi-monthly Welsh education magazine	—	1,000	—	—	—	—	—	1,000
Total	—	1,000	—	—	—	—	—	1,000
The Welsh school—London								
1. Temporary assistance with the school's activities	2,200	—	—	—	5,000	—	—	7,200
Total	2,200	—	—	—	5,000	—	—	7,200
Keep Wales tidy campaign								
1. Production of a Welsh language version of an environmental project for infants for use in schools	7,250	—	—	—	—	—	—	7,250
Total	7,250	—	—	—	—	—	—	7,250
Llandovery Welsh learners club								
Assistance with the club's activities	200	—	—	—	—	—	—	200
Total	200	—	—	—	—	—	—	200
Council for education in world citizenship (CEWC)—Wales								
1. Preparation of a Welsh language version of teaching materials developed by UNICEF illustrating water problems in developing countries	700	1,000	—	—	—	—	—	1,700
Total	700	1,000	—	—	—	—	—	1,700
Welsh industrial and maritime museum								
1. Welsh language education pack	—	—	—	—	400	—	—	400
Total	—	—	—	—	400	—	—	400
Canolfan Iaith Nant Gwrtheryn								
1. Teacher/researcher for centre	—	—	—	—	—	6,000	—	6,000
Total	—	—	—	—	—	6,000	—	6,000
Y Colegiwm Cymraeg								
1. Translation of selected works suitable for use by 'A' level students	—	—	—	—	—	6,500	3,500	10,000
2. French Companion	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,500	2,500
Total	—	—	—	—	—	6,500	6,000	12,500
Mudiad Cymraeg Casnewydd								
1. Expansion of Welsh classes for adults	—	—	—	—	150	—	—	150
Totals	—	—	—	—	150	—	—	150
Parents for Welsh medium education								
1. Promoting education through the medium of Welsh	—	—	—	—	500	650	800	1,950
Total	—	—	—	—	500	650	800	1,950
Council for Sunday schools and Christian education in Wales								
1. Employment of two area development officers to promote work of the Council	—	—	—	—	12,500	—	—	12,500
Total	—	—	—	—	12,500	—	—	12,500

	Grant Awarded 1980-81 £	Grant Awarded 1981-82 £	Grant Awarded 1982-83 £	Grant Awarded 1983-84 £	Grant Awarded 1984-85 £	Grant Awarded 1985-86 £	Grant Offered 1986-87 £	Total £
Schools broadcasting Council for Wales								
1. Publication of support material for Welsh language radio and television series for schools	—	—	—	—	5,000	7,000	5,000	17,000
Total	—	—	—	—	5,000	7,000	5,000	17,000
Cyngor y Dysgwr								
1. Part-time clerical help for National Officer	—	—	—	—	—	—	750	750
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—	750	750
School curriculum development committee								
1. Gorwelion newydd/new horizons: Teaching materials for Welsh as a first language in the secondary schools	—	—	—	—	—	—	12,000	12,000
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—	12,000	12,000
David Watson and Susanne Smith								
1. Welsh Database programme for use in education	—	—	—	—	—	—	5,000	5,000
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—	5,000	5,000
Grand Total	32,350	57,585	76,658	51,708	49,945	34,650	40,550	343,446
Overall total	501,775	790,630	857,567	[1]909,715	1,004,701	1,317,657	1,439,300	6,821,345

[1] Added Allocation £115,681. Total £1,025,396.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 15 December 1986

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Companies (Shareholders)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the workings of section 356 of the Companies Act 1985 which requires firms to supply lists of names and addresses of their shareholders; if the Government will review the workings of the section; and if he will list the firms that have made representations to him about the section.

Mr. Howard: I am aware that section 356 of the Companies Act 1985 has been used to obtain lists of shareholders in return for a nominal fee and that this has involved the companies concerned in expense and inconvenience. In a recent consultative document on the delivery of annual accounts and returns, the Department invited views by 22 December on this question. Some replies have already been received. Otherwise no representations by firms had been made to my Department this year. If the hon. Member has any suggestions, I shall be interested to study them.

Counterfeiting

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what evaluation he has made of the use by industrial and commercial counterfeiters of the United Kingdom as a base for the production and export of counterfeit goods;

(2) whether he plans to seek to amend the law on industrial and commercial counterfeiting;

(3) what recent representations he has received about industrial and commercial counterfeiting;

(4) what consultations he is having with EEC partners over the harmonisation of legislation which expressly covers the forgery or counterfeiting of a trade mark.

Mr. Pattie: The production of counterfeit goods is a covert activity on which there is no firm information. I have received representations suggesting that such production is increasing in the United Kingdom and that the forgery of a trade mark and certain related activities should be made criminal offences. These representations are being carefully considered.

Consultations with our EC partners have been undertaken in the context of the current GATT negotiations and the Community regulation on counterfeit goods which was adopted at the Internal Market Council on 1 December 1986 and which will come into force in January 1988.

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times in the past five years the authorities were unable to bring prosecutions over alleged industrial or commercial counterfeiting cases because the relevant legislation did not permit them to press charges.

Mr. Howard: This information is not readily available and its production would involve disproportionate cost.

Protective Clothing (Iran)

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will withdraw the ban on sales of nuclear, biological and chemical warfare protective clothing to Iran pending a decision on the imposition of a similar ban by all European Community countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Exports of such clothing are controlled to all destinations under the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985. Decisions on applications for licences to export defence equipment to Iran and Iraq take account of the guidelines announced in the House by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 29 October 1985.

Iron and Steel Employees Readaption Benefits Scheme

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many payments have been made in the iron and steel employees readaption benefits scheme; how many payments are outstanding for *(a)* one, *(b)* two, *(c)* three or *(d)* more than three months; what steps are being taken to speed up payments; if all arrears of payment will be cleared by Christmas; and if Her Majesty's Government are benefiting from the interest earned on the late payment of moneys due under this scheme.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I regret that the information requested is not available in the form requested. I shall be writing to the hon. Member shortly.

A330 and A340 Aircraft

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last had discussions with either British Aerospace or Airbus Industrie on the A330 and A340 projects; and if he will make it his policy to make a statement on this matter to the House at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Pattie: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry last had discussions including the airbus A330 and A340 project with representatives of British Aerospace on 11 November. I had further discussions on this subject with British Aerospace on 8 December. My last discussion of the airbus A330 and A340 project with representatives of Airbus Industrie took place on 5 September. The House will be informed on the question of British Aerospace's application for launch aid in respect of the proposed airbus A330 and A340 programme as soon as a decision is reached. I would expect this to be during the first quarter of next year.

Radio Laser

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he proposes to take in respect of the resumed broadcasting to the east of England by the offshore Radio Laser on 576 metres.

Mr. Pattie: We are concerned about the re-emergence of Radio Laser which operates from a ship anchored in international waters. It is an offence under the Marine Etc Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967 for anyone in the United Kingdom or a British national to assist in or be involved with a broadcasting station operating from the high seas.

Prosecutions under the Act are the responsibility of the Director of Public Prosecutions to whom my Department reports any evidence it obtains on possible offenders. My Department will also continue to pursue with other European countries its efforts to fulfil our international obligation to prevent broadcasting from ships outside national territories.

Submarine Ship Lift (Libya)

Mr. O'Neill asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when Her Majesty's Government first became aware that a submarine ship lift constructed by Anols (NEI) for the Italian company Improglio was going to Libya.

Mr. Alan Clark: The manufacturer contacted the Department of Trade and Industry in July 1985.

Libya (Defence Equipment Sales)

Mr. O'Neill asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the criteria whereby equipment ordered for Libya is designated as for the purposes of defence; and if he will make a statement on the number of occasions on which permission to supply the Libyan Government with such equipment has been refused.

Mr. Alan Clark: Goods subject to export control are specified in the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985 (S.I. 1985, No. 849), as amended. Items subject to control as military goods are listed in group I, part II, of schedule I of the order. Since March 1985 seven applications for licences to export such equipment to Libya have been refused.

Lawnmower Noise

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the departmental inspectors who will be appointed in terms of section 7 of the Lawnmower (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations to carry out periodic inspections of lawnmower noise will have responsibility for inspection in the Isle of Man and Channel Isles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Lawnmower (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations give the Secretary of State powers to carry out periodic checks in Great Britain. The powers do not extend to the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements he is making for residents of the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles to have their lawnmowers tested under the Lawnmower (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Lawnmower (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations do not apply to the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. However, I would point out to my hon. Friend that it is not necessary under these regulations to make arrangements for any residents in Great Britain apart from manufacturers, their agents or importers to have their lawnmowers noise tested.

Leyland Vehicles

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has discussed with the Economic Community Commission the Government's plans for Leyland Bus and Leyland Trucks.

Mr. Channon: As I told the House on 2 December, negotiations are proceeding for the sale of Leyland Bus and various options are under consideration regarding the future of Leyland Trucks. In this connection I have now notified the Commission under article 93(3) of the treaty of Rome that, when decisions are taken, the Government propose to deal with the historic debt in these companies and with any necessary restructuring costs.

The Government will take forward this notification with the Commission in the light of progress on the commercial negotiations. I will keep the House informed.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Mr. Lawrence asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken by the Export Credits Guarantee Department to limit its exposure to interest rate movements arising under interest support agreements entered into with banks involved in the fixed rate export finance scheme.

Mr. Alan Clark: The fixed rate export finance (FREF) scheme enables medium and long term finance to be provided in support of United Kingdom capital goods exports at fixed interest rates. This is achieved by ECGD's undertaking to make up to the banks any shortfall between the fixed rates and their floating rate cost of funds plus a margin. ECGD's obligations under these arrangements are open-ended.

In recent months ECGD has fixed its interest rate exposure on a substantial proportion of its liabilities under the FREF scheme by recourse to the commercial interest rate swap market. To date, the Department has hedged its interest rate exposure in relation to US$2 billion of loans guaranteed under the foreign currency FREF scheme. Although the Department's current swap programme is now complete, further hedging operations may be undertaken at some stage in the future.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Detention and Search

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the statistics for each division of the Metropolitan police for searches made, arrests made, road checks made and persons detained under part IV of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, persons detained under a warrant of further detention and intimate searches in the same form for each division as are published in the Home Office statistical bulletin and such periods of 1986 for which statistics are currently available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 28 October 1986, at column 87. When the annual figures become available I will place in the Library the divisional breakdown for the Metropolitan police.

Murder (Clear-up Rate)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the police clear-up rate for murder cases for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Mellor: In cases of homicide it is not possible in the absence of a court decision to distinguish between offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide. In England and Wales in 1985 the ratio of offences of homicide cleared up to offences of homicide recorded in the same year was 96 per cent. Some offences are recorded and cleared up in different years. Statistics of homicides recorded and cleared up are published annually in chapter 2 of the Cmnd. Paper "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales".

Maxwell Fyfe Directive

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has amended or has any plans to amend the Maxwell Fyfe directive of 1952.

Mr. Hurd: No.

Sunday Race Meetings

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent considerations he has given to the introduction of limited Sunday race meetings.

Mr. Hurd: I recently met representatives of the Jockey Club and the chairman of the Horserace Totalisator Board to hear their views on Sunday racing and betting, and I now await the report of the working party set up by the Jockey Club. In a speech at York on 9 December I mentioned my personal support for the principle of Sunday racing, but emphasised that this would in practice require a change in the law, and that much preparation for such a change would be needed.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will review the efficiency and workings of his Department's accounting and financial management system in relation to the funding of the Metropolitan police; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The efficiency and effectiveness of the accounting and financial management systems is regularly examined as part of the process of financial planning monitoring and control.

Racially Motivated Attacks

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his policy on combating the incidence of racially motivated attacks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I would refer the hon. Member to the Government's reply, published last week (Cmnd. 45), to the recent report of the Home Affairs Committee on racial attacks and harassment. We continue to give full support to the police and other local agencies in their efforts to combat racial attacks.

Visitors' Visas

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visitors to the United Kingdom, holding a visitor's visa, have been stripped and searched at terminals 3 and 4 at Heathrow airport, by immigration staff, in the current year to date.

Mr. Waddington: None.

Homosexual Acts

Mr. Dickens asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on lowering the age of consent for homosexual acts to 16 years of age, and from whom, in the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have received numerous representations on the age of consent for homosexual acts in the last five years. The number of these which specifically propose or oppose reduction in the age of consent to 16 could be ascertained only at disproportionate cost. We have no plans to introduce legislation to change the age of consent.

Young Offenders

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females under the age of 17 years were remanded in custody in jails at the latest available date;

(2) if he will list by remand jail the number of juveniles held in custody at the latest available date.

Mr. Mellor: The latest available information is given in the table.

Prisoners aged under 17 held in remand centres and local prisons in England and Wales on 30 September 1986; by establishment, sex and type of prisoner

Number[1]

Establishment	*Untried*		*Convicted unsentenced*		*Sentenced*		*Total*	
	Males	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*
Remand centres								
Ashford	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Brockhill	14	—	9	—	1	—	24	—
Cardiff	1	—	1	—	—	—	2	—
Chelmsford	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—
Dorchester	1	—	—	—	1	—	2	—
Exeter	7	—	—	—	—	—	7	—
Glen Parva	7	—	3	—	4	—	14	—
Hull	14	—	6	—	11	—	31	—
Latchmere House	30	—	5	—	7	—	42	—

Establishment	Untried		Convicted unsentenced		Sentenced		Total	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Low Newton	16	—	2	—	13	1	31	1
Manchester	11	—	—	—	—	—	11	—
Norwich	3	—	—	—	2	—	5	—
Pucklechurch	2	—	1	—	—	—	3	—
Risley	8	—	3	—	1	—	12	—
Swansea	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Winchester	2	—	—	—	1	—	3	—
Local prisons	3	—	1	—	20	—	24	—
All remand centres and local prisons	122	—	32	—	61	1	215	1

[1] Figures held centrally are approximate; checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.

Iranian Nationals

Mr. Kaufman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice or representations he has received from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in connection with the return to Iran of Iranian nationals in Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: Following the meetings held by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and myself with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Hocke, on 28 October, I have received a letter from UNHCR's representative in London, Mr. Volfing, taking up the question of Iranian asylum seekers in this country to which I shall be replying shortly.

The Government are continuing to respond generously to Iranians who have reason to fear return to Iran. However, we do not accept and have never accepted that all Iranians should be allowed to remain here regardless of their circumstances. Liability to conscription is not recognised under the United Nations convention on refugees as a basis for refugee status and we do not regard it as grounds for the grant of exceptional leave. Nevertheless, we are willing to look at individual cases together with any evidence that Iranians returning from abroad are being treated more harshly than other conscripts.

Mr. Stephen Beaufoy

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East of 14 November concerning Mr. Stephen Beaufoy of Coventry.

Mr. Waddington: A reply was sent on 12 December.

Court Escort Scrutiny

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he proposes to take on the recommendation in the report of the court escort scrutiny for changes in the statutory provisions governing remand in custody pending summary trial or committal.

Mr. Hurd: A consultation document is being published today. Copies have been placed in the Vote Office and in the Library. The document describes the existing statutory arrangements and the proposals made in the report of the court escort scrutiny, and invites comments by 31 January 1987 on possible changes in the statutory provisions.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND

Mr. William McCrae (Death)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland which police forces other than the Northern Constabulary were involved in the investigations into the death of Mr. William McCrae in April 1985; at what stage they became involved; and at whose invitation.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: The investigation into the death of Mr. William McCrae was carried out by officers of Northern Constabulary. No other police forces were involved in the investigation of the death except insofar as to assist in obtaining statements of witnesses residing outwith the Northern Constabulary area.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland at what stage and at whose invitation the special branch was involved in the investigation into the death of Mr. William McCrae in April 1985.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: Special Branch was not involved in the investigation into the death of Mr. William McCrae.

PRIME MINISTER

Security Service (Superannuation)

56. **Mr. Winnick** asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the superannuation arrangements of retired members of the security service.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) on 4 December at column 728.

Financial Management Initiative

Sir Philip Holland asked the Prime Minister whether the financial management initiative, in respect of non-departmental public bodies which was set out in the report published by the Cabinet Office in collaboration with the Treasury financial management unit in November 1984, remains on course for the main programme to be completed by all Departments in the life of the present Parliament and not later than April 1987; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Following the financial management unit's report, I announced in November 1984 a programme of work aimed at producing progressive value for money improvements in non-departmental public

bodies. By April 1986 departments had completed reviews of financial management in approximately half of all executive bodies and we are on course to complete the main programme of work by April 1987.

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if a copy of the Solicitor-General's letter of 6 January to the then Secretary of State for Defence was shown to her chief press secretary before officials from the Department of Trade and Industry contacted her Office about bringing the letter into the public domain.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November at cols. 49 and 50.

Libya

Mr. O'Neill asked the Prime Minister what arrangements exist between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Defence for the screening of contracts for Libya with possible military applications.

The Prime Minister: The Department of Trade and Industry seeks the advice of the Ministry of Defence on all export licence applications for military equipment as specified in group I of part II of schedule 1 to the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985 as amended; and on all applications for licences to export other controlled goods to a military end user.

State Security

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to her answer of 27 November, *Official Report*, columns *299* and *300*, why she will not refer to the Security Commission the matters published in the magazine *Lobster* by Robin Ramsey and Stephen Dorrell in respect of action taken by the security services against Her Majesty's Government from 1974 to 1976; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing furher to add to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on 27 November 1986, at cols. 299 and 300, or to the points made by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on 3 December 1986, at col. 941.

GCSE (Devon)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop asked the Prime Minister whether she will now update the information given in her letter of 22 July to the hon. Member for Tiverton as to central Government finance for books, equipment and other costs incurred in introducing the general certificate of secondary education in the county of Devon, to be paid before the end of the present financial year, and broken down as between payments by the Department of Education and the Manpower Services Commission, and similar information for the following financial year.

The Prime Minister: In my letter of 22 July I set out the expenditure ceiling, £277,500, for the GCSE for which education support grant (ESG) is available in this financial year to Devon local authority. That figure remains unchanged. Devon's allocation of grant from the MSC, for scientific and technological equipment, is £95,100 in this financial year.

My letter of 22 July also set out the expenditure ceiling, £197,000, for which ESG is available to Devon in the financial year 1987-88. That figure too remains unchanged. There are no plans to repeat the MSC grant scheme. However, for that financial year the Government's plans for local authority expenditure provide for specific expenditure onGCSE non-teaching costs of about £100 million, including the further phase of ESG, within total planned expenditure of £12,850 million, an increase of 18·8 per cent. in cash on plans for the current year. This should enable all authorities, including Devon, to ensure that their schools are able to meet the demands of the new examination courses.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

State Security

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Attorney-General if he will update the list of those prosecuted under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 in the same format as in the answer given to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras on 9 February 1985, *Official Report*, column *350*, and to list any cases that have been prosecuted under other Official Secrets legislation.

The Attorney-General: Details of proceedings undertaken under sections 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 since 28 January 1985 set out in the manner of appendix II of the Franks report are as follows:

Section 2

(a) A civilian police employee offered confidential information from the PNC to a burglar alarm company. He was tried summarily and convicted. On appeal the Crown court upheld the conviction and a further appeal to Divisional court by way of case stated was dismissed in May 1986.

(b) A civil servant employed by the Ministry of Defence was charged with unauthorised disclosure to a Member of Parliament of certain documents in his possession. He was tried at the Central Criminal court and acquitted.

(c) A civil servant employed by the Home Office was charged with authorised disclosure of a document in his possession in his capacity as part of a team investigating alleged corruption in relation to commercial contracts. No evidence offered at trial.

Cases *(b)* and *(c)* above were listed as pending at the time of my answer to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 28 January 1985 at column 38.

(d) A solicitor alleged to have offered money to a police officer to disclose criminal intelligence information in relation to a client was charged with corruption and offences under section 2. Tried and acquitted after a retrial.

(e) A clerk employed in a local DHSS office imparted personal information about claims made by the husband of a local councillor to an agent of a rival political party. Pleaded guilty at Crown court. Sentenced to three months imprisonment suspended for 12 months.

(f) Four persons were prosecuted for having been concerned with the obtaining and copying of classified technical manuals to facilitate the identification of marine components. Their alleged purpose was to trade in such components with the Argentine navy. Three of the defendants were convicted and fined £400, sentenced to six months imprisonment and conditionally discharged respectively.

There are five prosecutions under section 2 of the 1911 Act presently pending before the court:

(i) Proceedings have now been instituted against the individual alleged to have procured the offence mentioned at *(e)* above.

(ii) Proceedings have been instituted against a former member of the Royal Military Police alleged to have retained classified documents and disclosed them to an unauthorised person.

(iii) Proceedings have been instituted against two police officers alleged to have obtained information about criminal records for unauthorised supply to a security consultant.

(iv) Proceedings have been instituted against a journalist alleged to have obtained a copy of police intelligence records relating to a known criminal.

(v) Proceedings have been instituted against two police officers alleged to have made unauthorised supply of information obtained from the police national computer about vehicle registration and criminal records.

Other Provisions

The proceedings under section 1 of the Official Secrets Acts 1911 referred to in my written answer of 28 January 1985, against eight servicemen stationed in Cyprus resulted in the acquittal of all defendants.

Two foreign agents were convicted of offences contrary to section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 at the Central Criminal court on 10 July 1986.

One person was charged with an offence contrary to section 7 of the 1920 Act but proceedings were withdrawn after I had declined to grant my fiat.

SCOTLAND

Whisky Industry

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many jobs have been lost in the whisky industry in Scotland in each of the past seven years; and if he will provide a breakdown of the figures by location.

Mr. Lang: Information in the form requested is not available, but the estimated changes in the number employed in each of the years 1978 to 1984 from each previous year, in the spirit distilling and compounding industry in Scotland are 0, −700, −2,000, −1,900, −2,100 and −1,100 respectively. Estimates of numbers employed in each year are based on the annual census of production. Estimates for 1985 and 1986 are not available.

Greenock and Port Glasgow (Unemployment)

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the average number of people unemployed annually in Greenock and Port Glasgow in each year since 1979.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 31 October 1986 at columns *196-7*.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the latest unemployment figures for Greenock and Port Glasgow in the *Official Report* by district council ward boundary.

Mr. Lang: On 9 October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of unemployed claimants in each electoral ward of the Greenock and Port Glasgow parliamentary constituency was as shown in the table. This information is available in the Library.

Greenock and Port Glasgow Parliamentary Constituency

Ward Name	*Number of Unemployed Claimants*
Belville	516
Blairmore	436
Bow	567
Broomhill	319
Clune Brae	669
Gateside	310
Gibshill	815
Greenock East Central	664
Greenock South	528
Greenock West Central	345
Greenock West End	227
Larkfield	573
Port Glasgow East	835
Port Glasgow South	664
Port Glasgow West	397
Upper Larkfield	709
Total	8,574

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish figures showing unemployment by age group in Greenock and Port Glasgow.

Mr. Lang: On 9 October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of unemployed claimants by age group in the Greenock and Port Glasgow parliamentary constituency was as shown in the table. This information is available in the Library.

Age Group	*Number of Unemployed Claimants*
under 17	177
17	377
18	391
19	374
20-24	1,675
25-29	1,145
30-34	864
35-39	802
40-44	709
45-49	689
50-54	590
55-59	669
60 and over	112
Total	8,574

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the average length of time a person spends on the unemployment register in Greenock and Port Glasgow in each year since 1980.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available in the precise form requested. The table relates to unemployed claimants who had completed a period of unemployment in the Greenock and Port Glasgow parliamentary constituency in October each year from 1983. This information is available in the Library.

Year (October)	*Median Length of Unemployment (weeks)*
1983	12·8
1984	13·5
1985	9·1
1986	11·5

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many school leavers under the age of 18 years have never had a job since leaving school in Greenock and Port Glasgow.

Mr. Lang: On 9 October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of school leavers under the age of 18 years, who had never had a job since leaving school, in the Greenock and Port Glasgow parliamentary constituency, totalled 434. This information is available in the Library.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each local authority *(a)* the rate support grant at settlement spending assumption for 1987-88, *(b)* in 1986 prices the actual rate support grant aid paid in 1978-79, *(c)* the absolute difference between the two figures and *(d)* the percentage difference between the two figures for each authority.

Mr. Ancram: The figures show for each local authority the needs element of rate support grant proposed for 1987-88, the needs element paid in 1978-79 at 1986 prices, the absolute difference between the two figures and the percentage difference between the two figures for each authority. The GDP deflator is used to convert the figures for 1978-79 from cash to constant prices. The figures for 1987-88 are proposals which have still to be discussed with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Local authorities will also receive resource element to compensate for differences in rateable resources and domestic element to provide domestic rate relief.

	(1) Needs element proposed for 1987-88	*(2) Needs element 1978-79 in 1986 prices*	*(3) Difference column (1)-(2)*	*(4) Percentage change Per cent.*
REGIONS				
Borders	31·496152	27·607927	3·888225	14·1
Central	67·632605	69·313193	−1·680588	−2·4
Dumfries	43·281554	36·371754	6·9098	19·0
Fife	89·18089	84·448342	4·732548	5·6
Grampian	134·273126	116·376434	17·896692	15·4
Highland	79·365402	70·076481	9·288921	13·3
Lothian	168·980574	191·105748	−22·125174	−11·6
Strathclyde	701·098354	738·243778	−37·145424	−5·0
Tayside	102·760163	99·843205	2·916958	2·9
ISLANDS				
Orkney	9·101088	7·682173	1·418915	18·5
Shetland	10·7472	9·143642	1·603558	17·5
Western Isles	22·411306	16·555499	5·855807	35·4
DISTRICTS				
Berwick	0·213835	0·311359	−0·097524	−31·3
Ettrick	0·383018	0·56636	−0·183342	−32·4
Roxburgh	0·887561	0·618276	0·269285	43·6
Tweeddale	0·166888	0·263142	−0·096254	−36·6
Clackmannan	0·549295	1·072759	−0·523464	−48·8
Falkirk	1·650467	3·211921	−1·561454	−48·6
Stirling	0·933493	1·418053	−0·48456	−34·2
Annandale	0·413507	·533122	−0·119615	−22·4
Nithsdale	0·657168	1·068997	−0·411829	−38·5
Stewarty	0·265232	0·411124	−0·145892	−35·5
Wigtown	0·34971	0·500655	0·150945	−30·1
Dunfermlin	1·485223	2·722175	−1·236952	−45·4
Kirkcaldy	1·953516	3·254813	−1·301297	−40·0
North East Fife	0·75901	1·146439	−0·387429	−33·8
Aberdeen	4·18052	5·307477	−1·126957	−21·2
Banff	0·958713	1·302544	−0·343831	−26·4
Gordon	0·80697	0·920944	−0·113974	−12·4
Kincardine	0·537904	0·748435	−0·210531	−28·1
Moray	0·977378	1·354433	−0·377055	−27·8
Badenoch	0·120125	0·17849	−0·058365	−32·7
Caithness	0·478375	0·409665	0·06871	16·8
Inverness	0·676472	0·925813	−0·249341	−26·9
Lochaber	0·284064	0·440581	−0·156517	−35·5
Nairn	0·117071	0·123999	−0·006928	−5·6
Ross and Cromarty	1·028758	0·811752	0·217006	26·7
Skye and Lewis	0·237359	0·184375	0·052984	28·7
Sutherland	0·405867	0·251016	0·154851	61·7
East Lothian	0·944896	1·078209	−0·133313	−12·4
Edinburgh	12·513104	11·179539	1·333565	11·9
Midlothian	0·936546	1·447104	−0·510558	−35·3
West Lothian	1·63173	2·177522	−0·545792	−25·1
Argyll and Bute	2·630941	1·406628	1·224313	87·0
Bearsden	0·55918	0·884824	−0·325644	−36·8
Clydebank	3·073173	1·545087	1·528086	98·9
Clydesdale	0·669933	0·853253	−0·18332	−21·5

	(1) Needs element proposed for 1987-88	(2) Needs element 1978-79 in 1986 prices	(3) Difference column (1)-(2)	(4) Percentage change Per cent.
Cumbernauld	0·724204	1·336109	−0·611905	−45·0
Cumnock	0·912041	0·750671	0·16137	21·5
Cunninghame	1·932617	2·605019	−0·672402	−25·8
Dumbarton	1·006527	1·555735	−0·549208	−35·3
East Kilbride	0·94209	1·636653	−0·694563	−42·4
Eastwood	0·638522	0·97835	−0·339828	−34·7
Glasgow	42·497882	24·259475	18·238407	75·2
Hamilton	1·237428	2·489937	−1·252509	−50·3
Inverclyde	2·453304	2·471883	−0·018579	−0·8
Kilmarnock	1·012858	1·588	−0·575142	−36·2
Kyle and Carrick	1·374805	2·182713	−0·807908	−37·0
Monklands	2·466506	2·609833	−0·143327	−5·5
Motherwell	2·354567	3·61693	−1·262363	−34·9
Renfrew	4·396435	4·886487	−0·490052	−10·0
South Kelvin	1·111105	1·591734	−0·480629	−30·2
Angus	1·084667	1·806724	−0·722057	−40·0
Dundee	5·741682	4·71791	1·023772	21·7
Perth and Kinross	1·407344	1·917441	−0·510097	−26·6
Total	1578·060000	1580·400665	−2·340665	−0·1

Urban Aid (Glasgow)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* all the urban aid projects in the GEAR area of Glasgow which terminate in the 1986-87 financial year, the numbers of people employed in each project, and the total value of each project.

Mr. Ancram: The information is as follows:

Project	Staff employed		Estimated value of total expenditure approved up to 1986-87	
	Full time	Part time	Capital £	Current £
GEAR Home Visiting Project	2	1	650	116,250
GEAR Alcohol Information Centre	2	1	43,000	108,960
GEAR Unit for Mentally and Physically Handicapped	4	—	25,000	162,200
Daycare for the Elderly Parkhead	5	3	84,980	274,200
Trident GEAR	2	—	1,000	156,520
Boys Leader, St. Francis in the East, Youth Centre	1	—	—	62,860
Home Support/Day Care GEAR (part project)	[1]2	[1]1	—	389,400
	18	6	154,630	1,270,390

[1] Plus sessional staff.

Urban Aid Applications

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list, by individual local authority, the number of urban aid applications *(a)* approved, *(b)* refused and *(c)* still outstanding for the current year; and what percentage of each authority's total applications these figures represent.

Mr. Ancram: The information for 1986-87 is as follows:

Authority	Total	Approved		Refused		Withdrawn		Under consideration in SDD		Awaiting further information from LA	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Central RC	21	6	28	14	67	1	5	—	—	—	—
Dumfries and Galloway RC	1	—	—	1	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fife RC	9	4	44	5	55	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grampian RC	7	3	43	4	57	—	—	—	—	—	—
Highland RC	2	—	—	2	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lothian RC	9	5	55	4	44	—	—	—	—	—	—
Strathclyde RC	392	283	72	49	13	12	3	9	2	39	10
Tayside RC	21	6	26	14	67	1	5	—	—	—	—
Aberdeen DC	6	—	—	4	67	—	—	—	—	2	33
Angus DC	1	1	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Clydebank DC	11	3	27	8	73	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cunninghame DC	5	2	40	3	60	—	—	—	—	—	—

Authority	Total	Approved		Refused		Withdrawn		Under consideration in SDD		Awaiting further information from LA	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dumbarton DC	10	1	10	9	90	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dundee DC	7	5	71	2	29	—	—	—	—	—	—
Falkirk DC	1	—	—	—	—	1	100	—	—	—	—
Glasgow DC	49	35	71	13	27	1	2	—	—	—	—
Hamilton DC	2	1	50	1	50	—	—	—	—	—	—
Inverclyde DC	13	3	23	10	77	—	—	—	—	—	—
Inverness DC	1	1	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kilmarnock and Loudoun DC	2	2	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kyle and Carrick DC	1	—	—	1	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Monklands DC	26	7	27	19	73	—	—	—	—	—	—
Motherwell DC	2	—	—	2	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nithsdale DC	1	—	—	1	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Renfrew DC	10	5	50	5	50	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stirling DC	8	3	38	5	62	—	—	—	—	—	—
West Lothian DC	5	2	40	3	60	—	—	—	—	—	—
	623	378	61	179	29	16	2	9	1	41	7

RC = Regional Council.
DC = District Council.

Chief Executive Officials

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the gross annual salary paid to the chief executive official in each of the Scottish local authorities.

Mr. Ancram: Such information is not held centrally and would best be obtained from the local authorities concerned.

Private Education

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many members of the permanent secretariat of the Scottish Office have been educated privately, what percentage of the secretariat this comprises; and what are the corresponding figures for 1981.

Mr. Rifkind [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 December 1986, c. *831-2*]: My Department does not maintain central statistics on the schools attended by staff and the collation of information on its administration group staff from individual records could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

WALES

"Paying for Local Government"

Mr. Raffan asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has considered the responses which he has received to the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government".

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I am placing in the Library a summary of the 118 responses received in Wales to "Paying for Local Government". It is clear that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the present domestic rating system and that a fundamental reform is needed. More than twice as many private individuals were in favour of the proposed community charge as opposed it, and no other possible alternative to rates received substantial support. Although both the Welsh Counties Committee and the Committee of Welsh District Councils have rejected the proposals, they too have acknowledged the need for change but have expressed preferences for two totally different and incompatible alternatives, neither of which would properly and fully meet the Government's objective of achieving greater accountability. Most business respondents, including the CBI (Wales), were in favour of the proposal for a unified non-domestic rate poundage. There was also considerable support for a simplification of the present grant system.

The Government plan to introduce legislation as soon as practicable to implement in Wales and England the main proposals in the Green Paper, with the intention that the new system should start in 1990.

I am grateful to all those who took the trouble to respond to the Green Paper. Many of them were concerned about the practical problems of operating the community charge. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and I have today produced a document with detailed proposals for implementing the charge and a copy is being placed in the Library.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each local authority *(a)* the rate support grant at settlement spending assumption for 1987-88, *(b)* in 1986 prices the actual rate support grant paid in 1978-79, *(c)* the absolute difference between the two figures and *(d)* the percentage difference between the two figures for each authority.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Rate support grant figures for 1987-88 are not yet available, but we shall inform the House of our intentions for the forthcoming financial year in the near future. Details of the rate support grants paid to local authorities in 1978-79, expressed in real terms at 1986-87 prices using the GDP (market prices) deflator, are given in the following table.

No valid comparisons for individual authorities can be made between the two years as different arrangements for paying grants to each class of authority apply to each year.

Rate support grants paid to Welsh local authorities

£ thousand

	1978–79		
Local authority	*Domestic element*	*Needs element*	*Resources element*
Counties			
Clwyd		56,862	—
Dyfed		59,391	—
Gwent		72,466	—
Gwynedd		42,161	—
Mid Glamorgan		92,164	—
Powys		32,567	—
South Glamorgan		67,450	—
West Glamorgan		55,346	—
Districts			
Alyn & Deeside	2,675	—	6,967
Colwyn	2,283	—	6,506
Delyn	2,436	—	10,518
Glyndŵr	1,308	—	6,720
Rhuddlan	2,184	—	6,565
Wrexham Maelor	3,612	—	17,615
Carmarthen	1,350	—	8,830
Ceredigion	1,770	—	10,021
Dinefwr	832	—	6,874
Llanelli	2,057	—	12,104
Preseli	1,844	—	7,511
South Pembrokeshire	1,249	—	484
Blaenau Gwent	1,964	—	18,247
Islwyn	1,675	—	14,272
Monmouth	2,415	—	10,901
Newport	4,970	—	9,473
Torfaen	2,800	—	17,077
Aberconwy	2,052	—	7,095
Arfon	1,428	—	9,508
Dwyfor	892	—	4,082
Meirionnydd	1,146	—	3,004
Ynys Môn	2,120	—	8,939
Cynon Valley	1,393	—	15,461
Merthyr Tydfil	1,352	—	13,951
Ogwr	3,656	—	23,698
Rhondda	1,376	—	21,375
Rhymney Valley	2,594	—	23,222
Taff Ely	2,444	—	16,022
Brecknock	1,135	—	5,141
Montgomeryshire	1,346	—	6,574
Radnor	622	—	2,228
Cardiff	11,826	—	25,210
Vale of Glamorgan	4,152	—	12,566
Port Talbot	1,498	—	4,725
Lliw Valley	1,480	—	11,255
Neath	1,824	—	9,848
Swansea	6,337	—	33,465

Ambulance Personnel (Paramedical Training)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many ambulance personnel with extended paramedical training are employed by each area health authority in Wales.

Mr. Mark Robinson: This information is not held centrally.

Council Housing

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his latest estimate of the number of dwellings owned by local housing authorities in Wales; and if he will give corresponding figures for each of the last seven years.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The information requested is as follows:

Estimated number of local housing authority[1] dwellings relating to December in each year

Year	*Dwellings '000*
1979	308
1980	306
1981	293
1982	278
1983	271
1984	267
1985	262

[1]Including new town corporations.

Note: Dwelling stock figures for 1981 to 1985 are based on the 1981 Census of Population adjusted to take account of new buildings, demolitions and changes in tenure. Figures for 1979 and 1980 are similarly based on the 1971 Census.

Public Bodies (Nominees)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total number of persons whom he nominates to various public bodies and authorities in Wales; and how many of these posts are currently filled by women.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: On 30 June 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales had, either solely or jointly with other Ministers, responsibility for a total of 1,288 appointments to various public bodies and authorities in Wales, of which 222 were filled by women.

Ambulance Service, Gwynedd

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the outcome of the discussions between his staff and Gwynedd health authority in relation to the problems facing that authority in maintaining the ambulance service; and whether he will make funds available to the authority for this purpose.

Mr. Mark Robinson: A number of suggestions were made to officials of Gwynedd health authority about the effective operation of their ambulance service and the authority's management is taking these suggestions into account in considering the future of the service.

Responses to the consultative document on regional services for north Wales, including those on the provision of fast comfortable ambulance transport, are currently under consideration and an announcement will be made in due course.

A487 (Talyllyn)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales on what date a decision was taken to make major structural improvements on the A487 trunk road near Talyllyn in Gwynedd; on what date works were commenced on this scheme; what was the original target date for completion of the work; and when he now expects the work to be completed.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: A decision to undertake the current series of major structural improvements to the A487 was taken in 1982 when consulting engineers were appointed to carry out soil surveys and prepare three separate carriageway strengthening and stabilisation schemes. Work on the first contract started in July 1984 and, provided that adverse weather conditions do not interfere with the works, completion of the final contract is expected to be on time, before the end of this year.

HMI (Statistics)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools in Wales do not possess a specific degree or diploma in education.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on 15 April 1986, at column 350. The position remains the same with two of Her Majesty's inspectors not possessing a specific degree or diploma in education.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools are currently employed in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Fifty-six.

Hospital Beds (Costs)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Eccles, on 8 December, now make it his policy to collect central information on the annual costs of acute, chronic and geriatric beds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: It is not proposed to collect information in the form suggested. However, changes in the information about hospital services including financial data will start to be introduced in Wales from 1987-88. These changes broadly accord with the recommendations of the steering group on health service information and will include information on the direct costs of patient treatment services in more than 20 different specialties or specialty groupings.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Shellfish and Crabs

Mr. Cohen asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department has conducted or commissioned to determine the concentration of poly-chlorinated dibenzodioxins (PCDD) and dibenzofurans (PCDF) in commercially caught shellfish and in crabs.

Mr. Gummer: My Department has begun a programme of research to enable it to carry out sensitive and rapid detection of these substances in the environment and in the food chain.

Tilgate Forest, Sussex

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what criteria have been involved in the decision of the Forestry Commission to make land at Tilgate forest, Weald Forest district, Crawley, Sussex available for disposal; what account will be taken of the proposed use of the land by any prospective purchaser; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: In reaching its decision to dispose of land at Tilgate Forest, Crawley, the Forestry Commission had regard to the main purpose of its sales programme, namely the rationalisation of the forest estate in the interests of improving efficiency. The Commission also took account of the guidelines issued by Forestry Ministers in 1981, which were reproduced at appendix V of the Commission's 1981-82 annual report. Whether the proposed change of use is appropriate in planning terms is entirely a matter for the local planning authority.

Horticulture Grants

Mr. Gregory asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the number and value of horticulural grants for England and Wales made under the European agricultural guidance and guarantee fund in 1985 and 1986, respectively.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The following is the latest information available. Farm capital grants to horticultural enterprises in England and Wales under Schemes qualifying for partial EAGGF reimbursement were:

	Number of payments	*Value (£ million)*
1984	1,275	3·4
1985	1,054	3·7

The EAGGF reimburses up to 25 per cent. of the total grant paid. The following grant payments were also made direct from the EAGGF for horticultural processing and marketing schemes:

	Number of payments	*Value (£ million)*
1985	8	0·322
1986	4	0·183

Launching aids paid to horticultural co-operatives with a maximum EAGGF reimbursement of 50 per cent. were:

	Number of payments	*Value (£ million)*
1985	24	0·987
1986[1]	23	1·190

[1] Estimate.

Dairies (Inspection Visits)

Sir Peter Hordern asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will review the need for dairy inspection visits by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: My official need to visit farms to check compliance with the Milk and Dairies Regulations. Milk Marketing Board test results are not a reliable indicator of compliance, and dependence on these would, in any event, be inconsistent with the line we have taken in discussion of the heat treated milk directive. More generally, I refer my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) on 4 December at column 1061.

Pesticide Control Regulations

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will state the policy of his Department towards informing farmers of the new pesticide control regulations.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and the consents made under them came into effect on 6 October. Considerable publicity was given to the new controls through press briefing, a press release,

the wide distribution of our free leaflet "Pesticides: Guide to the New Controls", and the publication of "Pesticides 1986" by HMSO (reference book 500). Advice on the new controls is also available from ADAS advisors. A code of practice, at present under discussion with interested organisations, will provide practical guidance to farmers on how to comply with their new legal obligations. It will be laid before the House before it is issued in its final form.

Research and Development Fund

Mr. Robert Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about the wording of the questions in the agricultural census used to levy funds for the research and development fund.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We have received no such representations.

Intervention Storage

Mr. Robert Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will set out the number of United Kingdom firms with whom leasing arrangements have been made for intervention storage during the last 12 months, together with square footage space in each case.

Mr. Gummer: In the 12 months ending 30 November 1986 leasing arrangements for intervention storage have been made with 58 firms in the United Kingdom. Information on square footage is not available.

Milk Quota

Mr. Steen asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was *(a)* the per capita consumption of cow's milk and *(b)* the milk quota for the United Kingdom and France in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

Mr. Gummer: The milk quotas for the United Kingdom and France for each of the last three years are as follows:

	United Kingdom[1] *'000 tonnes*	*France* *'000 tonnes*
1984-85	15,885	26,768
1985-86	15,725	26,508
1986-87	15,725	26,508

[1] Excludes allocation from Community Reserve.

Milk is consumed as a range of products in which the butterfat and solids-not-fat proportion are different from those in whole milk and it is not meaningful to produce a single figure of the consumption of milk. However pages 95 to 103 of the fourth quarter of 1985 edition of the Eurostat publication "Animal Production" give the consumption per head of drinking milk and the major milk products for 1981 to 1984.

Mr. Steen asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what formula is used to determine national milk quotas under the Common Agriculture Policy: what account is taken of population size; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Allocation of national milk quotas was in general based on deliveries to dairies in each member state during 1981 increased by 1 per cent. An additional 1 per cent. was allowed for the first year of operation to facilitate transition to the quota system. Exceptionally, national quotas for Italy and Ireland were based on deliveries during 1983, with no extra 1 per cent. for the first quota year, and 1983 was also later used to fix the level of quota for Spain. Population size was not a contributory factor, as it is clearly irrelevant. I believe quota has been determined fairly but that continuing surpluses require further cuts to be made. These should be applied equally between all member states.

EMPLOYMENT

EC Labour and Social Affairs Council

Mr. Hayward asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the European Community Labour and Social Affairs Council held in Brussels on 11 December, including the agreed action programme on employment growth.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I presided at this Council. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment, my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee), represented the United Kingdom. The Council adopted an action programme for employment growth based on a text put forward by the United Kingdom, Italy and the Republic of Ireland. The programme sets the four priorities for the Labour and Social Affairs Council's future work as being the promotion of new business and employment growth, more efficient labour markets, better training for young people and adults, and more help for long-term unemployed people. First proposals under the programme are to be brought forward before the next Labour and Social Affairs Council. The European Commission will in addition be making six monthly reports to the Council and the European Parliament on progress made in the Programmes implementation.

The agreement to an action programme on employment growth is a major step forward in ensuring that the European Community makes a more effective contribution to reducing the current level of unemployment in the Community, which stands at some 16 million. Within its four priorities, the action programme sets out some 40 specific proposals for action to be taken either by the European Community or by member states, ranging from the provision of better support services for small firms to the promotion of training, counselling and guidance for the long-term unemployed.

For example, it calls for a reduction in burdens on enterprise including a review of current EC legislation in order to remove obstacles to self-employment. It includes measures aimed at improving the employment prospects of women and those of disabled people and residents of inner city areas. It endorses the need for up to two years vocational education and training for school leavers leading to recognised vocational qualifications. It also calls amongst other measures for the removal of obstacles to the further growth of part-time and temporary work and for Community-level support for efforts to establish and expand co-operatives.

The Council invited the European Commission to put forward the first of its specific proposals particularly on training and long-term unemployment before the meeting of the Labour and Social Affairs Council under the forthcoming Belgian Presidency. The Belgian and Danish

Ministers undertook to carry forward the programme during their respective presidencies in the coming year. It will remain our aim to ensure that the action programme is translated as quickly as possible into specific measures to be taken by the Community and member states. I am placing in the Library a copy of the resolution containing the action programme.

The Council was unable to reach agreement on the draft directive prescribing four named carcinogens, due to the inability of one country to subscribe to a text supported by the other 11 member states, or on the draft directive on benzene due both to the absence of an opinion from the European Parliament and to the inability of two countries to accept proposed figures for an action level. The Council was also unable to reach agreement on the draft decision of the EEC/Yugoslavia co-operation agreement.

The Council reached agreement on the allocation of extra resources to the Council's actions to combat poverty following the accession to the Community of Spain and Portugal.

Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

55. **Mr. Jim Callaghan** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to review the resources and staffing available to Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The resources and staffing of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate are the responsibility of the Health and Safety Commission and Executive subject to the limits set by the Government on their total manpower and running costs. A recruitment competition for up to 20 nuclear installations inspectors is at present under way.

Skillcentre (Deptford)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Paymaster General (1) what courses are currently offered at the Deptford skillcentre; how many places are available on each; and how many of these places are currently filled;

(2) how many places for *(a)* bricklayers and *(b)* carpenters and joiners have been available at the Deptford skillcentre in each year of its operation;

(3) what is the total capacity of the Deptford skillcentre; and how much of it is currently in use.

Mr. Trippier: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Polyurethane

Mr. Hardy asked the Paymaster General if he will list the circumstances in which the use of polyurethane is permitted in underground mining operations; and what representations he has received seeking approval for the use of this material underground.

Mr. Trippier: The use of polyurethane as a sealant in mines operated by British Coal is prohibited by NCB production instruction 1968/3. Its use in other circumstances is subject to the approval of a working group set up for this purpose by NCB producation instruction 1976/1. The working group has approved the use of polyurethane in personal protective equipment and as a filling for pneumatic tyres.

Her Majesty's mines inspectors advise against the use of polyurethane at other mines, and this advice is accepted.

Unemployment (Monklands, West)

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Paymaster General if he will give in percentage terms the latest available figures for unemployment in the Monklands, West constituency; if he will break these figures down between male and female unemployed and long-term unemployed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The information is not available in the form requested because percentage unemployment rates are not calculated for areas smaller than travel-to-work areas. The table shows the numbers of unemployed claimants in the Monklands, West constituency as at 9 October 1986. This information is also in the Library.

	Male	*Female*
Unemployed for over one year	1,658	461
Total unemployed	3,498	1,521

Jobstart Scheme

Mr. Boyes asked the Paymaster General how many males and females have been offered jobs as part of the jobstart programme by region; how many males and females have left the jobstart scheme; and how many leaving have immediately become unemployed.

Mr. Trippier: Jobstart offers long-term unemployed people a financial incentive to take jobs they might not otherwise consider. Applicants normally obtain a job and then apply for the jobstart allowance. The numbers of people successfully applying for jobstart since the scheme started on 1 July until 5 December are listed in table 1:

Region	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
East Midlands and Eastern	162	73	235
London	47	20	67
North West	439	202	641
Northern	167	45	212
Scotland	155	123	278
South East	102	53	155
South West	104	39	143
Wales	150	74	224
West Midlands	238	82	320
Yorkshire and Humberside	223	70	293
National Totals	1,787	781	2,568

The numbers of people who left the jobstart scheme during the same period are listed in table 2:

Region	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
East Midlands and Eastern	1	0	1
London	0	0	0
North West	3	2	5
Northern	3	0	3
Scotland	0	1	1
South East	2	0	2
South West	2	0	2
Wales	1	2	3
West Midlands	0	1	1
Yorkshire and Humberside	3	1	4
	15	7	22

Information about what happens to people who leave the jobstart scheme is not currently available.

Pay Increases

Mr. Meacher asked the Paymaster-General what has been the pay increase in each year since 1979 of *(a)* manual workers, *(b)* non-manual workers below executive grades, and *(c)* executives, including bonuses where appropriate.

Mr. Trippier: The available information is from the new earnings survey and is shown in the table:

Percentage increase in gross weekly earnings of full-time adult[1] [2] employees—Great Britain

April	*(a) Manual workers*	*(b) Non-manual workers excluding occupation groups I, II and VI*[3]	*(c) Non-manual workers occupation groups I, II and VI*[3]
1979-80	+20·2	+24·5	+26·7
1980-81	+ 9·5	+17·2	+11·8
1981-82	+ 9·3	+ 8·0	+10·8
1982-83	+ 7·5	+ 9·2	+ 9·9
1983-84	+ 7·8	+ 7·3	+10·3
1984-85	+ 7·0	+ 6·7	+ 7·9
1985-86	+ 6·7	+ 7·9	+10·0

[1] Whose earnings are not affected by absence.
[2] Females aged 18 and over and males aged 21 and over from 1979-1983 males and females on adult rates 1983 onwards.
[3] The occupation classification used in the New Earnings Survey does not separately identify executive grades; occupation groups I, II, and VI cover Professional and related supporting Management and Managerial (excluding General Management).

Work Permits

Mrs. Peacock asked the Paymaster General whether a decision has yet been made to continue after the current year the special annual quota of work permits for workers from the dependent territories whose level of skill is below that required by the general work permit scheme.

Mr. Lee: Yes. It has been decided that the quota for 1987 will be 200—the same as this year. Within the figure of 200, no more than 150 permits will be allowed for any one territory.

DEFENCE

Sultan of Oman

Mr. Neil Thorne asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the outcome of Exercise Swift Sword carried out in November jointly with the Sultan of Oman's armed forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: Exercise Saif Sareea (Swift Sword), a combined United Kingdom-Omani exercise took place in Oman between 15 November and 8 December and was most successful. The exercise, involving nearly 5,000 British service men, achieved its aim of demonstrating our capability for rapid strategic deployment outside the NATO area. It also enabled the three services to practice combined operations with a host nation in accordance with operational concepts evolved from the lessons of the Falklands campaign. Further work will continue on drawing together the many detailed lessons of the exercise. The success of the exercise owed much to the excellent co-operation from, and generous facilities provided by, our Omani partners, for which Her Majesty's Government and our armed forces are most grateful.

Mr. Neil Thorne asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will consider inviting the Sultan of Oman's armed forces to participate in a joint exercise in the United Kingdom during 1988 or 1989.

Mr. Stanley: We always give careful consideration to the possibility of combined exercises with our friends where there are mutual benefits to be gained and we would be happy to consider detailed proposals from Oman.

Royal Army Veterinary Corps

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on the visit by his hon. Friend the Member for Kettering, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, to the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Melton Mowbray, on 11 December.

Mr. Freeman: I regret that because of pressure from parliamentary commitments, I was in fact unable to visit the RAVC Melton Mowbray on 11 December.

Gurkha Field Force

Sir Antony Buck asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether there have been any recent developments concerning the Gurkha field force in Hong Kong.

Mr. Stanley: I am glad to announce today, on the 10th anniversary of the disbanding of the 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade, that the Gurkha field force in Hong Kong is to be renamed the 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade. The renaming will restore the distinguished designation of 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade to the Army's order of battle.

Libya

Mr. O'Neill asked the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 1 January his Department has been consulted by the Department of Trade and Industry regarding orders for British companies to supply Libya with equipment with possible military applications.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Consultation by meetings, phone calls and letters take place between my Department and the Department of Trade and Industry at many levels. It would not be possible to calculate the number of such consultations on any particular subject over a specific time scale.

HOTOL

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement with regard to the British Aerospace/Rolls-Royce horizontal take-off and landing project, with particular reference to any discussions within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation concerning its nuclear weapon delivery potential.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I know of no formal discussions within NATO regarding the military potential of HOTOL, including that for nuclear weapon delivery, although those nations which are also members of the European Space Agency are undoubtedly familiar with the HOTOL concept. There is currently no United Kingdom military requirement for such a vehicle.

Radar Equipment (Iran)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Defence what contracts for radar equipment for sale to Iran have been signed by British companies in the last 12 months.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It has been the consistent policy of this and previous Administrations not to give details of specific defence exports.

I can, however, confirm that no contracts have been signed for defence equipment which breach the Government's guidelines as set out in the answer given on 29 October 1985 by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in reply to a question by the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel).

Rapier

Mr. Robert B. Jones asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the further development of the Rapier air defence system.

Mr. Archie Hamilton [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 November 1986, c. *6*]: I am pleased to be able to say that we have recently placed an order with Shorts of Belfast for the supply of a new high velocity missile system, Starstreak, which will provide a further enhancement of our air defence capability into the 21st century. Rapier will provide the wide area defence umbrella under which combat units can manoeuvre. The new system will provide complementary close air defence protection, in conjunction with the Javelin system, guaranteeing the protection of important units and installations.

The Starstreak weapon system represents an evolutionary advance on the successful Blowpipe and Javelin shoulder-launched weapons systems deployed by the British armed forces and will provide an important enhancement to our capability in the face of increasingly hostile air threats foreseen through the 1990s and beyond.

This contract, worth approximately £225 million, represents the largest awarded to the company by the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and will provide major employment opportunities to Shorts and its subcontractors throughout the United Kingdom, mainly in regions outside the south-east of England, including a number of development areas. It will provide continuing employment at Shorts well into the 1990s together with work for up to 5,000 throughout the United Kingdom with a further 5,000 jobs being maintained or created indirectly.

This contract will enable the United Kingdom to remain at the very forefront of close air defence technology and confirms Shorts as one of the foremost missile manufacturers in the world.

State Security

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the book "Their Trade is Treachery" was referred to the D-notice Committee for consideration by all its members.

Mr. Stanley [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *310*]: The satisfactory working of the D-notice system, which is voluntary, is dependent on authors and publishers knowing that their discussions with the Defence, Press and Broadcasting Committee are regarded by the Committee as taking place in confidence. For this reason, it is not our practice to state which books have or have not been brought to the notice of the Committee.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978

Mr. Galley asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish quarterly statistics on the operation of the provision of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978.

Mr. Tom King: Statistics on the operation of the emergency provisions currently contained in the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 are held by a number of different Departments. Those statistics which are readily available are set out in the following tables. The tables show that the first year in which statistics were collected in the format set out varies. These tables will now form the base line for these statistics and will be updated at quarterly intervals.

Table 1
High Court bail applications made in 1985 in respect of persons charged with scheduled offences

	Number
Number of applications	1,299
Number granted	801
Number refused	476
Other outcomes[1]	22

[1] This figure includes withdrawals and adjournments.

Table 2
Percentage of persons on bail at time of trial

	Persons charged with	
	Scheduled offences	*Non-scheduled offences*
	per cent.	*per cent.*
1978	39	75
1979	44	78
1980	38	81
1981	40	87
1982	52	86
1983	48	89
1984	58	85
1985	57	84

Table 3: Number of persons tried for indictable scheduled offences by judge sitting without a jury, and outcome

Year	*Persons proceeded against*	*Pleaded guilty*	*Pleaded not guilty*	*Found guilty*	*Found not guilty*
1980	585	472	113	550	35
1981	598	490	108	562	36
1982	793	640	153	744	49
1983	638	464	174	577	61
1984	507	426	81	464	43
1985	698	552	146	625	73

Percentage pleading not-guilty found not-guilty

	Percentage
1980	31
1981	33
1982	32

	Percentage
1983	35
1984	53
1985	50

Table 4: Outcome of appeals lodged in 1985 following convictions for scheduled offences

	Number
Total number of appeals lodged	65
Total number of those appeals dealt with by June 1986	49
Appeals dismissed	19
Convictions quashed	2
Sentence varied	28
Sentence upheld	0
Appeals outstanding at June 1986	16

Table 5: Number of persons arrested by members of the armed forces under section 14 and by members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary under sections 11 and 13 and number subsequently charged

	Section 14	Section 11	Section 13	Number charged
1975	4,141			
1976	8,321			
1977	5,878			
1978	3,692	1,186	—	384
1979	2,572	2,035	—	588
1980	1,629	1,719	—	435
1981	1,993	2,555	—	780
1982	1,288	1,901	—	361
1983	476	1,222	—	197
1984	241	1,326	—	223
1985	142	986	2	202
1986[1]	58	784	4	148

[1] To 31 October.

Notes:

Figures on sections 11 and 13 are only available from 1 June 1978.

Some of those arrested by members of the armed forces would be recorded in the RUC figures if they were subsequently handed over to the police.

Table 6: Number of occasions on which premises were searched by members of the RUC and armed forces under section 15

	Army			[2] RUC
	Occupied	Unoccupied/ Derelict	Total	
1973	14,429	60,127	74,556	—
1974	19,576	52,338	71,914	—
1975	3,907	26,185	30,092	—
1976	10,749	24,190	34,939	—
1977	9,264	11,460	20,724	—
1978	6,309	9,153	15,462	—
1979	4,740	1,712	6,452	—
1980	2,960	1,146	4,106	—
1981	2,420	1,684	4,104	—
1982	2,979	1,066	4,045	—
1983	693	800	1,493	—
1984	769	513	1,282	—
1985	446	366	812	—
				11,852
1986 [1]	564	506	1,070	—
			271,051	

[1] To the end of October.

[2] To end of 1985.

Table 7: Compensation payments under section 28

Financial year	Amount £
1973-74 [1]	34,156
1974-75	27,848
1975-76	122,529
1976-77	133,797
1977-78	108,890
1978-79	82,845
1979-80	148,571
1980-81	157,073
1981-82	115,375
1982-83	143,619
1983-84	174,240
1984-85	235,384
1985-86 [2]	157,893

[1] Includes payments under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act 1922.

[2] To the end of September 1986.

Table 8: Persons charged with offences under the Emergency Provisions Act after having been initially detained under the Act

	Membership of proscribed organisation (s. 21)	Unlawful collecting of information (s. 22)	Training in make/use of firearms/ explosives (s. 23)	Dressing/behaving like member of proscribed organisation (s, 25)	Wearing of hoods (s. 26)
1978[1]	127	1	0	0	0
1979	134	4	2	4	0
1980	43	1	1	8	0
1981	25	2	0	0	5
1982	45	1	0	0	0
1983	21	2	0	0	0
1984	13	1	0	0	0
1985	2	0	0	0	0
1986[2]	2	2	0	2	5

[1] From 1 June.

[2] To 31 October.

Table 9: Number of requisition orders and derequisition orders under section 19

Year	Requisition Orders	Derequisition Orders
1973	0	—
1974	2	—
1975	1	—
1976	13	—
1977	5	—
1978	1	—
1979	9	—
1980	1	1
1981	5	3
1982	1	1
1983	4	3
1984	2	0
1985	16	2
1986	2	2

Departmental Land, Sprucefield

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at what date his Department sold its land at Sprucefield; to whom it sold it: and what was the total amount realised on the sale.

Mr. Viggers: The Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland has not sold any land at Sprucefield.

ENERGY

British Coal

4. **Mr. Redmond** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he will next meet the chairman of the National Coal Board to discuss future capacity in the industry.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have regular meetings with the chairman of British Coal to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

11. **Mr. McGuire** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the National Coal Board to discuss the introduction of new technology.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend and I have regular meetings with the chairman of British Coal to discuss a variety of issues concerning the coal industry.

17. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what subjects he expects to discuss at his next meeting with the chairman of the National Coal Board.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend and I have regular meetings with the chairman of British Coal to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

37. **Mr. Cunliffe** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he last discussed with the chairman of British Coal the level of imports of coal into Great Britain.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend and I have regular meetings with the chairman of British Coal during which we discuss a number of issues.

Home Insulation grants

7. **Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will consider extending home insulation grants to meet the costs of basic draught-proofing around windows and doors of older homes.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend is considering with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment a number of possible changes in the coverage of the homes insulation scheme.

Nuclear Accidents

12. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for energy if completed work by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate on the post-Chernobyl review of emergency plans for nuclear accidents has been made available to Sir Frank Layfield for his consideration; how much of this work on emergency plans remains incomplete at present; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: It would not be proper for me to comment on Sir Frank Layfield's report until I have completed my consideration of it.

A thorough review of emergency plans continues to be carried out in the light of our experience of the Chernobyl accident, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said on 24 November.

26. **Mr. Allan Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if completed work by his Department on the post-Chernobyl review of emergency plans for nuclear accidents has been made available to Sir Frank Layfield for his consideration; how much of this work on emergency plans remains incomplete at present; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I have given the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) today.

Coal Conversion Scheme

16. **Mr. Gregory** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about the future of the coal conversion scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: My Department has received two formal requests to reconsider the future of the coal firing scheme. The scheme will close to new applications made after 30 June 1987.

Alternative Energy Sources

19. **Mr. Bellingham** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had in the Council of Energy Ministers regarding alternative sources of energy.

Mr. David Hunt: The Council of Ministers under my right hon. Friend's Presidency agreed a major new initiative for a Community approach to the development of new and renewable sources of energy on the 26 November. This will look at ways in which European collaboration can improve Europe's performance in an area which is vital to the European economies during the next century.

Acid Rain

20. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he next proposes to meet the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to discuss acid rain.

Mr. Goodlad: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board on various aspects of electricity production.

Coal Mine Accidents

21. **Mr. Greg Knight** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the fatalities in coal mine accidents in each of the past 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The health and safety of its employees is a first priority of British Coal. The general trend in the number of fatalities continues to decline: there have been 10 fatalities so far this year, compared with 20 for the corresponding period in 1985-86. Fatalities in the last 10 years were as follows:

	Fatalities
1976-77	38
1977-78	48
1978-79	72
1979-80	31
1980-81	39
1981-82	34
1982-83	44
1983-84	[1]22
1984-85	[1]12
1985-86	27

Source: NCB Report and Accounts.
[1]Affected by industrial action.

Coal Industry (Employment)

22. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many persons are presently employed in the coal industry; what was the comparable figure for 1979; and what forecasts he has made for the coming year.

Mr. David Hunt: The number of men on colliery books at 22 November was 121,173 compared to 232,947 in the same week in 1979. Their future manpower requirement is a matter for British Coal; I have made no forecasts for the coming year. The chairman has, however, made clear that the task of major restructuring within the industry is nearly complete.

Voluntary Insulation Groups

25. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many voluntary insulation groups have started so far in 1986.

Mr. David Hunt: Since the beginning of Energy Efficiency Year 1986, the number of community insulation projects has risen by over 75 per cent., from 190 at the end of 1985 to 336 at the most recent count. Two hundred and thirty thousand homes have already been insulated.

Mersey Barrage

27. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what progress the feasibility study into the Mersey barrage is making; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The feasibility study work-programme was contracted in August and is now underway with the main sub-contracts placed. The first phase of the work-programme which includes identification of the preferred barrage line and an examination of possible impediments is due for completion in late 1987.

Coal Conversion Scheme

28. **Mr. Barron** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received to extend the coal conversion scheme beyond June 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given earlier today to the hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory).

Coal and Electricity Supply Industries

29. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he plans to widen ownership of the coal and electricity supply industries.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Government have no present plans to do so.

Offshore Oilfield

30. **Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many applications for the development of new offshore oilfields he has *(a)* received and *(b)* approved in the last 12 months.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: So far this year I have approved development plans for three new offshore oilfields. One further new offshore oilfield development is currently under discussion.

Nuclear Power Stations

31. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of Great Britain's electricity is generated by nuclear power stations; and what is the corresponding figure for France.

Mr. Goodlad: The proportions were 20 per cent. in the United Kingdom and 65 per cent. in France during 1985, the latest full year for which figures are available.

Sizewell B

32. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what studies his Department has carried out into the financial viability of the Sizewell B nuclear power station.

Mr. Goodlad: The inspector took wide-ranging evidence at the inquiry on the economics of Sizewell B. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy will consider the report fully.

North Sea (Rigs and Platforms)

33. **Mr. Rowlands** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received from the companies involved in the construction of offshore rigs and platforms about current and future orders in the North sea.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: My right hon. Friend and I are in regular touch with the companies involved in the construction of offshore rigs and platforms about current and future orders in the North sea.

Offshore Oil and Gas Industry

34. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the annual estimated expenditure on research and

development for the offshore oil and gas industry; how much is provided by public funds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The estimated annual expenditure on research and development related to the recovery of oil and gas resources of the United Kingdom continental shelf is £100 million to £120 million, of which £25 million to £30 million is spent by Government on field delineation, safety, and support for the research and development of United Kingdom suppliers of goods and services. Innovative and cost redundancy technology is crucial to the full exploration and exploitation of the UKCS.

British Gas

35. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the recent flotation of British Gas.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Erewash (Mr. Rost).

Mr. Blair asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will now provide information, in the same form as the answer of 24 May 1985 in relation to British Telecom, about all fees and commissions so far paid, or to be paid, to primary underwriters, sub-underwriters, financial advisers, legal advisers, auditors and stockbrokers in connection with the flotation of British Gas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The organisations directly involved in the British Gas sale were listed in the prospectus, a copy of which has been in the Library of the House since 21 November. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) on 12 December for estimates of the costs of the sale.

Solway Barrage

36. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had on the question of the Solway barrage.

Mr. David Hunt: None.

Cross-Channel Electricity Link

38. **Mr. Torney** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the latest amount and value of the electricity transmitted via the cross-Channel link with France.

Mr. Goodlad: I would refer the hon. Member to the September 1986 edition of "Overseas Trade Statistics of the UK". This shows that for the period January-September 1986 1·3 terawatt hours were imported via the link at a value of £23 million.

Passive Solar Housing Technology

39. **Mr. Freeson** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what design guidance and requirements his Department is issuing to local authorities and housing associations for new housing and housing renovation work to encourage them to use passive solar housing techniques and technology.

Mr. David Hunt: My Department is supporting a comprehensive research and development programme aimed at providing detailed advice on passive solar design for both domestic and non-domestic buildings in the United Kingdom. In the next three years over 20 design handbooks, housing layout guides, books and technical reports will be published as part of our programme. In addition we are examining a number of techniques to improve technical transfer and demonstrate that passive solar design is economically attractive now.

Expenditure on passive solar this year is expected to reach £1 million, an increase of over £0·4 million from 1985-86 and grow to over £2·5 million a year by 1988-89.

Home Heating Insulation

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to help people on low incomes or on state pensions towards the cost of home heating insulation.

Mr. David Hunt: In addition to the Monergy campaign of information and advice on energy efficiency to all householders, my right hon. Friend continues to support the expansion of the voluntary sector insulation projects, which have already provided a free or low cost insulation service to over 230,000 households of elderly and other people on low incomes.

Redundant Mineworkers (Tredegar)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Energy if employees of the National Coal Board Tredegar engineering works have been entitled to redundancy payments from the redundant mineworkers payments scheme at any time since the introduction of the scheme.

Mr. David Hunt: The Tredomen Engineering Ltd. establishment is not of the type, providing services ancillary to collieries, for which the redundant mineworkers payments scheme was designed.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Energy why employees of the National Coal Board made redundant from the National Coal Board Tredegar workshops were entitled to redundant mineworkers payment scheme payments calculated to include their length of service at Tredomen engineering works as eligible service.

Mr. David Hunt: Entitlement to benefits under the redundant mineworkers payment scheme is governed by the terms of the relevant statutory instrument — currently SI 1986, No. 625. Eligible service is determined on the basis of total coal industry employment having regard to the requirements of article 2 of that order.

SBK Consortium

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Rochford, (Dr. Clark) *Official Report*, 24 November column 161, whether the Central Electricity Generating Board has increased its holding in the SBK consortium following the reduction in the holding by the Dutch consortia partner SEP.

Mr. Goodlad: The CEGB advise me that it has not increased its shareholding in the SBK consortium.

Nuclear Waste

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what volume of (*a*) low-level nuclear waste and (*b*) intermediate level nuclear waste has arisen from the reprocessing of (i) spent Magnox nuclear fuel imported from the Latina nuclear station in Italy and (ii) spent Magnox nuclear fuel imported from the Tokai Mura nuclear station in Japan;

(2) where the nuclear waste arising from the reprocessing of spent Magnox nuclear fuel from (*a*) Japan and (*b*) Italy is currently stored; and what specific plans there are to return (i) low-, (ii) intermediate- and (iii) high-level waste to the respective countries of origin.

Mr. Goodlad: The quantities of low-level radioactive waste attributable to the reprocessing of spent fuel from these reactors was given in my reply of 27 November to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) at column *302*. The corresponding volumes of intermediate level waste are as follows:

	cubic metres
Italy	1,100
Japan	550

Wastes arising from the reprocessing of spent fuel are stored at Sellafield. The Government's policy with regard to the disposal of waste from the reprocessing of overseas spent fuel was given in my reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) of 2 May 1986 at column 502.

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for Energy what studies have been made into the technical feasibility and cost of retro fitting dry-storage facilities for spent nuclear fuel and the radioactive waste containment at each Magnox and advanced gas cooled reactor site in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Goodlad: The CEGB and SSEB have agreed to analyse the technical and economic aspects of backfitting dry-stores to Magnox stations following a recommendation that they should do so in the Environment Committee's report on radioactive waste. As far as the advanced gas cooled reactor stations are concerned, at the time of signing the new THORP contracts in April the CEGB and SSEB indicated their interest in building a dry buffer store for AGR spent fuel. Further studies by the boards are in hand.

Plutonium

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government regarding the uses to which plutonium produced in the Central Electricity Generating Board reactors may be put both abroad and in the United Kingdom; and if there has been any change in this policy since the reply given by the right hon. Member for Croydon, Central (Mr. Moore) on 4 February 1985, *Official Report*, column 206.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers given by the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) on 4 February 1985, and to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 15 April 1986. The policy of this Administration on the use of CEGB plutonium has not changed since they came to office.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his answer of 10 December, if he will specify what message the theatre groups sought to convey about nuclear power; and to what extent his Department vets in advance the contents of the material purveyed.

Mr. Peter Walker: The message conveyed by the theatre groups sponsored by my Department is the importance of using energy efficiently by avoiding waste in the home and at school. Nuclear power is mentioned as one of the fuels used to generate electricity. My Department vets the material and provides energy efficiency project material.

Chernobyl Disaster

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will place in the Library a full set of readings and maps produced by the Meteorological Office and the National Radiological Protection Board showing the detailed path of the radioactive cloud stemming from the Chernobyl disaster over Europe during the period 26 April to 8 May; and if he will make a statement as to whether these new details have modified the Government's understanding of the effects of this disaster on the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Currie: I have been asked to reply.

Copies of the readings and maps have been placed in the Library.

The assessment of the effect of the Chernobyl accident on the United Kingdom (and decisions consequently taken regarding protection of public health) were based on extensive monitoring data (and particularly on milk, vegetables and meat) from all parts of the country. The further information has not significantly modified the Government's understanding of the effects of the accident on the United Kingdom.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Brent Council Education Department

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if Her Majesty's inspectorate has any plans to inquire into personnel management in the education department of Brent council; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has asked Her Majesty's inspectorate to advise him on the quality of education received by pupils and students in establishments maintained by the Brent LEA. A series of inspections of schools in Brent is being undertaken. There will be published Her Majesty's inspectorate reports on each of the schools inspected in the normal way. The findings will then, together with evidence from other recent inspections and discussions with a range of interested parties, be pulled together into a single overall report on aspects of education in Brent.

Her Majesty's inspectorate is focussing on the actual provision of education in schools and classrooms in Brent. It is not its function directly to inspect the personnel management procedures in local education authorities, or other aspects of their internal administration. However, should evidence from the schools raise issues which, in the judgment of Her Majesty's inspectorate, appear to reflect

on the ways in which the Brent LEA conducts its business, then reference to these will be made in its report. When he receives the report, my right hon. Friend will consider it carefully and, as appropriate, follow up with the LEA any issues arising.

City Technology College

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the recommended composition of the governing body of a city technology college; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend will be discussing the composition of the governing bodies of city technology colleges with those who are sponsoring them financially. The sponsors will have the controlling interest.

Departmental Achievements

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the principal achievements of his Department since 1983 in advanced education.

Mr. Walden: A Green Paper on "The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s" (Cmnd. 9524) was published in May 1985.

Since 1983, the number of home students in higher education has increased by 49,000 (24,000 full-time and 25,000 part-time), including an increase in the proportion studying science and engineering. This reflects continuing growth in higher education participation rates: since 1979 the proportion of 18 to 19-year-olds entering higher education has increased by an eighth and the number of mature entrants by more than 15 per cent. At the same time measures to preserve and enhance quality and to increase the cost-effectiveness of the system and its responsiveness to the needs of the economy have been pursued. Specific measures to link higher education and industry in collaborative projects have been encouraged including the appointment of more industrialists to educational bodies.

The University Grants Committee and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals have agreed a programme of action for the energetic pursuit of necessary reforms in Britain's universities including better management, improved standards of teaching, greater selectivity in research funding, rationalisation of small departments and a review of tenure for academic staff.

The engineering and technology programme was launched in 1985 at a cost of £65 million over its first four years. It attracted donations of equipment and services from industry worth more than £24 million and by the end of the decade will provide about 5,000 extra high-quality places on courses in engineering and related disciplines.

The Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education has been set up to review and evaluate initial teacher training courses for which criteria have been set down.

The educational counselling and credit transfer information service (ECCTIS) has been established; and support given to the development of a computer-aided careers guidance system for graduates.

Academic validation procedures in the public sector of higher education were reviewed by a committee under Sir Norman Lindop and the Government's position was set out in a statement on 17 March 1986.

Resources were provided for "new blood" in universities, for the enhancement of equipment in selected centres of high quality research, and for support of programmes of efficiency studies in universities and in public sector higher education.

Through the IT in HE programme, providing an additional 5,000 places at higher diploma, first degree and postgraduate level, in electronic engineering and computer science. Launching, in collaboration with other Departments, the engineering and technology programme which, by 1990, will provide a further 5,000 places on high quality degree courses.

At the Open university the number of undergraduate students increased in 1983 from 63,000 to 66,500; a level which has been sustained since. An additional £4·8 million has recently been made available to the university over the next three years, which will enable it to increase its annual intake from 20,500 to 22,000 in 1987 and 24,000 in each of the years 1988 and 1989. Roughly two thirds of all new students will take mathematics, science and technology courses. One and a half million pounds of this new money will enable the university to develop courses and materials to help improve mathematics, physics and technology teaching in schools. The Open university also plays an important role in meeting national needs through its continuing education programme. The number of courses within this programme has increased from 69 in 1983 to 152 in 1986.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the principal achievements of his Department since 1983 in primary education.

Mr. Dunn: The Government's principal policies and achievements in respect to primary and other schools were set out in the White Paper "Better Schools" (Cmnd. 9469) published on 26 March 1985. Primary schools have benefited from education support grant programme activities such as those concerning the teaching of science in primary education, and pilot projects to enrich the curriculum provided in primary schools in rural areas. The Education (No. 2) Act 1986 promotes the effective management of maintained primary schools and teaching quality within them.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the principal achievements of his Department since 1983 in secondary education.

Mr. Dunn: The Government's policies and achievements in respect of secondary schools were set out in the White Paper "Better Schools" (Cmnd. 9469) published on 26 March 1985, in particular, the definition with greater clarity of the objectives and range of the curriculum, financial support for a pilot initiative to promote technical and vocational education for 14 to 18-year-olds in schools and colleges and the support of a pilot programme for improving the education of lower attaining pupils.

Developments since then have taken further the introduction of a new system of examinations at 16 (the general certificate of secondary education) based on national criteria; the AS level examination to broaden A-level studies; the development through specially financed pilot projects of records of achievement for all school leavers.

The Education (No. 2) Act 1986 promotes the more effective management of maintained schools and teaching quality within them.

The setting up of city technology colleges will be a further significant development.

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the principal achievements of his Department since 1983 in further education.

Mrs. Rumbold: Many of the Government's achievements in further education have been set out in the White Papers "Training for Jobs" (Cmnd 9135), "Education and Training for Young People" (Cmnd 9482) and "Working Together – Education and Training" (Cmnd 9823), and in the Green Paper "The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s". Principal among them are:

(i) the introducion of the certificate of pre-vocational education, which provides an attractive new option for young people who are not taking A-levels or specifically vocational courses;

(ii) the formation of the Business and Technician Education council with an important role in the preparation of skilled manpower;

(iii) the establishment, with the Department of Employment, of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications to improve the structure of vocational qualficiations;

(iv) the encouragement of employers to make better use of colleges, and of colleges to be more responsive to the needs of employment, through, for example, the College-Employer Links Project and the involvement of the MSC in the planning of work-related non-advanced further education (NAFE);

(v) the establishment, with the local authority associations, of a joint study to improve efficiency in NAFE. Related to this, the Department is encouraging, with education support grant, the introduction of computerised management information systems in colleges;

(vi) the establishement of a scheme of in-service training grants for further education lecturers;

(vii) the provision of education support grant to further the use of information technology in NAFE.

The implementation of the PICKUP programme to promote vocational education and training to update or broaden the skills of those in mid-career; the programme has brought about an increase in updating education of about 10 per cent. a year, especially in the areas of technology and business studies and has targets for much larger increases in the future.

The establishment of some 350 local collaborative projects in which educational institutions and firms work in partnership to offer adult training and updating—a joint venture between PICKUP and the MSC within the Government's adult training campaign.

The initiation of REPLAN for meeting more effectively the education needs of unemployed adults.

The promotion of the establishment of a national unit for the development of continuing education.

Heart Disease

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the actions taken by his Department since the publication of the COMA report, designed to assist in the prevention of coronary heart disease.

Mr. Dunn: The aim of all health education in schools is to encourage pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles and to avoid behaviour which may lead to ill health, including coronary heart disease. My right hon. Friend has made it clear that he considers health education an essential aspect of schools' work. The detailed content of the curriculum is for local determination. Schools already teach pupils about the need for a healthy diet, the avoidance of obesity and the importance of exercise, as advocated in the report of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA). Recent discussion papers by Her Majesty's inspectorate on "Home Economics from 5 to 16" and "Health Education from 5 to 16", have emphasised the messages of the COMA report. The Department has also drawn the report to the attention of the school examining boards and asked that they take its recommendations into account in their home economics syllabuses.

Schools Inspectors

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools in England *(a)* have had no experience of teaching in schools, *(b)* have had experience of teaching in primary schools and *(c)* do not possess a specific degree or diploma in education.

Mrs. Rumbold: The overwhelming majority of Her Majesty's inspectors are appointed on the basis of a sound academic background and proven success as teachers in schools or establishments of further and higher education. As Her Majesty's inspectors are appointed in mid-career, many have taught successfully in a number of different phases of the education service. In exceptional cases, Her Majesty's inspectors with a non-teaching background may be appointed on the basis of experience in other aspects of education which the inspectorate considers necessary to have within its numbers. The Department does not maintain in readily accessible form records of all the previous education and employment of Her Majesty's inspectors. The detailed information requested could thus only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Higher Education

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what is the number of students in public sector higher education, divided into men and women, in each of the last five years for which information is available;

(2) what is the number of students currently enrolled on access courses to higher education in public sector higher education institutions;

(3) what is the number of public sector higher education students divided into men and women in each of the different modes of full-time study, sandwich study, and part-time evening and part-time day study, in the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Walden: Figures for each of the last five years for the number of public sector higher education students in England divided into men and women in each of the different modes of study are shown in the table. No data are available on enrolments on access courses to higher education.

Enrolments in Public Sector Higher Education: England

Thousands

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Men					
Full-time	74·8	79·2	83·8	86·1	88·0
Sandwich	39·7	41·1	42·2	42·2	46·9
Part-time Day	93·9	92·9	93·9	92·8	94·2

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Evening Only	28·4	28·2	28·9	28·2	29·5
Total	236·9	241·3	248·9	249·4	252·7
Women					
Full-time	76·2	83·0	88·4	92·4	94·9
Sandwich	13·1	14·6	16·2	17·4	18·2
Part-time Day	28·5	30·3	33·8	36·7	44·0
Evening Only	13·7	15·1	15·3	14·2	18·0
Total	131·5	142·9	153·7	160·6	175·2
Men and Women					
Full-time	151·0	162·2	172·2	178·5	183·0
Sandwich	52·8	55·6	58·5	59·6	59·2
Part-time Day	122·4	123·2	127·7	129·5	138·3
Evening Only	42·1	43·2	44·2	42·4	47·5
Total	368·4	384·2	402·6	410·0	427·9

Note: Owing to rounding totals may not agree with the sum of component figures.

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what is the number of students in public sector higher education in England and Wales for each of the last five years for which figures are available, divided into the 19 different programmes utilised by the national advisory body; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what are the percentages and full-time equivalent numbers of public sector higher education students in *(a)* full-time study, *(b)* sandwich study, *(c)* part-time evening and *(d)* part-time day, in the last five years for which figures are available;

(3) what the numbers of students in public sector higher education have been in the past five years for which figures are available, in each of the subject programmes 01, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17, as used by the national advisory body; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what are the numbers and percentages of public sector higher education students studying *(a)* in polytechnics and *(b)* in other colleges in each of the last five years for which figures are available in each of the subject programmes utilised by the national advisory body;

(5) what the percentage change in the number of first-year students on public sector higher education courses in the three areas of art, design and performing arts has been in the last five years for which fugures are availble; and if he will make a statement;

(6) what is the number and percentage of students aged 21 years and over who have been in public sector higher education in each of the last five years for which figures are available;

(7) what is the number of students in higher education studying fine art in each of the last five years for which figures are available, divided into the university and public sector of higher education; and if he will make a statement;

(8) what is the number and percentage of mature students aged 25 years and over who have been in public sector higher education in each of the last five years for which figures are available;

(9) what is the number of higher education students in *(a)* Great Britain as a whole and *(b)* England and Wales in the academic years 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85, together with the best estimates for 1985-86, and divided into the figures for universities and public sector, the latter split into the figures for polytechnics and other colleges;

(10) what is the number of first year students in public sector higher education in England and Wales for each of the last five years for which figures are available, as compared to the number of first year students in the universities over the same period, and divided into the subject classification utilised by the University Grants Committee and national advisory body, respectively;

Mr. Walden: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Institute of Terrestrial Ecology

Mr. Donald Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if will publish in the *Official Report* the levels of Government funding for the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology in 1984-85, 1985-86 and the estimated totals for 1986-87 and 1987-88; and if he will give a breakdown of funding in those years to the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology research stations in Scotland.

Mr. Walden: The funding of ITE as a whole and for the ITE research stations in Scotland is as follows:

£ million

	1984-85	1985-86	[1]1986-87	[1]1987-88
ITE funding from all sources (Includes non-Government fundings)	5·9	5·8	6·0	[2]5·6
the funding for the ITE stations in Scotland included in the above total (of which major capital building).	(0·3)	(0·5)	(0·7)	(0·6)
	1·8	1·5	1·5	[2]1·5
	(0·4)			

[1] Estimated.
[2] These lines represent the aggregates of grant-in-aid from the Science Budget of the Department through the Natural Environment Research Council, and income from other Departments for commissioned research and from other non-Government sources.

ENVIRONMENT

Hampton Court (Fire)

Mr. Jessel asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what further steps he has taken in the light of his statement on 3 July about the fire at Hampton Court palace on 31 March; and if he will make another statement.

Mr. Ridley: The damaged part of the building has been made safe and weatherproof. The Property Services Agency has been working in close co-operation with English Heritage and other experts to rescue as much as possible from the debris, and to protect or remove all artifacts which can be saved and restored, including nearly all the Grinling Gibbons carvings which will be repaired separately. Work is progressing on the detailed plans for re-building and restoration. Tenders for the main contract will be sought towards the end of 1987. Meanwhile, work on the restoration of stonework damaged in the fire has already started. The palace is open to the public, who can visit the great majority of the public rooms.

Work has been proceeding as speedily as practicable to ensure that the lessons learned with regard to automatic

fire detection systems are put to good effect in protecting the palace, and other historic buildings, against the possibility of further such accidents.

Sir John Garlick, in his report which was the subject of my statement on 3 July, recommended a number of technical improvements to the existing automatic fire detection system which he considered would achieve the most immediate improvement in security against fire. All the control panels have now been modified in accordance with these recommendations so that switches cannot be left in the 'reset' condition; lockable covers have been installed; and a memory facility has been incorporated. Work is either completed or in hand on all other recommended improvements.

I have received further detailed advice from my officials on the design, installation, and commissioning of the automatic fire detection system at Hampton Court palace.

This has confirmed that the design specification was consistent with the relevant British standards at the time. It is now evident that the problems of handing over a system of this size and novel technical development were under-estimated and the procedures were not sufficiently clear. The lessons we have learned will be applied at Hampton Court and at other buildings for which my Department is responsible.

Sir John Garlick also recommended that there should be more effective fire drills involving the fire brigade and the staff responsible for the supervision and maintenance of the palace. Following further discussions with the fire brigade, this recommendation has been fully implemented. Improved fire drills have already taken place and arrangements have been made for more effective training, including the provision of more comprehensive advice on the efficient operation of the automatic fire detection system.

Sir John Garlick's recommendation that there should be an operational audit to check technical systems of this kind in operation after installation is of more general relevance. The Property Services Agency is currently undertaking such checks of the automatic fire detection systems installed in other buildings on the Government's estate, and considering whether such systems should be installed in buildings which have none at present.

Copies of Sir John Garlick's report have also been sent to other interested bodies, including English Heritage, the Historic Houses Association and the National Trust, so that they can consider its relevance to them.

In addition to his more technical recommendations, Sir John Garlick made a number of recommendations for improving management arrangements within Hampton Court palace, and suggested that consideration should be given to merging the custody guards and warders who are presently employed by the Property Services Agency and by DOE (Central) respectively. As a first step, the operational instructions to the custody staff and other staff are being thoroughly revised.

I have also studied the conclusions and recommendations in the Garlick report relating to wider issues of responsibility and accountability, and I am considering further the scope for closer co-operation between those concerned with the management of the palace.

"Paying for Local Government"

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a further statement about the outcome of consultations on the Green Paper, "Paying for Local Government.

Mr. Ridley: There were 1,217 responses to the Green Paper in England. Though opinions varied more than twice as many people wanted to abolish domestic rates as wanted to keep them. The community charge received considerably greater support than any other replacement for the rates. I have placed in the Library a summary of the responses received.

The rating system has been under review for too long. The time has come to decide, and to embark on reform. I therefore confirm the Government's intention to introduce legislation as soon as practicable and no later than the first session of the next Parliament: to abolish domestic rates and introduce the community charge; to move to a uniform national non-domestic rate poundage; to simplify the system of Government grants to local authorities.

Many of those who responded to the Green Paper expressed concern about practical problems associated with the community charge. I believe that these worries are either overstated or can be overcome. I have therefore also placed in the Library a document which sets out how the community charge will work. The document deals with many of the practical questions that have been raised, and takes account of discussions with interested organisations held during the consultation period. There will be the opportunity for further discussion about the detailed arrangements before legislation is introduced.

Water (Nitrate)

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when the report on nitrate in water will be published; and what action the Government plans to take following the report.

Mr. Ridley: The report of the nitrate co-ordination group is being published today. It gives a comprehensive picture of the present situation on nitrate in water and a valuable assessment of the many options which have been suggested for stabilising or reducing nitrate levels. I have placed copies in the Library.

The Government are considering the report and its recommendations. Ministers will be examining the potential consequences of the various approaches which the report considers. This will include exploring the practicality of protection policies aimed at limiting the nitrate reaching water resources in vulnerable areas, as well as assessing the merits of further treatment of blending water supplies.

Byker District Heating Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his Department's involvement in the Byker district heating experiment.

Mr. Tracey: The Department currently has no direct involvement in the Byker district heating scheme.

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has concerning the

efficiency of the Byker district heating system; and what comparative information he has relating to other district heating schemes and to individual *(a)* gas, *(b)* oil and *(c)* electric central heating systems.

Mr. Tracey: The Department has no information concerning the efficiency of this scheme. General information on the efficiencies of such schemes is available from a BRE paper, CP34/78, "The Performance of 15 District Heating Schemes". General information on the performance of individual gas, oil and electric heating schemes is available from a BRE report, "An Economic Assessment of Energy Conservation Measures in Housing" (1984) and from the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency Office publications on "Cutting Home Energy Costs".

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has concerning the installation cost of the Byker district heating scheme pipe network, the cost of maintaining the network and the cost of renewing and replacing the network; and what are the existing and forecast costs of keeping the pipe network operational.

Mr. Tracey: These are matters for the local authority. We have no reliable information available.

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what assessment he has made of the costs of insuring the Byker district heating system;

(2) what information he has about the quality of workmanship on *(a)* the original Byker district heating system pipe network and *(b)* the replacement of the network;

(3) what information he has regarding *(a)* the present fuel cost to tenants on the Byker district heating scheme and *(b)* the comparable cost of individual central heating systems;

(4) what assessment he has made of the medium-term financial implications of the costs of the Byker district heating scheme for *(a)* the tenants, *(b)* Newcastle city council and *(c)* his Department; and what figures he has showing the cost implications involved in conversion to other heating systems.

Mr. Tracey: None. These are matters for the local authority.

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what proportion of the costs of the Byker district heating system are met by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the Newcastle city council, *(c)* the tenants of Byker and *(d)* others;

(2) what information he has relating to the operation of the boiler plant at Walbrook terrace, Newcastle; and how much of the costs of operating the boiler so far have been met by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the local authority, *(c)* the tenants and *(d)* others.

Mr. Tracey: The Department does not contribute directly to the running costs of the Byker district heating scheme. There is an allowance for management and maintenance expenditure in the calculation of entitlement to housing subsidy. The local authority has discretion to fix heating charges as with other services.

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, what evaluation or studies he has of the Byker refuse derived fuel pellets project; and what conclusions he has drawn from the experiment.

Mr. Tracey: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the true cost of producing refuse derived fuel pellets at the Byker plant; what is the market value of the pellets; and how much is being charged to Byker district heating system for them;

(2) since commissioning for how many days the Walbrook terrace, Newcastle boiler plant has been operational; and for how many days it has been out of service.

Mr. Tracey: This is a matter for the local authority.

Mr. Nicholas Brown asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has made to Newcastle city council regarding the privatisation of the Walbrook terrace district heating boiler plant.

Mr. Tracey: I am always interested to see proposals from local authorities for contracting out services, but the Department has made no specific approach to Newcastle city council about the Walbrook terrace plant.

Ancient Monuments

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next intends to visit and inspect any of the ancient monuments in the care of his Department.

Mr. Waldegrave: The majority of ancient monuments for which my right hon. Friend is responsible are managed on his behalf by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission (English Heritage). My colleagues and I at present have no specific plans for visiting these monuments during the coming months, but opportunities to do so arise regularly. For instance, I recently visited Stonehenge to discuss plans for its future development with the chairman of English Heritage. The royal palaces are managed directly by my Department. I plan to visit the Tower of London in the New Year.

Compulsory Purchase (Unfit Property)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has for seeking to amend legislation to enable owners of unfit property to receive market value compensation in case of compulsory purchase.

Mr. Tracey: The Green Paper "Home Improvement —A New Approach" (Cmnd. 9513) published last year proposed that market value compensation should be available as of right to the owners of unfit dwellings subject to compulsory purchase. This remains our intention, but the necessary amendments to existing primary legislation must await a suitable opportunity.

Lead (Petrol)

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the preliminary indications from his monitoring of the incidence of airborne emissions of lead of the changes resulting from recent EEC directives reducing the lead content of petrol.

Mr. Waldegrave: Air lead levels in the first quarter of 1986 have dropped to an average of 0·29/ug/m³ compared with an average 0·563/ug/m³ during the same period in

1985. This is a direct consequence of the Government's decision to reduce the maximum permitted lead content of petrol by 60 per cent. from 0·4 to 0·15 gm/l, with effect from 31 December last year.

Housing Repair Grants

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to review the age of a property for which a tenant can apply for a housing repair grant; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The Green Paper, "Home Improvement — A New Approach" outlined proposals to make discretionary assistance for both repairs and improvements available to properties built before 1940, as part of a wider reform of the home improvement grant system. We are giving further consideration to this and other possible changes to the system in the light of the Green Paper and responses to it.

Parish, Town and Community Councils

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by district the names of new parish, town and community councils which have been created since local government reorganisation in 1974.

Mr. Chope: I am sending the hon. Member lists of changes in local government areas and status since 1974, which include the information requested on the creation of parish councils. Parish councils are not required to notify my Department when they adopt the status of a town for their parish. The creation of new community councils in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, and in Scotland for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Home Owners (Southwark)

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest figures available for the number of home owners in the borough of Southwark; how this compares with the years 1979 and 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The latest available figures for Southwark are from the 1981 Census which counted 13,111 households who were owner-occupiers, representing 15·8 per cent. of all the households present on census night.

Since 1979 there has been an unparalleled growth in owner-occupation in Britain, as a result of the measures introduced to enable tenants to buy council housing. From April 1979 to March 1983, 688 council houses and flats in Southwark were sold; the latest figures received show 752 were sold from April 1983 to March 1986.

Radioactive Waste

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to make financial resources available to objectors participating in the public inquiry into the Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive plans for a low-level nuclear waste repository at *(a)* Bradwell, *(b)* Elstow, *(c)* Fulbeck and *(d)* Killingholme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. It is not Government policy to give financial aid to objectors at public inquiries of this nature.

Deprivation in Rural England

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will place in the Library the full and unedited report commissioned by his Department, "Deprivation in Rural England" by Brian McLaughlin.

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes. I am arranging for a copy of the final agreed report to be placed in the Library.

Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what funds have been made available in each of the last five years to the Devon branch of the council for small industries in rural areas; and if he will make a statement about the proposed funding for the next financial year.

Mr. Waldegrave: COSIRA's budget is managed on a national basis and is not broken down by county. The level of funds used by COSIRA in Devon is therefore not available.

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what funds have been made available in each of the last five years to the council for small industries in rural areas; and if he will make a statement about the proposed funding for the next financial year.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas is financed by grant aid from the Development Commission. The grants provided in each of the last five years are shown in the table:

£ 000

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	[1]*1986-87*
Operational Expenditure	4,750	5,269	5,458	5,907	6,357
Loan Fund Replenishment[2]	—	1,500	—	450	650
Redundant Building Grant Scheme[3]	10	500	1,192	1,770	1,300

[1] Approved Estimate.
[2] Loan Fund replenishment is made available to finance loans that cannot be financed from capital repayments.
[3] The administration of a scheme of grants for the conversion of redundant buildings for approved purposes is undertaken by CoSIRA on behalf of the Development Commission.

Note
CoSIRA's Grant aid for the financial year 1987-88 is currently under consideration.

Peak Park

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money has been spent over the last four years by the Peak district national park; and from what sources this funding has come.

Mr. Waldegrave: Details of the Peak Park joint planning board's expenditure is set out in the board's annual reports for the years in question. Gross expenditure is as follows:

	£
1982-83	2,645,061
1983-84	2,980,752
1984-85	3,126,642
1985-86	3,293,513

The board derives its income mainly from precepts on Derbyshire Staffordshire and Cheshire county councils, and (from 1 April 1986) Sheffield, Barnsley, Kirklees and Oldham metropolitan borough councils. These councils in turn receive national park supplementary grant from central Government. In additional the board receives some income from charges for services and grants from the Countryside Commission.

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people serve on the Peak park planning board; how many of these were appointed by him; how many were appointed by outside bodies; if, in each case, he will state how many live in the area covered by the board; and if he will give similar figures for each of the 10 years since the formation of the Peak park planning board.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information for the current year is as follows:

Appointing Authority	*Number of members*	*Number living within National park*
Secretary of State	11	7
Derbyshire County Council	8	1
Cheshire County Council	2	—
Staffordshire County Council	2	1
Sheffield City Council	2	—
Barnsley Borough Council	1	—
Kirklees Borough Council	2	—
Oldham Borough Council	1	—
West Derbyshire District Council	2	2
High Peak District Council	1	—
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	[1] 2	—
Macclesfield District Council		—
North East Derbyshire District Council		—
	34	11

[1] on rota basis

Comparative figures in respect of the 11 appointments by the Secretary of State in previous years are as follows:

	Number
1974-75	3
1975-76	3
1976-77	3
1977-78	2
1978-79	3
1979-80	2
1980-81	3
1981-82	4
1982-83	7
1983-84	6
1984-85	7
1985-86	6

Records of the addresses of local authority members in previous years are not held centrally.

Planning Authorities

Mr. Butterfill asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to introduce legislation to increase the powers of local planning authorities *(a)* to specify whether land should be developed with single storey, two storey or multi-storey accommodation and *(b)* to control the density of development, its height and external appearance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. I am satisfied that adequate powers already exist for these purposes.

Water Authorities

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what directions he has given to the 10 water authorities in England and Wales in respect of sales of *(a)* operational and *(b)* non-operational land; and what instructions he has given to water authorities on land sales procedures to be adopted so as to safeguard the future of land of scientific interest or amenity value.

Mr. John Patten: Operational land is not sold. It is an objective of the water industry, agreed in 1982, that they should dispose of land which is surplus to their operational requirements. Water authorities were last reminded of this objective in April 1985 in a letter setting out Government policy. At that time my Department and the Welsh Office also commended to authorities the adoption of guidelines for notification to interested bodies, particularly in relation to national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will produce a table, by water authority, of the specified rate of return on value of net assets for each year from 1979 to the latest date for which information is available.

Mr. John Patten: I shall answer this question shortly.

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will produce a table, by water authority, showing the annual percentage increase in water rates charged to consumers for each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 23 October at column *930*.

Lindane

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will ban the use of lindane for the treatment of timber in buildings.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am aware that there is concern that the use of lindane for the treatment of timber in buildings may be hazardous to bats which roost in roof spaces. Bats

are already protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Nature Conservancy Council is required under the Act to advise on proposed actions which may be hazardous to bats. I understand the NCC intends, in the near future, to present a review paper on lindane and bats to the expert committees that advise Ministers on pesticides. In the light of advice, my colleagues and I will consider whether it is necessary to impose further restrictions on the use of lindane.

Residential Development (Planning Conditions)

Mr. Heddle: asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to prevent local planning authorities having granted outline consent for residential development, imposing onerous conditions in association with their approval of reserved matters.

Mr. Waldegrave [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *278*]: We gave comprehensive guidance to local planning authorities on the use of conditions in circular 1/85. Conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

We have introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 1986 a provision which will enable a developer who considers any condition to be onerous to apply to the planning authority to have it removed. He can also if necessary appeal to the Secretary of State.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make it his policy in future to announce the final rate support grant settlement for England earlier in the financial year than December; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will take steps to ensure that there will be three full months between his announcement of the final rate support grant settlement for England for 1987-88, and the date by which councils have to set a rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *283*]: It is my policy to announce the rate support grant settlement for a year as soon as possible to do so, in the light of all the circumstances.

Plutonium

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which organs of Cumbrians were found to have higher than average levels of plutonium in the recent survey by Mr. Don Popplewell of the National Radiological Protection Board.

Mr. Newton: I have been asked to reply.

Plutonium tissue concentrations were generally higher in Cumbrians than in subjects from other areas of the country, levels being significantly higher in the femur, lung and liver.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Initiatives (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those initiatives of his Department which have been of benefit to women, since 1979, the cost or estimated cost of these initiatives, and the proportion of the total budget of his Department this represents.

Mr. Moore: There has long been a policy of equal opportunities for women in my Department. In addition, there have since 1979 been a number of initiatives benefiting women, managed jointly with the Department of the Environment (including the PSA). These include:

- measures to reduce the risk of discrimination in recruitment and promotion procedures;
- management and special skills training courses for women;
- provision for part-time working and job-sharing;
- more favourable reinstatement provision for those who have resigned;
- special leave arrangements for maternity, domestic and other reasons;
- progressive introduction of flexible working hours;
- establishing an equal opportunities unit.

The costs of these and other relevant initiatives are not centrally recorded.

Police National Computer

Mr. J. Enoch Powell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he will take to reduce the time lag between the registration of a new car and the recording in the police national computer of the details of its ownership.

Mr. Moore: The Police have not brought to my Department's attention any concerns about the time taken to provide the police national computer with information about the registered keepers of new vehicles. Technological developments should allow for a faster service in the future.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what resources in staff and money are currently engaged in work towards the development of heavy goods vehicle front underrun guards.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In the current financial year about 1·5 man-years of TRRL research staff effort will be used in the development of heavy goods vehicle front underrun bumpers, at an estimated cost (including contract and support services) of about £70,000.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to introduce a mandatory specification for the fitting of energy absorbing front underrun protection to heavy goods vehicles to reduce the severity of injury to car and light van occupants in heavy goods vehicle/car accidents.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The transport and road research laboratory is carrying out research into a practical specification for effective energy absorbing front underrun guards. When this work is completed we shall decide whether these devices should be required on all new lorries.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many car and light van occupants were injured in the current year in accidents involving the fronts of heavy goods vehicles.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Figures for 1986 are not yet available. The data for 1985 are as follows:

Occupants of cars and light vans injured in accidents involving the fronts of heavy goods vehicles: by severity: Great Britain: 1985

	Number
Fatal	294
Serious	1,216
Slight	3,927
Total	5,437

Barking-Gospel Oak Railway Line

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Transport what effect he estimates the proposed reduction in the public service obligation grant for suburban rail services will have on the Barking-Gospel Oak railway line.

Mr. David Mitchell: PSO grant is not paid for any specific service. The chairman of British Rail has assured me that the agreed levels of quality of service to the customer can be achieved within the new grant targets.

M40 (Buckinghamshire)

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to widen the two-lane section of the M40 in Buckinghamshire.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Buckinghamshire county council, at the Department's request, has undertaken a preliminary study of the need and scope for widening the dual two-lane section of M40 between junctions 4 (Handy Cross, High Wycombe) and 5 (Stokenchurch). We are studying the county council's report. We will announce our conclusions in due course.

Road-Related Expenditure

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate of the underspend by his Department on road-related projects in the current year.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We intend to spend the full provision of £894 million. We shall spend significantly more this year than last when expenditure was about 18 per cent. higher in real terms than in 1978-79.

Dover Harbour

Mr. Gale asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what discussions he and his Department have had, within the past six months, with Dover harbour board concerning the renewal of the rail operating agreement with Dover harbour; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what discussions he and his Department have had with British Rail, within the last six months, concerning the renewal of its operating agreement with Dover harbour; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend has had no such discussions. Negotiations over the rail operating agreement at Dover are entirely a matter for the harbour board, British Rail, and the ferry operators concerned.

Mr. Gale asked the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he and his Department have had with Sealink, within the past six months, concerning the maintenance of a rail operating agreement with Dover harbour; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend has had no such discussions.

Negotiations between Sealink and Dover harbour board are entirely a matter for them.

Road Schemes (Grant)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation to modify the criteria for schemes eligible for transport supplementary grant to include small schemes on local roads; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Transport supplementary grant provides assistance from central Government funds for schemes on local roads of more than local importance, that is, which are used regularly by drivers from outside the area. The criteria apply equally to major projects and to works costing less than £1 million. In the current year 11·5 per cent. of expenditure accepted for grant (£41·3 million) was for such minor works.

Roadside Environmental Improvement Initiative

Mr. Baldry asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to announce his roadside environmental improvement initiative.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I am today announcing, in association with my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment, a national initiative aimed at improving the appearance of roads and providing better amenities for motorists. It will tackle roadside eyesores by a package of improvements, including landscaping, tree planting, the creation of picnic areas and measures to deal with fly tips and litter. The work will be undertaken by community programme teams supervised by highway authorities; for safety reasons it is particularly important that the operators involved should be carefully supervised. The work will be over and above the normal programme of the Department and local authorities. This initiative will form part of the United Kingdom 2000 national initiative and will complement the environmental improvement projects promoted by voluntary organisations.

The Department is today writing to local authorities in England encouraging them to promote suitable community programme projects under this initiative, both on their own roads and on the trunk roads and motorways for which they act as the Department's agents.

Tyre Tread Depths

Mr. Walters asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what criteria were used in fixing the current minimum United Kingdom tyre tread depth; and what account was taken of the relevant provisions in other European countries;

(2) what evidence led the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley), to conclude that increasing the United Kingdom's minimum tyre tread depth would not be of any significant benefit to road safety;

(3) if he will give figures on which the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley), based the statement that a substantial cost to road users would result from a change in the tyre tread regulations.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The current minimum tyre tread depth requirement in the United Kingdom as in most European countries is 1 mm. Our regulations do allow less tread than this on the outer edge of the tyre which often gets worn at a slightly faster rate than the tread in the middle. Recent work by the transport and road research laboratory has confirmed that such tyres within the legal limits provide as much adhesion as tyres with 1mm tread over the whole width. The research findings were discussed with trade and motoring organisations in February. Tyre replacement is a significant part of motoring costs. Additional wear permitted may prolong the useful life of tyres for several thousand miles.

We do not encourage the use of tyres up to the limits of legality.

Blackwall Tunnels

Mr. Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Transport what studies he has undertaken of the Blackwall tunnels as part of the trunk road network.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) on 4 December.

Mr. Barnett asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has received any requests from the London Docklands Development Corporation for improvements to be made to the Blackwall tunnels to cater for traffic arising from developments or planned developments by the corporation.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) on Thursday 11 December.

East London Road Assessment Study

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will visit the Archway road, Holloway road, St. Paul's road and Balls Pond road areas of London, following the publication of the east London road assessment study.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are no plans to do so.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Islington, North of 3 December, *Official Report*, column *587*, concerning the east London road assessment study, if he will state the exact date of publication, and the cover price.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: 12 December with a cover price of £60.

Leaflets setting out the main findings are free of charge. Copies of the full reports on east London are also being made available for those who wish to consult them in the four town halls and 42 public libraries throughout the area.

M25

Mr. Macfarlane asked the Secretary of State for Transport if pursuant to his answer on 9 December, *Official Report*, column *325*, he will publish the M25 traffic flow figures during peak hours between junctions 4 to 8 and junctions 24 to 30; and if he will make a statement concerning his Department's assessment that certain sections of the M25 do not justify three lanes.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The lastest available figures are set out in the table. They are for the sections between junctions. No figures are available for the flows through the junctions. This information is derived from automatic counting loops which are progressively being installed in all sections of the M25 and appropriate slip roads.

Junctions 4—8

Peak hour flows in October 1986:
Junction 4—5 5,255 vehicles per hour.
Junction 5—6 6,960 vehicles per hour.
Junction 6—7 7,944 vehicles per hour.
Junction 7—8 counting loops not yet installed.

Junctions 24—30

Peak hour flows, for 3-7 November 1986.
Junction 24—25 counting loops not yet installed.
Junction 25—26 7,647 vehicles per hour.
Junction 26—27 7,403 vehicles per hour.
Junction 27—30 counting loops not yet installed.

The M25 reduces to dual two-lanes only at those junctions specified in my reply of 9 December at columns 133-34. When they were designed it was expected that a substantial proportion of the traffic on adjacent sections would leave or join the motorway there, reducing the flow through the junction itself. Between the junction slip roads two lanes in each direction were considered sufficient. Integrating the nearside lane with the exit or entry slip road in such cases can enable traffic to flow more smoothly. There is no indication that inadequate provision has been made at these junctions.

Nevertheless, traffic is being closely monitored and, as I announced on 28 August, further studies will be undertaken as necessary.

Drink-Driving

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation stipulating a legal alcoholic limit of 20 mg/100 ml for all drivers under 20 years old; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I shall answer this question shortly.

Road Safety

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport what material is made available on road safety issues to children of pre-school age; if he will consider the development of pre-school traffic clubs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department has for several years issued road safety advice to parents of pre-school children, rather than to the children themselves, on the basis that our advice is that these young people should not go out on the roads unaccompanied. It is general rather than detailed advice.

We have developed a range of more detailed materials suitable for pre-school traffic club members. It would encourage and assist parents and very young children to work together on acquiring and developing road safety skills for life.

We are now intent on determining whether it is viable to establish an independent traffic club scheme to deploy such items on a national basis, and will be considering various proposals put to the Department by potential organisers.

Motor Cycle Accidents

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the number of motor cycle

accidents in which skidding in adverse conditions is a contributory factor; if he will introduce a requirement for the mandatory fitting of anti-lock braking systems to motor cycles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In 1985 58,000 motor cycles, scooters and mopeds were involved in accidents. Of these, 10,000 skidded; 3,700 of these did so in wet, snow or ice conditions.

Trials of anti-lock braking devices are taking place. When their reliability is proven, we will consider mandatory requirements.

Motor Cycles (Crash-worthiness Performance Standards)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation prescribing motor cycle crash-worthiness performance standards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Research at the transport and road research laboratory has identified a number of measures to improve the crash-worthiness of motor cycles. We are giving priority to the development of a performance standard for effective leg-guards which could then be prescribed in regulations.

Child Pedestrian Casualties

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to reduce the continuing upward trend of child pedestrian casualties in the 10 to 14 year age group.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: One of the priority tasks for the Government's road safety review, now virtually complete, has been to identify effective means of reducing casualties among pedestrians generally. Almost all pedestrian casualties occur on local roads. The most significant impact in the foreseeable future is likely to come from the vigorous application of engineering and traffic management measures which create a safer local environment for all pedestrians. I have just sent to all highway authorities a major revision of the accident investigation and prevention manual which gives them up-to-date advice.

The Department is planning research from 1987 on new methods of training 10 to 14-year-old pedestrians in safe crossing behaviour.

A40 (Congestion)

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to reduce traffic congestion on the A40 between the M40 and A40(M).

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department has given high priority to a series of schemes to improve this route. Draft orders have been published for three of the four surface level junctions that have still to be tackled. I am writing to my hon. Friend with details.

CIVIL SERVICE

Management Reform

54. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will make a statement on the response by the Civil Service to management reform.

Mr. Luce: An enormous change is taking place in management methods in the Civil Service, through the financial management initiative, the personnel work reforms, and specific improvements in value for money. I am greatly impressed by the way that the Civil Service itself has accepted the need for these changes and is making them work.

THE ARTS

National Museums and Galleries (Lending)

41. **Mr. Bowen Wells** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will encourage wider lending of exhibits from the national museums and galleries to local museums and galleries.

Mr. Luce: I am anxious to encourage greater public access to museum and gallery collections, and was delighted to announce last week that the Museums and Galleries Commission intends in 1987 to introduce a new scheme to encourage touring exhibitions. I also welcome the co-operation between the national museums, the MGC and the area museum councils to enable objects to be lent between collections. Such loans are greatly facilitated by the Government's indemnity scheme.

Film Appreciation

42. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Minister for the Arts what steps he intends to take to increase the appreciation of film as an art form.

Mr. Luce: I have been able to increase the funding of the British Film Institute to £10·03 million for 1987-88. The institute's appointed tasks include the encouragement of the development of the art of film in Great Britain.

European Cultural Policies

45. **Mr. Alexander** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the development of European cultural policies under his presidency.

Mr. Luce: Four resolutions aimed at increasing co-operation between member states were adopted by Ministers responsible for cultural affairs when they met in November. These concerned European Cinema and Television year (1988), the protection of architectural heritage, the encouragement of business sponsorship and the conservation of works of art. Glasgow was nominated European City of Culture for 1990. Work also continues on other cultural matters — for example, encouraging translations of literary works and a programme of discussions initiated by the European Commission aimed at identifying areas for Community co-operation in the audio-visual field.

Marketing

46. **Mr. Stevens** asked the Minister for the Arts what resources he plans to make available to encourage better marketing of the arts.

Mr. Luce: I have made available £250,000 in the next financial year for an arts marketing scheme to encourage better marketing among arts organisations. Full details will be announced on 17 December.

Arts Centres

47. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Minister for the Arts what is his estimate of the number of arts centres in (*a*) 1979 and (*b*) the latest available date.

Mr. Luce: The information requested is as follows:

	Number of Arts Centres in Great Britain
1979	172
1986	312

For additional information I refer my hon. Friend to the Arts Council's directory of arts centres in Great Britain, copies of which I have placed in the Libraries of Parliament.

Scottish Arts Council

49. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Minister for the Arts when he next intends to meet the chairman of the Scottish Arts Council.

Mr. Luce: I have had three useful exchanges with the chairman of the Scottish Arts Council during 1986 and look forward to seeing him in the future.

News International

50. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Minister for the Arts what reply he has received from the Audit Commission to his letter concerning the ban imposed by certain councils in public libraries on News International Publications; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The Audit Commission has informed me that the district auditors are alert to the situation and will be considering whether there is any action they need to take.

Arts Council Budget

51. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received following his announcement of the 1987-88 budget allocation for the Arts Council.

Mr. Luce: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) earlier today.

Expenditure

Mr. Coombs asked the Minister for the Arts what is his latest estimate of total consumer expenditure on the arts.

Mr. Luce: In 1984, the last year for which figures are available, consumer expenditure on the arts was estimated, on the basis of figures collected by the Central Statistical Office, to be in the region of £1·5 billion.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Health Authorities (Membership)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what specific steps he intends to take to ensure (i) that more women are nominated and appointed to membership of health authorities and (ii) that the membership of health authorities reflects the communities they serve;

(2) which specific interested bodies he will invite to submit nominations for membership of health authorities;

(3) on what basis he intends to invite hon. and right hon. Members to submit nominations for membership of health authorities.

Mrs. Currie: We would propose to make a parliamentary announcement, as on previous occasions, inviting right hon. and hon. Members to submit nominations for membership of regional health authorities. We will also consult, in accordance with schedule 5 of the National Health Service Act 1977, the relevant local authorities, universities, representatives of the main health professions, federations of workers organisations and the regional health authorities themselves. In seeking nominations we will be asking specifically for more women. In making appointments we will continue to ensure that the membership of regional health authorities reflects a reasonable balance of factors relevant to the communities served including geographical coverage and social and ethnic mix. Similar procedures will be adopted in making appointments to the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals.

Members of district health authorities are appointed by the regional health authority.

Health Education Council

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the annual budget of the special health authority proposed to replace the Health Education Council.

Mr. Newton: In view of the intention that the proposed authority should in due course assume responsibility for a continuing programme of public education on AIDS, its budget is likely to be substantially larger than that of the present council. My right hon. Friend has promised an announcement about the new authority shortly.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he plans to make any staffing changes, including the position of director, as part of the proposed replacement of the Health Education Council by a special health authority.

Mr. Newton: Generally it is intended that Health Education Council staff should be offered employment by the special health authority; but it will be for the authority to determine the most senior appointments.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the provision for the continuation of the Health Education Council's current programmes when it is incorporated into the National Health Service as a special health authority.

Mr. Newton: In announcing the new special health authority, my right hon. Friend's stated intention was that there should be no loss of momentum in the work of the Health Education Council. Officers of the council have been asked to assume that all current commitments and programmes will be taken over by the new body.

AIDS

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what provision he will make for hospice facilities for acquired immune deficiency syndrome victims;

(2) whether disused hospital and health facilities will be made available to voluntary organisations for use as hospices for acquired immune deficiency syndrome victims.

Mr. Newton: Hospices provide a tranquil environment in which terminally ill people can end their days with dignity, and they provide an invaluable service. But they do not provide the only form of care needed by terminally ill people since many of these, whether AIDS sufferers or not, will not wish to receive this form of care, or may need types of acute care that hospices may not be able to provide. We shall expect health authorities to have regard to the need for terminal care services as part of a broad range of facilities which they will need to make available to meet the differing needs and wishes of AIDS patients.

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of *(a)* the number of hospital beds and *(b)* other National Health Service resources, that will be required over the next 10 years in (i) London and (ii) the rest of England and Wales to deal with persons suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Newton: Beds and other health care resources do not have to be dedicated specifically for this purpose. The wide spectrum of illnesses associated with the infection will be treated in district general hospital in-patient and out-patient facilities and by the family practitioner and community health services. The need for resources for services for AIDS sufferers will be taken into account when allocations to health authorities for the coming year are decided, but it is not possible to take a sensible view at this stage of requirements in 10 years time. These will depend on our success in containing the spread of the infection.

Regional Health Authorities

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much additional money he has made available to each of the metropolitan regional health authorities; and for what purposes.

Mr. Newton: Total funds available to the hospital and community health services in England will increase by £626 million in 1987-88. This is a 6 per cent. increase in cash, representing 2·2 per cent. more in real terms. My right hon. Friend hopes to announce details of allocations to individual regional health authorities shortly.

NHS (Resources)

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the additional resources allocated to the National Health Service in the statement will be distributed to the regions in accordance with the resource allocation working party equalisation principles.

Mr. Newton: The Government remain committed to the principle of improving equity of access to services, and will continue to determine regions' main revenue and capital allocations in accordance with this principle. This will, as ever, involve judgments about the appropriate pace of change.

There will be separate arrangements for allocating the two new special funds: £50 million over two years for projects to tackle waiting lists and times, and £30 million over two years to help tackle transitional problems in regions receiving less than national average growth.

Pharmacies

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if all persons providing pharmaceutical services and listed according to the provisions of section 42 of the National Health Service Act 1977 will continue to be able to dispense National Health Service prescriptions under the regulations he plans to make under section 3 of the National Health Service (Amendment) Act 1986; if any applications for listings made prior to the coming into force of section 3 of the 1986 Act will be dealt with under the provisions of the 1977 Act; and if any financial arrangements he makes for the voluntary removal of a person's name from the list will apply to all persons listed at the time that section 3 of the 1986 Act comes into force.

Mr. Newton: Changes introduced by the new arrangements for allocating National Health Service pharmacy contracts will not affect current contract holders unless they decide to relocate their business. Applications made before the new arrangements come into force will be considered under the present arrangements. Final decisions have not yet been taken on the details of the arrangements for payments to those who wish to withdraw from their NHS contract but only a minority of current contract holders will be eligible.

Mr. Michael Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he has recived from the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee of the number of pharmacies which are expected to claim compensation for the surrender of their right to dispense National Health Service prescriptions.

Mr. Newton: No such estimate has been received.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has on the extent to which National Health Service hospital pharmacies are recommending the use of local pharmacies.

Mr. Newton: Guidance from the Department has set out for health authorities the limited circumstances in which they may transfer dispensing from hospital pharmacies to community pharmacies.

We do not hold records of the circumstances in which individual transfers are made.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for social Services if he will make a statement on staffing levels in National Health Service hospital pharmacies.

Mr. Newton: It is a matter for health authorities to determine the appropriate staffing level in their hospital pharmacies.

We expect that the difficulties which were experienced in recruiting and retaining pharmacists in the National Health Service will have been ameliorated by the pay increases which have recently been implemented.

I understand that the hospital pharmacists grading structure is currently under consideration by the pharmaceutical Whitley council.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the present numbers of people awaiting hospital treatment in the Wandsworth health authority area; and to what treatment the lists relate.

Mr. Newton: A bound volume of the hospital in-patient waiting lists for each health authority in England at 31 March 1986, the latest date for which figures are available centrally, has been placed in the Library. Waiting list information is available centrally by the consultant's specialty and not according to the intended method of treatment.

Health Services

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what will be the amount of money to be allocated to the Wandsworth health authority for the recently announced extra funding to be made by his Department to London health services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The special fund of £30 million over two years has been established to help ease the transitional problems which some districts in regions receiving less than national growth may face. My right hon. Friend hopes to announce details of allocations from the fund to regions shortly, and to give guidance on how the fund is to be used.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to raise the long-term growth assumption for the hospital and community health services in England from the current ½ per cent. figure; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Long-term resource assumptions are intended to provide a broad framework for regions' ten year strategic plans.

When the existing assumptions were issued in 1983 (HC(83)12) it was made clear to health authorities that the level of resources available for health services in the future would depend on the success of the national economy and on competing demands for resources, and could not be predicted with any certainty. The position would be reviewed in the public expenditure survey. Health authorities were therefore asked to ensure that their long-term plans were flexible enough to cope with levels of resources below the long-term assumption and to make good use of any extra resources which could be made available. Authorities were also asked to continue to release further resources through increased efficiency for improvements and new developments.

The long-term assumptions do not therefore require fine tuning year by year, and we would not expect to revise them until guidelines are issued for the next strategic planning round.

Prescriptions

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will consider the introduction of additional methods whereby prescriptions designated as in need of urgent dispensing can be made available to the individual concerned.

Mr. Newton: Yes, if the hon. Member would care to write to me with a specific suggestion to make which could be considered in connection with the current review of primary care.

Condoms

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has about regional variations in the availability of condoms (i) free and (ii) on prescription under the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The Department's guidance to health authorities on family planning services advises that all forms of contraceptive appliances should be available at family planning clinics. There is no charge for the supplies which are prescribed and dispensed through this service, although a charge may be made for condoms supplied by clinics without prescription. There are over 1,700 family planning clinics throughout the country and I am not aware that the Department's guidelines are not being followed. Condoms are not supplied under the National Health Service on prescription by a general practitioner.

Departmental Staff (Attacks)

Mrs. Peacock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will detail the number of reported attacks on his Department's or National Health Service staff in Batley and Spen in 1985 and in 1986 so far.

Mr. Lyell: The Department's Dewsbury social security local office serves an area which includes the Batley and Spen constituency. It has reported only one case of violence to staff in 1985 and none so far in 1986, for this area. Information about violence to staff in the National Health Service is not held centrally.

Mr. A. A. Marklew (Pension Entitlement)

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will instruct his Department's central pensions branch, Newcastle upon Tyne to explain the reasons why the insurance contributions made by Mr. A. A. Marklew of 30 Moss Green, Fernwood, Rugeley, Staffordshire, prior to 5 July 1948 have not been taken into account in assessing his pension entitlement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lyell: Following investigation, the insurance contributions paid by my hon. Friend's constituent prior to 5 July 1948 have now been taken into account in assessing his pension entitlement. I am writing to my hon. Friend concerning the details.

Abortions

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a breakdown by regional health authority of the total number of abortions performed in England and Wales under the Abortion Act 1967; and, in each region, how many of these abortions were performed in emergency to save the life of the mother.

Mr. Newton: The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, figures which are more readily available are shown in the table.

Number of notifications of legal abortions by area of termination—Total all abortions to resident women, number with grounds 5[1] 1979-85

Area of termination	*Number of abortions to resident women*	*No. with grounds 5[1]*
Nothern RHA	35,245	2
Yorkshire RHA	55,296	1
Trent RHA	55,005	5
East Anglian RHA	23,607	1
North West Thames RHA	63,673	4
North East Thames RHA	120,987	3
South East Thames RHA	121,791	2
South West Thames RHA	80,660	1
Wessex RHA	30,072	2
Oxford RHA	21,698	3
South Western RHA	35,972	1
West Midlands RHA	138,071	2
Mersey RHA	51,881	3
North Western RHA	50,590	2
Wales	25,580	2

[1] In emergency to save the life of the pregnant woman.
Figures exclude, for 1979 and 1980, abortions performed in post graduate teaching hospitals which were not assigned to a Regional Health Authority (RHA)

Mr. Amess asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total number of abortions that have so far been performed in the United Kingdom under the Abortion Act 1967; how many of these abortions were performed in emergency to save the life of the mother; and what percentage this latter figure represents of the former.

Mr. Newton: The total number of notifications of legal abortions, to resident and non-resident women, carried out under the Abortion Act 1967, from 27 April 1968 to 31 December 1985 in England and Wales, and Scotland is 2,589,110. Of these, 136 were notified as having been performed in emergency to save the life of the pregnant woman, which represents 0·005 per cent. of all abortions.

A further 86,468 notifications were made in respect of England and Wales alone from 1 January to 30 June 1986, of which one was notified as having been performed in emergency to save the life of the pregnant woman.

The Abortion Act does not apply to Northern Ireland.

Public Health Laboratory Service

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what reductions in expenditure have been planned for the public health laboratory service in 1986-87 and 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: There have been no reductions in the overall allocation by the Department to the public health laboratory services board for 1986-87, and no reduction is planned for 1987-88.

Criminal Injuries (Brain Damage)

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will consider special medical provision for those victims of crimes who have sustained brain damage.

Mrs. Currie: It has always been a principle of the National Health Service that patients are treated according to their medical needs rather than the way in which their illness or injury has arisen. It would not be in the best interests of the patients concerned to abandon this principle.

Babies (Sex Selection)

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what National Health Service funds are devoted to research into the selection of sex of babies by their parents; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We are not aware that any National Health Service Funds have been devoted to such research.

NHS (Industry Competitiveness)

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress has been made by the group set up to consider further improvements in National Health Service support of industry competitiveness.

Mrs. Currie: As part of the responsibilities for National Health Service procurement matters which my noble Friend has recently assumed, she now chairs the group to which my hon. Friend refers. On the advice of the group, whose establishment was reported on 25 March at columns *459-60*, the NHS procurement directorate has proposed an action programme to help ensure that the NHS can continue to look to a strong internationally competitive United Kingdom industry in the future. With the approval of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services and the support of all regional health authorities, an extensive range of actions is now being implemented in all National Health Service regions. As part of these actions:

top NHS management in all regions will put its weight behind, and initiate new, efforts to raise awareness of staff at all levels on how important a strong United Kingdom industrial base is for the economy and hence for the financing of the NHS. The intention to look for ways of enhancing the competitiveness of industry consistent with value for money will be written into authorities' organisational aims and management plans;

steps will be taken by NHS authorities to broaden competition in NHS supplies by ensuring that all possible United Kingdom suppliers are asked to bid for contracts;

NHS authorities will seek to improve their dialogue with suppliers on needs, problems and ways of overcoming them. Further guidance to be developed by the NHS procurement directorate on de-briefing of unsuccessful tenderers and other aspects of the Government's public purchasing policy will assist in this;

information for decision-makers will be improved to help ensure better NHS equipment replacement programmes and option appraisals, recognition of opportunities for improving United Kingdom value-added in purchases, identification of vulnerable areas of United Kingdom industry competitiveness, and wider appreciation of new products and technology and their costs and benefits.

NHS Management

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department has carried out a recent study of management in the National Health Service, with particular regard to non-clinical factors affecting waiting lists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: In July my right hon. Friend asked the chairman of the regional health authorities to lead their districts in an analysis of the nature, cause and extent of waiting list and waiting time problems. Their reports show that in many cases solutions to these problems can be found or significantly assisted by non-clinical activities through more effective management of existing resources and facilities. The Department and regions are now acting on those reports.

NHS (Equal Opportunities)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what progress has been made by the King Edward's fund task force on equal opportunities in the National Health Service; and when the initial findings of the task force are expected to be published;

(2) what actions he proposes to take to ensure the implementation of equal opportunities policies in the National Health Service;

(3) if he will list (*a*) the health authorities which have no comprehensive equal opportunities policies; and (*b*) the health authorities which have taken no steps to translate policies into effective programmes of action.

Mrs. Currie: Health authorities are responsible for meeting the requirements of the Race Relations Act and the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice. It was our concern whether adequate progress was being made by health authorities in implementing equal opportunities policies which led my right hon. Friend to invite the King Edward's fund to set up the task force.

The task force has the Government's full support and is supported by funding from the Department. It is intended to have a three-year life. Its programme of work will include the establishment of a clearing house for information, and work in depth with a small number of health authorities who are at different stages in the implementation of equal opportunities policies. It will be reporting to the King Edward's fund.

Health authorities were advised when the task force was established that they should not wait for the task force's advice but should press ahead in accordance with the commission's code of practice. We have no central information on the extent to which individual health authorities have done so.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services following the comments of Sir Ralph Milner-Brown on behalf of the employment appeal tribunal in the matter of Dr. M. Noone v. North-West Thames regional health authority, if he will issue an amended form of the circular HC(78)36 attaching the 1984 code of practice from the Commission for Racial Equality.

Mrs. Currie: The code of practice was drawn to the attention of health service management when it was published by the Commission for Racial Equality. In May this year, the Department wrote to all general managers, announcing the establishment of the King Edward's fund task force, and reminding health authorities that they should be taking action in accordance with the Commission's code of practice.

We do not, at this stage, see any need to further reinforce the guidance we have given to health authorities.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the cost of appeals by the South-West Thames and North-West Thames regional health authorities following the industrial tribunal's decisions on racial discrimination in consultant appointments.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not held centrally. The hon. Member way wish therefore to contact the Chairman of North-West Thames and South-West Thames regional health authorities.

Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was his Department's original estimate of the savings to be made by the introduction of the time limit on the vaccine damage payments scheme.

Mr. Major: None. The six-year time limit on claims was included in the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 because of the difficulty of considering claims older than this. But the time limit was not brought into effect until 9 May 1984 in order to give everyone who had suffered vaccine damage since 1948 the opportunity of making a claim.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give, for each year since the introduction of the vaccine damage payments scheme, the number of awards given under the scheme; and what was the number of claims rejected each year.

Mr. Major: The information requested is set out in the following table:

	Awards	*Rejections*
1979	349	2,199
1980	255	150
1981	74	71
1982	43	54
1983	42	107
1984	29	124
1985	26	75
1986[1]	14	64
	[2]832	[2]2,838

[1] To 14 November.

[2] Includes 432 cases originally rejected but subsequently awarded by a Vaccine Damage Tribunal.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his Department's estimate of the total number of people severely disabled within the meaning of the Vaccine Damage Payments Act; and what is the estimate for the number less severely damaged as a result of vaccination.

Mr. Major: 832 awards have been made on the basis that vaccine damage resulted in severe disablement and there have also been 14 claims involving vaccine damage which were rejected because disablement was not severe. A further 1,637 claims involved severe disablement but were rejected because disablement was not a result of vaccine damage, and in a further 326 rejected claims the cause of disablement was not investigated because disablement was substantially less than severe.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his Department's estimate of the additional cost of making payments available, on a sliding scale, to everyone disabled as a result of vaccination.

Mr. Major: I regret there is insufficient information for any reliable estimates to be made.

Disabled People

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when it is intended that the survey of disability presently under way will be completed; when the proposed subsequent review of social security provisions for disabled people is planned to start and to finish; when the

results of that review will be presented to Parliament; and when the subsequent new arrangements are expected to come into force.

Mr. Major: Publication by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys of the results of its current survey of disabled people is expected in 1988. It is too early to give a timetable for the review of social security benefits for disabled people and for subsequent action.

Children at Risk

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has given any guidance to social service departments on the advisability of informing head teachers of schools when a child is notified to social service departments as being at risk; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Guidance issued by the Department recommends that the decision whether the responsible agencies should regard a child as at risk of abuse should be taken at a case conference of the professionals, including teachers, concerned with the particular child and his family. In May we issued new draft guidance on child abuse procedures and we are now considering the comments received. Communication with the head teacher is one of the subjects which will be covered in the final version which we hope to issue in the spring.

Urinary Tract Infections (In-patients)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospital in-patients caught urinary tract infections in 1978 and in each subsequent year.

Mrs. Currie: Information on how many hospital in-patients caught urinary tract infections in 1978 and in each subsequent year is not available.

Post-operative Infection

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the rate of post-operative infection in each health region in 1978 and each year since.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will produce tables to show how many people in Wales in 1983 were *(a)* below, *(b)* at and *(c)* up to 140 per cent. of the supplementary benefit level on the latest basis and on a basis comparable with 1979 and 1981; what percentage of the total population they represent in each case; what his estimate is of the number of children living in such households in each case; and what percentage of total children they represent in each case;

(2) how many children in Wales were living in families below supplementary benefit level, on supplementary benefit, and with incomes up to 140 per cent. of supplementary benefit level, classified by employment status; whether they were in one or two-parent families in 1983 on the latest basis and on a basis comparable with 1981 and 1979; and what proportion these children made up of the total number of children.

Mr. Major: I regret that the information requested cannot be provided. I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) on 6 November at column *584*.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services taking supplementary benefit for a married couple in 1956 as the base = 100, what has been the real increase in supplementary benefit each year since 1956; on the same basis what has been the real increase in national average earnings each year since 1956; and what are the equivalent figures, taking the 1979 supplementary benefit level as the base = 100.

Mr. Major: The information is as follows:

Uprating Dates	*Supplementary Benefit ordinary scale rate for married couple*[1]		*Earnings*[2]	
	January 1956 = 100 (a)	*November 1979 = 100 (b)*	*January 1956 = 100 (a)*	*November 1979 = 100 (b)*
January 1956	100·0	—	100·0	—
January 1958	105·8	—	101·9	—
September 1959	118·8	—	108·1	—
April 1961	121·0	—	116·1	—
September 1962	122·2	—	115·8	—
May 1963	130·6	—	118·1	—
March 1965	148·9	—	126·3	—
November 1966	147·6	—	127·3	—
October 1967	155·0	—	132.6	—
October 1968	154·9	—	135·1	—
November 1969	154·4	—	139·1	—
November 1970	155·3	—	147·0	—
September 1971	159·7	—	146·6	—
October 1972	167·2	—	157·6	—
October 1973	166·3	—	161·8	—
July 1974	170·9	—	163·4	—
April 1975	166·3	—	167·0	—
November 1975	167·8	—	165·9	—
November 1976	169·0	—	161·8	—
November 1977	170·0	—	156·4	—

Uprating Dates	Supplementary Benefit ordinary scale rate for married couple[1]		Earnings[2]	
	January 1956 = 100 (a)	November 1979 = 100 (b)	January 1956 = 100 (a)	November 1979 = 100 (b)
November 1978	169·3	—	167·1	—
November 1979	170·5	100·0	168·7	100·0
November 1980	175·2	102·7	167·5	99·3
November 1981	172·8	101·4	163·4	96·8
November 1982	179·2	105·1	164·3	97·4
November 1983	178·5	104·7	167·3	99·1
November 1984	180·0	105·6	174·4	103·5
November 1985	180·3	105·7	175·0	103·7
July 1986	179·8	105·4	[3]180·0	[3]106·8

[1] Based on the movement in the Retail Prices Index (less housing) between
(a) January 1956 to July 1986 and
(b) November 1979 to July 1986.
[2] Index based on estimates of average gross weekly male manual earnings expressed in real terms using the movement in the Retail Prices Index (all items) between
(a) January 1956 to July 1986 and
(b) November 1979 to July 1986.
[3] Provisional.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the ratio of supplementary benefit claimants to staff in, *(a)* each local office of his Department in London, *(b)* the average in each social security region and *(c)* the national average for 1 August 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Lyell: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Hospital (Beds)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Eccles, on 8 December, he will now make it his policy to collect central information on the annual costs of acute, chronic and geriatric beds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: No. Substantial changes are being introduced from 1987-88 in the information about hospital services, including financial information, which is collected by the Department. These give effect to the recommendations of the steering group on health services information. The new form of health authority accounts will include information on the cost of treating patients in more than 20 different specialties or specialty groupings.

Information on the cost of a hospital bed is of little value by itself. Financial information, if it is to serve a useful purpose, needs to be related to the services actually provided—for example treatment given to patients. The changes we are now making are directed above all to improving the quality and relevance of information for management at all levels in the National Health Service.

Secure Unit Places

Mr. Gerald Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many secure unit places are available for those held in secure care and accused of serious criminal offences in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Greater London area;

(2) how many secure unit places for those held in secure care and those accused of serious criminal offences were in use at the latest available date in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Greater London area.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney) on 3 July at columns *634-636* which provided details of regional secure units in England. This information is still broadly accurate. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales would be able to supply information on the proposals for regional secure accommodation in Wales.

While regional secure units will treat mentally disordered patients accused of serious criminal offences, places for such offenders are not separately allocated.

Health Services (Value)

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he makes of the value of health services received per head of the population by social classes I to V.

Mrs. Currie: Health service activity is not recorded by reference to socio-economic class and information on which to base a reliable estimate is not therefore available.

Expert Advisory Committees

Sir Philip Holland asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the status of the 25 expert advisory committees listed in columns 587 and 588 of the *Official Report* for 16 May but not listed in the replies to the hon. Member for Gedling on 9 December.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Mental Handicap (Exhibition)

Mr. Pavitt asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to mental handicap in perspective to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 23 February 1987 to 27 February 1987.

AIDS

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, for purposes of planning the future allocation of resources within the National Health Service, what epidemiological assumptions he is using in respect of the increasing incidence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 25 November 1986, c. *201*]: Short-term projections as to the likely increase in the incidence of AIDS are based on the assumption that the number of cases will continue to rise at the same rate as previously.

Wessex Health Authority (Computer Contracts)

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras on 9 December, whether Arthur Andersen and Co. submitted the lowest tender for each of the contracts referred to.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *289*]: Wessex regional health authority did not compare costs for each separate sub-system, because its declared objective was a single integrated system. Some of the combinations proposed were not capable of satisfying the identified requirements. On a cost basis, Arthur Andersen and Co. were equal lowest at the end of the evaluation process but best value for money overall.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all those who advised Wessex health authority on any aspect of the prospective contracts before tenders were invited; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *290*]: Between October 1984 and October 1985 Wessex regional health authority was advised by

Deloittes, Haskins and Sells
Model Systems
PACTEL
F International.

Warnock Report

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has instigated consultations with the medical profession concerning legislative implications of the recommendations contained in the Warnock report.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 November 1986, c. *333*]: Preparing the consultation document on these matters which was issued as Cm. 46 on 10 December did not involve negotiations with the medical profession. Relevant medical organisations are being invited to comment on the consultation document.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Economic and Finance Council

Mr. Forth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the latest meeting of the European Communities, Economic and Finance Council.

Mr. Lawson: The Community's Economic and Finance Council met in Brussels on Monday 8 December, under my chairmanship. My hon. Friend, the Economic Secretary represented the United Kingdom.

The Council adopt a directive on the annual and consolidated accounts of banks and other financial institutions. The directive provides for a standardised accounting regime for banks and other financial institutions throughout the Community, and is an important element in the achievement of the internal market for financial services.

The Council had a further discussion of the Commission's annual economic report for 1986-87. The report, as amended to take account of member states' comments, was agreed by the Council.

The Council discussed the Greek economy, and the progress made in its economic stabilisation programme since the Council agreed in November 1985 to a Community loan of 1·75 billion ecu (about £1·3 billion). The Council agreed that the Commission should release the second half of the loan. In reaching its view, the council took into account the provisional agreement reached between the Commission and Greece that:

(a) the import deposit scheme will be abolished by the end of April 1987;

(b) phasing out of the export subsidy scheme will start in January 1987, and be completed over the following three years. The Commission decision authorising the continuation of the scheme will contain a safeguard clause designed to cover any particular problems created by the scheme for other member states.

The Council reached agreement (subject to a United Kingdom parliamentary scrutiny reserve) on a two-year extension, from 31 December 1986 to 31 December 1988, of the Community's medium-term financial assistance facility, and on a reduction of 2 billion ecu (about £1·5 billion) in the total of credits under the facility. The reduction in the total of credits matches a 2 billion ecu increase agreed in 1985 in the lending ceiling for the Community loan mechanism.

The Council had a useful discussion on travellers' allowances, in particular duty and tax-free shopping, against the background of its acceptance of the continuing existence of duty and tax-free facilities as long as fiscal frontiers remain. The Commission made clear its intention to take initiatives to meet the different concerns of a number of member states in this area. Good progress was made on finding solutions to those concerns. In respect of the Channel fixed link, the Commission gave an assurance that the link would enjoy the same fiscal treatment as other cross-channel operators.

The Council also discussed duty-free admission of fuel contained in the tanks of goods transport vehicles, and the fiscal treatment of rum imported from the Frnech overseas departments.

Community Budget

Mr. Colvin asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the 10 December Budget Council and the latest steps in the 1987 Community budget process.

Mr. Brooke: The Budget Council met in Strasbourg on the evening of 10 December in an attempt to reach agreement with the Parliament on the Community budget for 1987. I was in the Chair.

In response to the Council's second reading budget proposals, which respected the budget discipline limits for agricultural and non-obligatory expenditure, the

European Parliament's Budget Committee had recommended increases in expenditure which would have taken the budget beyond the budget discipline limit on non-obligatory expenditure by some 293 mecu (£183.8 million*) on commitment appropriations and some 93 mecu (£58·3 million) on payment appropriations. The Council's budget discipline agreement requires that the maximum rate of increase in non-obligatory expenditure laid down in the treaty, 8·1 per cent. for 1987, be respected.

The Council made clear to the Parliament's representatives that, while it was prepared to go a long way towards meeting the Parliament's priorities within the budget discipline-maximum rate totals, it was not willing to increase non-obligatory expenditure in total beyond the maximum rate levels. The Council pointed out that the deficit which was expected to be carried forward from the current year was likely to use up all the remaining resources within the 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling and that there was therefore no money to finance further increases in expenditure. Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands joined the United Kingdom in insisting that the budget discipline limits must be respected.

The Parliament's representatives made clear that they could not agree that the increase in non-obligatory expenditure should be limited to the 8·1 per cent. maximum rate. Hence no agreement was reached between the Council and the Parliament's representatives.

The Parliament's plenary then voted on 11 December for amendments to non-obligatory expenditure whose effect would be to raise both commitment and payment appropriations above the maximum rate of increase, by 185·5 mecu (some £116·4 million) and 88·2 mecu (some £55·3 million), respectively.

When the results of these votes were announced, I formally reminded the Parliament's plenary that the Council had not agreed to raise the maximum rate and that the budgetary procedure provided for in article 203 of the treaty had not therefore been completed.

As the 3 July judgment by the European Court of Justice on the 1986 budget dispute makes clear, the President of the Parliament is not in a position under article 203 of the treaty to declare adopted without the Council's agreement a budget for 1987 which does not respect the 8·1 per cent. maximum rate. From 1 January 1987, therefore, the Community will have to operate under the provisional twelfths regime set out in article 204 of the treaty. The broad effect of this is to limit expenditure on individual lines month by month to one twelfth of the level of the preceding year, though the Council may authorise by qualified majority expenditure in excess of one twelfth subject to the further limitations set out in the treaty. While the provisional twelfths regime lasts, we would expect to make VAT contributions, and to benefit from VAT abatements under the Fontainebleau system, at the same monthly rates as in the current year: the favourable effect on our net budgetary position would however be unwound after a 1987 budget has been adopted.

The Government naturally regret that the Council and the Parliament were unable to reach agreement last week on a budget for 1987 but welcome the Council's determination to insist on adherence to budget discipline.

* All conversions are made at the 1987 budget exchange rate of £1 = 1·5939

Investment Income Surcharge

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the total yield resulting from the reintroduction of the investment income surcharge at the rate prevailing in 1983-84 on the basis of the lower threshold; indexed to 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The direct revenue yield from an investment income surcharge of 15 per cent. on investment income over £8,300 in 1986-87 would be about £450 million in a full year. This estimate does not allow for any possible behavioural effects.

Mortgage Interest Tax Relief

Mr. Cohen asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if Her Majesty's Government have any plans to introduce legislation to reduce the amount of mortgage interest tax relief available to unmarried partners purchasing a house jointly; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 5 December at column *825* to my hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle).

Debts (Africa)

Mr. Wigley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing the amount of money paid by each African country last year to the United Kingdom Government for servicing debts.

Mr. MacGregor: The amount paid directly to the United Kingdom Government by African countries in the last financial year for aid loans made by the Overseas Development Administration was £9,817,572. During 1985 official development assistance to Africa amounted to £280,334,000 — of which debt relief totalled £18,192,000.

Repayment of Overseas Development Administration loans 1985-86

Country	*Principal and interest* £
Cameroon	21,799
Ghana	877,367
Liberia	124
Mauritius	1,342,563
Nigeria	2,780,268
Seychelles	288,180
Swaziland	1,064,299
Tunisia	49,022
Zambia	1,387,808
Zimbabwe	2,006,142
TOTAL	9,817,572

£1 Notes

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many £1 bank notes remain in circulation.

Mr. Ian Stewart: At the end of November 1986 the total number of £1 bank notes outstanding was 119 million. No statistics are available showing the amount of £1 notes in active circulation.

Profit-Sharing

Mr. Steel asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is his estimate of the total number of profit-sharing schemes operated by firms in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is his current estimate of the number of firms operating profit-sharing schemes; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what is his estimate of the number of employees in firms operating profit-sharing schemes.

Mr. Lawson: There are no reliable estimates for the whole economy of the number of profit-sharing schemes, the number of firms operating profit-sharing or the number of employees covered. Many different types of arrangement may be represented as profit-sharing, including employee share ownership schemes, profit-related pay schemes and other arrangements which are not formalised in a published scheme. Analysis of unpublished data from the 1984 workplace industrial relations survey (sponsored by the Department of Employment, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Policy Studies Institute and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) suggests that one in five establishments may operate profit-sharing in one form or another. Because large firms often have many establishments, the data cannot be used to infer the number of firms involved. But a survey for the Department of Employment in 1985 of companies with annual turnover exceeding £750,000, reported in the September 1986 *Employment Gazette*, suggested that about one in five of these companies have an all-employee profit-sharing scheme of some sort. Some 6 per cent. of these companies had cash-based profit-sharing of some sort. Statistics on all-employee share schemes approved for the purposes of the Finance Acts 1978 and 1980 show that as at November 1986 1,186 such schemes had been approved, covering well over 10,000 companies, and that some 1·5 million employees had taken up shares or interests in shares under them. The Government welcome the spread of employee share ownership and will continue to encourage it. The Government would also welcome widespread adoption of profit-related pay schemes which, as discussed in the Green Paper "Profit Related Pay" (Cmnd. 9835) published in July 1986, would bring benefits to the whole economy in productivity, living standards and employment.

Strip Searches

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what clothing is available at Leeds/Bradford airport, and other ports of entry in the United Kingdom for passengers to wear whilst their own clothing is being searched by Customs and Excise staff;

(2) what instructions have been issued to Customs and Excise staff at ports of entry in the United Kingdom concerning the stripping and searching of passengers; and if he will place a copy of such instructions in the Library;

(3) how many visitors to the United Kingdom including those holding a visitor's visa, have been stripped and searched at terminals three and four at Heathrow airport in the current year to date;

(4) how many men, women and young people aged under 18 years have been stripped and searched by Customs and Excise staff at Leeds/Bradford airport in the current year to date;

(5) what categories of passenger are exempt from being stripped and searched by Customs and Excise staff on arrival at United Kingdom ports of entry; and what action is taken against any passenger who refuses to agree to being stripped and searched.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Transferable Allowances

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what would be the cost to the Exchequer if transferable allowances were introduced with no losers;

(2) how many winners and losers there would be if transferable allowances were introduced at nil cost to the Exchequer; and how many would win or lose *(a)* less than £1 per week, *(b)* £1 to £2, *(c)* £2 to £3, *(d)* £3 to £4, *(e)* £4 to £5, *(f)* £5 to £7, *(g)* £7 to £10, *(h)* £10 to £15, *(i)* £15 to £20, and *(j)* more than £20 per week.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Wiggin asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what gross and net revenue he expects to receive if Her Majesty's Customs and Excise implement the proposals contained in the consultative document on value added tax, "Input Tax, Origin and the Scope of right to Deduct", issued in August; and what he estimates will be the compliance costs.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Income Tax

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the percentage share of tax paid by the top 5, 10 and 20 per cent. of income earners for the years 1978-79 and 1985-86.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986, c. *775*]: The information is given in the table. The analysis is of single people and married couples and the quantiles are determined by reference to income tax liability. The figures for 1978-79 are based on the survey of personal incomes for that year. For 1985-86, they are based on a projection from the 1984-85 survey and are therefore provisional.

Quantile shares of income tax

Quantile group of tax units[1]	*1978-79 per cent.*	*1985-86 per cent.*
Top 5 per cent.	24·0	26·5
Top 10 per cent.	34·5	37·0
Top 20 per cent.	50·2	53·0

[1] ie counting married couples as one and combining their incomes.

Dr. McDonald asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost in the 1987-88 financial year of introducing a reduced rate tax band of *(a)* 25 per cent. and *(b)* 20 per cent. on the first £1,500 of taxable income; and what would be the effect on the net income of (i) a single person, (ii) a couple where the wife is not working, and (iii) a couple where the wife is working and paying tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986, c. *775*]: The direct revenue costs are estimated to be

about £1,300 million and £2,800 million, respectively, in a full year at 1987-88 levels of income, compared with the illustrative income tax regime resulting from indexation by 3·25 per cent. The estimates assume that a separate lower rate band would be available to a married couple against the wife's earned income and that the thresholds for higher rate tax would be unaffected by the introduction of the lower rate band. The effect on the incomes of taxpayers with taxable income of at least £1,500 per annum would be as follows:

Increase in income after tax (£ per week)

	Reduced rate of tax	
	25 per cent.	*20 per cent.*
Single person	1·15	2·60
Married couple (wife not working)	1·15	2·60
Married couple (wife working[1])	2.30	5.20

[1] Assuming that both husband and wife each have taxable income of at least £1,500 per annum.

Departmental Expenditure

Dr. Bray asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what basis the central team of Treasury and other officials reported on page 37 of the executive summary of their multi-departmental review of budgeting, published by the Treasury in March, that there is no evidence that Departments produce a record of expenditure committed but not yet incurred.

Mr. MacGregor: [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *260*]: The central team's comment was made in the context of the summarised information for top management boards in the seven departments they studied. It was not intended to suggest that such records were not produced but to encourage Departments who produce commitment information to summarise it for use by top management.

Leasehold Rental Payments (Taxation)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the revenue in 1985-86 from tax on domestic leasehold rental payments.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *260*]: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his answer of 25 November, *Official Report*, columns *240-2*, if he will give a breakdown between all Government Departments and agencies of the figures given in that answer; and whether all expenditure on behalf of Government Departments and agencies on advertising was made through the Central Office of Information.

Mr. MacGregor [*pursuant to his reply*, 10 December 1986, c. *188*]: A breakdown of the answer provided on 25 November, *Official Report*, columns *240-2* is not readily available in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All departmental advertising expenditure, with the exception of that on staff recruitment and national savings goes through the Central Office of Information. Some agencies do not place their advertising through the Central Office of Information.

ENVIRONMENT

Water Authorities

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will produce a table, by water authority, of the specified rate of return on value of net assets for each year from 1979 to the latest date for which information is available.

Mr. John Patten: I shall answer this question shortly.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 16 December 1986

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Recorders

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Attorney-General in how many cases since May 1979 the Lord Chancellor has not renewed the appointments of recorders at the Crown court, willing to continue to serve as such, on the grounds of alleged incompetence.

The Attorney-General: The figures from 1979 are not immediately available. Since 1 January 1981 the appointments of 27 recorders have expired and not been extended. In some of the cases, the recorders had reached the age limit of 72. In some others, the Lord Chancellor was not satisfied of their continuing fitness or suitability to be recorders.

Neville Chamberlain (Private Papers)

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to seek to prevent the publication of Neville Chamberlain's private papers relating to 1936.

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply.

Under section 5(1) of the Public Records Act 1958, public records relating to the abdication of King Edward VIII have been closed for 100 years, until 2 January 2037. The holders of the private papers of certain people who *held high ministerial office at that time, including Mr.* Neville Chamberlain, were asked not to release for public inspection material from those papers relating to the abdication. When this request was first made to the University of Birmingham in 1974, it was asked, and agreed, to keep entries in Mr. Chamberlain's diary relating to the abdication closed for 100 years. In subsequent correspondence two years later the university was told that the then Lord Chancellor's approval had been given to a 50-year closure in respect of public records. This was not correct; and when the mistake came to light earlier this year it was drawn to the university's attention and it was asked, and agreed, to keep the material closed for 100 years, in accordance with the original request.

THE ARTS

Objects in Lieu of Tax

Mr. Bright asked the Minister for the Arts whether any objects or property have been accepted in satisfaction of capital transfer tax since his answer of 8 July, *Official Report*, column 97.

Mr. Luce: Since my answer of 8 July 1986 the Government have accepted in lieu of tax the following items:

	Amount of Tax Satisfied
Three Flemish still life floral studies	£330,000

The following properties have been allocated to recipient institutions:

	Amount of Tax Satisfied	*Recipient Institutions*
Hans Arp bronze sculpture	£15,100	Tate Gallery
Nine paintings by Ben Nicholson:	£187,825	
First Abstract Painting		Tate Gallery
Vertical Stripe		
Piero		Manchester City Art Gallery
Ivory		Fitzwilliam Museum
Azetaio		Bristol City Art Gallery
St. Ives		Ashmolean Museum
Palastra		Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum
Still Life 1934		York City Art Gallery
Still Life, Harlequinade		Cleveland Gallery

"Arts and Disabled People"

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I met the chairman of the Carnegie Council in January of this year, and we have corresponded on a number of the recommendations of the Attenborough Committee. The Arts Council has published a code of practice to encourage its clients to consider the needs of people with disabilities, both as participants in the arts and as members of audiences. The council has now appointed a full-time disability officer. Other funding bodies have issued codes of practice.

I am satisfied that the arts bodies for which I am responsible are fully aware of the needs of disabled people, and are doing all that they can to meet those needs.

ENVIRONMENT

Small Businesses

91. **Mr. Lord** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what further steps he proposes to take to encourage small businesses in rural areas.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Government, through the Development Commission and its agency the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, already do much to help small businesses in rural areas. For example, they provide advice, loans and other services for over 20,000 small businesses employing some 100,000 people and have financed wholly or partly over 3 million sq ft of factory space. The Development Commission through CoSIRA expects to give grants worth over £1 million for the conversion of redundant buildings to industrial or service uses, and will continue to arrange technical and other training courses. CoSIRA has recently improved its marketing services and the commission has set up a scheme to help local enterprise agencies in rural areas, complementing the Department of Employment's scheme. To enable the commission to do still more, the Government made an extra £2 million available to the commission in the recent public expenditure settlement.

Nitrates

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to seek to reduce the nitrate content of public water supplies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend announced on Monday 15 December that the report of the nitrate co-ordination group was being published on that day. The Government are urgently considering the report, which assesses the various ways in which nitrate may be reduced in water supplies and makes a number of recommendations.

Land Registers

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps are taken to ensure that local authorities list in the land registers all the land which they are obliged to register; what is his estimate of the extent to which local authorities are understating their land holdings in the land registers at present; and what information he has as to regional variations in such understating of land holdings.

Mr. John Patten: Under part X of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, registration of unused and under-used land is carried out by the Secretary of State and it is he who decides whether or not land meets the conditions for registration laid down in section 95(2) of the Act. All public bodies in England to which part X applies, including local authorities, have been asked to submit information about any under-used land which may be eligible for registration, and are asked periodically to review the accuracy of that information. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment proposes to introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity to strengthen his powers to require information about public bodies' under-used land, but at present the information which would enable him to estimate the extent to which local authorities understate their holdings of such land is not available.

Departmental Initiatives (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those initiatives of his Department which have been of benefit to women, since 1979, the cost or estimated cost of these initiatives, and the proportion of the total budget of his Department this represents.

Mr. Ridley: There has long been a policy of equal opportunities for women in my Department. My Department does not discriminate against women. I have no idea what the cost to public funds of such a policy has been.

"Building for the Future"

Mr. Richard Alexander asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to "Building for the Future" to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. John Patten: Yes. The Secretary of State has given his approval in principle.

Rent Arrears

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to introduce legislation in regard to the collection of rent arrears by local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I have nothing to add at present to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) on Wednesday 10 December, at column 188.

Voluntary Neighbourhood Councils

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by district the names of those voluntary neighbourhood councils of which he is aware.

Mr. Chope: I have no recent information about neighbourhood councils. The Association for Neighbourhood Councils may be able to assist the hon. Member: its address is 50, Whetstone Close, Farquhar Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2QN.

Birdwatching

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the number of people who participate in the recreation of birdwatching.

Mr. Waldegrave: Records of numbers of people who engage in birdwatching are not maintained by my Department; they are known, however, to be very high.

Dr. David Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will seek to make further facilities available for the recreation of birdwatching; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Facilities for birdwatchers are, I believe, extensively provided by voluntary organisations, sometimes in co-operation with organisations such as national part authorities. I see no need for direct Government intervention.

"Arts and Disabled People" (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the

recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: The trust wrote in September 1985 to draw the Department's attention to the recommendations of the Attenborough committee. My Department replied in December 1985. No further representations have been received.

Political Propaganda

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about his proposal to introduce legislation to curb the dissemination by local authorities of partisan political propaganda.

Dr. Boyson: My right hon. Friend has received a significant number of representations about political publicity by local authorities since the Local Government Act 1986 was passed. These demonstrate the need to strengthen the present provisions, which we have undertaken to do.

River Thames (Pollution)

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what report he has received from the Thames water authority about the pollution of the Thames tideway on 5 July by the discharge of a large volume of sewage from Thames water authority stormwater outfalls.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply he has received to his question of December 8 to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and also to the reply given to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on 17 July.

I understand that Thames water authority is taking steps to ensure that such incidents on the Thames do not recur.

Mercury

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to mount a national campaign for the recovery of mercury batteries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: My Department has been exploring with the battery industry the scope for practicable and economic battery recovery. I understand that the European Commission is considering making a proposal on this subject.

The Association of European Primary Dry Battery Manufacturers has adopted a programme which will achieve a 70 per cent. reduction in the mercury content of waste from domestic dry batteries by 1990.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the monitoring of mercury emissions from waste incineration plant.

Mr. Waldegrave: Industrial waste incinerators are required to be registered with the Industrial Air Pollution Inspectorate under the Health and Safety (Emissions into the Atmosphere) Regulations 1983 as chemical incineration works. The definition of chemical incineration works includes works for the destruction by burning of chemical waste containing mercury. Works so registered are required by section 5 of the Health and Safety etc. Act 1974 to use best practical means, and this will include monitoring of the process.

Monitoring carried out to date on municipal incinerators indicated the mercury emissions to be insignificant. The situation is being kept under review.

Rivers

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will report on the quality of rivers in England and Wales.

Mr. Waldegrave: The report of the 1985 river quality survey, which provides details of the quality of rivers, canals and estuaries in England and Wales, was published today. Together with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales I have arranged for copies to be placed in the Library.

Using data routinely collected by water authorities, the survey shows that, although there has been deterioration in a few areas, there has been improvement in others. The overall quality of the waters surveyed continues to be high, with 90 per cent. of river and canal length and 92 per cent. of estuarial length assessed as being of good or fair quality.

Consideration is being given to the implications of these results, including the need for improvements to the survey methodology.

EC Directives

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's record of implementing European Community environmental directives; and what information he has on performance of other member states in this respect.

Mr. Waldegrave: I understand that actions have been brought in the European Court of Justice for non-compliance with environmental directives as follows:

	Number of actions
Belgium	7
Italy	4
France	2
Germany	2
Luxembourg	2
Netherlands	2
Denmark	1
Greece	1
Ireland	1
Portugal	—
Spain	—
United Kingdom	—

My hon. Friend may be interested to see a copy of a survey carried out by the European Community, from which these figures are taken. I have placed a copy in the Library.

Croxteth Hall and Country Park, Liverpool

Mr. Wareing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made towards the setting up of a trust to manage the Croxteth hall and country park in Liverpool; and if he will make a statement about the future of the property.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend has appointed Mr. Philip Carter to the Merseyside residuary body with special responsibility for Croxteth hall and park. His task will be to set up and become chairman of a trust to take over responsibility for Croxteth from the Merseyside residuary body.

My noble Friend has today visited Croxteth with Mr. Carter and the chairman of the residuary body to discuss the main tasks which lie ahead. These will be to commission a long term management, development and financial plan and to appoint managing agents with the necessary expertise to run the estate; to recommend a programme of capital works; to discuss possible financial support with national and local bodies concerned with the heritage and the private sector; and to consider and consult on the constitution, structure and financing of a trust and to bring it into being, if possible, before 1 April 1988.

Water Authorities

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will produce a table, by water authority, of the specified rate of return on value of net assets for each year from 1979 to the latest date for which information is available.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986]: The table shows rates of return of value of net assets from 1981-82 to 1987-88.

The form of accounts used prior to 1981-82 does not enable a rate of return comparable with later years to be calculated.

Specified rates of return (percentage) on value of net assets in respect of 1981-82 to 1987-88

Name of water authority	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Anglian	1·38	2·06	2·06	1·36	1·62	1·68	2·10
Northumbrian	2·52	1·87	1·87	1·25	1·48	1·73	2·05
North West	0·80	1·26	1·26	0·95	1·43	1·50	1·75
Severn Trent	1·02	1·17	1·25	1·25	1·47	1·60	1·95
Southern	1·09	1·18	1·25	0·91	1·41	1·55	1·75
South West	2·17	1·47	1·47	1·26	1·54	1·73	1·95
Thames	1·24	1·09	1·25	0·50	1·37	1·61	1·85
Welsh	0·30	0·95	1·20	1·25	1·45	1·65	1·95
Wessex	1·65	1·50	1·50	0·61	1·40	1·50	1·75
Yorkshire	0·85	1·14	1·25	1·00	1·43	1·60	1·70

Note

A reassessment of asset values, described in note 1 to the current cost supplementary statements in the authorities' account for 1983-84, resulted in generally higher asset values. These higher values were taken into account in setting financial targets for 1984-85. The targets set for 1984-85 averaged about 1 per cent., for 1985-86 about 1·4 per cent., for 1986-87 about 1·6 per cent. and for next year about 1·9 per cent.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Research Assistants

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Lord Privy Seal, for each Session from 1975-76 to 1985-86, how many research assistants were employed by right hon. and hon. Members.

Mr. Biffen: I regret that detailed figures in the form requested by the hon. Member are not available.

Questions and Amendments to Bills

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Lord Privy Seal how many *(a)* parliamentary questions, written and oral; and *(b)* amendments at the Committee stages of Bills were tabled in each Session from 1975-76.

Mr. Biffen: *(a)* The information requested in respect of parliamentary questions is as follows:

Year	*Oral*	*Written*
1975-76	3,199	39,108
1976-77	2,488	29,051
1977-78	9,036	28,739
1978-79	4,699	13,152
1979-80	12,453	39,912
1980-81	8,175	22,688
1981-82	8,991	23,439
1982-83	6,125	17,095
1983-84	13,386	40,119
1984-85	14,800	31,523
1985-86	18,139	31,808

(b) The information requested in respect of Committee stage amendments is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Achievements

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the principal achievements of his Department since 1983.

Mr. Channon: Since 1983 the Department of Trade and Industry has contributed by its support for industry and commerce to the substantial improvement in the operating environment for United Kingdom companies. This environment has enabled manufacturing output in the third quarter of 1986 to rise by over 7 per cent., investment in business to rise by 23 per cent. and non-oil exports by 16 per cent., all as compared with the third quarter of 1983. Over the same period output per head in manufacturing rose by over 9 per cent. Company profitability in 1985 was significantly higher than in 1983—in manufacturing it rose from 4·9 to 7·2 per cent.

The Department has played a major role in the liberalisation of the financial services markets, notably through the passage of the Financial Services Act in 1986, designed to enhance investor protection and to ensure that the United Kingdom remains a world financial centre. The Department has reached a memorandum of understanding with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the

Commodity Futures Trading Commission to exchange regulatory information on a confidential basis to strengthen investor protection against fraud and market malpractice. Other memoranda of understanding are under discussion. The Department has also hosted an informal meeting of the regulators of the world's most important securities markets to discuss ways of improving co-operation amongst them.

Since 1983 the Department has completed the massive task of consolidating the Companies Acts and also the passage of the Insolvency Act 1985 and the subsequent consolidation of the law on insolvency and disqualification of directors. By May 1985 all regulations bringing into operation the provisions of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 were in place.

Within the European Community, the Department has pressed for the completion of the internal market and for greater European industrial co-operation. Making and accelerating progress towards the completion of the internal market has been a major objective of the United Kingdom presidency. In this we have been successful. Thirty six internal market measures have been agreed to date and we hope that further decisions can be taken before the end of the year.

Non-oil export volume has grown since 1983 by 16 per cent. and for manufactures by 15 per cent. The Department has helped industry to achieve this through a wide range of ministerial visits, trade policy work and, under the guidance of the British Overseas Trade Board, a programme of export promotion and services. The Department has continued to support British companies pursuing major project business overseas. Since June 1983 contracts worth £5½ billion with a United Kingdom content of £3½ billion have been won. The aid and trade provision was used to help obtain contracts with a United Kingdom content worth in excess of £700 million.

In 1986 a successful start was made to the new GATT round of trade negotiations with agreement at the September ministerial meeting in Uruguay on the inclusion of trade in agriculture and services in the discussion. The Department pursues a policy of reducing barriers to trade while working through the EC to see that our GATT rights against traded goods damaging to British producers are exercised in full.

The Department has been active in pursuing the Government's policy of transferring state owned businesses to the private sector. The sale of British Shipbuilders' warship building interests was completed in 1986, following the major privatisations in 1984 of Jaguar and British Telecom. Where businesses remain in the public sector the Department aims to ensure that they are efficiently managed on a commerical basis. 1986 saw the return of British Steel to profitability after over 10 years. The Post Office has maintained its good record on profitability and continued to improve productivity.

Technological innovation has been shown to be an important contribution to competitiveness and since 1983 approximately £1 billion has been spent by the Department to stimulate industrial research and development. Since 1985 the Department has placed emphasis on awareness and advisory services and has paid special attention to areas of technology with widespread applications across many industrial sectors such as microelectronics, information technology and advanced manufacturing technology. Special awareness programmes have also been mounted in the areas of quality and design. Under the £350 million Alvey programme of collaborative research into advanced information technology some 200 projects are now in place bringing academic researchers into collaboration with industry. The new £210 million LINK initiative just announced provides support for projects designed to enable industry to exploit the results of academic research.

The Department has encouraged industry to participate in international, and especially European, collaborative research and development programmes which it has ensured are of real benefit to industry. The EUREKA programme is now, following the United Kingdom chairmanship during the first six months of 1986, firmly established as a European industrial collaboration programme with 32 United Kingdom companies collaborating in projects with a total value approaching £1 billion.

A White Paper was published in 1986 with proposals to make the system of patents, designs and trade marks more relevant to industrial needs and a new service mark registration system has been introduced.

The British National Space Centre was established in November 1985 to provide a focus for United Kingdom space policy both nationally and internationally and to administer the United Kingdom contribution to the European Space Agency. The centre operates with a mix of staff drawn from the DTI, MOD, SERC and NERC.

Following the publication of a White Paper on regional industrial development in December 1983, decisions on the revised structure of regional industrial incentives were announced on 28 November 1984. The major changes from the previous structure affect the assisted areas map and regional development grants, and are designed to concentrate the Department's regional assistance where it can be most effective in creating new jobs.

The Department has played an increasing role in attracting a growing volume of inward investment to the United Kingdom. Since 1983, 1,025 investment decisions have been made by companies locating or expanding in the United Kingdom with nearly 140,000 jobs created or safeguarded. Among the significant individual investments was that of the Nissan Motor Company of Japan, which announced in 1983 its intention to locate its European manufacturing operation in the United Kingdom. In 1986 the plant was opened at Washington, Tyne and Wear with the Nissan announcement that it was moving to phase 2 in 1988, two years ahead of schedule, representing a total investment of just under £400 million and the eventual creation of 2,700 jobs.

The Department has pursued a wide range of matters of concern to consumers. The Consumer Protection Bill published last month will implement the EC directive on liability for defective products and introduce a general duty to supply only consumer goods that meet sound modern standards of safety. These measures, together with new safety regulations, such as those requiring child resistant packaging for dangerous household chemicals and continuing activities on updating safety standards and on home safety research, education and publicity are helping to reduce the sale of dangerous goods to the public. The Consumer Protection Bill will also make the law on misleading price indications clearer and fairer, thereby providing people with better information about the prices of consumer goods.

The Department has also acted as a national focus to spread industrial and technological awareness in schools

and to devise new ways of meeting the technology skills shortage. The micros in schools programme has been successfully completed and the Department has strongly supported the 1986 "Industry Year" initiative.

Further progress has been made in implementing the financial management initiative in my Department.

Lawnmowers

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to how many factories in the United Kingdom produce power lawnmowers; where they are located; and what estimate he has made of the numbers employed in the manufacture of such products.

Mr. Giles Shaw: There are 13 main factories in the United Kingdom producing powered lawnmowers. They are widely distributed throughout Britain and employ about 3,500 people.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total value of power lawnmowers *(a)* exported from and *(b)* imported to the United Kingdom in the most recent annual period for which figures are available; and what were the principal export markets for United Kingdom power lawnmowers in that year.

Mr. Giles Shaw: For the 12 months ended September 1986 United Kingdom exports of power lawnmowers amounted to £21·4 millions: imports for the same period amounted to £24·1 millions. The principal export markets for United Kingdom power lawnmowers are the EEC, Australia and the United States of America.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many inspectors he proposes to appoint to undertake the periodic inspection of lawnmowers under section 7 of the Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations 1986; and if he will make a statement outlining the work which they will be doing;

(2) if the inspectors whom he will appoint to carry out the periodic inspections of lawnmowers under section 7 of the Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations 1986 will wear official uniforms or will carry other forms of identification; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer he was given on Thursday 6 November, at columns 560-61, and would advise him that there is no intention to appoint any inspectors.

Rover Group (Corporate Plan)

Mr. Gerald Howarth asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to receive the Rover Group's corporate plan; when he intends publishing it; and whether he will publish it in full.

Mr. Channon: The Government expect to receive Rover Group's 1987 corporate plan around the end of the year. In accordance with the memorandum of understanding governing the relationship between Rover Group and the Government, I will in due course place in the Library of the House a summary. Following normal practice, this will exclude commercially sensitive details.

Liverpool

Mr. Parry asked the Minister of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Liverpool.

Mr. Channon: I visited Liverpool on 4 and 5 December 1986.

On the evening of 4 December I attended the Merseyside Industries dinner at the Lyceum club. On the morning of 5 December I had a breakfast meeting with the editors of the *Liverpool Daily Post* and the *Liverpool Echo*. Later in the day I visited the Ford Motor Company at Halewood and my Department's Liverpool office.

Council of European Communities (Research)

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the meeting of the Council of European Communities (Research) on 9 December.

Mr. Pattie: The Community's Council of Ministers (Research) met on 9 December in Brussels: I chaired the meeting; Mr. John Fairclough, the Government's chief scientific adviser, represented the United Kingdom.

The Council agreed a resolution taking note of the Commission's communication on a plan of action for the evaluation of Community research and development. The plan anticipates proposals for a formal programme of evaluation activities to be submitted early in 1987.

The Council considered a Commission paper on the relationship between Community research and EUREKA projects and agreed on the importance of drawing maximum benefit from the complementary nature of the two types of activity, while avoiding unnecessary duplication.

The Council discussed the report prepared by an independent panel of European industrialists on the Community's joint research centre (JRC) together with a Commission proposal for a revision in 1987 of the current JRC programme. The Council welcomed the panel's emphasis on the need for reform to make the JRC more effective and to increase its links with European industry.

The greater part of the Council's meeting was devoted to discussion, both in full session and in a series of bilaterals between all member states and the presidency, of the Commission's proposals for expenditure of 7·7 becu (£5·5 billion) for a new five-year framework programme of Community research and development. Despite intensive and lengthy negotiations, a consensus could not be reached. The Commission then put forward a proposal for a partial decision covering a three-year period at a cost of 3·7 becu (£2·25 billion).

British Steel Corporation

Mr. Hickmet asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he intends to appoint external advisers in connection with the privatisation of the British Steel Corporation.

Mr. Giles Shaw: The Government wish to transfer BSC's assets and activities to the private sector as quickly as is practicable. Subject to market conditions, the Government intend privatisation to take place during the course of the next Parliament. I welcome the corporation's results for the first half of the current year, which show a continuing improvement in performance and, although a

longer period of profitability will be required before BSC can be returned to the private sector, I intend to appoint a merchant bank shortly to give preliminary advice to the Department in connection with the corporation's privatisation.

TRANSPORT

Tourism

92. **Mr. Hanley** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what actions he is taking to solve the problem of tourism coach parking in central London.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Those concerned with coach tourism in London have been following up the various proposals contained in the report "Tourist Coaches in London" which we published in March, copies of which were placed in the Library. The effects are being assessed as a basis for the next steps.

"Arts and Disabled People" (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have noted with interest the recommendations of the report "Arts and Disabled People" which concern transport.

We have a clear policy of working to improve transport services and facilities to enable disabled people to travel for whatever purpose they choose. Involvement in the arts, whether as spectators or participants, is part of that freedom of choice that we are working to achieve.

Marine Radar Specification 1977

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will revise the "Marine Radar Performance Specification 1977"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The "Marine Radar Performance Specification 1968" has been revised and is superseded by the "Marine Radar Performance Specification 1982". The "Marine Radar Reflector Performance Specification 1977" will be updated by an ISO standard which is now well advanced; this when published will be complemented by an identical British standard.

European Road Safety Year

Mr. Sims asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on developments during European Road Safety Year.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: On 17 December, acting as the presidency of the EC, we will draw together the main strands of ERSY activity in the United Kingdom and throughout the Community. Awards will be presented to individuals who have contributed to the year in each member state of the Community, and to children from the United Kingdom. The most important event will be the dispatch of a message from the Prime Minister to Transport Ministers in each member state. Her theme, and ours, is that one year is not enough: we must continue working for road safety.

During 1986 we have seen major initiatives from the private sector, from local authorities, from the police forces and from the Department. All these are reported in the ERSY newsfile. Copies are available in the Library.

The level of our participation has won us congratulations in Europe. I shall mention only a few examples: General Accident's £2 million road safety campaign and the AA research foundation from the private sector; the international conference organised by the Association of London Borough Road Safety Officers in July; the police national motorway campaign; and the international conference, "Transport Without Handicap" organised by the Department of Transport.

We have also reissued our accident investigation and prevention manual to local authorities, and will continue to encourage them to practise low-cost casualty reduction schemes.

The important message is that European Road Safety Year has not ended; we will keep on working for road safety at international, national, and local level. Specific ERSY themes on casualty reduction for the elderly, children and young people, cyclists and motorcyclists together with the greater installation and use of rear seat belts and child restraints, and the growing campaign against drinking and driving have been taken forward. The effort will continue. The majority of accidents and injuries are avoidable and preventable. The United Kingdom may have the least bad accident record in the European Community, but there were still 5,342 deaths and 320,819 injuries on our roads last year.

PRIME MINISTER

State Security

Q72. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if Her Majesty's Government took any steps to dissuade Granada TV from broadcasting an interview with Peter Wright concerning Sir Roger Hollis broadcast in the "World in Action" programme "The Spy Who Never Was", broadcast on 16 July 1984.

The Prime Minister: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters which may arise in the proceedings concerning the peter Wright case in Australia while those proceedings continue. I also intend to follow the precedent set by previous Prime Ministers of not commenting on security matters.

Research and Development (Report)

Mr. Hind asked the Prime Minister when the second joint report from the chairman of the Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development and the Advisory Board for the Research Councils will be laid before the House.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) on 12 December, at column *239*.

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister if Her Majesty's Government received any representations from Westland

plc after 3 January about the continuing validity of her letter of 1 January to Sir John Cuckney about Government policy on the future of Westland; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November at column *50*.

Engagements

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 16 December.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 16 December.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 16 December.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty The Queen.

Iran (Defence Equipment Sales)

Mr. George Robertson asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the Plessey deal to supply Iran with six AR-3D static air defence systems.

Mr. Renton: I have been asked to reply.

It is our policy not to comment on individual defence sales. However, in view of the current interest in Iran, I can confirm that a proposal from Plessey to sell static AR-3D radars to Iran does not breach our strict guidelines for defence sales to Iran and Iraq. The installations would be installed on permanent sites along Iran's northern and eastern borders, facing the Soviet Union. They will be of no relevance to the current conflict with Iraq.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Departmental Initiatives (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those initiatives of his Department which have been of benefit to women, since 1979, the cost or estimated cost of these initiatives, and the proportion of the total budget of his Department this represents.

Mr. Eggar: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has taken a range of initiatives in accordance with its obligations as an equal opportunities employer. These include appointing equal opportunity officers, more flexible working arrangements and regular review consultations with the trade union side.

The Overseas Development Administration has taken a number of initiatives which are described in a recently published ODA booklet "Women in Development and the British Aid Programme" which also describes a number of projects involving or affecting women, and the spending involved. This booklet is available in the House of Commons Library.

It is not possible to estimate the cost of these initiatives.

Afghanistan

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards human rights in Afghanistan in the light of Amnesty International's report on torture in that country, a copy of which has been sent to him; and what action he intends to take.

Mr. Eggar: The Amnesty International report independently confirms the horrifying picture of the denial of human rights in Afghanistan separately documented in the reports of the United Nations special rapporteur. We have recently co-sponsored a United Nations resolution, which was endorsed by a large majority, expressing grave concern over the human rights situation in Afghanistan. We have already raised the question with the Soviet embassy in London. The Soviet Government can be in no doubt of our concern at these reports of torture and of the complicity of Soviet personnel.

Nicaragua

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what purpose Her Majesty's Government were represented by a member of the diplomatic service at the meeting of the Contras held to launch a provisional Government for Nicaragua in San José on 24 November.

Mr. Eggar: A member of Her Majesty's embassy in San José attended the meeting as an observer as part of his normal duties of obtaining information and reporting to us on developments in the area. Observers were also present from a number of other countries, including other European embassy representatives and parliamentarians from three Contadora group countries.

Mr. Mohammed F. Sheikh

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East of 21 October on the case of Mr. Mohammed F. Sheikh.

Mr. Eggar: The high commission at New Delhi has been asked to raise the case of Mr. Mohammed Farid Sheikh with the Indian authorities. As soon as the latter let us have a reply the hon. Member will of course be informed of the results.

Parking Fines

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish up-to-date figures indicating, in numerical order, the number of unpaid parking fines incurred by each diplomatic mission in the last two quarters for which figures are available.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested by my hon. Friend is given in the following table. The figures, and the order in which missions are listed, may be altered by late payments. The table also includes those international organisations which have incurred unpaid fines.

The annual rate for the most recent quarter was 23,348 or only 21 per cent. of the total for 1984 (108,932). We welcome this very significant improvement and hope it will be continued in the future.

Parking fines incurred by missions: 2nd Quarter 1986

	Number
Saudi Arabia	336
France	309
Nigeria	266
China	262
Egypt	222
Iraq	200
Turkey	200
Malaysia	199
Cameroon	191
Sudan	185
Qatar	176
Soviet Union	171
Spain	151
Oman	132
United Arab Emirates	125
Venezuela	122
Poland	120
Morocco	119
Jordan	117
Algeria	103
Pakistan	99
Italy	98
Thailand	90
Iran	75
Portugal	75
Korea	74
Japan	73
India	72
Ivory Coast	70
Finland	68
Bulgaria	67
Barbados	65
Indonesia	63
Greece	61
German Democratic Republic	60
Peru	59
Ghana	55
Tunisia	53
Ireland	52
Philippines	51
Kuwait	48
Uganda	48
Brazil	47
Israel	46
Zambia	46
The Gambia	45
Syria	44
Bangladesh	43
Zimbabwe	42
Mexico	40
Brunei	38
Sierra Leone	37
Sri Lanka	35
Federal Republic of Germany	33
Chile	32
Gabon	31
Hungary	29
Somali	28
Uruguay	26
Norway	25
Yugoslavia	25
Paraguay	24
USA	24
Tanzania	23
Canada	22
Ecuador	21
Romania	21
Sweden	21
Costa Rica	20
Cyprus	20
Mauritius	20
Trinidad	20
Bulgaria	19
Czechoslovakia	19
PDR Yemen	19
Yemen AR	19
Ethiopia	18
Cuba	17
El Salvador	15
Iceland	15
Lesotho	14
Jamaica	13
Zaire	13
Kenya	12
Malta	12
Belgium	11
Nepal	10
Lebanon	9
Liberia	9
Senegal	9
Austria	7
Botswana	7
Nicaragua	7
Colombia	6
Swaziland	6
Eastern Caribbean States	5
Guyana	5
South Africa	5
Fiji	4
Malawi	4
Togo	4
Panama	3
Singapore	3
Bahamas	2
Bolivia	2
Honduras	2
Netherlands	2
Afghanistan	1
Denmark	1
Dominica	1
Mongolia	1
Papua New Guinea	1
Seychelles	1
Switzerland	1
Vietnam	1
Antigua	0
Australia	0
Bahrain	0
Grenada	0
Haiti	0
Luxembourg	0
New Zealand	0
Tonga	0
Total	6,445

Parking fines incurred by international organisations: 2nd quarter 1986

	Number
Commonwealth Secretariat	37
International Maritime Organisation	3
Western European Union	3
Commission of the European Communities	2
International Coffee Organisation	1
TOTAL	46

These figures are based on information received up to Tuesday 9 December 1986.

Parking fines incurred by missions: 3rd quarter 1986

	Number
Saudi Arabia	478
Qatar	329
France	244
Egypt	235
Turkey	218
China	190
Iraq	166
Soviet Union	162

	Number
Cameroon	158
Oman	158
UAE	135
Malaysia	132
Kuwait	114
Pakistan	108
Ghana	102
Nigeria	92
Jordan	90
Spain	85
Brazil	84
Korea	83
Thailand	82
Morocco	79
Bangladesh	77
Portugal	76
Sudan	73
India	72
Venezuela	72
Barbados	68
Zambia	68
Italy	67
Poland	66
Greece	64
Sierra Leone	59
Indonesia	58
The Gambia	56
Kenya	56
Iran	54
Ivory Coast	54
Peru	53
Israel	50
Algeria	48
Tunisia	48
Gabon	47
Canada	46
Syria	40
Finland	39
GDR	39
Brunei	36
Tanzania	36
Chile	35
Somali	35
Japan	34
Zaire	33
Zimbabwe	33
USA	32
Uruguay	32
Mexico	27
Philippines	26
Burma	25
Federal Republic of Germany	25
Paraguay	23
Cyprus	22
Ireland	22
Ecuador	19
Hungary	19
Trinidad	17
Guyana	16
Sweden	16
Togo	16
Norway	15
Yugoslavia	14
PDRYemen	13
Belgium	12
Ethiopia	12
Romania	12
Uganda	12
Lesotho	11
Colombia	9
Fiji	9
Jamaica	9
Mauritius	9
Austria	8
Cuba	8
Czechoslovakia	8
El Salvador	8
Liberia	8
Afghanistan	7
Lebanon	7
Panama	7
Sri Lanka	7
Botswana	6
Bulgaria	6
Iceland	6
Nepal	6
Yemen AR	6
Nicaragua	5
Honduras	4
Netherlands	4
Senegal	4
South Africa	4
Costa Rica	3
Mongolia	3
Papua New Guinea	3
Singapore	3
Swaziland	3
Bahamas	2
Eastern Caribbean States	2
Malawi	2
Seychelles	2
Bolivia	1
Haiti	1
Luxembourg	1
Switzerland	1
Tonga	1
Antigua	0
Australia	0
Bahrain	0
Denmark	0
Dominica	0
Grenada	0
Malta	0
New Zealand	0
Vietnam	0
TOTAL	5,837

Parking fines incurred by international organisations: 3rd quarter 1986

	Number
Commonwealth Secretariat	50
Western European Union	3
International Maritime Organisation	2
International Cocoa Organisation	1
International Maritime Satellite Organisation	1
Total	57

These figures are based on information received up to Tuesday 9 December 1986.

WALES

Tourism

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales how much money has been provided under the Development of Tourism Act 1969 by way of grants to bus operators in Wales in each of the past seven years; and what proportion of applicants for such grants are successful.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Since 1979 the Wales Tourist Board has received two applications from bus operators in Wales for financial assistance under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969. One was approved and a grant of £17,000 paid in 1983.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of the latest figures for the average cost of public expenditure for every job created in the tourist industry in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information is not available. However, in 1985-86 the average cost per job for tourism schemes aided by the Wales Tourist Board was just over £7,000.

Urban Aid, Arfon

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales what applications he has received from Arfon borough council for urban aid for 1987-88; how much of this sum refers to projects for the improvement of parking facilities on council estates in the Caernarfon area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Arfon borough council has submitted 13 urban programme applications for consideration for 1987-88 amounting to £689,339; three applications amounting to £77,000 are in respect of projects to improve parking facilities on council estates in the Caernarfon area. These applications, together with all other bids received from Welsh local authorities, are currently being assessed and I expect to announce my decisions early in 1987.

Dyfed (Farmers)

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many farmers in Dyfed are owner-occupiers; and how many tenant farmers there are farming over three hectares.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: As at June 1985 there were 8,288 wholly owned main holdings in Dyfed; and 1,348 wholly rented main holdings of over three hectares. These figures exclude partially owned or rented holdings.

Ceredigion (Farmers)

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many farmers in Ceredigion are owner-occupiers; and how many tenant farmers there are farming over three hectares.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: As at June 1985 there were 2,370 wholly owned main holdings in Ceredigion; and 310 wholly rented main holdings of over three hectares. These figures exclude partially owned or rented holdings.

"Arts and Disabled People" (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The Department is in continual liaison with organisations concerned with the provision of arts for disabled people. We recently met representatives of the Carnegie council to discuss the implications of the Attenborough report and access by disabled people in Wales to the arts. Earlier this year we agreed to fund for two years the costs of an access officer at the Wales Council for the Disabled who will take particular account of the report's recommendations in relation to access by disabled people to arts buildings. Since 1985 we have also been funding part of the administration costs of a voluntary organisation, Arts for Disabled People in Wales, concerned with creating art opportunities for people with disabilities or special needs.

Surplus Butter

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to sell some of the surplus butter to the elderly and the needy during the Christmas period and the new year at a cheaper rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Responsibility for measures to dispose of surplus butter stocks rests primarily with the Commission. There are currently no proposals for a Christmas butter scheme.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he has taken to ensure that the milk quota system is being operated fairly and evenly within the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Generally, we are satisfied that most member states appear to be applying the quota system correctly. The Commission, which is responsible for the regulations, recently began action in the European Court against Italy for failing to operate the quota system.

Lime Sales

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give details of lime sales in Wales during the last 12 months; what were the corresponding figures for 1976; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: Information on lime sales in Wales is not collected.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the population of Wales in each of the years 1979 to 1986; what was the level in real terms of rate support grant in each of those years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The population of Wales, and the level in real terms of rate support grant, in the relevant years are shown in the following tables:

Mid-year estimates of home population: Wales, persons all ages

	'000
1979	2,810·1
1980	2,815·8
1981	2,813·5
1982	2,806·6
1983	2,807·8
1984	2,807·2
1985	2,811·8
1986	n/a

Source: Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys.

Rate support grant paid to Welsh authorities (£ million), for 1979-80 to 1986-87, expressed in 1986-87 prices

	£ million
1979-80	980·7
1980-81	971·7
1981-82	950·8
1982-83	949·1
1983-84	924·5
1984-85	885·8
1985-86	856·1
1986-87	875·8

All figures are expressed in real terms at 1986-87 prices using the GDP (Market Prices) deflator.

The Government's policy on rate support grant since 1979 has already been made clear. I am today announcing my intentions for the 1987-88 Welsh rate support grant settlement.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy that the rate support grant settlement for Wales for 1987-88 will include an increase in revenue support sufficient to meet in full the interest on the additional capital expenditure sanctioned by the Government for Welsh local authorities for 1987-88.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my statement to the House today. I intend to make appropriate allowance for the revenue consequences including interest payments arising from rate fund capital expenditure in 1987-88.

Hotel Classification Scheme (Wales Tourist Board)

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the short-term and long-term policies, respectively, of the hotel classification scheme of the Wales Tourist Board.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The present scheme has been operational for just over a year and the public will experience it for the first time in the 1987 holiday brochures. In the short term, the Wales Tourist Board does not intend to make any significant changes to the scheme. In the longer term, it is the board's objective to effect a general raising of the thresholds for achieving particular classification ratings and through the introduction of a qualitative grading scheme.

Mentally Ill People (Gwynedd)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer on 8 December, *Official Report*, column *34*, concerning Gwynedd health authority, whether he will make additional resources available to that authority in order to remedy deficiences in the services given to mentally ill people in Gwynedd.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The authorities in Gwynedd are presently considering the development of mental illness services in the light of the recent Health Authority Service report. It is premature to consider the question of additional Welsh Office funding.

Perinatal Mortality Initiative

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will now publish the final report submitted under the perinatal mortality initiative; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I am today publishing the final report submitted to me by the survey group set up under the perinatal mortality initiative which was announced in May 1983 by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library of the House. Copies are being made available to all hon. Members representing Welsh constituencies.

This is a very important report, containing what I believe to be one of the most detailed surveys ever undertaken of maternity and neo-natal services in the National Health Service as well as the results of the all Wales perinatal mortality survey based on a clinical review of all perinatal deaths in Wales during 1985. I congratulate the survey group and the catalyst team on their achievement. In addition, I would like to thank all those in the Health Service in Wales and across the border whose co-operation has, I know, proved invaluable to the group.

A large number of the recommendations in the report confirm and reinforce accepted good practice in maternity and neo-natal services and the group has acknowledged the work of the Maternity Services Advisory Committee which reported to me and to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services over the last four years. Most of the report's recommendations fall to health authorities and in some cases to family practitioner committees to implement, but I recognise that the Welsh Office also has an important role in carrying forward the work of the initiative. My officials will be reviewing progress regularly with health authorities to help overcome particular problems and to continue—albeit in a different form—the work of the catalyst team set up under the initiative to stimulate professional and administrative action in this area.

In addition, my officials will be taking urgent steps to initiate detailed consultations with the service on the report's proposals for a designated regional service of neo-natal intensive care in Wales. I have noted the view of the group that a regional perinatal (intensive care) centre should be developed at the University Hospital of Wales, but do not consider that designation of such a centre should be made before this consultation has taken place. I recognise that considerable expertise has been developed at this hospital and that the necessary access to specialised support facilities is already in existence to a significant degree. I have therefore decided that in order to maintain and safeguard the existing neo-natal intensive care service in South Glamorgan, revenue funding should be made available on a recurrent basis pending the outcome of the consultation on a regional service, to enable the appointment of essential medical and nursing staff. It is my intention to make available central funding up to a limit of £0·25 million from 1 April next year.

The report also includes an analysis of the provision of equipment in special care baby units throughout Wales and identifies deficiencies in this provision. I believe it important that these special care baby units should be helped to continue to provide the level of care—in some cases quite advanced—which is already in existence and I also intend to make capital provision available in 1987-88 of £0·25 million to assist authorities to remedy deficiencies in this area. Health authorities are being invited to submit bids against this funding.

Finally, the report makes a number of important recommendations about the need to integrate all obstetric units on to district general hospital sites because of the

adverse effects physical separation has on efficiency and safety. In many cases such units are already integrated and remaining problems will be susceptible to straightforward remedies. In some authorities, however, significant capital investment will be required before integration can be achieved, and we will be discussing this with the authorities involved. In the meantime I am asking all authorities to review the existing disposition of their maternity services and to review proposals for integration, where necessary, in the light of their forward capital programmes.

Although it is clear from the report that there remains considerable scope for further improvement in the provision of this service, that must be judged against the progress that has already been made. The perinatal mortality rate in Wales has continued to fall and by 1985 had reduced to almost half of its 1975 level, to 10·2 per thousand total births. This reflects the considerable effort already put in by service providers and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to those involved. I look forward to seeing further improvements in the care of mothers and the newly born as the recommendations contained in this important report are implemented by the relevant components of the Health Service.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what pupil-teacher ratio his Department has proposed for the city technology colleges; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: The Government's grant toward the running costs of city technology colleges will assume a pupil: teacher ratio which moves in line with good practice in LEA-maintained city schools.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the definition given by his Department of the extent of the catchment area from which pupils will be drawn for a city technology college; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: The Department's booklet on the city technology college proposals, which is available in the Library, explains that each CTC will serve a substantial catchment area. The precise arrangements will need to be decided case-by-case, but a typical catchment area is likely to contain at least 5,000 pupils of secondary age, of whom 750 to 1,000 will be admitted.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the first city technology colleges will be established; when the full list of proposed city technology colleges will be established; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend expects that the first city technology colleges will come into operation by September 1988 and that 20 will be in operation by the end of the decade. A list of possible locations for the first 20 city technology colleges is in the published proposals, copies of which are available in the Library.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science, for each city technology college that has been proposed by his Department if he will list *(a)* the number of inquiries, from potential sponsors, to his Department, *(b)* the number of firm offers of sponsorship and *(c)* the total amount firmly pledged in sponsorship.

Mr. Dunn: Several hundred inquiries have been received following the announcement of my right hon. Friend's proposals for city technology colleges. Many of these inquiries have led to discussions about support or sponsorship. More precise information could not be made available without disproportionate cost. At their request, discussions with prospective sponsors are being conducted in confidence.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science, for each city technology college that has been proposed by his Department, if he will give the local education authority that covers that site, the total number of secondary education establishments within the city technology college's catchment area and the total number of pupils aged 11 years and above currently attending secondary education establishments in the catchment area.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has proposed that 20 city technology colleges be established over the next few years in a number of our cities. There is a list of possible locations at Annex B of the Department's booklet on CTCs, which is available in the Library. The precise locations will depend upon factors such as the local response to these proposals, and the availability of finance and of accommodation. The sizes and boundaries of the catchment areas will be determined in due course, in discussion between prospective sponsors and the department. The following local education authorities will be responsible for each of the suggested locations listed in the booklet:

Possible location	*LEA concerned*
Greater London:	
North Peckham	Inner London Education Authority
Notting Hill	
Hackney	
Newham	Newham
Greater Manchester:	
Manchester (Moss Side)	Manchester
Merseyside:	
Liverpool	Liverpool
Knowsley	Knowsley
West Midlands:	
Birmingham (Handsworth)	Birmingham
Coventry	Coventry
Sandwell	Sandwell
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton
East Midlands:	
Leicester (Highfields)	Leicestershire
Derby	Derbyshire
Nottingham	Nottinghamshire
Yorkshire and Humberside:	
Leeds (Chapeltown)	Leeds
Bradford	Bradford
Hull	Humberside
Cleveland:	
Middlesbrough	Cleveland
Tyne and Wear:	
Newcastle/Gateshead	Newcastle/Gateshead
Sunderland	Sunderland

Possible location	LEA concerned
Lancashire	
Preston	Lancashire
East Anglia	
Norwich	Norfolk
South East	
Portsmouth	Hampshire
Southampton	Hampshire
South West	
Bristol (St. Paul's)	Avon
Plymouth	Devon

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science by what process entry to a city technology college will take place in its first year of establishment for pupils other than those aged 11 years; and who will administer applications for entry to a city technology college.

Mr. Dunn: The sponsors of each city technology college will be responsible, through the governing body, for deciding and administering the arrangements for admitting pupils. These arrangements will be the subject of prior discussion between the Department and the sponsors. One of the Department's aims in these discussions will be to secure, if possible, that some pupils aged more than 11 are admitted in the first year of establishment of the city technology college, so that it can progress as quickly as possible to full operation.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the total expenditure by his Department on the city technology colleges programme in the current financial year, and the next financial year; and what proportion of this expenditure will be on additional administrative costs involved in the proposal.

Mr. Dunn: In the current financial year the estimated total expenditure by the Department on the city technology colleges programme will be £160,000. Estimated expenditure for the next financial year will be £4 million. In the current financial year 80 per cent. of the expenditure on CTCs represents additional administrative costs, and 20 per cent. other costs. It is not yet possible to break down the estimated expenditure in 1987-88 in this way.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy as to the minimum percentage of the total capital costs of establishing a city technology college firmly pledged by sponsors necessary for his Department to proceed with the establishment of that city technical college; and when such decisions will be taken.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has made it clear that he is seeking all or a substantial part of the total capital costs of each city technology college from private sponsors. The decision whether or not to proceed with an individual project will depend on the response from prospective sponsors.

Departmental Initiatives (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list those initiatives of his Department which have been of benefit to women and girls, since 1979, the cost or estimated cost of those initiatives, and the proportion of the total budget of his Department this represents.

Mr. Dunn: Since 1979 the Government have published a number of statements on curricular policy which emphasise the importance of offering equal opportunities in education to both sexes. Her Majesty's Inspectorate has published reports on good practice such as "Girls and Science" and "Schools and Working Life". Our outlook is reflected in recent curricular developments such as the technical and vocational educational initiative and the microelectronics programme, and in examination reform. New criteria for initial teacher training require that all courses should equip students to guard against preconceptions based on the race or sex of pupils. Her Majesty's Inspectorate has promoted regional in-service training courses for teachers on different aspects of sex stereo-typing. The newly established National Council for the Youth Service will specifically look at youth work for girls and young women. In higher education, increased opportunities have been offered for appropriately qualified girls and women to study engineering and technology, and funding has been provided to improve the effectiveness of careers guidance and information. Encouragement for flexible forms of continuing education, such as open learning, should be of particular benefit to women mature students with domestic responsibilities.

These initiatives in general form part of broader programmes and their claim on the budget of the Department could not be isolated except at disproportionate cost.

"Arts and Disabled People" (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State received representations both from Sir Richard Attenborough when the report was published and later from the Carnegie council. A deputation from the council was received by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Mr. Dunn) on 6 March 1986 to discuss those recommendations of the report which refer to the education service. These accord with the Government's general policies on provision for special educational needs, but are mainly addressed to local education authorities and other local bodies, which must themselves decide how to allocate the resources available to them. My right hon. Friend has made it clear that the establishment of a central fund for building adaptations is not practicable given the structure on which the funding of educational provision is based.

Education (No. 2) Act 1986

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what commencement orders have been made, or are in prospect, for implementing the provision of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: A commencement order has now been made to bring the following sections of the Act into effect:

(a) on 7 January 1987
- 17—local education authority's to state curriculum policy
- 30 and 31—governors annual report and parents' meeting
- 33—local consultations over admission arrangements
- 44 to 46—safeguards in the teaching of political and sexual matters
- 50—specific grants for teacher training etc.
- 51 and 52—inter-authority recoupment
- 53—school transport
- 56—reports to the Secretary of State.

(b) on 1 April 1987
- 54 and 55—change of status from controlled school to aided school.

A further commencement order is planned for April 1987 to bring remaining sections into effect as follows:

(a) on 15 August 1987
- 47 and 48—abolition of corporal punishment in the maintained sector.

(b) on 1 September 1987
- 12—temporary governing bodies for new schools
- 20—curriculum information for parents
- 28—local education authority's reserve power in disciplinary matters
- 29—financial information and delegation to schools
- 32—reports by governing bodies and head teachers
- 43—free speech in universities, polytechnics and colleges
- 57 and 58—information, training and allowances for governors
- 61—minimum age for governors in establishments of further education
- 62—access to governing bodies' papers

and

the remaining school government provisions in Part I to III for new schools, any other schools without instruments and articles of government, and those schools for which local education authorities adopt the new arrangements in advance of the following dates for mandatory implementation of these provisions:

(i) 1 September 1988 for county and maintained special schools; and

(ii) 1 September 1989 for voluntary schools.

A circular will be issued very shortly setting out these arrangements and offering advice on the provisions being brought into effect on 7 January 1987. Further guidance will be offered in due course on the remaining provisions.

Education Pools

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science on what basis he proposes to close the education pools for 1981-82.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I propose to close these pools in the next financial year. I have been advised that the method used in previous stages of their operation to apportion between local education authorities expenditure within the capped pool for advanced further education was unlawful. However, this method was agreed in 1980 between the Government and representatives of the local education authorities in good faith, and the allocations flowing from it have been used by authorities in making budgets and rates. Accordingly, following consultation with the local authority associations, the Government propose to legislate in the present Session of Parliament to validate past stages in the allocation of the 1981-82 capped pool, and to enable it to be closed broadly on the basis originally envisaged. The method in question was used only for 1981-82 and the legislation will apply only to pooling in that year.

School Closures

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the proposals for school closures or reorganisations he has received from local education authorities which are outstanding for *(a)* 15 months or more, *(b)* 12 months or more, *(c)* nine months or more *(d)* six months or more and *(e)* three months or more, respectively; and when he expects to reach a decision in each case.

Mr. Dunn [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986, c. *42*]: The outstanding proposals are as follows. My right hon. Friend will announce his decision on these as soon as possible.

(a) Proposals outstanding for 15 months or more after publication of notices
- Staffordshire LEA: closure of Kinnersley Memorial CE Junior School

(b) Proposals outstanding for 12 months or more
- Rochdale LEA: reorganisation of RC middle and upper schools.
- Hertfordshire LEA: amalgamation of Hawe Dell and Millwards County Junior Schools
- Sheffield LEA: reorganisation of secondary schools
- Kirklees LEA: closure of West Slaithwaite Junior and Infant Schools (action suspended pending outcome of appeal against judicial review)
- Gloucestershire LEA: amalgamation of Burton Vale County Secondary and Westwood's Grammar Schools

(c) Proposals outstanding for 9 months or more
- Nottinghamshire LEA: amalgamation of St. Saviour's CE Infants and Carr Hill County Junior Schools
- Gateshead: reorganisation of secondary schools (action suspended pending outcome of judicial review)

(d) Proposals outstanding for 6 months or more
- Salford LEA: reorganisation of county high schools
- Sefton LEA: amalgamation of All Saints, St. Simons and St. Jude's Schools
- Stockport LEA: closure of Parish CE Primary School
- Essex LEA: reorganisation of secondary schools in Epping Forest
- Warwickshire LEA: closure of Ullenhall CE Junior and Infant Schools
- Warwickshire LEA: closure of Baddesley Clinton RC Junior and Infant Schools
- Warwickshire LEA: closure of Wolverhampton Junior and Infant Schools
- Warwickshire LEA: closure of Netherwhitacre CE Junior and Infant Schools
- Berkshire LEA: closure of Norcot Primary and Grovelands County Infant schools
- Gloucester LEA: closure of Sandhurst CE Primary School
- Avon LEA: reorganisation of secondary schools in south Bristol

(e) Proposals outstanding for 3 months or more
- Wirral LEA: amalgamation of Marian and Bishop Challoner RC High Schools.
- Cheshire LEA: closure of Marbury-with-Quidsley CE Primary School.
- Waltham Forest LEA: amalgamation of Corpus Christie and Cardinal Wiseman RC High Schools.
- Lincolnshire LEA: closure of Great Hale CE Primary.
- Lincolnshire LEA: amalgamation of Waddington St. Michael's Infant and St. Clements Junior Schools.
- Cambridgeshire LEA: amalgamation of Colvile and Tydd St. Giles County Primary Schools.
- Staffordshire LEA: reorganisation in Stafford.
- Surrey LEA: closure of Heathcote Memorial (CE) and South Ash County Middle Schools.
- Kent LEA: closure of Lower Hardres CE Primary.
- Hampshire LEA: reorganisation of primary education

Winchester.
Surrey LEA: amalgamation of St. Teresa's and Cardinal Godfrey RC Secondary Schools.
Cleveland LEA: closure of Huntcliffe County Secondary School.
Cleveland LEA: closure of Westfield and Saltscar County Secondary Schools.
Oxforshire LEA: closure of King Alfred's Boarding House.
Wiltshire LEA: Salisbury reorganisation.
Dorset LEA: closure of Buckhorn Weston County Primary School.
Oxfordshire LEA: closure of Kiddington County First School.
Wiltshire LEA: amalgamation of Burbage, Easton Royal and Grafton Primary Schools.
Gloucestershire LEA: reorganisation of secondary school in Gloucester city.
Gloucestershire LEA: closure of Severn Vale Secondary School.

NB. Proposals concerning special schools are not included in the list.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Community Care

Mr. Hayward asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he has taken to ensure that the money going towards community care is used to best effect; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fowler: I am concerned that our community care policy should be as effectively delivered and efficiently managed as possible. It is a key element in our strategy for the Health Service, for the personal social services and for social security. We devote substantial public funds to it so we need to be sure that we are doing all we can to get it right.

I have therefore asked Sir Roy Griffiths, the Government's adviser on the Health Service, to undertake an overview of community care policy. The review will be geared towards advice on action, as was Sir Roy's review of management in the Health Service. The review will be completed within 12 months.

The terms of reference of his remit are:

"To review the way in which public funds are used to support community care policy and to advise me on the options that would improve the use of these funds as a contribution to more effective community care."

We have in hand detailed studies of certain aspects of community care, particularly residential care. But we need to complement these studies by Sir Roy's overview for three main reasons.

First, the present structure of social security benefits may encourage people to go into residential or nursing care, when they might actually be better off in their own home and prefer to remain there. It is important that the social security system is sensitive to individual requirements. But it is equally important that the system should operate neutrally and not distort individual choice. Given the sharp rise in expenditure on residential and nursing care in recent years, we need to see whether the system is operating sensibly and fairly. One of the main focuses of Sir Roy's work will therefore be to examine the financing of nursing homes, residential care homes and other group accommodation in which social care facilities are provided on a communal basis and compare it to the financing of domiciliary care.

Second, substantial public funds go, quite rightly, into supporting our community care policies. They are provided through social security, through the personal social services run by local authorities and through the health service. Given the scale of funds involved, we need to look at whether they are being used to give best value for money, whether they are properly targeted and whether people who have help are given the help most appropriate to their needs.

Third, there is considerable variation in the way that community care funds are managed in different parts of the country. Indeed, it is sensible that the arrangements should be capable of adaptation to suit local circumstances. But this does not mean that there is no scope for better budgetary and other financial management arrangements, which would help to improve the use of resources. This, too, is an area which would benefit from an expert outside scrutiny.

National Insurance Cards

87. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans his Department has to reintroduce national insurance cards.

Mr. Major: The Department currently issues plastic national insurance number cards and, for self-employed people and voluntary contributors who pay national insurance contributions weekly, national insurance stamp cards. There are no plans to introduce other cards.

Single Payments

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many applications for single payments were made during September 1986; how many of these were granted; what was the average payment to those granted; how many were rejected; how many have gone to appeal; and what were the corresponding figures for *(a)* May 1986 and *(b)* September 1985.

Mr. Major: Information on single payments is not available in the exact form requested as statistics are recorded at the time of the decision on the claim. Separate statistics are not kept on the number of single payment applications received each month.

Single payment decisions (rounded to nearest '000)

	Four week MIS period ending		
	24 September 1985	*3 June 1986*[1]	*23 September 1986*[1]
Number of refusals	80,000	121,000	190,000
Number of awards (full and partial)	308,000	428,000	351,000
Average award (£)	80	73	85

[1]1986 data are provisional.
Source: Management Information Statistics.

National administrative statistics for social security appeals are summarised quarterly. The most recent statistics available are for appeals heard and decided in the three-month period ended 31 December 1985. The table shows the number of supplementary benefit single payment appeals and referrals registered with the social security appeal tribunals in each period, or uncleared from a previous period.

Single payment appeals

	Three-month period ending					
	31 December 1984	*per cent.*	*30 September 1985*	*per cent.*	*31 December 1985*	*per cent.*
Number of appeals or referrals to social security appeal tribunals, or uncleared from previous period	33,124	—	33,892	—	37,813	—
Superseded on review	5,577	(16·8)	6,279	(18·5)	6,565	(17·4)
Withdrawn	3,382	(10·2)	3,374	(10·0)	3,560	(9·4)
Not submitted	208	(0·6)	237	(0·7)	230	(0·6)
Heard and decided by social security appeal tribunals	10,128	(30·6)	10,744	(31·7)	11,366	(30·1)
of which decided in claimants favour	2,566	[1](25·3)	2,811	[1](26·2)	3,110	[1](27·4)

[1]Those decided.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the total number of payments made under the single payments system during the period 1 January to 3 June; what was the average payment made during this period; and what was the highest payment made to any one household or individual in this period; and what is the highest payment now possible under the revised regulations which came into force in August.

Mr. Major: The information requested on single payments for the period 15 January 1986 to 3 June 1986 (the nearest available dates to those asked in the question) is as follows:

Total number of single payments made, 2,165,271
Total amount paid, £156,184,947
Average payment, £72

Source: Four-weekly management information statistics (1986 provisional figures).

Information on individual payments is not kept at national or regional level and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

There is no absolute upper limit on the amount payable under the revised regulations which came into force in August 1986. The amount payable will depend, among other things on the numbers of members in the assessment unit and the items for which there is a need. These needs can vary depending on factors such as the health of the family members and/or the heating facilities in the accommodation occupied by the claimant.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will amend the supplmentary benefit single payment regulations which came into force in August in order to provide a greater flexibility for local offices to help families in need.

Mr. Major: No. The present regulations permit single payments to be made to claimants (including families) in a variety of circumstances; and allow adjudication officers some limited flexibility within the structure of a regulation based scheme. The Government recognise that a regulation-based scheme cannot by its nature cover all possible contingencies; and have already announced that the present system will be replaced from April 1988 by a social fund which should provide a greater degree of flexibility than exists at present.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the total cost of single payments made by his Department's local offices to those receiving help under the supplementary benefit system in September, October and November; and what were the figures for the comparable periods in *(a)* 1983, *(b)* 1984 and *(c)* 1985.

Mr. Major: The information requested is as follows:

	Amount paid in single payments £ million (to nearest £0·1 million)			
	1983	*1984*	*1985*	[1] *1986*
Four weekly MIS period ending				
September	11·5	17·1	24·5	29·8
October	12·7	19·5	26·1	26·1
November	14·0	20·5	28·1	23·0

[1] 1986 figures are based on provisional data.
Source: Management Information Statistics

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many letters he has received from *(a)* right hon. and hon. Members and *(b)* the general public concerning difficulty faced by individuals and families following the changes made in August to regulations concerning single payments under the supplementary benefit system.

Mr. Major: In the period 11 August 1986 to 9 December 1986, 45 letters were received from right hon. and hon. Members on various matters connected with the single payment changes introduced on 11 August. Statistical information on letters from the general public about single payments is not kept in sufficient detail to record those letters specifically about the August changes.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the number of deaths from breast cancer from 1974 to the present time.

Mrs. Currie: The information is shown in the table.

Number of deaths with underlying cause as breast cancer[1], registered in England and Wales, males, females, persons, all ages 1974-1986

Year	Number of deaths		
	Males	Females	Persons
1974	80	11,239	11,319
1975	82	11,637	11,719
1976	68	11,763	11,831
1977	98	11,820	11,918
1978	92	11,915	12,007
1979	83	12,091	12,174
1980	78	12,167	12,245
1981	84	12,513	12,597
1982	87	12,405	12,492
1983	87	12,672	12,759
1984	99	13,310	13,409
1985	79	13,513	13,592
1986[2] (March quarter)	20	3,482	3,502

[1] 1974-1978 ICD (8) 174 Malignant neoplasm of breast
1979-1986 ICD (9) 174 malignant neoplasm of female breast
175 Malignant neoplasm of male breast
[2] all ages 28 days and over; provisional

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the number of deaths amongst women from all forms of cancer from 1974 to the present time and the proportion of those deaths from breast cancer.

Mrs. Currie: The information is shown in the table.

Number of females deaths with underlying cause as all malignant neoplasms[1] and of these the percentage as malignant neoplasm of female breast
All ages, England and Wales—1974-1986

Year	Number of female deaths all malignant neoplasms (a)	Percentage of (a) as malignant neoplasm of female breast
1974	56,009	20·1
1975	56,658	20·5
1976	58,098	20·2
1977	58,048	20·4
1978	58,681	20·3
1979	59,645	20·3
1980	60,359	20·2
1981	60,944	20·5
1982	61,476	20·2
1983	62,057	20·4
1984	65,397	20·4
1985	66,338	20·4
1986[2] (1st quarter)	16,310	21·3

[1] 1974-1978 ICD (8) 140-209
1979-1986 ICD (9) 140-208
[2] All ages 28 days and over; provisional.

Coronary Heart Disease

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to respond to the report on coronary heart disease amongst Asians in Britain, sent to him by the coronary prevention group and the Confederation of Indian Organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The report "Coronary Heart Disease and Asians in Britain" has been studied with interest within the Department. We are considering what, if any, special steps might need to be taken as part of the national heart disease prevention campaign planned to be launched next spring.

Sugars (COMA Panel)

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will announce the membership and terms of reference of the COMA panel on sugars in the diet.

Mrs. Currie It is hoped that an announcement will be made following the meeting of the committee on the medical aspects of food policy (COMA) on 19 December.

"Arts and Disabled People" (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: My predecessor as Minister for the Disabled met representatives of the Carnegie council in January to discuss what action could be taken on those recommendations that related to the Department's responsibilities. It was agreed at that meeting that there should be further discussions at official level with the council and other interested bodies. A meeting was held in June between the Department, the council and the arts therapy associations to discuss the development of art therapy in the National Health Service. A further meeting is to be held with the council in January to discuss wider questions about the role of the arts in hospitals.

Drug Abuse

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases of drug abuse of amyl nitrite, popularly known as "Poppers", have been reported to the health authorities; and what information his Department has on the medical and social consequences of such abuse.

Mr. Newton: Information on the reported misuse of amyl nitrite, or "Poppers" is not held centrally. I am advised that the direct inhalation of volatile nitrites/nitrates, including amyl nitrite, can lead to a number of effects such as euphoria and a fall in blood pressure leading to fainting, nausea and vomiting, palpitations, deeper, faster breathing, sensations of numbness and tingling. The effects are transitory and it is not thought that the abuse of these substances would lead to any lasting ill-effects in the majority of cases.

Mental Handicap Hospitals

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will name those mental handicap hospitals which have firm dates for closure; and if he will give a breakdown by region of these hospitals showing the anticipated dates and the numbers of residents to be discharged;

(2) if he will list the number of mental handicap hospitals in England which have closed down in each year since 1981; and if he will give a breakdown by region of these closures during the same period;

(3) if he will list by region the mental handicap hospitals which have not yet made any firm plans for closure; and if he will give the number of residents residing in these hospitals for the last three years for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

Mentally Handicapped People (Community Care)

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give for the last three years for which figures are available the number of residents who have moved out of long-stay mental handicap hospitals and who have *(a)* remained within the district, *(b)* returned to districts within the region and *(c)* moved outside the region;

(2) if he will give the numbers by region of people who have moved out of long-stay mental handicap hospitals during the last three years for which figures are available; and if he will give a breakdown by region and type of accommodation of where these former residents have now moved.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that I cannot give the hon. Member all the information he seeks. Information is not available centrally on where former mental handicap hospital in-patients go to live following their discharge; and the first move is not necessarily the last. Mental handicap hospitals are not classified by the length of stay.

Statistics of discharges and transfers from mental handicap hospitals and units in the period 1983-85 are available in the DHSS booklets "Mental Health Statistics for England", copies of which are in the Library. Most of the discharges relate to people who have been in hospital less than six months.

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the numbers of residents of long-stay mental handicap hospitals in England who have moved into community homes or units with *(a)* one to 10 beds, *(b)* 11 to 20 beds, *(c)* 21 to 30 beds, *(d)* 31 to 40 beds and *(e)* 41 plus beds over the last five years.

Mrs. Currie: I am sorry that I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks. Information on where people move to on discharge from mental handicap hospitals is not collected centrally.

However, since 1984, statistics have been recorded on the number of residents in small National Health Service units providing community provision for mentally handicapped people. The table gives figures for 1984 and 1985. Units of more than 24 beds do not fall within the definition of "community unit" for the purpose of the statistics. Not all residents in these units have moved there from hospital.

Mentally handicapped people in small NHS units in the community, at 31 December: England

Number of beds in units	*1984*	*1985*
1-10	374	704
11-20	512	675
21-24	797	700
Total	1,683	2,079

Information on residents in local authority homes and sponsored by local authorities in voluntary and private homes is given in the booklet "Homes and Hostels for the Mentally Ill and the Mentally Handicapped", copies of which are in the Library. Again, not all residents in these homes have been in hospital previously. We do not have figures for people in private and voluntary sector homes-villages etc. who are not sponsored by local authorities.

More detailed information will become available with the introduction of a new residential accommodation statistical return in April 1987.

Heating Costs (Single Payments)

Mr. Raynsford asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many single payments were made by his Department in respect of the extra heating costs incurred by recipients of supplementary benefit during last winter's exceptionally cold weather.

Mr. Major: Final returns are still awaited from a number of local offices, but latest figures show that a total of 493,000 payments have been made.

Baths (Payments)

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the medical conditions which qualify claimants to additional payments for extra baths;

(2) what recent changes have been made in defining the circumstances in which claimants suffering from arthritis, rheumatism and diabetes can qualify for additional requirements payments for extra baths.

Mr. Lyell: Additional supplementary benefit for baths is payable in respect of any person who, on medical grounds, needs more than one bath a week. It is for the individual adjudication officer to decide, with medical advice if necessary, whether or not the person meets the criteria for payment. Guidance to adjudication officers on the supplementary benefit legislation is issued by the chief adjudication officer and published in the S manual, a copy of which is in the Library. The guidance on eligibility for additional benefit for baths is at paragraphs S4531-4532. there have been no recent changes in definition in the relevant areas.

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the total number of payments for additional requirements for extra baths to claimants suffering from arthritis, rheumatism and diabetes in each of the years 1980 to 1985, inclusive.

Mr. Lyell: The total number of persons in respect of whom additional supplementry benefit for bath was paid is as follows:

	Number of persons (thousands)
1980	Nil
1981	1
1982	3
1983	13
1984	31

Source: Annual Statistical Enquiries.

No information is available about the particular grounds for the awards.

London Ambulance Service

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average cost of each ambulance per patient mile in the London Ambulance Service for each year since 1983.

Mr. Newton: The average cost of each ambulance per patient mile since 1983 is as follows:

	£
1983-84	[1]2·72
1984-85	[1]2·76
1985-86	[1]2·97

[1] Cost per mile (based on total LAS expenditure).

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many patients have been carried per division *(a)* as emergencies and *(b)* as hospital transport per division of the London Ambulance Service for each year since 1979.

Mr. Newton: The figures requested are:

Emergency patient journeys ('000s)

Year	*North East*	*North West*	*South East*	*South West*	*Total*
1979	89	90	60	94	333
1980	117	118	79	122	436
1981	119	120	79	123	441
1982	121	122	91	114	448
1983	127	133	88	101	449
1984	131	140	85	106	462
1985	134	145	90	107	476

Non emergency patient journeys ('000s)

Year	*North East*	*North West*	*South East*	*South West*	*Indirect*[1]	*Total*
1979	415	334	329	407	195	1,680
1980	538	445	440	540	274	2,237
1981	586	483	471	538	235	2,313
1982	593	482	507	468	239	2,289
1983	592	487	526	469	228	2,302
1984	579	491	513	473	212	2,268
1985	548	453	497	455	252	2,205

[1] Includes Ambulance Car Service, Car Hire, Vehicles on loan.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what training is given to drivers in the London Ambulance Service.

Mr. Newton: There are two grades of ambulance staff —ambulance persons and qualified ambulance persons —the training for which is as follows:

Ambulance Persons

These are staff who are normally engaged in conveying out-patients to and from hospital. These patients normally require the assistance of two members of staff to get them to and from the vehicle.

The training period is of four weeks during which time staff are trained in the lifting and handling of patients, radio procedures, vehicle familiarisation and given sufficient first-aid training in basic life support to enable them to care for a patient until the arrival of an emergency vehicle. Both members of crew are trained to the same level; no one is employed solely as a driver.

Qualified Ambulance Persons

These members of staff would normally undertake emergency ambulance work and be engaged on 24-hour rotas. Prior to being selected for training they must have completed at least one year in the ambulance person grade.

The training takes the form prescribed in the Millar report of 1966 and is of six weeks, consisting of the following subjects:

Advanced first aid
Gynaecological emergencies
Sudden illnesses
Major accident procedures
Administration of analgesic gases
Accident approach.

This is followed by a two-week course in the driving techniques required for a smooth, safe drive in emergency situations.

Staff are then posted to the operational training station at Bloomsbury where they work under the supervision of an instructor whilst carrying out emergency duties for a period of four weeks.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospital car drivers have been used by the London Ambulance Service by division in *(a)* 1983, *(b)* 1984, *(c)* 1985 and *(d)* the current year.

Mr. Newton: The number of hospital car service drivers used by the London Ambulance Service since 1983 is as follows:

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*[1]
North East	30	34	40	47
North West	51	51	51	73
South East	42	45	47	47
South West	39	52	62	61
Total	162	182	200	228

[1] As at 1 December 1986.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much money has been paid to hospital car drivers in each of the London Ambulance Service areas for each year since 1983.

Mr. Newton: There was no divisional breakdown of figures in 1983 when the amount spent on the hospital car service was £326,600. Since 1984 the amounts are as follows:

Hospital Car Service

	North West £	*North East* £	*South West* £	*South East* £	*Total* £
1984-85	75,829	76,540	97,494	100,731	350,594
1985-86	110,243	136,370	151,351	138,724	536,688
[1]1986-87	120,000	155,000	158,000	171,180	604,180

[1] Budget.

Ambulance Personnel

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the total number of *(a)* ambulance drivers and *(b)* ambulances attached per National Health Service region for each year since 1979.

Mr. Newton: I regret that the information is not available centrally in the form requested. The table shows, for each National Health Service regional health authority, the numbers of all types of ambulance vehicles in use in the financial years for which these figures are available.

NHS Ambulance Services: Ambulance vehicles (all types)

Regional Health Authority	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*
Northern	548	549	566	546	546	470
Yorkshire	615	590	590	660	597	636

Regional Health Authority	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*
Trent	590	687	668	651	644	648
East Anglian	194	202	218	221	218	219
North West Thames	194	194	197	199	196	193
North East Thames	173	175	172	168	149	148
South East Thames	349	346	344	311	317	300
South West Thames (including London Ambulance Service)	1,230	1,270	1,227	1,281	1,179	1,184
Wessex	295	295	302	328	308	297
Oxford	286	282	289	289	285	284
South Western	472	475	479	490	484	480
West Midlands	691	704	749	749	729	713
Mersey	310	302	301	306	338	351
North Western	601	595	614	608	616	568

Source: York Health Authority Financial and Statistical Information.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the latest cost of extending the long-term rate of supplementary benefit to the long-term unemployed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: About £530 million.

Ear, Nose and Throat Waiting Lists

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what changes there has been in the numbers on ear, nose and throat in-patient waiting lists for English regional health authorities between December 1984 and December 1986.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry that I cannot give the right hon. Member the information he seeks in precisely the form requested. Figures for December 1986 are not yet available centrally. The available information is given in the table.

In-patient waiting lists NHS Ear, nose and throat departments

Regional Health Authority	*Number of cases on list*		*Change 1984-1986*	
	31 December	*31 March*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Northern	4,586	4,311	− 275	− 6·0
Yorkshire	8,522	8,373	− 149	− 1·7
Trent	8,835	8,977	+ 142	+ 1·6
East Anglian	4,055	3,946	− 109	− 2·7
North West Thames	7,231	7,658	+ 427	+ 5·9
North East Thames	13,236	14,134	+ 898	+ 6·8
South East Thames	7,396	8,420	+1,024	+13·8
South West Thames	5,065	5,111	+ 46	+ 0·9
Wessex	5,948	5,846	− 102	− 1·7
Oxford	4,511	4,564	+ 53	+ 1·2
South Western	4,716	4,790	+ 74	+ 1·6
West Midlands	13,825	14,346	+ 521	+ 3·8
Mersey	4,218	3,982	− 236	− 5·6
North Western	9,787	10,525	+ 738	+ 7·5
All regional health authorities	101,931	104,983	+3,052	+ 3·0

Warnock Report

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services to whom he has circulated for comment his draft consultative document on implementing parts of the Warnock report; on what bases these organisations were selected; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The Department has sent copies of the consultation document "Legislation on Human Infertility Services and Embryo Research" (Cm. 46) to the main interested national organisations. A copy of the list has been placed in the Library. Comments from individuals and other organisations are also welcome. Similar consultations are being carried out by the other health departments.

Benefits (Appeals)

Mr. Frank Field asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the latest information he has on waiting times for an appeal hearing against single payments and other benefits for *(a)* each of the main regions and *(b)* for Birkenhead.

Mr. Lyell: National administrative statistics for social security appeals are not disaggregated for areas smaller than a social security region. The information for Great Britain for the 12 months of 1985 is contained in table 49.02B in "Social Security Statistics 1986" (HMSO) a copy of which is in the Library. The boundaries of social security regions are shown in appendix 4 of that publication. The most recent statistics available are for appeals heard and decided in the three-month period ended 31 December 1985. Tables giving details of the average number of weeks between the lodgement of an appeal and the tribunal hearing for supplementary benefit single payment appeals and appeals for other benefits for each of the social security regions, have been placed in the Library.

Hypothermia

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many deaths have been recorded in Leeds metropolitan district council during the last five years in which *(a)* hypothermia was given as the result of death, *(b)* hypothermia was noted as a contributory factor resulting in death for each of the following age bands (i) 0-two years, (ii) three to five years, (iii) six to 16 years, (iv) 17 to 64 years and (v) 65 years and over.

Mrs. Currie: The numbers of deaths registered in the Leeds registration district (which is conterminous with Leeds metropolitan district) where hypothermia *(a)* was stated as the underlying cause of death and *(b)* was mentioned on the death certificate, irrespective of whether it did or did not appear as the underlying cause, by specified age-groups for the years 1981 to 1985 are given in the table.

Number of hypothermia deaths registered as (a) underlying cause and (b) any mention on death certificate, in Leeds registration district by age-group 1981-85

(a) Underlying cause	*Year*				
Age-group (years)	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
0-2	—	—	—	—	—
3-5	—	—	—	—	—
6-16	—	—	—	1	—
17-64	2	1	1	—	—
65 and over	2	4	2	2	2

(b) Any mention	*Year*				
Age-group (years)	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
0-2	—	—	—	—	—
3-5	—	—	—	—	—
6-16	—	—	—	1	—
17-64	4	1	3	1	1
65 and over	11	6	6	7	6

Claimants (Highland Region)

Mr. Kennedy asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the total number of claimants applying to each of his Department's offices located within Highland region for each year from 1979 to 1986 respectively.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *295*]: The Highland region is covered, for social security purposes, by the Department's local offices at Fort William, Inverness and Wick. The number of claims for supplementary benefit received at these offices each year from 1979 to 1986 was:

	Fort William	*Inverness*	*Wick*
1979-80	2,573	11,703	4,131
1980-81	3,178	11,485	4,406
1981-82	3,362	15,050	4,615
1982-83	3,397	15,821	5,019
1983-84	3,307	16,499	5,172
1984-85	3,469	15,693	5,390
1985-86	4,096	15,972	5,499

NORTHERN IRELAND

Trial Delays

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if, pursuant to the answer given on 27 November, *Official Report*, columns *420-21*, by the hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Scott) to the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) he will list the measures which have been introduced to eliminate avoidable delays between first remand and trial in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Scott: The Government are conscious of the importance of public confidence in all aspects of the administration of justice, and accordingly the position is monitored on a regular basis by all the agencies involved. Particular attention has been paid to measures to help reduce the average period between first remand and trial. Within the past two years these have included:

(a) a review of organisation and staffing levels in the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Director of Public Prosecution's office, with a view to improving the work of file preparation and direction. A number of changes have been made as a result, including an increase in the number of professional staff assigned to the DPP's office;

(b) the Director of Public Prosecutions is shortly to reorganise his Department so that each professional member of staff preparing a case combines both directing and editing functions. This should increase the speed with which committal papers are despatched to the RUC for signature by the witnesses and service upon the defendant;

(c) the RUC and DPP are giving sustained priority to major complex cases;

(d) pro forma reporting has been introduced into the RUC for straightforward cases, with the aim of reducing the time taken to submit police case files to the DPP's office;

(e) a "fast stream" system has been established by the DPP to identify and take forward cases which could be brought to trial relatively quickly;

(f) the types of case which may be reported directly from the RUC sub-divisional level to the circuit Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions have been extended;

(g) a provisional committal date will be set when the committal papers are sent from the DPP's office to RUC headquarters rather than when they have been returned duly signed;

(h) a presiding judge has been appointed at Belfast Crown court to oversee the listing of cases, thus discouraging unnecessary delay between committal and trial;

(i) two additional High Court judges and an additional county court judge have been appointed;

(j) twelve additional Queen's Counsel have been appointed, thus significantly increasing the number of senior counsel available for criminal cases;

(k) courtroom accommodation is being used more intensively, through increased sittings and reduced vacations;

(l) in addition, the Government have proposed an amendment to the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 which would allow scheduled cases to be heard other than at Belfast Crown court, thus potentially reducing the pressure on court room accommodation;

(m) the Government have also proposed that the maximum remand interval in scheduled cases should be increased to 28 days, thus further reducing the pressure on court accommodation.

The Government will monitor the effects of these measures to see whether further changes are necessary.

ENERGY

Uranium

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will provide in tabular form details of the gross imports of highly enriched uranium from each foreign source for civil purposes, and the gross exports of highly enriched uranium to each foreign country; and if he will give separate figures in each case for highly enriched uranium of an enrichment of 4·20 per cent., and highly enriched uranium of an enrichment of greater than 20 per cent.

Mr. Goodlad: High enriched uranium is defined by Euratom and by the International Atomic Energy Agency as uranium enriched to 20 per cent. or more in the isotope U-235. This definition is used in the United Kingdom. Since May 1979, transfers of high enriched uranium in larger than gram quantities have been:

	Kg
Imports	286
Exports	1,356

These amounts include about 150kg temporarily held in transit in the United Kingdom. The following countries have been involved in transactions totalling more than 1kg:

Imports
Federal Republic of Germany
Netherlands
United States of America
Japan

Exports
Australia
Chile
Federal Republic of Germany
France
United States of America
Venezuela

Details relating to individual countries cannot be disclosed for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Power Stations

Mr. McGuire asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* for each of the power stations listed in his reply to the hon. Member for Makerfield on 2 December, *Official Report*, columns 544-45, what rated output of electricity was used in the original calculation of net effective cost when approval for construction was given; what is the present rated output of each station; whether the net effective cost per kilowatt has been recalculated to take account of any relevant downrating; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list in the *Official Report* for each of the power stations listed in his reply to the hon. Member for Makerfield on 2 December, *Official Report*, columns 544-45, what additional capital expenditure has been incurred on improving safety features since construction was completed; whether the net effective cost of each station has been recalculated to take account of such additional expenditure; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will list in the *Official Report* for each of the power stations listed in his reply to the hon. Member for Makerfield on 2 December, *Official Report*, columns 544-45, the net effective cost in pounds per kilowatt per year *(a)* as originally calculated when approval for construction was given and *(b)* as recalculated on the basis of actual cost of construction and actual time of construction; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if he will list in the *Official Report* for each of the power stations listed in his reply to the hon. Member for Makerfield, on 2 December, *Official Report*, columns 544-45, what availability factor was used in the original calculation of net effective cost when approval for construction was given; what are the highest and lowest availability factors recorded for each station since construction; whether the net effective cost of each station has been recalculated to take account of the actual availability achieved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I shall ask the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to write to the hon. Member.

Highland Fabricators (Contract)

Mr. Eadie asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has on which part of the Eider Jacket contract won by Highland Fabricators is being done in Japan; if he will state the precise work being done in that country; and what information he has as to the reason for this work being carried out abroad.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The part of the Eider Jacket contract being done in Japan is the pile clusters (four units); the pre-use work being done is the supply of heavy section plate. The reason for this work being carried out abroad is *(a)* lowest cost, and *(b)* guaranteed delivery to suit Highlands Fabricators' requirements.

CEGB (Financial Control Systems)

Mr. Wainwright asked the Secretary of State for Energy what action he has taken to strengthen the Central Electricity Generating Board's financial control systems in the light of the observations of Judge Stroyan on 10 December at Teesside Crown court; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: The offences which gave rise to the case were committed between 1976 and 1982. The Central Electricity Generating Board subsequently introduced revised financial control procedures which were the subject of a satisfactory report by the board's auditors, Peat Marwick, Mitchell and Co. At my right hon. Friend's request the auditors provided a subsequent report which was received earlier this year. Like the previous report, it was undertaken with particular reference to the north-eastern region of the board but was of more general application. In it, the auditors concluded that the board's revised procedures constituted an adequate system of control over contract expenditure.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Rother Valley on 4 December, *Official Report*, column 740, if he will publish the formal comments made by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate on exercises of emergency arrangements at *(a)* Heysham 2 on 18 July, *(b)* Heysham 2 on 6 November, *(c)* Hartlepool on 19 November and *(d)* Dungeness B on 21 November.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend the Member for Galloway and Upper

Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), gave on 10 December, at column 174, to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson).

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Rother Valley on 4 December, *Official Report*, column 740, whether the exercises observed by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate at each named power station included full exercises performed by all shifts and teams at the station; what proportion of duly authorised persons was observed in the performance of full exercises; what proportion of other personnel was observed in the performance of full exercises; whether the content and duration of exercises observed varied between shifts and teams; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Nuclear Site Liaison Committees

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans to impose a duty on nuclear site liaison committees to hold their meetings in public.

Mr. Goodlad: This is a matter for the liaison committees themselves.

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Yeovil on 3 December, *Official Report*, column 676, whether the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate work on the review of Bradwell is now complete with the exception of a few issues; if the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate still expects to meet the announced target of spring 1987 for publication of its conclusions on the review; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986]: Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate's work on the CEGB's long-term review of Bradwell is proceeding. At present, the NII still expects to meet its target of the first half of 1987 for publication of its conclusions on the review.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisons (Conditions)

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to announce any plans to improve conditions in prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We have already developed and are committed to maintaining a substantial prison building programme, which constitutes the principal means by which physical conditions in prisons are being improved. The programme includes a total of 20 new establishments, three of which have been completed and taken into use, five are being built and the remainder are at various stages of design or planning, including two new schemes which were added to the programme as a result of the Government's recently announced decisions on public expenditure in 1987-88. In addition we are undertaking an extensive programme of modernisation and redevelopment of the existing prison estate with major capital work in progress or planned at about 100 establishments. Benefits for both staff and inmates will also flow from our fresh start proposals for improved working arrangements, pay systems and management structures, which are the subject of discussions with the Prison Officers Association and the other prison service trade unions.

BBC

Mr. Fallon asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures he follows to ensure that the BBC fulfils its obligations.

Mr. Mellor: It is for the board of governors of the BBC to ensure that the corporation fulfils its obligations on programming and other matters.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the latest crime statistics.

Mr. Mellor: In 1985 the police recorded 3·6 million notifiable offences in England and Wales, an increase of 3 per cent. over 1984. This was below the average increase (5·7 per cent.) over the years 1950-1985. In the 12-month period from October 1985-September 1986 the police recorded 3·8 million notifiable offences in England and Wales, an increase of 6 per cent. over the previous 12 months. This is in line with the average increase for previous years.

Police (Freemasonry)

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on progress in implementing his policy towards police officer membership of masonic institutions; how many police officers are known to be members of such institutions; in which divisions and departments they are; if any action has been taken in respect of them; if any staff resources are currently devoted to investigating such links; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that his policy — which we fully support — is to ensure that Metropolitan police officers are in no doubt as to their obligation both to be and to be seen to be impartial. Advice on freemasonry is contained in "The Principles of Policing and Guidance for Professional Behaviour", which is issued to all members of the force. No staff resources are devoted to establishing the numbers of police officers who are freemasons and no information is available on this or the other matters about which the hon. Member asks.

Mr. Roy Garner

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis showing all oral and verbal recommendations by his officers for reward payments from private sources to Mr. Roy Garner; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to whether any new oral or

verbal recommendations for a reward payment from private sources to Mr. Roy Garner have been made by his officers; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis about the alleged bribe and death threat made by a senior police officer to Superintendent Gerald Wiltshire, and the threat to the career prospects of two police officers under Superintendent Wiltshire's supervision and as to what action was taken in response to these matters when reported; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis has appointed the chief constable of South Yorkshire to investigate the allegations made in the "World in Action" TV programme on 3 November 1986. The investigation is being supervised by the Police Complaints Authority. The Commissioner has stated that Mr. Wright will have full access to all documents relating to earlier investigations. It would not be right for me to seek to intervene while the matter is under investigation.

AIDS

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the prisons in the United Kingdom that have in-patient facilities for treatment of AIDS sufferers.

Mr. Mellor: At the present time there is no diagnosed case of AIDS among the prison population. Inmates who develop AIDS and are ill will be removed to a National Health Service hospital for such treatment as is required and will stay there for as long as the specialist facilities of the National Health Service hospital are needed. If their condition remits and they return to prison such inmates will initially be placed in a selected prison hospital where it will be for the medical officer in charge to decide on the appropriate management of the case. The prison department has contingency plans to provide special care facilities in selected strategically situated establishments in case of need, and the use of such facilities would be an option open to the medical officer. Accommodation at Brixton prison and Risley remand centre is already available for such use and accommodation at other establishments is being considered for use in the longer term as and when necessary.

Prisons (Health Checks)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what health checks are made by prison doctors on new inmates coming into prison; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: All inmates on first reception are questioned about specific aspects of their health and are examined by the medical officer on the day of reception or as soon as possible on the following day.

Police National Computer

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what disciplinary action is taken against a Metropolitan police officer who accesses the police national computer but fails to record the fact that he has done so.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am advised by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the action taken would depend on the circumstances of the case. It could range from a warning about future conduct to criminal proceedings.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the number of police national computer terminals that his answer of 18 November, *Official Report*, column *90*, relates to; whether the policy and checking procedure announced in that answer applies to all computer terminals in the Metropolitan police force area that can obtain information from the police national computer; and if he will break down the figure given in his answer of 2 December, *Official Report*, column *572*, by division and administrative units.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the policy and procedures set out in my answer of 18 November at column *90* relates to all accesses from the 68 dedicated police national computer terminals in his force and from the 157 terminals in his force which are connected by a standard link to the PNC.

I regret that the figure for the number of accesses in August 1986 which was given in my answer to the hon. Member of 2 December at column *572* was incorrect. The total number of accesses (inquiries plus update transactions) to the police national computer by the Metropolitan police during August 1986 was 398,552. It is not possible to break down this figure by division and administrative units as statistical records are not kept in this form.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for reports from chief constables to establish the practice of police forces other than the Metropolitan police in requiring records to be kept of requests for access to the police national computer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A system of automatic logging of accesses to the police national computer is used by 20 forces; other forces keep manual records. The police national computer board is considering whether the system of automatic logging should be mandatory for all forces.

Chief officers were advised to re-examine their procedures for logging accesses to the police national computer in Home Office circular 47/1986, a copy of which is in the Library, and the matter is also being considered by the working party which is producing a code of practice for police computer systems under section 36(4) of the Data Protection Act 1984. In these circumstances, we see no need to call for reports from chief constables.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, further to his answer of 19 November, *Official Report*, column *201*, about the replacement strategy for the police national computer, if he will explain how the operational requirements are going to be communicated to possible suppliers; when this is likely to take place; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A distinction must be drawn between the operational specification referred to in my answer of 19 November, at column *201* and an operational requirement, which is much less detailed.

The operational requirement resulting from the replacement strategy for the police national computer will be made available to all potential suppliers through the usual government procurement procedures and in

accordance with the appropriate EEC/GATT regulations which include the placing of an advertisement in the EEC *Journal*. This will take place once the replacement strategy has been determined.

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements he proposes to make to ensure that the operational requirements for the replacement police national computer *(a)* meet police needs, *(b)* represent the best value for money and *(c)* do not breach data protection requirements; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The operational requirement for the replacement police national computer will be agreed by the police national computer board, which includes representatives of the Home Office, the police service, police authorities and independent advisers from the private sector. The equipment will be procured by open competition and we are satisfied that these arrangements will ensure that it both meets police needs and represents best value for money.

The police service is preparing a code of practice for police computer systems, in consulation with the Data Protection Registrar, under the provisions of section 36(4) of the Data Protection Act 1984. Both the existing and the replacement police national computer will be subject to the provisions of this code of practice.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

Mr. Ground asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how much of the additional money being provided for the criminal injuries compensation scheme in 1987-88 he estimates will be spent on additional staff;

(2) how many additional officers he estimates will be engaged by the Criminal Injuries Compensation board as a result of the additional funds being provided for the criminal injuries compensation scheme in 1987;

(3) how many cases he estimates the Criminal Injuries Compensation board will resolve during the year 1987-88;

(4) what he estimates, on the basis of the planned expenditure on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, the current level of new cases and the backlog of cases awaiting resolution by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board will be at the end of 1987-88.

Mr. Mellor: The Government's plans make provision for the resolution of some 49,500 applications in 1987-88, which it is estimated will leave about 63,000 cases awaiting resolution at the end of March 1988. These plans involve the addition of about 100 staff at a cost of around £800,000 in 1987-88.

Rape

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many men convicted of rape and subsequently released from prison have been reconvicted of the same offence in each year since 1975; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The only information readily available which relates to a sample of adult males discharged from prison department establishments in 1981 is for those discharged from a sentence for any sexual offence. About 3 per cent. of those so discharged were convicted of another sexual offence within two years. Results of this study were published in tables 8(h) and 8(i) of "Prison Statistics England and Wales 1984" (Cmnd. 9622).

Prisons (Damage)

Mr. Bellingham asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost of damage caused to prisons by inmates during the year to July 1986.

Mr. Mellor: Separate records of damage caused by inmates are kept only in cases of major disturbance; otherwise the cost of repair is included in the day-to-day maintenance costs of prison department establishments. The information requested is not therefore available.

"Arts and Disabled People" (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Representatives of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust were invited by the Home Office to take part in discussions together with other organisations representing disabled people to produce acceptable guidance on access for disabled people to cinemas. The trust is one of the organisations which will be consulted when similar guidance is being considered for other premises.

Interport Lists

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the purpose of the interport lists circulated within the immigration service; if he will place a copy of interport list 213/86 in the Library; and what criteria are observed in placing names of individuals or organisations on interport lists.

Mr. Waddington: The interport list is a means of transmitting to ports of entry a variety of operational information and instructions, including action to be taken in individual cases. The criterion for inclusion is a requirement to bring the information to the notice of operational staff at the earliest possible opportunity. It would not be right to place this type of information in the Library.

Leeds-Bradford Airport

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete his review of the Immigration (Ports of Entry) Order, especially with regard to designating Leeds-Bradford airport as a port of entry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: A review of the Immigration (Ports of Entry) Order is approaching completion. I expect to be able to announce the outcome early in the new year.

Burglaries

Mr. Onslow asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what statistics are available to him relating to

the number of burglaries carried out by persons who have been remanded on bail to await trial for a similar offence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The information available relates to the year 1978 and was published in table 11 of the Home Office statistical bulletin 22/81, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

H Wing, Durham Prison

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what grounds exercise has been reduced fom one hour a day to half an hour a day for women in H wing, Durham prison.

Mr. Mellor: Exercise in the open air on weekdays for prisoners in H wing, Durham was reduced to half an hour a day when new gymnasium facilities were taken into use, allowing indoor exercise. These are available to the prisoners for two hours on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and two hours on alternate Saturdays.

Prisoners (Bibles)

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what financial resources are allocated to make provision for copies of the Bible to be made available for each prison inmate who requests one during the financial year 1987-88;

(2) what steps have been taken to ensure that sufficient funds are available to supply copies of the Bible to all prison inmates who request one during the remaining months of the current financial year;

(3) whether copies of the Bible are freely given to all prison inmates if they make such a request of the prison chaplain.

Mr. Mellor: A copy of the Bible is normally made available to any inmate who asks for it for the period of his stay in prison. Earlier in the year reserve stocks of new Bibles became exhausted, but funds have now been made available to purchase additional Bibles and distribute them to establishments before the end of the financial year. Financial allocations for 1987-88 have not yet been approved.

Metropolitan Police Instruction Book

Mr. Alex Carlile asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will give the reasons for the amendment issued on 4 November to chapter 6, paragraph 9(1) of the Metropolitan police instruction book, regarding collaboration between police officers in the making of their notes; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what consultations were carried out with regard to the amendment issued on 4 November to chapter 6, paragraph 9(1) of the Metropolitan police instruction book in particular, and whether those consulted included the Bar Council, the Law Society, the Criminal Bar Association and the Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am advised by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the instruction book was amended in order to remove the distinction in making notes between simple and complex cases and to provide for a standard practice. The way in which the police gather and record evidence in individual cases is an operational matter for them to decide, subject to the views of the court of trial. I understand that outside bodies were not consulted.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

Mr. Clay asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) of 8 December, *Official Report*, column 82, what information he has as to whether Dr. Black's recollection of his conversation with Dr. Skuse in May 1975 is also supported by a contemporaneous note; and if he will say when he first received this information.

Mr. Mellor: On 1 December my right hon. Friend received from my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) various documents relating to the review of the safety of the convictions in the Birmingham pub bombings case. These included a transcript of the "World in Action" programme to be broadcast that evening in which Dr. Black refers to notes which he took when he saw Dr. Skuse. Also included was an affidavit by Dr. Black in which he refers to having noted at the time his coversation with Dr. Skuse and to having summarised the details in a letter which he sent to the defence solicitors on 11 June 1975. A copy of the letter was attached to the affidavit.

Unclaimed Vehicles

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 8 December to the hon. Member for Leicester, East, *Official Report*, columns 77-78, regarding unclaimed vehicles, for how long unclaimed vehicles are held; how they are disposed of; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Where a vehicle which has been removed to a car pound is not claimed within seven days, the police follow the procedures laid down in the Removal and Disposal of Vehicles Regulations 1986. A notice is sent to the address of the last known keeper of the vehicle, and where no response is received within the next 21 days further enquiries are undertaken. If no claim is made, vehicles are sold through auction or for scrap approximately eight weeks after removal.

Mr. Ken McGinley

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations have been received from officers of the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association on the subject of alleged monitoring of telephone calls to and from Mr. Ken McGinley, chairman of that organisation; what were the dates of such representations; what reply has been sent; and on what date.

Mr. Hurd Mr. McGinley, chairman of the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association wrote to me about this subject on 18 September. I regret that a reply was not sent until 15 December. A copy of this reply has been sent to the hon. Member.

Media Policy (Vienna Conference)

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what role his Department played in the

recent Council of Europe conference on mass media policy in Vienna; what implications arose for the United Kingdom; what resolutions were adopted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the outcome of the conference of European Ministers on mass media policy.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986]: I represented the United Kingdom at the conference and Home Office officials played a full part in its preparation through the mass media committees of the Council of Europe. The conference adopted two resolutions: on the promotion of European audiovisual production and on public and private broadcasting. The major decision of the conference, the terms of which were proposed by the United Kingdom, was to agree the rapid preparation of a binding convention on transfrontier broadcasting, building on existing Council of Europe instruments. Home Office officials will also play a full part in that work, which I hope can be completed speedily. European broadcasting Ministers agreed to meet again in a second conference in Stockholm in 1988.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

Mr. McTaggart asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for compensation have been made to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in each of the last six years.

Mr. Mellor: The information requested is published today in the 22nd report of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (Cm. 42, paragraph 2).

Mr. McTaggart asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the level of staffing of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for each of the last six years.

Mr. Mellor: The number of staff in post at the Board, on 1 April each year from 1981 to 1986, was as follows (part-time staff being each counted as one-half):

Date	*Staff in post*
1 April 1981	155
1 April 1982	163
1 April 1983	163
1 April 1984	182
1 April 1985	189
1 April 1986	202·5

The number of staff in post on 1 December 1986 was 208·5.

Mr. McTaggart asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average length of time taken in dealing with applications to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Information is not available on the average length of time taken to deal with applications to the Board. As stated in the Board's annual report for 1985-86, published today (Cm. 42, paragraph 5), 70 per cent. of cases resolved in the last financial year were resolved within a year of application.

Hans Raj

Mr. Nellist asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to give a substantive reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East, dated 4 August regarding the case of Hans Raj ref. R: 254009/4(5).

Mr. Waddington: Shortly.

Prisons (AIDS)

Mr. Alex Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals for setting up AIDS treatment units in *(a)* Brixton prison or *(b)* elsewhere within the prison system: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The Prison Department's contingency plans for AIDS include the provision of special care facilities in selected strategically situated establishments in case of need for inmates who have developed the full disease but whose medical management does not for the time being call for the specialist treatment facilities of the National Health Service. As an interim measure, some accommodation has already been set aside at Brixton prison and Risley remand centre, and similar measures at other establishments are being explored. The possibility of setting up a permanent, purpose-designed care unit of 12 beds at Brixton for patients with AIDS and other infective conditions is being considered.

Greater Manchester (Civil Defence)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration he has given to the severe financial restrictions the Greater Manchester fire and civil defence authority is facing on both revenue and capital accounts; what representations he has received on the matter; if he will now increase the authority's expenditure limit and capital allocation for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Alan Richard Knowlden (Escape)

Mr. Stevens asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received the report of the inquiry conducted by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons into the escape of Alan Richard Knowlden from St. Mary's hospital, Paddington, on 8 April; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: The report of the inquiry of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons into this escape is published today (HC 80). I am grateful for the work which he and his colleagues put into the inquiry and for the comprehensive report he has submitted.

The events which occasioned the inquiry were as follows. On 30 March Alan Richard Knowlden, a remand prisoner at Wormwood Scrubs prison, who had been placed provisionally in category A (the highest security category), attacked a prison officer and, in the ensuing scuffle, sustained a broken nose. The medical officer decided that the broken nose required treatment and that Knowlden should be seen by a specialist. The specialist advised an operation within 10 days. This could not be carried out in a prison hospital and arrangements were

made for Knowlden to be admitted to St. Mary's hospital, Paddington. On 7 April Knowlden was removed to the hospital. On the morning of 8 April three or four men armed with various weapons broke into the ward where he was located, attacked the escort and escaped with Knowlden.

Her Majesty's Inspector's report records his view, which I endorse, that at the time of the escape the officers who were in charge of Knowlden acted with considerable bravery and determination.

The report describes the procedures relating to the security classification of prisoners and the movement of category A prisoners for medical treatment; and discusses the medical facilities available at HM prison Wormwood Scrubs and in the prison system as a whole. It goes on to describe Knowlden's history and security classification, his conduct in prison, the events which led to the decision to move him to St. Mary's hospital, Paddington, the arrangements for the transfer and the escape. It identifies the factors which may have contributed to the escape and contains 21 recommendations aimed at reducing the risks of such an escape in future.

HM Chief Inspector draws the following main conclusions from his inquiry. The key to the escape lay in the fact that, at the crucial time Knowlden was not being held in the maximum security prison to which he had been remanded but in the relatively insecure conditions of St. Mary's hospital. The instructions which are designed to ensure that transfers to outside hospital are made only as a last resort were not followed, though the report recognises that, even if they had been, the decision to send Knowlden to St. Mary's would probably have been the same. HM Chief Inspector concludes that there was a tendency on the part of staff to apply the prescribed procedures less strictly to some category A prisoners than to others, and he attributes this to the fact that staff, working under pressure and familiar with the problems posed by category A prisoners, had come to see them as varying in escape risk and concentrated their attention on the exceptionally dangerous prisoners such as terrorists, spies and notorious gangsters. He also concludes that the existing instructions are unsatisfactory in a number of respects, for example as regards their accessibility and comprehensiveness; and that the respective responsibilities of medical and non-medical staff need to be clarified. HM Chief Inspector observes that it will not be possible to ensure that a similar escape does not take place again, but that more can be done to deter attempts. His recommendations are framed with this objective in mind.

I accept HM Chief Inspector's conclusions and recommendations, and revised instructions on the security procedures for category A prisoners, which take these recommendations into account, have already been issued.

The escape into which HM Chief Inspector has inquired was a serious breach of security. With the help of his report, the lessons to be learned from the escape have been learned by all concerned and are being translated into action.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Value Added Tax

90. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received in connection with the level of value added tax threshold and the effect on employment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: A number of representations about the level of the VAT threshold have been received this year, the majority calling for the threshold to be increased. Very few mentioned any effect on employment.

Mr. Robert Sheldon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the increase in revenue for 1986-87 and 1987-88 arising from the introduction of new penalties for late value added tax returns.

Mr. Lawson: I shall let the right hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

European Community (Duty-free Sales)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with fellow European Community Ministers about the continuation of duty-free sales within member states; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Fallon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing, for the latest years now available, identifiable public expenditure by function in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the United Kingdom expressed *(a)* in cash terms, *(b)* as a percentage of United Kingdom total identifiable public expenditure, *(c)* as an amount per capita and *(d)* as an amount per capita expressed as a percentage of the United Kingdom amount per capita.

Mr. MacGregor: The term "identifiable expenditure" refers to expenditure that can be identified from official reports as having been incurred in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Total identifiable expenditure accounts for just over 80 per cent. of total departmental public expenditure.

The remaining, unidentifiable expenditure includes expenditure on defence, overseas aid and other overseas services which are deemed to have been incurred on behalf of the United Kingdom as a whole. Also included in this category are Government net lending to, and the market and overseas borrowing of, the public corporations (including the nationalised industries) due to the difficulty in allocating this expenditure between countries.

Tables 1 to 5 show figures of indentifiable public expenditure according to main function in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These are the only available figures comparing public expenditure by function in the four countries of the United Kingdom. The analysis covers 1981-82 to 1985-86, the only period for which data are available on a consistent basis.

Table 6 compares, for the latest year, 1985-86 expenditure in the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland

programmes with the total indentifiable expenditure in the respective countries. It shows that identifiable expenditure has a wider coverage than expenditure within the responsibility of the Secretaries of State in the case of Scotland or Wales, and in the case of Northern Ireland, it has a slightly wider coverage than the Northern Ireland departments in the public expenditure survey. This table also shows total unidentifiable expenditure by function for 1985-86.

In some cases expenditure which cannot be separately identified for England, Scotland or Wales can be allocated to Great Britian and in these circumstances it is appropriate to compare Northern Ireland allocated expenditure with that allocated to Great Britain. Tables 7a and 7b provide this analysis over the five-year period.

The extent to which expenditure can be identified may vary from year to year and between countries. The coverage of particular functions can also vary between countries — for example, in Northern Ireland, expenditure on arts and libraries is contained in the education category.

The tables use the terms and definitions of the last public expenditure White Paper "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1986-87 to 1988-89" (Cmnd 9702) but they incorporate later information.

Table 1a: Identifiable public expenditure 1981-82

£ million

	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure* *England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	686·2	193·0	70·1	109·1	1,058·4	64·8	18·2	6·6	10·3
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	2,546·8	638·1	355·1	362·3	3,902·3	65·3	16·4	9·1	9·3
Arts and Libraries	492·2	71·5	29·5	—	593·2	83·0	12·1	5·0	—
Roads and Transport	3,816·9	305·8	300·4	125·4	4,748·5	80·4	10·7	6·3	2·6
Housing	3,129·7	721·8	122·8	234·1	4,208·4	74·4	17·2	2·9	5·6
Other Environmental Services	2,895·0	465·2	239·8	128·7	3,728·7	77·6	12·5	6·4	3·5
Law, Order and Protective Services	2,965·3	368·9	152·8	361·3	3,848·3	77·1	9·6	4·0	9·4
Education and Science	11,496·6	1,730·3	719·6	499·9	14,446·4	79·6	12·0	5·0	3·5
Health and Personal Social Services	12,729·1	1,769·4	782·3	546·2	15,827·0	80·4	11·2	4·9	3·5
Social Security	23,769·7	2,759·4	1,495·0	875·5	28,899·6	82·2	9·5	5·2	3·0
Other Public Services	799·8	194·6	76·4	34·8	1,105·6	72·3	17·6	6·9	3·1
Common Services	547·6	63·1	26·6	26·7	664·0	82·5	9·5	4·0	4·0
Planning Total	65,874·9	9,481·1	4,370·4	3,304·0	83,030·4	79·3	11·4	5·3	4·0

Table 1b Identifiable public expenditure 1981-82

£ per head

	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head* *England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	14·7	37·3	24·9	70·9	18·8	78·2	198·4	132·4	377·1
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	54·4	123·2	126·2	235·6	69·2	78·6	178·0	182·4	340·5
Arts and Libraries	10·5	13·8	10·5	—	10·5	100·0	131·4	100·0	—
Roads and Transport	81·5	97·6	106·8	81·5	84·3	96·7	115·8	126·7	96·7
Housing	66·8	139·3	43·6	152·2	74·7	89·4	186·5	58·4	203·7
Other Environmental Services	61·8	89·8	85·2	83·7	66·2	93·4	135·6	128·7	126·4
Law, Order and Protective Services	63·3	71·2	54·3	234·9	68·3	92·7	104·2	79·5	343·9
Education and Science	245·5	334·0	255·7	325·0	256·4	95·7	130·3	99·7	126·8
Health and Personal Social Services	271·9	341·6	278·0	355·1	280·9	96·8	121·6	99·0	126·4
Social Security	507·7	532·7	531·3	569·2	512·8	99·0	103·9	103·6	111·0
Other Public Services	17·1	37·6	27·1	22·6	19·6	87·2	191·8	138·3	115·3
Common Services	11·7	12·2	9·5	17·4	11·8	99·2	103·4	80·5	147·5
Planning Total	1,407·0	1,830·3	1,553·1	2,148·2	1,473·4	95·5	124·2	105·4	145·8

Table 2a Identifiable public expenditure 1982-83

£ million

	England	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*	*As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure* *England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	694·7	191·3	78·1	144·0	1,108·1	62·7	17·3	7·0	13·0
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	2,769·3	664·5	339·7	363·1	4,136·6	66·9	16·1	8·2	8·8

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Arts and Libraries	549·6	74·3	32·7	—	656·6	83·7	11·3	5·0	—
Roads and Transport	4,368·9	537·4	323·0	110·8	5,340·1	81·8	10·1	6·0	2·1
Housing	2,683·7	690·9	127·1	284·4	3,786·1	70·9	18·2	3·4	7·5
Other Environmental Services	3,297·9	496·7	267·6	140·2	4,202·4	78·5	11·8	6·4	3·3
Law, Order and Protective Services	3,319·2	408·8	171·9	380·9	4,280·8	77·5	9·5	4·0	8·9
Education and Science	12,321·7	1,883·9	774·0	535·5	15,515·1	79·4	12·1	5·0	3·5
Health and Personal Social Services	13,864·5	1,911·4	858·8	589·1	17,223·8	80·5	11·1	5·0	3·4
Social Security	27,151·2	3,123·0	1,702·5	1,005·1	32,981·8	82·3	9·5	5·2	3·0
Other Public Services	852·4	196·1	78·5	37·3	1,164·3	73·2	16·8	6·7	3·2
Common Services	596·9	68·2	29·4	28·6	723·1	82·5	9·4	4·1	4·0
Planning Total	72,470·0	10,246·5	4,783·3	3,619·0	91,118·8	79·5	11·2	5·2	4·0

Table 2b Identifiable public expenditure 1982-83

£ per head

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	14·8	37·0	27·8	93·6	19·7	75·1	187·8	141·1	475·1
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	59·2	128·6	121·0	236·1	73·5	80·5	175·0	164·6	321·2
Arts and Libraries	11·7	14·4	11·6	—	11·7	100·0	123·1	99·1	—
Roads and Transport	93·4	104·0	115·1	72·0	94·8	98·5	109·7	121·4	75·9
Housing	57·4	133·7	45·3	184·9	67·2	85·4	199·0	67·4	275·1
Other Environmental Services	70·5	96·1	95·3	91·2	74·6	94·5	128·8	127·7	122·3
Law, Order and Protective Services	70·9	79·1	61·2	247·7	76·0	93·3	104·1	80·5	325·9
Education and Science	263·3	364·6	275·7	348·2	275·5	95·6	132·3	100·1	126·4
Health and Personal Social Services	296·3	369·9	305·9	383·0	305·9	96·9	120·9	100·0	125·2
Social Security	580·2	604·4	606·5	653·5	585·8	99·0	103·2	103·5	111·6
Other Public Services	18·2	38·0	28·0	24·3	20·7	87·9	183·6	135·3	117·4
Common Services	12·8	13·2	10·5	18·6	12·8	100·0	103·1	82·0	145·3
Planning Total	1,548·7	1,983·1	1,704·1	2,353·1	1,618·3	95·7	122·5	105·3	145·4

Table 3a Identifiable public expenditure 1983-84

£ million

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	711·2	201·5	95·8	150·0	1,158·5	61·4	17·4	8·3	12·9
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	3,134·3	615·4	328·8	376·0	4,454·5	70·4	13·8	7·4	8·4
Arts and Libraries	593·4	75·2	34·6	—	703·2	84·4	10·7	4·9	—
Roads and Transport	4,496·3	546·7	376·0	122·5	5,541·5	81·1	9·9	6·8	2·2
Housing	3,111·3	723·8	196·8	314·8	4,346·7	71·6	16·7	4·5	7·2
Other Environmental Services	3,468·5	517·7	277·1	152·8	4,416·1	78·5	11·7	6·3	3·5
Law, Order and Protective Services	3,631·7	458·7	190·0	400·6	4,681·0	77·6	9·8	4·1	8·6
Education and Science	12,982·7	1,968·2	816·8	565·5	16,333·2	79·5	12·1	5·0	3·5
Health and Personal Social Services	14,710·1	2,036·2	916·0	634·2	18,296·5	80·4	11·1	5·0	3·5
Social Security	29,378·5	3,387·3	1,854·9	1,094·4	35,715·1	82·3	9·5	5·2	3·1
Other Public Services	1,066·1	237·0	102·6	45·2	1,450·9	73·5	16·3	7·1	3·1
Common Services	−78·9	4·7	1·1	33·3	−39·8	198·2	−11·8	−2·8	−83·7
Planning Total	77,205·2	10,772·4	5,190·5	3,889·3	97,057·4	79·5	11·1	5·3	4·0

Table 3b Identifiable public expenditure 1983-84

£ per head

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	15·2	39·1	34·1	97·2	20·6	73·8	189·8	165·5	471·8
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	66·9	119·5	117·1	243·7	79·1	84·6	151·1	148·0	308·1

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Arts and Libraries	12·7	14·6	12·3	—	12·5	101·6	116·8	98·4	—
Roads and Transport	96·0	106·2	133·9	79·4	98·3	97·7	108·0	136·2	80·8
Housing	66·4	140·5	70·1	204·0	77·1	86·1	182·2	90·9	264·6
Other Environmental Services	74·0	100·5	98·7	99·0	78·4	94·4	128·2	125·9	126·3
Law, Order and Protective Services	77·5	89·1	67·7	259·6	83·1	93·3	107·2	81·5	312·4
Education and Science	277·1	382·2	290·9	366·5	289·9	95·6	131·8	100·3	126·4
Health and Personal Social Services	314·0	395·4	326·2	411·0	324·7	96·7	121·8	100·5	126·6
Social Security	627·1	657·7	660·6	709·3	633·8	98·9	103·8	104·2	111·9
Other Public Services	22·8	46·0	36·5	29·3	25·7	88·7	179·0	142·0	114·0
Common Services	−1·7	0·9	0·4	21·6	−0·7	242·9	−128·6	−57·1	−3,085·7
Planning Total	1,648·1	2,091·7	1,848·5	2,520·6	1,722·5	95·7	121·4	107·3	146·3

Table 4a Identifiable public expenditure 1984-85

£ million

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	681·2	233·4	99·6	160·6	1,174·8	58·0	19·9	8·5	13·7
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	3,278·0	709·4	345·7	420·6	4,753·7	69·0	14·9	7·3	8·8
Arts and Libraries	629·6	81·2	36·1	—	746·9	84·3	10·9	4·8	—
Roads and Transport	4,681·6	558·6	326·5	122·2	5,688·9	82·3	9·8	5·7	2·1
Housing	3,212·1	654·6	140·7	336·8	4,344·2	73·9	15·1	3·2	7·8
Other Environmental Services	3,740·5	533·5	263·2	157·8	4,695·0	79·7	11·4	5·6	3·4
Law, Order and Protective Services	4,038·0	493·9	206·6	431·2	5,169·7	78·1	9·6	4·0	8·3
Education and Science	13,485·0	2,008·5	839·3	592·6	16,925·4	79·7	11·9	5·0	3·5
Health and Personal Social Services	15,747·9	2,181·6	985·6	665·8	19,580·9	80·4	11·1	5·0	3·4
Social Security	31,857·2	3,662·3	2,014·8	1,182·6	38,716·9	82·3	9·5	5·2	3·1
Other Public Services	1,180·1	247·3	106·1	49·1	1,582·6	74·6	15·6	6·7	3·1
Common Services	−11·7	12·5	6·4	38·6	45·8	−25·5	27·3	14·0	84·3
Planning Total	82,519·5	11,376·8	5,370·6	4,157·9	103,424·8	79·8	11·0	5·2	4·0

Table 4b Identifiable public expenditure 1984-85

£ per head

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	14·5	45·4	35·5	103·6	20·8	69·7	218·3	170·7	498·1
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	69·8	137·9	123·2	271·4	84·2	82·9	163·8	146·3	322·3
Arts and Libraries	13·4	15·8	12·9	—	13·2	101·5	119·7	97·7	—
Roads and Transport	99·7	108·6	116·3	78·8	100·8	98·9	107·7	115·4	78·2
Housing	68·4	127·2	50·1	217·3	76·9	88·9	165·4	65·1	282·6
Other Environmental Services	79·7	103·7	93·8	101·8	83·2	95·8	124·6	112·7	122·4
Law, Order and Protective Services	86·0	96·0	73·6	278·2	91·6	93·9	104·8	80·3	303·7
Education and Science	287·2	390·3	299·0	382·3	299·8	95·8	130·2	99·7	127·5
Health and Personal Social Services	335·4	423·9	351·1	429·5	346·8	96·7	122·2	101·2	123·8
Social Security	678·4	711·7	717·8	763·0	685·8	98·9	103·8	104·7	111·3
Other Public Services	25·1	48·1	37·8	31·7	28·0	89·6	171·8	135·0	113·2
Common Services	−0·2	2·4	2·3	24·9	0·8	−25·0	300·0	287·5	3,112·5
Planning Total	1,757·4	2,210·8	1,913·3	2,682·5	1,831·9	95·9	120·7	104·4	146·4

Table 5a Identifiable public expenditure 1985-86

£ million

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	714·3	265·2	107·5	170·8	1,257·8	56·8	21·1	8·5	13·6
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	3,377·6	774·0	383·1	442·1	4976·8	67·9	15·6	7·7	8·9

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Arts and Libraries	662·1	86·9	38·2	—	787·2	84·1	11·0	4·9	—
Roads and Transport	4,721·7	600·7	346·0	123·6	5,792·0	81·5	10·4	6·0	2·1
Housing	2,684·0	618·2	129·9	357·0	3,789·1	70·8	16·3	3·4	9·4
Other Environmental Services	3,632·9	583·3	286·5	165·3	4,668·0	77·8	12·5	6·1	3·5
Law, Order and Protective Services	4,251·1	525·6	212·9	472·6	5,462·2	77·8	9·6	3·9	8·7
Education and Science	13,980·8	2,090·8	848·9	614·0	17,534·5	79·7	11·9	4·8	3·5
Health and Personal Social Services	16,637·5	2,311·1	1,051·6	699·6	20,699·8	80·4	11·2	5·1	3·4
Social Security	34,642·7	4,009·6	2,202·8	1,293·1	42,148·2	82·2	9·5	5·2	3·1
Other Public Services	1,302·4	254·6	111·0	53·8	1,721·8	75·6	14·8	6·4	3·1
Common Services	4·0	15·3	8·6	45·9	73·8	5·4	20·7	11·7	62·2
Planning Total	86,611·1	12,135·3	5,727·0	4,437·8	108,911·2	79·5	11·1	5·3	4·1

Table 5b Identifiable public expenditure 1985-86

£ per head

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head: England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	15·2	51·6	38·2	109·6	22·2	68·5	232·4	172·1	493·7
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	71·7	150·7	136·2	283·8	87·9	81·6	171·4	154·9	322·9
Arts and Libraries	14·1	16·9	13·6	—	13·9	101·4	121·6	97·8	—
Roads and Transport	100·2	116·9	123·0	79·3	102·3	97·9	114·3	120·2	77·5
Housing	57·0	120·3	46·2	229·1	66·9	85·2	179·8	69·1	342·5
Other Environmental Services	77·1	113·5	101·9	106·1	82·4	93·6	137·7	123·7	128·8
Law, Order and Protective Services	90·2	102·3	75·7	303·3	96·5	93·5	106·0	78·4	314·3
Education and Science	296·8	407·0	301·9	394·1	309·7	95·8	131·4	97·5	127·3
Health and Personal Social Services	353·1	449·9	374·0	449·0	365·6	96·6	123·1	102·3	122·8
Social Security	735·3	780·5	783·4	830·0	744·4	98·8	104·8	105·2	111·5
Other Public Services	27·6	49·6	39·5	34·5	30·4	90·8	163·2	129·9	113·5
Common Services	0·1	3·0	3·1	29·5	1·3	7·7	230·8	238·5	2,269·2
Planning Total	1,838·4	2,362·3	2,036·6	2,848·4	1,923·6	95·6	122·8	105·9	148·1

Table 6 Planning total analysed by territorial area 1985-86

£ million

	England	Programme 15[2]	Scotland Other	Total	Programme 16[2]	Wales Other	Total	Programme 17[2]	Northern Ireland Other	Total	Total	Non Identified[1]	United Kingdom
Defence												18,013·6	18,013·6
Overseas services												2,649·8	2,649·8
Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry	714·3	212·1	53·1	265·2	87·0	20·5	107·5	79·1	91·7	170·8	1,257·0	1,641·8	2,899·6
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	3,377·6	328·5	445·5	774·0	154·3	228·8	383·1	438·4	3·7	442·1	4,976·8	2,074·2	7,051·0
Arts and Libraries	662·1	73·3	13·6	86·9	30·4	7·8	38·2				787·2	39·3	826·5
Roads and Transport	4,721·7	599·1	1·6	600·7	281·0	65·0	346·0	123·6		123·6	5,792·0	−240·5	5,551·5
Housing	2,684·0	618·2		618·2	129·9		129·9	357·0		357·0	3,789·1		3,789·1
Other Environmental Services	3,632·9	576·8	6·5	583·3	281·1	5·4	286·5	165·3		165·3	4,668·0	248·3	4,916·3
Law, Order and Protective Services	4,251·1	511·7	13·9	525·6		212·9	212·9	457·1	15·5	472·6	5,462·2	913·8	6,376·0
Education and Science	13,980·8	1,821·3	269·5	2,090·8	710·0	138·9	848·9	612·2	1·8	614·0	17,534·5	75·7	17,610·2
Health and Personal Social Services	16,637·5	2,311·1		2,311·1	1,051·6		1,051·6	699·6		699·6	20,699·8	22·6	20,722·4
Social Security	34,642·7		4,009·6	4,009·6		2,202·8	2,202·8	1,282·1	11·0	1,293·1	42,148·2	375·5	42,523·7
Other Public Services	1,302·4	102·8	151·8	254·6	34·2	76·8	111·0	25·7	28·1	53·8	1,721·8	425·5	2,147·3
Common Services	4·0		15·3	15·3		8·6	8·6	39·8	6·1	45·9	73·8	1,033·8	1,107·6
Total Expenditure on Programmes	86,611·1	7,154·9	4,980·4	12,135·3	2,759·5	2,967·5	5,727·0	4,279·9	157·9	4,437·8	108,911·2	27,273·4	136,184·6
Privatisation Proceeds												−2,701·0	−2,701·0
Adjustment[3]												100·0	100·0
Planning Total	86,611·1	7,154·9	4,980·4	12,135·3	2,759·5	2,967·5	5,727·0	4,279·9	157·9	4,437·8	108,911·2	24,672·4	133,583·6

[1] Including government net lending to, and the market and overseas borrowing of, the nationalised industries and other public corporations.
[2] Programmes 15, 16 and 17 relate to the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland programmes shown in Table 2.11 of the 1986 public expenditure White Paper. (Cmnd. 9702).
[3] An adjustment to bring the overall total into line with the latest estimate of outturn for 1985-86, as published in Table 2.3 of the Autumn Statement.

Table 7a. Identifiable Public Expenditure 1981-82 to 1985-86[1]

£ million

	Great Britain	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom Identified	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure: Great Britain	Northern Ireland
1981-82	84,144·5	3,305·1	87,449·6	96·2	3·8
1982-83	90,381·9	3,606·9	93,988·8	96·2	3·8
1983-84	96,129·0	3,873·2	100,002·2	96·1	3·9
1984-85	103,969·8	4,142·7	108,112·5	96·2	3·8
1985-86	107,190·2	4,430·6	111,620·8	96·0	4·0

[1] Financing of nationalised industries expenditure can be allocated between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and has therefore been included in this table.

Table 7b Identifiable Public Expenditure 1981-82 to 1985-86[1]

£ per head

	Great Britain	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom Identified	As a percentage of United Kingdom identifiable expenditure per head: Great Britain	Northern Ireland
1981-82	1,535·1	2,149·0	1,551·8	98·9	138·5
1982-83	1,650·3	2,345·2	1,669·3	98·9	140·5
1983-84	1,754·1	2,510·2	1,774·8	98·8	141·4
1984-85	1,893·5	2,672·7	1,914·9	98·9	139·6
1985-86	1,946·8	2,843·8	1,971·5	98·7	144·2

[1] Financing of nationalised industries expenditure can be allocated between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and has therefore been included in this table.

Taxation

Mr. Squire asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table which sets out for a two-child family on *(a)* half average earnings, *(b)* three quarters average earnings, *(c)* average earnings, *(d)* one and a half average earnings, *(e)* twice average earnings, *(f)* five times average earnings and *(g)* 10 times average earnings the increase in net income to be derived from (i) a 1p cut in the standard rate of income tax in the 1987-88 financial year, (ii) an increase in personal allowances, over and above indexation, which incurred the same cost as a 1p cut in standard rate income tax, (iii) an increase in child benefit which incurred the same cost as a 1p cut in standard rate income tax, both assuming and not assuming similar increases in the supplementary benefit children's rates, (iv) the introduction of a reduced rate tax band of 25 per cent. at the same cost as a 1p cut in standard rate income tax, showing what band of income the reduced rate would cover and (v) the introduction of a reduced rate tax band of 20 per cent. at the same cost as a 1p cut in standard rate income tax, showing what band of income the reduced rate would cover.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information based on full year direct revenue or expenditure costs at forecast 1987-88 levels is in the table. The income tax calculations assume that all the main personal allowances would be increased by the same percentage. Each of the measures would have a cost of about £1,300 million in a full year at 1987-88 income levels. The income tax changes have been made on top of the illustrative income tax regime resulting from 3·25 per cent. indexation as in "Autumn Statement 1986" (Cmnd. 14). It has also been assumed that the only income tax allowance or relief available to the married couple is the married man's allowance and that the wife has no earnings.

Increase in net income after tax (£ per week) compared with indexation in 1987-88 for married man with two children

Multiple of average earnings[1]

	½	¾	1	1½	2	5	10
Increase derived from:							
(i) 1p cut in basic rate	0·41	0·98	1·55	2·68	3·42	3·42	3·42
(ii) 6 per cent. increase in personal allowances	1·23	1·23	1·23	1·23	1·69	2·54	2·54
(iii) increase in child benefit							
£2·00 per week[2]	4·00	4·00	4·00	4·00	4·00	4·00	4·00
£2·60 per week[3]	5·20	5·20	5·20	5·20	5·20	5·20	5·20
(iv) 25 per cent. lower rate band on £1,480 of taxable income	1·14	1·14	1·14	1·14	1·14	1·14	1·14
(v) 20 per cent. lower rate band on £620 of taxable income	1·07	1·07	1·07	1·07	1·07	1·07	1·07

[1] Average earnings assumed to be £227·3 per week, an increase of 6·5 per cent. on 1986-87.
[2] Assuming a corresponding change in supplementary benefit rates.
[3] Assuming no change in supplementary benefit rates.

Payroll Giving

Mr. Colvin asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will increase the £100 limit on charitable donations qualifying for tax relief under the new payroll giving scheme.

Mr. Lawson: I propose to introduce legislation in the next Finance Bill to increase the annual limit to £120—or £10 a month—with effect from 6 April 1987.

Local Authorities (Capital Projects)

Mr. Michael Forsyth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the financial effects of local authorities undertaking capital projects and arranging leaseback deals with other public sector organisations or companies in which they have a majority interest.

Mr. MacGregor [*pursuant to his reply*, 9 December 1986, c. *137*]: Such schemes will in general boost nominal demand in the economy, implying higher interest rates than would otherwise be the case. This will tend to displace capital projects elsewhere in the economy. Whether the net effect is beneficial depends on the commercial viability of the initial project.

Strip Searches

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what categories of passenger are exempt from being stripped and searched by Customs and Excise staff on arrival at United Kingdom ports of entry; and what action is taken against any passenger who refuses to agree to being stripped and searched.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *425-26*]: Exemption from search is confined to very limited categories of persons falling to be considered under the Diplomatic Privilege Act 1964, the State Immunity Act 1978 or the International Organisations Act 1968. Typically these categories could involve only such as a sovereign or head of state or accredited diplomats and their families.

Any passenger refusing to agree to be searched has the right to be taken before either a superior of the officer requiring the search to be made or a justice of the peace who, if satisfied that the search is justified, will direct accordingly.

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many men, women and young people aged under 18 years have been stripped and searched by Customs and Excise staff at Leeds/Bradford airport in the current year to date.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *425-26*]: Customs search records do not identify separately those persons who have been stripped and searched or indicate age groups. In the year to date 228 passengers have been searched at Leeds/Bradford airport of whom 179 were male and 49 female.

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many visitors to the United Kingdom, including those holding a visitor's visa, have been stripped and searched at terminals 3 and 4 at Heathrow airport in the current year to date.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *425-26*]: Customs search records do not identify separately those persons who have been stripped and searched or distinguish between visitors and United Kingdom residents. In the year to date some 7,770 and 4,080 passengers respectively have been searched at terminals 3 and 4 at Heathrow airport.

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what instructions have been issued to Customs and Excise staff at ports of entry in the United Kingdom concerning the stripping and searching of passengers; and if he will place a copy of such instructions in the Library.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *425-26*]: Customs officers are instructed that power to search passengers is provided for under section 164 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that dutiable, prohibited or restricted goods are being carried. A copy of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 is already held in the Library. It is not the practice to publish the Department's internal standing instructions.

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what clothing is available at Leeds/Bradford airport and other ports of entry in the United Kingdom for passengers to wear whilst their own clothing is being searched by Customs and Excise staff.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *425-26*]: At Leeds/Bradford airport and other ports of entry searches by Customs officers are usually conducted step-by-step and in most cases the limited extent of search precludes the need to provide alternative clothing or blankets but such provision is available as required in appropriate cases.

DEFENCE

Chemical Weapons

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list in the *Official Report* which countries are known to maintain stocks of chemical weapons.

Mr. Stanley: The Soviet Union is capable of engaging in chemical warfare on a very large scale. Among the NATO allies the United States currently possesses a limited retaliatory capability. The French Government have recently announced that France should possess an appropriate deterrent capacity of chemical weapons. A UN fact-finding mission in 1986 has concluded that Iraqi forces used chemical weapons in the Gulf conflict. Worldwide, there may be more than 20 nations which now either possess chemical weapons or are looking at the option of acquiring them. I cannot provide further details on a non-classified basis.

Crown Proceedings Act 1947

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of any information and

advice that has been put to Her Majesty's forces following his decision to support repeal of section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947.

Mr. Freeman: Initial notification of our decision that section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947 should be repealed was signalled to the services on 8 December. This will be followed shortly by more comprehensive guidance which will be incorporated in standing instructions in due course.

It is not our practice to place in the Library copies of internal administrative communications such as these.

Service Personnel (Compensation)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 8 December, *Official Report*, column *123*, if his Department will pay any compensation that becomes due from one service person to another following a successful claim of negligence.

Mr. Freeman: Where one service man is sued by another for alleged negligence arising out of the execution of his duties my Department will stand behind him and will meet the cost of any damages awarded against him.

DROPS

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the preference of his Department's selection team in the selection of demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system trailists in 1983 as regards a flat flatrack system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Department selected Foden Trucks Ltd. and Scammell Motors as main contractors for the supply of the trails equipment, with Powell Duffryn Ltd. and Multilift (UK) Ltd. being chosen to supply three types of loading handling systems. Messrs Multilift and Marshalls of Cambridge provided three designs of flatracks each. Messrs Craven Tasker and the Boughton Group supplied trailers. Messrs Blatchford and EKA Ltd. provided rail transfer equipment.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish details of briefings on the flat flatrack system given to the United States army and British press at the time of the selection of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There have been exchanges of information with the United States army on the DROPS logistic concepts and programme and their similar PLS one within the normal collaborative machinery. Information on the programme has been provided by the Department and the firms concerned to the press as appropriate and in response to inquiries.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence when formal research by his Department into the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system was started; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Formal research into the logistic problems and concepts from which DROPS evolved began in 1969 when a study was undertaken by the then Fighting Vehicles Research and Development Establishment.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department's involvement in the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system started; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Work on the concepts from which DROPS evolved began with a study undertaken by the then Fighting Vehicles Research and Development Establishment in 1969.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence what contractors were involved in his Department's formal research into the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system; at what dates; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The following firms were involved in the Department's consideration of load handling concepts between 1975 and 1982 when the general staff target for DROPS was finalised: Abel Systems, Arlington, CF Coach, EDBRO, Foden, Herncrest Boughton, Multilift, Pengco, Powell Duffryn and Ray Smith. This involvement took the form of supplying equipment for trial, demonstration of equipment or discussions with the Department, or a combination of these.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence at what date formal tasking on the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system was begun by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamiliton: Formal procurement action on DROPS was started in mid-1982 with the approval of the requirement and its presentation to industry.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence to what extent the Multilift chain-operated loading system has satisfied the purpose for which it was procured; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A single purchase of Multilift chain-operated loading equipment was made in 1975 to enable the Army to carry out a trial as part of the consideration of load handling concepts and it served for that purpose. It was a different equipment to the one finally selected for the DROPS requirement.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cost of trialing each of the Multilift flat flatrack systems in each year that such trials took place; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The DROPS evaluation trials consisted of extensive field trials in BAOR and, in parallel, detailed engineering trials at RARDE Chertsey. Altogether they lasted a year (July 1984 to June 1985). They involved the total range of chosen equipment options and vehicle combinations of load handling systems. Trialing costs of individual systems cannot be identified separately.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Multilift chainlift system procured in 1975 is able to pick-up a load in off-road conditions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Multilift chainlift equipment purchased in 1975 was not found to be suitable for all the situations in which the Army would need to use such a system in the field.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all defence contractors involved in providing to his Department what is now referred to as DROPS equipment; at what dates they were involved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The principal contractors now involved in providing DROPS equipment are: Foden Trucks Ltd.; Leyland Vehicles (Scammell Motors) as main contractors; Multilift (UK) Ltd.; Marshalls of Cambridge; EKA Ltd.; King Trailers Ltd. With the exception of King Trailers, these companies' involvement with the full DROPS procurement programme dates from the 1982-83 competition. King Trailers entered the programme following a further subcontract competition for the production order held last year.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence what were the reasons for preferring a flat flatrack system for the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system in 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Multilift Mk II (low lift) system was one of three load handling systems chosen in 1983 for further DROPS trials and evaluation. Its potential operating advantages were that, with no A frame, the flatracks offered larger load bed area, and access from all four sides; they could be picked up from either end; they could be stacked more easily when unloaded; they were simpler and lighter in construction than other flatrack designs; and they could thus be more easily concealed on the battlefield.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations regarding the problem of visibility in the flat flatrack demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system were made to his Department by Boughtons in 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Boughton's proposals in the 1982-83 competition envisaged the need for a rear loading system with single point connection in a position clearly visible to the operator.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment was made by *(a)* Boughton and *(b)* his Department in 1982 of the suitability for rough terrain use of the flat flatrack demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system options; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Both Boughton's and the Department's assessments in the 1982-83 competition recognised the difficulties which might arise in flat flatrack (low lift) operations in rough terrain. The Department concluded, however, that, in view of the significant potential advantages offered by the system, it merited further trial and evaluation alongside two other high lift systems.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give details of the reasons for the non-selection of the flat flatrack demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system after the 1984-85 trials; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Extended trials of the flat flatrack DROPS system confirmed the advantages foreseen earlier. However, they also indicated that they would be outweighed by practical difficulties in achieving consistent first-time hook connection and vehicle stability problems when dealing with asymmetric part loads.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will specify the shortcomings in Boughton's appreciation of technical factors and risks which led him to reject its system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Boughton's proposals figured fully in the final stages of the Department's assessment process in the 1982-83 procurement competition. In the final outcome competing proposals were judged preferable on a balance of technical and economic grounds.

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether the selected DROPS MMLC truck designs proposed by Foden and Scammell in 1982 provided sufficient engine power to pull the fully laden LMLC trailer; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when the need for the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system was first formally identified by his Department; and if he will make a statement;

(3) when funds for the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system were first put into his Department's budgeted expenditure; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what were the shortcomings identified by his Department in the Boughton 1982 demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system proposal; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what requirements on stacking flatracks was included in the 1985 specification against which the definitive demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system equipment was tendered; and if he will make a statement;

(6) what part the issue of flatrack stacking played in Multilift's 1982 demountable rack off-loading pick-up system proposal; and if he will make a statement;

(7) what weight was given by the demountable rack off-loading pick-up system selection team to stackability of flatracks; and if he will make a statement;

(8) what assessment was made by the 1982 demountable rack off-loading pick-up system selection team of the implications of the stacking of loaded flatracks for the size of field storage areas; and if he will make a statement;

(9) what assessment was made by his Department in 1980 of the implications of the stacking of loaded flatracks for the space required in storage areas; and if he will make a statement;

(10) to what extent the question of stacking was a criterion in the selection of demountable rack off-loading pick-up system; and if he will make a statement;

(11) if he will publish details of Boughton's shortcomings in its presentation for the demountable rack off-loading pick-up system contract; and if he will make a statement;

(12) if those companies involved in 1982 provided drawings of their proposed load handling systems drawn onto the prime contractor's chassis under consideration for the demountable rack off-loading pick-up system; and if he will make a statement;

(13) what representations were received from any demountable rack off-loading pick-up system prime contractors in 1982 on Multilift's presentation and management; and if he will make a statement;

(13A) what was the nature of such drawings as Multilift produced via the main contractors in 1982 in connection with demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system; and if he will make a statement;

(14) what allocations were introduced into the equipment produced for trials in 1984 after its feasibility study response in 1982; and if he will make a statement;

(15) what was the weight *(a)* originally estimated by Multilift for its Mk. II flat flatrack system and *(b)* of the equipment built; and if he will make a statement;

(16) when the decision was taken by his Department that the requirement for low mobility demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system was to be provided by the use of a trailer; and if he will make a statement;

(17) what were the main conclusions of the project carried out by his Department into how the low mobility transport role after the introduction of demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system would be carried out; and if he will make a statement;

(18) to what degree of detail the selected main contractors and subcontractors proposed designs and analysis of a trailer for demountable rack off-load and pick-up system LMLC; and if he will make a statement;

(19) if Boughton's put forward detailed proposals for, and recommendations on, a trailer as the preferred solution for demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system LMLC; and if he will make a statement;

(20) whether the trailers proposed by the selected main contractors and subcontractors met the stated requirement for LMLC demountable racking off-loading and pick-up system in respect of one-man operation and maximum loading; and if he will make a statement;

(21) what assessment was made by his Department in reviewing the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system feasibility study in 1983 of the implications for road traffic law of trailer/truck combinations selected to fulfil the low mobility demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system role on the roads; and if he will make a statement;

(22) what was the gross weight of *(a)* Boughton's 1982 proposed demountable rack off-loading and demountable system LMLC truck/trailer combination and *(b)* the combinations selected; and if he will make a statement;

(23) what proposal was made at the time of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system submissions in 1982 by the two selected contractors as to the most cost-effective way of meeting the stated requirements for the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I shall answer shortly.

AWACS

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from the United States Government regarding the choice of airborne early warning system currently being made by Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: None.

SCOTLAND

Labour Statistics

88. **Mr. James Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the level of unemployment in Scotland at the latest available date; and what the figures were for June 1979.

Mr. Lang: On 9 October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of unemployed claimants in Scotland was 359,236. In June 1979 the corresponding figure was 166,986. The figures are not comparable due to the various changes which have taken place in the compilation of the statistics.

89. **Mr. Ron Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many young people under the age of 25 years are currently unemployed in Lothian region.

Mr. Lang: On 9 October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of unemployed claimants under the age of 25 years in Lothian region was 17,926. This information is available in the Library.

Housing Starts and Completions

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many houses have been started and completed in the public and private sector in Greenock and Port Glasgow, and Strathclyde region as a whole in each year since 1979.

Mr. Ancram: Details of public and private sector houses started and completed in Strathclyde region for the years in question are provided in the table. The information held centrally does not identify areas other than district council areas or their aggregates. However, information for Inverclyde district, which includes Greenock and Port Glasgow, is also shown.

Year	*Houses Started*		*Houses Completed*	
	Public Sector	*Private Sector*	*Public Sector*	*Private Sector*
Strathclyde Region				
1979	3,296	5,233	3,422	5,122
1980	2,738	3,688	2,646	4,332
1981	1,027	3,878	4,298	3,830
1982	1,917	4,660	1,689	4,246
1983	1,219	5,479	1,356	4,730
1984	1,097	5,680	1,260	5,319
1985	761	5,464	1,267	5,670
Inverclyde				
1979	80	164	64	65
1980	—	102	8	87
1981	59	114	69	155
1982	23	113	58	99
1983	42	142	23	107
1984	97	228	20	199
1985	61	190	42	205

HMI (Colleges of Education)

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide information, for Her Majesty's inspectorate in Scotland, on how many present inspectors have worked as staff in a college of education and for how long, showing separate figures for those inspectors involved in the inspection of Aberdeen college of education during 1984 to 1986.

Mr. John MacKay: There are 29 HM inspectors of schools who have worked in Scottish colleges of education

for periods ranging from one year to 12 years. The inspection of Aberdeen college of education involved 10 of these inspectors, among others, and their college of education experience ranged from two to nine years.

Afforestation (Grants)

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the numbers and amounts of grants given to private afforestation companies in each year since 1975.

Mr. John MacKay: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland why the levels of forestry planting grants pay no regard to the number of acres being planted.

Mr. John MacKay: The levels of grants under the Forestry Commission's grant schemes do, in fact, vary according to the area of the planting or of the woodland, with higher grants being given for smaller areas.

Tree Planting

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the proportions of deciduous trees to conifers planted, respectively, in the private and public sectors.

Mr. John MacKay: In the year ended 31 March 1986, the private sector planted or restocked 21,017 hectares with conifers and 2,341 hectares with broadleaves under the Forestry Commission's grant schemes (in Scotland, 18,422 hectares and 429 hectares, respectively). The commission itself planted or restocked 11,268 hectares with conifers and 362 hectares with broadleaves (in Scotland, 7,289 hectares and 112 hectares, respectively). The areas of broadleaved woodland planted or restocked by the private sector and the commission represented increases of 42 per cent. and 84 per cent., respectively over the previous year (72 per cent. and 93 per cent. in Scotland). It is expected that the planting of broadleaves will continue to increase as the initiatives announced by the Government in July 1985 take full effect.

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will seek to introduce planning controls in respect of planting of trees on high land.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to introduce such controls.

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to extend the powers of the regional advisory committee concerning tree planting schemes.

Mr. John MacKay: The Forestry Commission's regional advisory committees are advisory and have no powers as such.

Forestry Commission (Land Bank)

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish details of the land bank held by the Forestry Commission for future afforestation.

Mr. John MacKay: This information was published in appendix VIII (tables 15 to 17) to the "Forestry Commission's Annual Report and Accounts 1985-86" (HC 554), a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House.

Drink-Driving

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many motorists were charged with drink-driving offences in the latest year for which figures are available; how many of these were convicted; and of those convicted how many had previous convictions for similar offences.

Mr. Lang: In 1985, 12,514 persons were proceeded against for drunk driving, of whom 12,269 had the charge proved against them. Statistics on previous convictions are not available.

Motorways

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total length of all motorways presently in use and under construction in Scotland; and what proportion is *(a)* presently lit and *(b)* planned to be lit.

Mr. Ancram: There are currently 159 miles of motorway in use in Scotland, and a further two miles are under construction. Of the total in use, 22 miles (approximately 14 per cent.) are lit. There are no plans to light the stretch of motorway under construction, but it is planned to provide lighting on another five miles of existing motorway.

Road-Related Projects

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the underspend by his Department on road-related projects in the current year.

Mr. Ancram: Capital expenditure on motorway and trunk roads is expected to exceed £96·5 million, out of a total provision of £98 million; total expenditure, including maintenance, is expected to correspond closely to provision.

Fatal Road Accidents (Costs)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated average cost of a fatal road accident in Scotland.

Mr. Ancram: £204,200 at 1985 prices. A description of the way in which the cost is estimated is contained in "Road Accidents, Scotland, 1985," a copy of which is in the Library.

Road Accidents and Injuries (Alcohol)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many road accidents and road injuries in Scotland each year are attributable to the effects of alcohol.

Mr. Ancram: It is not possible to estimate the total number of injury road accidents attributable to the effects of alcohol since comprehensive information is not held centrally on the breath or blood alcohol levels of those involved. However, the numbers of accidents in which at least one of the drivers or riders involved is known to have been over the legal limit, and the numbers of casualties, were as follows:

	1985	[1] *1986*
Accidents	1,205	516
Casualties	1,791	764

[1] January to June (provisional).

Scottish Transport Group

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total value of grants paid by Her Majesty's Government to the Scottish Transport Group for employing people in the road passenger transport industry, listing such grants to individual transport group subsidiary companies.

Mr. Ancram: I understand from the Scottish Transport Group that it expects to receive a total of around £60,000 in the present calendar year in grants from the Manpower Services Commission arising from the group's participation in the youth training scheme. Most of the young people involved are placed with the Scottish Bus Group Engineering Limited; a more precise breakdown for all Scottish Transport Group subsidiaries is not readily available.

Elections (Form RPF9)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when form RPF9 under the Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 1986 will be available for the use of electoral registration officers and electors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The new form RPF9, for use by an elector applying for an absent vote at an election held on or after 16 February 1987, will be available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office by the end of December.

Trunk Roads (Cats Eyes)

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many miles of trunk road in Scotland do not carry cats eyes; and what proportion this is of the total mileage of trunk roads in Scotland.

Mr. Ancram: Most of the Scottish trunk road network is equipped with cats eyes. Up-to-date information on this and other features of the network has been collected as part of a recent survey, but until the data have been analysed I am unable to give precise figures.

Farmers

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many farmers in Scotland are owner-occupiers; and how many tenant farmers there are farming over three hectares.

Mr. John MacKay: At the June 1986 agricultural census in Scotland there were 17,329 wholly owned farms, while there were 9,915 wholly rented farms of over three hectares.

"Arts and Disabled People" (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of a committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend received a copy of the report. Two meetings with representatives of the Carnegie council have since been held to discuss questions arising from it, relating to education, arts, training, access and local authority and health board services in Scotland.

My right hon. and learned Friend will keep under review the development of the recommendations made in the report where these are consistent with established policies and relationships between himself and the statutory and voluntary bodies concerned.

Hotel Classification Scheme

Mr. Gregory asked the Secretary of State for Scotland where are the short-term and long-term policies, respectively, of the hotel classification scheme of the Scottish Tourist Board.

Mr. Lang: I understand from the board that the immediate objectives for the scheme have been achieved. The voluntary scheme, applying to all accommodation sectors and incorporating verified classification and grading, was successfully launched in 1985. A positive response has been received from accommodation operators and the results of the first inspections have been incorporated in the 1987 season brochures. The board's longer term policy is to ensure that the customer has a guaranteed official assessment of the range of facilities and services provided (classification) and the quality of services provided (grading). In this way, the customer will be well placed to determine if he is getting value for money compared with competitor destinations which operate similar schemes. The scheme also aims to help increase the stock of good quality accommodation in Scotland by providing an incentive to operators to improve their product.

Housing (Grants and Loans)

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a revised edition of the guidance notes issued with details of crofter housing grants and loans in order to provide intending applicants with more extensive information about the criteria to be applied in assessing applications.

Mr. John MacKay: The preparation of revised guidance notes is in hand.

Hill Farming Review

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the annual hill farming review.

Mr. John MacKay: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Pollution

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland, 1 December, *Official Report*, column *523*, he will list the works in Scotland

operating land-based flaring systems which are currently registered with Her Majesty's industrial air pollution inspectorate; and what controls he exercises over sea-based flaring systems.

Mr. Ancram: In Scotland the following premises registered under section 9 of the Alkali and Works Regulation Act 1906 (a relevant statutory provision of the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974) operate land-based flaring systems.

BP Petroleum Development Ltd, Sullom Voe Shetland
Occidental Petroleum (Caledonia) Ltd, Flotta Orkney
Britoil PLC, Nigg Ross-shire
Shell UK Ltd, Mossmorran
Exxon Chemicals Olefins Inc, Mossmorran
BP Oil Development Ltd, Kinneil Kerse, Grangemouth
BP Oil, Grangemouth Refinery, Grangemouth
BP Chemicals Ltd, Grangemouth
Enichem Elastomers Ltd, Grangemouth

The control of sea-based flaring systems. is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy.

EMPLOYMENT

Job Training

9. **Mr. Norman Atkinson** asked the Paymaster General what arrangements have been made for payment of the allowance to participants in the job training scheme; and if they will be counted as unemployed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the administrative arrangements outlined in my hon. Friend's reply to the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Wainwright) on 9 December at column *115*. The normal practice of successive Governments has been not to count people as unemployed when they are undertaking full-time courses of vocational training.

Management Training

11. **Mr. Hoyle** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the Manpower Services Commission's role in management training.

Mr. Lee: Effective management training is an essential element in ensuring the competitiveness of British industry. Employers have the primary responsibility for training and developing their own managers. Although the Manpower Services Commission has a key role to play in helping to achieve improvements, as with all aspects of vocational education and training.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

16. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about the progress of the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Trippier: The enterprise allowance scheme continues to flourish. By the end of November 1986 191,145 previously unemployed people had entered the scheme and over 71,000 are currently receiving the allowance.

Recent survey information shows that 54 per cent. of entrants to the scheme are still trading in their enterprise allowance scheme business three years after start-up. For every 100 businesses continuing at that stage, survey evidence indicates that 39 additional people have been taken on as employees.

24. **Mr. Hickmet** asked the Paymaster General what is the latest figure for applicants for the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Trippier: By the end of November the enterprise allowance scheme had assisted 191,145 previously unemployed people set up in self-employment. This includes 3,331 people who entered the pilot scheme between January 1982 and July 1983.

45. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to extend the enterprise allowance scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Since the introduction of the enterprise allowance scheme, up to the end of November 1986, 191,145 people have been helped to set up in business. The success of the scheme has led to the number of places being expanded from 86,000 in the financial year 1986-87 to 100,000 in 1987-88 and 1988-89.

55. **Mr. Michael Forsyth** asked the Paymaster General how much money has so far been spent on the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Trippier: From the beginning of the pilot scheme in January 1982 to the end of November 1986, £306 million has been spent on the enterprise allowance scheme. This includes £13·5 million in administration costs.

62. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Paymaster General if he has any figures to indicate how many of those people who started their businesses on the enterprise allowance scheme are still in business after two years.

Mr. Trippier: The latest survey results show that 68 per cent. of entrants are still trading in their enterprise allowance scheme business 18 months after start-up and 54 per cent. are still trading in their scheme business three years after start-up.

Self-employment

18. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to encourage graduates to start their own businesses.

Mr. Trippier: Many graduates possess the skills and aptitudes that are needed to run a business successfully. The Manpower Services Commission runs several programmes to encourage and help graduates and others considering going into business. My right hon. and noble Friend and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science will be meeting a group of university vice-chancellors and polytechnic directors on 27 January to discuss enterprise and higher education.

We also plan to send a leaflet to all undergraduates drawing their attention to the options of self-employment or running their own business when they complete their courses and describing the range of advice and assistance available to them.

58. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Paymaster General what is his latest estimate of the number of self-employed in the United Kingdom; how this compares with the number in May 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: In June 1986 there were an estimated 2,745,000 self-employed in the United Kingdom. This compares with 1,925,000 in June 1979 (estimates are not available for May).

The labour force surveys indicate that the numbers in self-employment have risen continually during the period specified.

Labour Statistics

19. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Paymaster General if he will give the figures for unemployment in the Sheffield travel-to-work area for each year from 1979 to 1986.

Mr. Lee: The following table shows the numbers of unemployed registrants in the Sheffield travel-to-work area as defined in 1978 for October 1979, 1980, 1981 and 1982. The number of unemployed claimants in that area are also given for October 1982 and 1983. Figures for October of each year since 1983 are also given according to the 1984 definition of the travel-to-work area. Comparisons over the period 1979 to 1986 are difficult to make because of changes in the method of collection and compilation of the data.

Unemployed registrants in the Sheffield travel-to-work area (as defined in 1978)

	Numbers
October 1979	14,203
October 1980	23,100
October 1981	38,063
October 1982	42,554

Unemployed claimants in the Sheffield travel-to-work area (as defined in 1978)

	Numbers
October 1982	39,367
October 1983	41,681

Unemployed claimants in the Sheffield travel-to-work area (as defined in 1984)

	Numbers
October 1983	41,869
October 1984	43,946
October 1985	44,915
October 1986	47,030

29. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Paymaster General what is the total number of unemployed people in the United Kingdom.

65. **Mr. Latham** asked the Paymaster General whether he will make a statement on the current level of unemployment.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986 the number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom was 3,237,154.

35. **Mr. Kenneth Carlisle** asked the Paymaster General what is the latest trend in the unemployment figures; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The latest figures indicate that the trend in unemployment turned downward about three months ago. It is difficult to quantify the trend, so close to the turning point, but in the three months to October the seasonally adjusted series fell by nearly 19,000 a month on average.

50. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Paymaster General what are the latest unemployment figures for the Basingstoke travel-to-work area.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the Basingstoke and Alton travel-to-work area was 3,756.

56. **Mr. Knox** asked the Paymaster General how many people were out of work in the Staffordshire, Moorlands parliamentary constituency at the most recent count.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October 1986 the number of unemployed claimants in the Staffordshire, Moorlands parliamentary constituency was 3,406.

68. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Paymaster General how many protests he has received, and from what bodies, concerning the changes made in the method of counting the number of people unemployed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: During the past 12 months, my Department has received 20 letters expressing concern about changes which the writers claimed affected the unemployment figures.

Three were from local authorities, the rest from individuals. I do, of course, receive frequent politically motivated protests in this House.

71. **Mr. Evans** asked the Paymaster General what is his estimate of the effect to date of changes made in 1986 in the methods of counting the unemployed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: There has been one change in compilation during 1986 which, from March, reduced an unintended over-recording by about 50,000 on average and therefore improved the accuracy of the figures.

Hotel Classification Scheme

20. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton** asked the Paymaster General what progress he is making with the voluntary hotel classification scheme.

Mr. Trippier: The scheme is being operated by the English, Scottish and Wales tourist boards. To date some 8,500 establishments in England and a further 3,500 in Scotland and Wales have applied for classification under the scheme. The scheme will be launched publicly in January 1987.

Local Enterprises

21. **Mr. Bellingham** asked the Paymaster General if he will give the latest figures for the number of local enterprises that have been set up.

Mr. Trippier: There are currently 354 local enterprise agencies throughout the United Kingdom, of which 284 are approved under the terms of the Finance Act 1982 which allows business sector sponsors tax relief on their contributions to such bodies.

Adult Training

22. **Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Paymaster General what progress has been made on the adult training strategy.

Mr. Trippier: During 1986 the Manpower Services Commission has continued to progress the adult training strategy in three main ways: first, through promoting more positive attitudes to training and awareness of the means for taking action; secondly, through projects to enhance the effectiveness of the training infrastructure and systems; and, thirdly, through programmes to make an immediate contribution to the supply of skills in current and future demand.

Much has been done to encourage closer partnership between employers and training institutions. Several

initiatives now exist to enhance the effectiveness of the role played by employers, training institutions and representative agencies in the training system.

40. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Paymaster General what new measures he expects to introduce to improve adult training.

Mr. Trippier: Our adult training programmes are frequently reviewed to ensure that they meet the needs of the labour market and represent good value for money. Changes are announced whenever decisions are taken.

77. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to increase adult training facilities.

Mr. Trippier: This year it is planned that over 250,000 people will benefit from a wide variety of programmes. Twice the number helped in 1983-84. In addition, a number of initiatives seek to make employers, individuals and training providers more aware of the need for relevant and cost-effective training.

YTS

23. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Paymaster General how many young people have now completed YTS courses.

Mr. Trippier: Under one-year YTS, which ran between 1 April 1983 and 31 March 1986, 1,166,255 people started in schemes. Up to 31 October 1986 there have been 548,704 completers.

Since the introduction of two-year YTS on 1 April 1986 up to 31 October 1986 there have been 315,357 entrants, but it is too early to say how many will complete their training.

44. **Sir John Farr** asked the Paymaster General what new steps he is taking to promote support for YTS among trade unions.

Mr. Trippier: YTS has the active support of the TUC and large numbers of individual unions. The commission maintains a close liaison with all unions involved in YTS. MSC staff, both at head office and in the field organisation, meet frequently with union officials to develop particular schemes or to discuss particular aspects of YTS.

Unions not currently associated with YTS feature in the commission's ongoing marketing plans. A number of general YTS pamphlets and videos are available for this purpose.

53. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Paymaster General if he will introduce into YTS an element of overseas service in the Third world.

Mr. Trippier: YTS is provided through independent managing agents who are responsible, within the agreed guidelines, for preparing the training programmes they propose to offer to trainees. If a programme is proposed which includes overseas experience, the general rule is that this is acceptable provided that such training forms an integrated part of the programme and there are adequate safeguards covering essential matters such as safety and insurance.

78. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Paymaster General when he will respond to the recommendations made by the commissioner of the Manpower Services Commission regarding the YTS.

Mr. Trippier: I refer my hon. Friend to my right hon. and learned Friend's reply to my hon. Friend the Member of Staffordshire, Moorlands (Mr. Knox) on 3 December 1986 at columns *671-73*.

High Technology

25. **Mr. Park** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on training for high technology skills.

37. **Mr. Faulds** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on training for high technology skills.

Mr. Trippier: Training for high technology skills is of the greatest importance for ensuring this country's economic prosperity. In recognition of this fact one of the key objectives of the Government's adult training strategy is to secure an adequate supply of people with the up-to-date skills to meet the demands of new technology generally.

30. **Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Paymaster General what information he has as to the number of job vacancies in high technology industries in the Thames Valley area.

Mr. Lee: An analysis of vacancy statistics by industry group is available in the Library, but is not sufficiently detailed for high technology industries to be separately identified.

North Sea Diving

26. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received from the Diving Medical Advisory Committee regarding regulations applicable to North sea diving.

Mr. Trippier: None. But the Health and Safety Executive is in regular contact with this committee and has received various representations relating wholly or partly to regulations or proposed regulations on this subject.

Tourism

27. **Mr. Gale** asked the Paymaster General what major tourist attractions have been funded by section 4 grants in the last 12 months.

Mr. Trippier: In the last 12 months, section 4 support has been committed by the English Tourist Board to nine tourist attraction projects with a capital cost of £250,000 or greater. The total capital cost of these projects was £9·8 million, and the total support committed to them was over £900,000. The nine attractions are as follows:

ATTRACTION AND PROJECT ASSISTED

Westminster Abbey
Amalgamation and re-presentation of Abbey Museum and Treasury.

Museum of Modern Art, Oxford
Reconstruction of facade to improve access; provision of better facilities, particularly for disabled.

HMS Warrior
Provision of visitor facilities.

Bar Convent Museum, York
Creation of a museum of the religious history of York and England.

Botanical Gardens, Birmingham
Visitor facilities.

POW Camp 83, Malton
Creation of a museum of modern history 1939-45 and visitor facilities.

Thursford Museum, Fakenham
Enlarged exhibition space, selling space, WC and catering facilities.

Stapeley Water Gardens, Nantwich
Creation of visitor centre.
Rock Gardens Centre, Portsmouth
Provision of indoor leisure complex.

66. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Paymaster General whether the Manpower Services Commission plans to introduce its jointly sponsored business development programme for small businesses related to tourism into other areas after the pilot scheme takes place in Newcastle early in 1987.

Mr. Trippier: The business development programme for hotel and catering industry employers in Newcastle is recruiting participants for its January start. This programme has its roots in a successful tourism local collaborative project set up by the Northumbria tourist board in June 1984. The LCP programme recognises that needs differ from area to area. It would be inappropriate and might well prove unsuccessful to attempt to transplant this BDP without its roots. However, MSC is keen to disseminate the successful outcomes of LCPs amongst the business and education community. MSC will ensure that other tourism projects throughout the country, including that based at the Dorset institute, are made aware of the BDP so that they may learn from relevant aspects of its experience. I expect that forthcoming computerisation of LCP project records will help in achieving this.

70. **Mr. Coombs** asked the Paymaster General what information he has on the number of tourists visiting the United Kingdom in 1986 by comparison with previous years.

Mr. Trippier: There were about 10·9 million visits to the United Kingdom by overseas residents in the first nine months of 1986. This compares with a record 11·7 million in the first nine months of 1985 and 10·9 million in the first nine months of 1984.

83. **Mr. Butterfill** asked the Paymaster General what proposals have been submitted to the European Economic Community Commissioners for better use of European Community funds to assist the development of tourism in general and, in particular, the spread of tourism to economically depressed regions.

Mr. Trippier: The Commission's communication to the Council of 5 February 1986 on Community action in the field of tourism put forward a number of proposals for encouraging the development of tourism within the Community. The Commission stated that it was planning, in collaboration with the member states, to make better use of existing Community financial instruments to assist tourism and particularly to improve its seasonal and geographical distribution. I am not aware of any specific proposals which have been submitted to, or put forward by, the Commission in this respect.

Manufacturing Industry

28. **Mr. Duffy** asked the Paymaster General how many people are employed in manufacturing industries in the Sheffield travel-to-work area; and how many were employed in manufacturing in the same area in June 1979.

Mr. Lee: Employment statistics for local areas are available only for those dates when censuses of employment are taken. The latest available figures from the 1981 census of employment showed that 90,000 employees were employed in manufacturing industries in the Sheffield travel-to-work area compared with 123,000 in 1978 when the previous census was taken. As results of the 1978 census are not available for the new ward-based travel-to-work areas, the figures relate to the area as defined before the 1984 review.

More up-to-date employment estimates for travel-to-work areas, relating to September 1985, will become available early in the new year. Between censuses, employment statistics are based on small-scale sample inquiries which cannot produce reliable results for areas smaller than regions.

74. **Mrs. Golding** asked the Paymaster General how many people are presently employed in manufacturing industry; and what were the comparable figures in 1979.

Mr. Lee: In September 1986, there were 5,554,000 employees in employment and self-employed people in manufacturing industries in Great Britain. In September 1979 the figure was 7,242,000.

Northern Region

31. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Paymaster General how many people left the unemployment register in the northern region in each of the last three months for which figures are available.

Mr. Lee: The following table shows the numbers of claimants in the northern region who left the unemployment count in each of the last three months to October 1986.

Month ending	*Number*
August 14	26,943
September 11	30,729
October 9	36,717

Note: These figures are converted to a standard four and one third week month.

Job Creation (EC Funds)

32. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Paymaster General what cash has been received in the past 12 months from European Community funds to assist in creating new employment opportunities; and how these moneys have been disbursed.

Mr. Lee: During the calendar year 1986 new allocations totalling some £34 million have been approved under the European social fund (ESF) for projects in the United Kingdom taking place in 1986 specifically related to employment creation. In addition, a further £246 million has been approved for other, mainly training, projects in the United Kingdom which are also helping to create new employment opportunities. ESF funds are paid to the sponsors of the particular projects for which assistance is sought. Apart from social fund support, the United Kingdom also receives considerable assistance under the European regional development fund towards projects which help to increase overall employment opportunities.

Housing Benefit

33. **Mr. Patchett** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to amend the terms under which people participate in the pilot job training scheme so as to affect their qualification for housing benefit.

Mr. Trippier: Training allowance is paid at an amount equal to unemployment/supplementary benefit in payment

immediately before the start of training. It will be increased if benefit would have increased had the person remained unemployed; it will not decrease during training. Participants previously entitled to certificated housing benefit are entitled to standard housing benefit, topped up as appropriate by housing benefit supplement.

Small Businesses

34. **Mr. Watts** asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received recently in connection with the effect of planning controls on small businesses and start ups.

Mr. Trippier: A wide variety of representations have been received. Many of these have demonstrated the need for the measures set out in the White Papers "Lifting the Burden" (Cmnd. 9571) and "Building Businesses . . . Not Barriers" (Cmnd. 9794), designed to simplify planning controls and speed up applications and appeals. These initiatives and the operation of the planning system are, of course, the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

43. **Mr. Norris** asked the Paymaster General what steps he proposes to take to encourage small businesses on university campuses.

Mr. Trippier: I welcome the establishment of small businesses on university campuses, particularly where they are part of a science park, as they are able to benefit greatly from links with the university which offer easy access to academic expertise, research equipment and other support services.

I am particularly keen that these small businesses should take full advantage of the range of Government support measures that are available to the sector.

61. **Mr. Stevens** asked the Paymaster General what recent steps he has taken to discourage late payment of bills owing to small firms.

Mr. Trippier: Our "Payment on Time" booklet is a worthwhile step in encouraging a change of attitude towards good payment practice. I shall keep in mind the possibility of further initiatives in this area.

82. **Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Paymaster General what steps he has taken to assist small businesses in tendering for Government contracts.

Mr. Trippier: The principal requirement in Government purchasing is to obtain the best value for public expenditure. We have encouraged small businesses to compete for Government contracts by publishing advice such as the booklet "Tendering for Government Contracts" and by making Government purchasing procedures more easily understood by small businesses. The central unit on purchasing is charged with improving the effectiveness of Government purchasing and supply, and ensuring that small firms have access to contracts is an essential part of that process. Within the Department of Employment we are ensuring that purchasing staff are aware of the benefits from access to a wider range of suppliers, including small firms.

The Ministry of Defence has recently announced, with my Department, an initiative intended to assist small firms in competing for defence contracts. A small firms advice division has been set up to give advice to small firms and encourage developments within MoD that will help small firms to compete for business. The small firms service will be closely involved in efforts to open up defence contracts in this way.

84. **Mr. Woodcock** asked the Paymaster General what steps he proposes to take to encourage small businesses in inner city areas.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Small firms in inner city areas benefit from the wide range of measures available to small firms generally. These include the enterprise allowance scheme, the loan guarantee scheme and the help and advice of the small firms service and the local enterprise agency movement.

In addition, under our inner cities initiative, we are piloting new approaches to job creation and enterprise through our task forces in eight small English inner city areas. In these eight areas we are paying particular attention to the needs of small businesses. I have recently announced a new arrangement, in co-operation with the Association of British Insurers, to help businesses in the eight areas overcome difficulties in arranging insurance. I am also preparing new proposals to help small businesses in the eight areas to gain more ready access to the finance they need. I am supporting inner city-based enterprise agencies in Birmingham and Bristol, and intend to extend such agencies into the other areas. I have given a grant of £150,000 to the Cleveland youth enterprise centre to support its work in inner-city Middlesbrough.

I have contributed £77,000 to support the headstart programme, under which, in collaboration with the Industrial Society and MSC, we will give access to business training to 3,000 inner city youngsters. We propose to place building contracts in inner cities which provide work experience and training for local residents. Small subcontractors in Handsworth will benefit from the Broughton road contract recently awarded to Tarmac as the first of these arrangements. I have also given a grant of £50,000 in Birmingham for a scheme under which experienced business men are seconded for six months to small local businesses to give advice and support, and a grant of £20,000 to a design and marketing consultancy in Middlesbrough to provide advice to small local businesses. I am also intending to support numerous other projects aimed at helping small businesses in our eight areas.

Skill Shortages

36. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the extent of skill shortages in different regions of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Trippier: Information is available from a number of sources about the difficulties encountered by some employers in recruiting employees with the particular experience and competence they seek, including an analysis of vacancies notified to jobcentres which have been outstanding for more than two months. In April 1986, the latest date for which results are available, this analysis showed that such difficulties occurred in all regions, and, as a proportion of all outstanding vacancies, varied from 2·1 per cent. in the north-west to 4·2 per cent. in the west midlands and the south-east. This general picture is confirmed by other surveys.

46. **Mr. Stan Thorne** asked the Paymaster General what steps he is taking to tackle skill shortages in engineering.

Mr. Trippier: Whilst the primary responsibility for indentifying and meeting skill requirements rests with the industry, the Government are helping through a range of initiatives including two-year YTS, the job training programme and the engineering and technology programme.

Hotel and Tourism

38. **Mr. Gerald Bowden** asked the Paymaster General what progress has been made towards the establishment of nationally recognised qualifications for trainees in the hotel and tourism industries.

Mr. Trippier: The Hotel and Catering training board, as the lead industry body, is establishing flexible modular routes for progression and a workplace assessment route to vocational qualifications through the Manpower Services Commission funded "Caterbase" project. It is currently being piloted and will be submitted to the YTS certification board, whose job it is to recommend to MSC qualifications suitable for YTS, in early 1987.

In the area of tourism the Manpower Services Commission is in discussion with a wide range of bodies within the industry to develop nationally recognised qualifications. A formal submission to the YTS certification board for a vocational qualification in retail travel and tour operations will be made in early 1987.

Loan Guarantee Scheme

39. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the current take-up of funds on the loan guarantee scheme.

Mr. Trippier: There has been an encouraging improvement in the take-up of the scheme since the changes announced in the Budget earlier this year came into effect. From 1 May 1986 to 30 November 1986, 668 guarantees were issued to cover loans to the value of £25·74 million. For the scheme as a whole 17,269 guarantees to cover lending of £565·15 million have been issued since 1981.

59. **Mr. Alton** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the recent responses of bank managers at branch level to the current loan guarantee scheme for small businesses.

Mr. Trippier: I am currently discussing with bank staff, at a series of regional meetings, the use of the loan guarantee scheme. The discussions have been interesting and worth while and have covered ways in which use of the loan guarantee scheme might be increased. I believe that there are many sound business proposals that could take advantage of the scheme.

64. **Mr. Hargreaves** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to extend the loan guarantee scheme.

Mr. Trippier: Our decision to extend the loan guarantee scheme for three years to March 1989 was announced earlier this year. I have taken a number of steps to promote awareness and usage of the scheme, including production of a promotional video and a series of regional meetings with bank managers and financial advisers.

Work Test

41. **Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Paymaster General how many in the Stockton, North constituency who have filled in form UB671 have had benefit refused since the inception of the form.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Stockton unemployment benefit offices introduced the revised procedure for availability testing on 17 November 1986. At 5 December 1986, the last date for which information is available, three claimants at those offices had been disallowed benefit by the independent adjudicating authorities because they were not available for work and therefore, under long-standing legal rules, not entitled to benefit.

51. **Mr. Parry** asked the Paymaster General how many in the Liverpool Riverside constituency who have filled in form UB671 have been subsequently refused benefit since the form was introduced.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The unemployment benefit offices in the Liverpool, Riverside constituency introduced the revised procedures for availability testing on 10 November 1986. At 5 December 1986, the last date for which information is available, one claimant had been disallowed benefit following completion of UB671 as the person concerned was not available for work and therefore, under long-standing legal rules, not entitled to benefit.

52. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Paymaster General how many in the Ogmore constituency who have filled in form UB671 have had benefit refused since the adoption of the form.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The unemployment benefit offices in the Ogmore constituency have not yet introduced the revised procedures for testing availability for work.

54. **Mr. Dixon** asked the Paymaster General how many in the Jarrow constituency who have filled in form UB671 have been subsequently refused benefit since the form was introduced.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The unemployment benefit offices in the Jarrow constituency have not yet introduced the revised procedures for testing availability for work.

Disabled People

42. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General what is the latest percentage figure of registered disabled people who are unemployed; and how this compares with the national average of unemployment.

Mr. Lee: There were 25,539 unemployed registered disabled people registered for employment at jobcentres and careers offices on 3 October 1986. The number of registered disabled people who are unemployed claimants at unemployment benefit offices is not available. A percentage rate of unemployed registered disabled people cannot be calculated. Because the numbers of registered disabled people in employment and in the working population are not available.

Industrial Disputes

47. **Mr. Wainwright** asked the Paymaster General whether he has any plans to seek to amend section 17 of the Employment Act 1980 in respect of secondary action during disputes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: As my right hon. and noble Friend promised the Select Committee on Employment, we are committed to reviewing the law on secondary action in the light of the News International dispute, once that dispute has ended.

Leicester

48. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the employment opportunities available *(a)* in the city of Leicester and *(b)* within the constituency of Leicester, East.

Mr. Trippier: The Government's economic strategy is creating the enterprising economy necessary for the sustained growth needed to maintain rising employment. A variety of new and enhanced measures have been introduced this year to reduce unemployment throughout the country. An example in Leicester is that one of the Government's inner city task forces has been set up in the Highfields area to develop new approaches to job creation and enterprise for the benefit of residents. The task force also aims to achieve in the area it covers the maximum impact of existing Government programmes. However, the main impact on unemployment must come from employers and those who decide to work for themselves, through their drive towards competitiveness and increased flexibility. Greater moderation in wage settlements will also help to provide more jobs in Leicester and elsewhere.

Restart Scheme

49. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General if he has issued any fresh guidelines to staff on the length of time each restart interview should take.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: No.

69. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Paymaster General what is the Government's target date for interviewing all those currently long-term unemployed under restart; and on what basis this target was set.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: In order to give help to long-term unemployed people as quickly as possible we have set ourselves the objective of offering everyone out of work for more than 12 months an interview on a date before 1 April 1987.

76. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress of the restart programme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The restart programme has been making good progress. By 13 November 1986, 528,386 people had been interviewed. A worthwhile offer that might lead to employment had been made to around nine out of 10 of those interviewed.

79. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Paymaster General how many long-term unemployed have left the register since the beginning of the restart scheme; and what was the comparable figure compared with a similar period for 1985.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Between 10 July 1986 and 9 October 1986, the estimated number of claimants in Great Britain who left the unemployment count and who had been unemployed for over one year was 253,000. The comparable figure for the period 11 July 1985 to 10 October 1985 was 220,000.

The comparison of numbers of people who ceased to claim between July and October this year and the corresponding period last year is influenced by many factors, such as changes in the economic climate, as well as by programmes such as restart.

86. **Mr. Gilroy-Bevan** asked the Paymaster General what increase in tourist-related employment has taken place since the introduction of the restart programme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The most recently available figures of employment in tourism-related industries are for June 1986. Since the restart programme was introduced nationally only on 1 July 1986, the information requested is not yet available.

Training Schemes

57. **Mr. Stott** asked the Paymaster General whether the Government have any plans to monitor the numbers obtaining permanent jobs as a result of job clubs, restart courses and the jobstart allowance.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Next spring the Manpower Services Commission proposes to carry out a study of a sample of people passing through the restart programme to determine the effects of the programme. This will provide information about the numbers of people obtaining permanent jobs through jobclubs and following restart courses. There will also be a follow-up survey of a sample of participants who have completed their six months on jobstart allowance.

West London

60. **Mr. Raynsford** asked the Paymaster General what steps he is taking to deal with the problems of unemployment in west London.

Mr. Lee: On 9 October I announced four new initiatives which will benefit the unemployed in west London and elsewhere. Ealing is a pilot area for two of these initiatives. The job training scheme and the extended restart programme, which will help those who have been unemployed for over six months. I also announced an increase in the number of jobclubs nationally, and by the end of March 1987 there will be 11 jobclubs in west London. We have also relaxed the rules of the enterprise allowance scheme to allow unemployed people to start businesses under franchise operations. Additionally, in north Kensington, an inner city task force aims to develop new approaches to local job creation and enterprise.

We will continue to provide practical help to the unemployed through our employment and training measures, such as the restart and community programmes —our major schemes to help the long-term unemployed. However, the main impact on unemployment must come from employers and those who decide to work for themselves, through their drive towards competitiveness and increased flexibility. Greater moderation in wage settlements will also help to provide more jobs in west London. Our economic strategy is designed to create an enterprising economy which will support sustained growth and rising employment.

Community Programme

63. **Mr. Madden** asked the Paymaster General what is the net take-home pay of non-supervisory staff on the community programme.

Mr. Lee: The average net take-home pay of non-supervisory staff on the community programme, based on survey evidence of tax payments and current estimates of gross wages, is £56 per week, excluding benefits received whilst on the programme.

Personal Social Services (Young People)

67. **Mr. Rowe** asked the Paymaster General when he last made an assessment of the employment opportunities potentially open to young people in the personal social services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: My Department has under way an extensive programme of research into youth labour markets. However, no specific study of employment opportunities in personal social services has been included. If my hon. Friend has particular concerns in this area, I should be pleased to hear from him.

Job Clubs

72. **Mr. Dobson** asked the Paymaster General how many people have up to now passed through job clubs; what is the average length of stay; and how many have got permanent jobs as a result.

Mr. Lee: Since job clubs began in 1984 11,347 people have passed through them to 7 November 1986. The latest date for which statistics are available. Of these, 6,977 (61 per cent,) found jobs. An evaluation was carried out in early 1986 into the performance of the 29 job clubs then open. That showed that average length of stay was 4·8 weeks.

Trade Union Reform

73. **Mr. Alexander** asked the Paymaster General if he intends to introduce further legislation for the reform of trade unions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have no plans to introduce such legislation in this parliamentary Session. I am considering the option of further legislation at some time in the future.

North of England and Cumbria

75. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to announce new measures for the reduction of unemployment in the north of England and Cumbria.

Mr. Lee: The main impact of unemployment must come from employers and those who decide to work for themselves, through their drive towards competitiveness and greater flexibility. Greater moderation in wage settlements will also help to provide more jobs. Our economic strategy is creating the enterprising economy necessary for the sustained growth needed to maintain rising employment. However, we are continually looking at ways of reducing unemployment. The Department of Employment and the Manpower Services Commission have introduced a variety of new and enhanced measures this year throughout the country. The latest initiative, the job training scheme, is currently being piloted in Preston and Billingham as well as seven other locations in the country.

Wages Inspectorate

80. **Mr. Leighton** asked the Paymaster General what was the size of the Wages Inspectorate in 1979; what is it now; and what plans he has for its future.

Mr. Trippier: The numbers of staff in post in the Wages Inspectorate on 1 September 1979 and on 1 December 1986 were 290·5 (including 158 outdoor inspectors) and 156 (including 85 outdoor inspectors) respectively.

The number of posts is being reduced to 139 (including 71 outdoor inspectors) by 1 April 1987.

Local Enterprise Agencies

81. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Paymaster General what assistance his Department has given to local enterprise agencies.

Mr. Trippier: The main support for local enterprise agencies must rest with the private sector in partnership with other local interests. However, my Department is encouraging the private sector in this role through the local enterprise agency grant scheme. The scheme came into operation on 1 April this year and superseded a modest pump-priming grant scheme that my Department took over from the Department of Trade and Industry. Additionally, limited financial support is also being provided under my Department's inner cities initiative. That support, together with that provided under the aforementioned past and current grant schemes, is expected to amount to approximately £3 million by the end of the financial year.

Sheltered Placement Scheme

85. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Paymaster General what is the current contribution of his Department to the Manpower Services Commission for the sheltered placement scheme.

Mr. Lee: My Department has provided the resources to support 1,000 new places under the sheltered placement scheme in 1986-87. This represents a 50 per cent. increase in a single year. By 31 March 1987, the scheme will provide job opportunities for about 2,900 severely disabled people.

On the best information presently available, we expect the scheme to require funding of about £7 million in 1986-87.

Job Creation

Mr. Corbyn asked the Paymaster General what are the total number of people subject to special employment and training measures at the latest available date for the Islington, North constituency; and what are the measures and the numbers affected in each case.

Mr. Lee: It is not possible to give a precise total figure because of the various bases on which local information is collated. The number of people participating in the following employment measures and training in the Islington, North constituency on 31 October were:

Community Industry	99
YTS	189
Voluntary Projects Programme	212
Adult Training	79

In addition, in the area covering the boroughs of Hackney, City, Islington, Tower Hamlets, Camden, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham

which includes the Islington, South constituency, there are 4,954 people on the community programme and 637 people receiving the enterprise allowance. In London and the south-east 4,308 people were participating in the new workers scheme. A further breakdown for these schemes for the Islington, North constituency is available only at disproportionate cost.

"Arts and Disabled People" (Report)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust concerning the recommendations of "Arts and Disabled People", the report of committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Attenborough; what action he has taken or will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: My predecessor met representatives of the Carnegie council last March to discuss the recommendations of this report, following correspondence with my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State and his predecessor. Officials of the Manpower Services Commission are in contact with the council to examine how more community programme projects in the arts can be mounted to help disabled people. We shall also continue to ensure that those in the disablement advisory service and others involved in finding work for disabled people include employers in the arts in their overall programme of visits.

Hotel Classification Scheme

Mr. Gregory asked the Paymaster General what are the short-term and long-term policies, respectively, of the hotel classification scheme of the English Tourist Board.

Mr. Trippier: The scheme is to be publicly launched in January 1987. The English Tourist Board will monitor the scheme carefully to assess the extent to which it meets the needs of the industry and its customers, and will consider any necessary modification in consultation with the other national tourist boards.

Dangerous Substances

Mr. Terry Davis asked the Paymaster General how many installations which have been notified to the Health and Safety Executive under the notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations 1982 come under these regulations by virtue of the storage of the hazardous substance chlorine.

Mr. Trippier: The number of installations notified to the Health and Safety Executive under the notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations 1982 by virtue of the storage of chlorine is 153.

Mr. Terry Davis asked the Paymaster General how many sites come under the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984 by virtue of the dangerous substance involved being one listed in schedule 3, column 1 of the regulations which has a quantity as listed in schedule 3, column 2 of the regulations of 1 tonne or less.

Mr. Trippier: The number of sites notified to the Health and Safety Executive subject to the Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984 by virtue of the dangerous substance involved being one listed in schedule 3, column 1 of the regulations which have a quantity as listed in schedule 3, column 2, of the regulations of one tonne or less is 118.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Animal Welfare

Mr. Crouch asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he intends in regard to the approval as an export lairage of the premises at Homestead farm, Petham, near Canterbury, in the light of the recent successful prosecution of the lairage manager for failing to comply with the minimum rest period for exported animals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We do not propose to take special action as a result of the recent court case. However the approval of Homestead farm, in common with that of other export lairages, is reviewed annually by my Department.

Farmers (Loans)

Mr. Robert Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will set out the fixed interest loans available to farmers in countries within the European Economic Community.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I regret that this information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Plant Pests and Disease

Mr. Robert Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps his Department is taking to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests and disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department takes stringent action to prevent the introduction and spread of serious plant pests and diseases. Active campaigns are currently in force against rhizomania disease, cucumber downey mildew, pea bacterial blight and the western flower thrips.

Our plant health legislation lays down a wide range of import controls to avoid the introduction of plant pests and diseases. The Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate carries out checks at ports, airports and markets and on farms and nurseries to ensure that imports are free from infection. If they are not, action is taken to destroy, treat or otherwise safely dispose of the infected material. Immediate contact is made with the exporting country to prevent a recurrence.

We do not hesitate to impose additional controls when new threats occur. We are able in an emergency to supplement the requirements of the EC directive by unilateral controls.

If outbreaks of alien pests and diseases occur, we take firm steps to eradicate or control the infection and to minimise spread. Inspectors may require, by statutory notice, infected material to be destroyed or treated and marketing restrictions can be imposed.

I attach great importance to the preservation of the United Kingdom's plant health status and shall continue actively to pursue this objective.

Milk and Dairies Regulations

Mr. Robert Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consideration he has given to the introduction of a variable rate for hygiene and quality control visits under the milk and dairies regulations.

Mr. Gummer: Charges need to reflect the costs which the Ministry incurs in administering the Milk and Dairy Regulations, and these do not vary very much between large and small producers. Significant differentiation of the visiting charge would, therefore, be difficult to justify. However, as I announced on 4 December at column 1061, we are considering whether the proposed charge might be reduced from £90 to £80 for producers with fewer than 20 cows.

Heart Disease

Mr. Coombs asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the actions taken by his Department since the publication of the COMA report designed to assist in the prevention of coronary heart disease.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Proposals for regulations to require labelling of the fat content in food have been circulated widely and comments on these are being assessed. Consideration is also being given to the publicity material necessary to assist consumers to make use of the information that will be provided on food labels. We have also had discussions with catering interests to see what can be done to provide consumers with information on meals served in catering establishments comparable with that which the regulations will require for other foods.

Changes have been made this year in the application of certification standards for sheepmeat, from 6 January, and for beef, from 12 May. These have excluded the fatter animals from qualification for premia.

We have negotiated agreement in Brussels for alcoholic drinks throughout the European Community to be marked with their alcoholic strength.

We also take COMA recommendations into account along with other considerations in formulating our position on common agricultural policy discussions. The Ministry publication "The Manual of Nutrition" which is widely used for home economics courses has also been revised to take account of the COMA advice. We are involved in monitoring changes in foods and in peoples diets, with a view to assessing the effects on public health.

EEC (Subsidised Food)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will raise at the next meeting of the Management Committee the question of seeking an assurance from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that the subsidised food provided from European Economic Community stockpiles is not used for military purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Intervention Stores

Mr. Parry asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will now make it his practice to list the sites of European Economic Community intervention butter stores;

(2) how many locations in Liverpool are used for European Economic Community intervention butter stores.

Mr. Jopling: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Sheep

Mr. Speller asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he intends to take further action to protect the welfare of sheep exported from the United Kingdom.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Further to the arrangements already in force, my Department has notified the exporters of sheep to France for slaughter or further fattening of two new conditions. Before a licence is issued they will have to provide details of the approximate time at which the animals will be fed and watered if the journey is likely to exceed 18 hours, in addition to details of the place which are already required. Within seven days of shipment they will also have to provide a written statement from the French importer confirming the time of arrival at the final destination and, where appropriate, confirming that the animals were fed and watered and giving the time at which this was done.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy towards the future of the common agricultural policy in the light of the recent estimate by the EEC-funded European Union of Consumers that the net cost of the policy per average family is £13 per week; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *246*]: The Government's policy is to endeavour to bring the supply of, and demand for, CAP products into better balance through price restraint and all other appropriate means. Such a policy is in the interests of consumers, taxpayers and the long-term health of the agricultural community. The policies we have pursued since 1979 have resulted in food prices increasing at a lower rate than the retail price index as a whole, which in turn has been below the rate of increase in average earnings. At the same time we have supported the farming community in providing 80 per cent. of our people's temperate food, and caring for 80 per cent. of the land area of the United Kingdom.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 17 December 1986

WALES

Farmers

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many farmers in Wales are owner occupiers; and how many tenant farmers there are farming over 3 hectares.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: As at June 1985 there were 19,758 wholly owned main holdings in Wales; and 4,476 wholly rented main holdings of over 3 hectares.

These figures exclude partially owned or rented holdings.

Housing

Mr. Anderson asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy towards the role of local housing authorities in providing new accommodation for categories other than special needs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: I have been asked to reply.

The main priority for local authorities must be the renovation and repair of their existing housing. For new accommodation to rent, our main aim is to diversify the supply and increase the choice available to tenants by creating opportunities for private sector organisations to become involved in meeting a wider range of housing needs. Local authorities are ideally placed to co-ordinate and encourage participation in this task by a variety of agencies, including building societies, other financial institutions, private developers, and housing associations.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Miss Maureen McGoldrick

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has come to a conclusion as to whether to exercise his powers under the Education Act in the case of Miss Maureen McGoldrick; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend yesterday used his powers under section 68 of the Education Act 1944 to direct the authority not to proceed with any further disciplinary hearing or action against Miss McGoldrick in respect of the allegations against her.

ENERGY

Passive Solar Housing Technology

77. **Mr. Freeson** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what design guidance and requirements his Department is issuing to local authorities and housing associations for new housing and housing renovation work to encourage them to use passive solar housing techniques and technology.

Mr. David Hunt: I refer to the answer that I gave the right hon. Member on 15 December, at column 381. The Department of the Environment's Building Research Establishment is actively involved in our programme. I very much welcome the important contribution that it is making.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) on 8 December, *Official Report*, column 6, whether any investment approval given to the Central Electricity Generating Board since 1979 has included provision for payments of compensation or for the purchase of residential property beyond that required for operational purposes; and if he will make it his policy to require separate identification of any such costs in considering whether to give investment approval for a new development; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: Such payments would be a matter for the Central Electricity Generating Board and I would not expect them to be separately identified in any investment approval.

PRIME MINISTER

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister what factors Her Majesty's Government take into account in deciding the timing of the release of information of commercial sensitivity, having regard to relevant market factors; and how these factors were applied in relation to the disclosure of parts of the Solicitor-General's letter to the then Secretary of State for Defence relating to Westland.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November, at columns *49-50*.

Family Income

Mr. Tom Clarke asked the Prime Minister what was the ratio for *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* Scotland, of average family income for the richest quarter of households compared with the poorest quarter of households in 1979; and what was the ratio in 1985.

The Prime Minister: It is estimated from the family expenditure survey that the ratios of the household incomes for those households in the top quarter of the income range compared with those in the bottom quarter, are as follows measuring income in gross terms:

	United Kingdom	*Scotland*
1979	6·2:1	6·4:1
1985	7·9:1	8·1:1

Income as measured by the FES is not an indicator of wealth. Households with the largest incomes tend to be those with the largest number of members. The lowest quartile of households has a predominance of lone adult households including pensioners while the upper quartile has the highest average number of members contributing to the income.

Cabinet Committees

Mr. Austin Mitchell asked the Prime Minister whether she will specify the number of standing Cabinet committees and sub-committees and their titles and functions; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Gentleman of 14 November 1984, at columns 243-44.

TRANSPORT

London Regional Transport

Mr. Dicks asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce his proposals for the levy on Londons' ratepayers in support of his grants to London Regional Transport for 1987-88.

Mr. Moore: Section 13 of the London Regional Transport Act 1984 empowers me to make a levy on London ratepayers to recover up to two thirds of the cost of my total grants to London Regional Transport. I have today laid before Parliament a draft levy order which is subject to affirmative resolution. This provides for a levy in 1987-88 of 7·77p in the pound, which is estimated to raise £156·9 million. This is equivalent to 65·6 per cent. of my estimated expenditure in 1987-88 on grants to LRT, which amount to £239 million; the balance of 82·1 million will be found from the Exchequer.

By comparison with 1986-87 these proposals represent a reduction in grant of £56 million and a reduction in the call on ratepayers of £36·7 million. The burden on ratepayers falls by slightly more than 2p in the pound, while the proportion of expenditure they fund has been held constant.

My proposals reflect London Regional Transport's achievements in cutting costs while providing a more efficient and attractive public transport service in the capital. LRT has proposed for 1987-88 a further cut in the revenue deficit to £58 million, and within that sum I have been able to increase to £6 million the provision for funding Dial-a-Ride services for disabled people. Investment will continue at a high level and will include expenditure on new Underground trains which I approved in September and crime prevention measures which were announced on 28 November.

Further details of LRT's proposals for next year are given in its annual business plan, which will be published shortly. Copies will be placed in the Library.

Transport Council

Sir Julian Ridsdale asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make a statement on the outcome of the European Community Transport Council on 15 and 16 December.

Mr. Moore: I am glad to say that the Council agreed yesterday a package of four important shipping measures which lay the foundation of a common shipping policy. This represents a historic step forward in the development of the European Community and will create conditions for the British fleet to compete on more equal terms in world trade. In particular it will liberalise Community international trades, enable the Community to take concerted action to combat protectionism for third countries, counter unfair pricing practices particularly from state trading lines, and establish a competition regime for shipping.

The regulation on a freedom to provide shipping services in international trades to, from and between member states is the key instrument in the package. It provides for a progressive phasing out of unilateral cargo reservation and discriminatory cargo-sharing arrangements in bilateral agreements with third countries over the period leading up to the completion of the internal market which the Community has already decided shall be achieved by the end of 1992.

The Council was not able to reach agreement on the liberalisation of Community cabotage trades and I expect to make an announcement early in the new year of how we propose to pursue this in the United Kingdom's interests.

This package of regulations, while being of major importance to our shipping industry, is the first stage of the development of a common shipping policy. It was agreed that the Community should move straight to the further development of policy aimed both at the harmonisation of aids given by Community Governments to their merchant fleets and at ways of strengthening the position of the Community shipping industry in today's highly competitive international shipping market.

On the inland transport side, the Council agreed to increase each member state's quota of Community wide road haulage permits by 15 per cent. in 1987. A further increase up to 40 per cent. for 1987 could not be adopted owing to the lack of an opinion from the European Parliament and a reserve by one member state, but adoption should be possible early in the new year. The Council also agreed in principle to a regulation allocating 90 million ecu for transport infrastructure projects in individual member states, including two projects in the United Kingdom. This regulation is still subject to a United Kingdom reserve pending parliamentary scrutiny. A directive was adopted to streamline procedures for goods traffic at community frontiers, and the Council agreed a framework for further work to improve railway finances. Finally, the Council called on the Commission to do a report on port finances with a view to ensuring greater transparency of port accounts in the future.

On air transport, the Council again concentrated on a three-year first step towards the 1992 target date for full liberalisation. We were able to secure unanimous support for our proposals on capacity and a substantial majority for our ideas on market access. There was also usefulprogress on fares, where seven member states clearly support our efforts to allow cheaper travel, and only two are still totally opposed.

This means that at last there is solid progress in an area where the Community has failed to act for far too long. It puts the incoming Belgian presidency in a commanding position to complete a worthwhile first stage package.

Traffic Lights

Mr. McGuire asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to introduce a standard procedure throughout the United Kingdom on the operation of traffic lights at crossroads in respect of giving priority at the first change of lights to the traffic turning right.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are a number of techniques described in the Department's advice note TA 16/81 for

dealing with this type of problem. It is for the appropriate highway authority to determine which technique is best suited in the light of local conditions. A copy of the advice note is in the Library of the House.

Coaches (Speed Limiters)

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Transport, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) on 21 November, *Official Report*, column *361*, what steps he is taking to minimise the period between the making of the regulations on speed limiters for coaches and their operative date.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: When we consult interested parties on the draft regulations early next year, we shall seek their views on the earliest dates that seem practically possible, bearing in mind the need to spread the work of installing speed limiters over a reasonable period.

Motorways

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply of 24 November, *Official Report*, column *71*, why the design flow figure given of 91,000 vehicles per day for dual three-lane motorways differs from the figure of 85,000 vehicles per day given on 24 February, *Official Report*, column *501*; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The design flows for dual three-lane motorways are specified in Department of Transport standards, which are revised from time to time. During the period when most of the M25 was being planned 85,000 vehicles was specified as the maximum design flow for 16 hours on an August day. The figure of 91,000 is the corresponding flow for a 24-hour August day. In the current Departmental standard, issued in November 1985, the flow is expressed as an annual average daily flow (24 hours) of 79,000. Allowing for seasonal variations in traffic volume this corresponds to the peak month figures mentioned above.

Buses

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many representations he has received since the implementation of bus deregulation.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have received many such representations, on various aspects of deregulation.

Road Accidents

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the consideration given to the potential for road accident casualty reduction when he approves road schemes.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: When assessing new road schemes the benefits for savings in road casualty costs are considered along with other economic and wider environmental effects. On average about 14 per cent. of the total economic benefits of schemes are attributed to reductions in accidents.

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will rank the road schemes approved during the past year in terms of anticipated casualty reductions for £100,000 spent.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Casualty savings account for part of the total estimated benefit of new road schemes. It would be misleading to compare the total costs of road schemes with a partial measure of their benefits or to rank schemes on this basis. The information asked for could only be assembled with disproportionate expenditure of time and cost.

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he intends to introduce any further measures for accident reduction during the remainder of European Road Safety Year.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have just published a revised edition of the accident investigation and prevention manual. I have written to the chairman of each local authority highway committee drawing his attention to the manual and emphasising that local AIP work represents the single most cost-effective means of reducing road casualties yet identified.

I am today announcing new criteria for the installation of crash barriers on dual carriageways. New regulations on pelican crossings will be also laid very shortly.

European Road Safety Year has provided a useful focus for effort by central and local government and by voluntary and private sector organisations. However, the task of reducing road casualties will not end on 31 December. Continued progress will depend on the ability of central Government, local authorities and others to deploy their resources on strategies that are of demonstrable cost-effectiveness in casualty reducing terms, thus saving the maximum number of lives and reducing avoidable injuries.

Motor Cycle Noise

Mr. Hanley asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the agreement on motor cycle noise reached at the European Community environment council on 24 November; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The scope of the Commission's original proposals was set out in a Department of Transport memorandum in November 1984 (9148/84). Despite the two-year delay in reaching agreement, the Council has agreed a number of significant improvements to the Commission's original proposals. The table compares the Council agreement with the current limits and the Commission's proposals. The agreement also provides for a Community standard to be prepared on replacement silencers.

The agreement reflects a Community policy to make motor cycle manufacturers improve their product so as to keep in step with the progress being made by car and lorry manufacturers to reduce noise at source, whilst improving no threat whatsoever to the traditional air-cooled machine.

It is our intention, as soon as the directive is formally adopted by the Council, to prepare draft amendments to the construction and use regulations so as to make the new limits applicable at the due dates to new machines registered in Britain. We will consult representative organisations on the draft amending regulations in the usual way.

Category of Motor-cycle (cc)	Limit Values (dB(A))			Application Dates (1 October except [2])					
				Stage I			Stage II		
				New Type Approvals		All new registrations	New Type Approvals		All new registrations
	Current limit (adjusted to new test procedure)	Commission's proposals[1]	24 November agreement[1]	Proposed	Agreed	Proposed and Agreed	Proposed	Agreed	Proposed	Agreed
80	78	77	77	1987	1988	1990	1995	1993	1998	1995
80 125	80	80	79		1989		1995	end of 1994[2]	1998	end of 1996[2]
125 175	83									
175 350	85									
350 500	83	82	82		1988		1995	1993	1998	1995
500	84									

[1] These limits are reduced by 2dB(A) at stage II

Safety Barriers

Mr. Nicholls asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has decided to amend the criteria governing the erection of safety fencing in the central reserves of dual carriageway roads.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. In future safety fencing will be provided on all dual carriageway trunk roads where it can be shown that this is justified by the traffic using the road. It will be provided both as part of new road schemes and in the course of renewing existing roads.

In addition, there will be a programme to provide fencing on other lengths of existing trunk roads. The net effect will be that most roads with dual carriageways will have such fencing. All existing safety fencing will be inspected and repaired as part of normal maintenance work.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Rhodes James asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, in the light of the further consultation over the rate support grant report announced by Her Majesty's Government on 3 December, he is able to offer any guidance on the distribution of transport supplementary grant to local highway authorities.

Mr. Moore: I am proposing acceptance of 70 new schemes for support with a view to giving further impetus to improvement of more important local authority roads. I also propose to maintain my commitment to support around 270 schemes accepted in previous settlements, many of which which are already under construction.

Officials have today informed each highway authority of their expenditure I propose to accept for TSG, at the proposed 50 per cent. rate of grant. In total, I propose to accept £360 million expenditure and give £180 million grant—almost a 10 per cent. increase over 1986-87.

A copy of the press notice I am issuing today giving total proposed accepted expenditure for each authority has been placed in the Library.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Jordan

Mr. Richard Page asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he plans to offer further aid to Jordan following the launching of its new five-year plan and its programme for the occupied territories.

Mr. Chris Patten: We have offered a new loan of £10 million, on concessionary terms and tied to the provision of British goods and services, as a contribution to the new Jordan five-year plan. The finance will be spent on capital projects to be agreed between our two Governments.

In support of the Jordanian Government's objectives to assist the economic and social development of the occupied territories we propose to increase our aid to the West Bank and Gaza to £5 million on grant terms over the next five years. Half of this will be channelled through Jordanian institutions. The finance would be available for technical co-operation, training, British equipment and some elements of local costs.

RMS St. Helena

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what type of ship will be built to replace the RMS St. Helena.

Mr. Chris Patten: The Government have given careful consideration to a variety of options and have decided, with the agreement of the St. Helena Government, that the new ship will be a 125-berth mixed passenger-cargo vessel, built in a United Kingdom yard. We expect the ship to meet all St. Helena's estimated passenger and cargo needs for the foreseeable future, except for petrol, which cannot be carried on a passenger ship and which will be supplied under separate arrangements.

The Overseas Development Administration is now setting in motion the competitive tendering arrangements for design and construction of the vessel.

EMPLOYMENT

Tourism

Mr. Gregory asked the Paymaster General which local authorities in England have published tourism strategies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: This information is not comprehensively available centrally. However, there has been a substantial increase in the number of local authorities which have published tourist strategies. The English Tourist Board and the non-statutory regional tourist boards are actively encouraging all local authorities to produce their own strategies for tourism development based on local needs and priorities of each area.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Janner asked the Paymaster General whether he intends to introduce any further new method of calculation for the unemployment figures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: As a result of the ending of compulsory "signing-on" at jobcentres, the method of calculating the unemployment figures was changed in October 1982 from a count of registrants at jobcentres to a count of claimants of unemployment benefit. Since then there have been two changes in the calculations to remove mistakes over counting, one very minor. We have made no other changes to the method of calculations and I have no present plans to make any further changes.

Mr. Hardy asked the Paymaster General how many young people are now unemployed; and how many are engaged in officially supported employment schemes within the Rotherham travel-to-work area.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: On 9 October 1986 the number of unemployed claimants aged under 18 in the Rotherham and Mexborough travel-to-work area was 1,891. The number of people aged under 18 in employment schemes in this area is not available. However, the new workers scheme, which helps people under 21 who are ineligible for YTS into full-time permanent jobs, currently supports over 600 people in Sheffield and Rotherham, a proportion of whom will be under 18. Also at the community industry unit at Rotherham there are 62 young people aged under 18 participating in community industry. In addition, in the Rotherham travel-to-work area on 5 December 1986 there were 2,473 young people in training on YTS. The vast majority of claimant school leavers aged under 18 on 9 October were eligible for YTS; and some will have taken up YTS places since the count was made.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Paymaster General (1) if he will publish a table showing the numbers and percentages of jobs lost, or gained, in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole between June 1979 and June 1986, or the latest month for which figures are available in *(a)* all industries, *(b)* all manufacturing industries, *(c)* all service industries, *(d)* shipbuilding and repairing, *(e)* metal goods engineering and vehicles, *(f)* mechanical engineering, *(g)* electrical electronic engineering and instrument engineering, *(h)* health, education and personal social services, *(i)* retail distribution and *(j)* banking, insurance and financial;

(2) if he will publish a table showing for Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole the number of persons at work who are *(a)* employees and *(b)* self-employed, in June 1979, June 1983 and June 1986 or the latest month for which figures are available; and if he will estimate the number of second jobs included in these figures;

(3) if he will publish a table showing the number of additional *(a)* jobs in service industries, *(b)* jobs in banking, insurance and finance, *(c)* self employed and *(d)* small business starts over stops, created in (i) Northern Ireland and (ii) the United Kingdom between June 1983 and June 1986.

Mr. Lee: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Training Scheme (Transfers)

Mr. Wigley asked the Paymaster General whether persons on Manpower Services Commission training schemes can transfer from one scheme which they have commenced to another without a loss of benefit for any intervening period; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: A person can transfer from one MSC scheme to another, subject to the individual's circumstances and the conditions applying to particular schemes. Should the individual claim benefit in the intervening period, he is subject to the normal rules of entitlement. I am not aware of any particular problems in the administration of such claims by my Department.

Printing Industry (London)

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General how many unfilled vacancies exist in the printing industry in the London area.

Mr. Lee: The following information is in the library. On 8 August 1986, the latest date for which an analysis of vacancies by industry is available, the number of unfilled vacancies at jobcentres in the Greater London area in the paper, printing and publishing industries was 444. A more detailed industrial analysis is not available.

Restart Scheme

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Paymaster General whether his Department will conduct an investigation to estimate how many of the long-term unemployed leave the register as a result of the normal inflow and outflow compared with those leaving as a direct result of the restart interviews over a controlled period of six months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I doubt whether it is possible to carry out a controlled experiment to monitor the precise effects of restart. There are significant variations in the normal flow into and out of unemployment because of changing labour market conditions and variable seasonal influences. These make it very difficult to provide a reliable estimate of what the position could have been without restart. We are considering ways of assessing the impact of the scheme, but we are not yet sure that a reasonably accurate assessment of its direct employment effect can be made.

Mr. Terry Fields asked the Paymaster General how many unemployed people have been offered jobs as a

result of restart training schemes in the *(a)* Liverpool travel-to-work area and *(b)* Broadgreen constituency area; how many people have had benefit suspended having failed to attend restart interviews in (i) Liverpool travel-to-work area and (ii) Broadgreen constituency area; and how many people have had benefit suspended for not meeting the requirements of the new availability for work test in (1) Liverpool travel-to-work area and (2) Broadgreen constituency area.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. 258]: We have no means of knowing how many people are offered or obtain jobs as a result of their participation in the restart programme, which is designed to improve their prospects of employment.

No one can lose his benefit entitlement solely as a result of the restart programme. Under long-standing legal rules, people can lose their entitlement to benefit if they fail to attend an interview, are not available for work or refuse an offer of suitable employment.

We cannot provide information about loss of benefit in the exact form requested as it is not possible to equate precisely unemployment benefit office areas within the locations quoted. Failure to attend an interview has always resulted in disallowance of benefit, not suspension, but up to 13 November 1986 the number of people in what is broadly the Liverpool travel-to-work area who failed to attend a restart interview and as a result had benefit disallowed by independent adjudication officers was 666. Of these, 196 were in the unemployment benefit office areas that largely covered the Broadgreen constituency. Subsequently, 469 and 157 claimants respectively had benefit reinstated after attending a restart interview.

The improved procedures for testing the availability for work of new claimants in accordance with long-standing legal rules, which I announced on 28 October, at columns 175-87, are a separate arrangement from the restart programme, which is for long-term unemployment people. Up to 5 December 1986, in the areas of Liverpool and Broadgreen respectively, 155 and 28 people who were making a fresh claim had their benefit suspended after completing the availability questionnaire, pending a decision on their entitlement by the independent adjudication officer.

Care Facilities

Ms. Richardson asked the Paymaster General what information is made available to employees of the Department of Health and Social Security and claimants on the availability of full-time child-care and day-care facilities for dependent adults within the area, when the new availability for work test is applied.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The provision of information about child-care and day-care facilities is a matter for the local authorities and other bodies which run them. Such information may be made available to staff and claimants at local offices of the Department of Health and Social Security or of the Department of Employment by local arrangement. We have no plans to make any changes.

We have not introduced any new test for benefit, but merely introduced a new form to help with the application of long-established rules followed by successive Governments.

A person who claims that he or she is actively seeking work and so is available for work and eligible for benefit as an unemployed person must also accept some personal responsibility for making arrangements for dependants to enable that person to take up a job. If a claimant says that he or she is not able to contemplate taking work, the law and the legal rules have always provided that the claimant is not entitled to benefit as unemployed.

YTS

Mr. Nicholls asked the Paymaster General how many people *(a)* are at present and *(b)* have been on the YTS in the constituency of Teignbridge since 1983.

Mr. Trippier: At present there are 296 young people in training on YTS schemes in Teignbridge. Since April 1986, when two year YTS began, there have been 329 entering the schemes. I regret the Manpower Services Commission's management information system is unable to give historical data prior to that date.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Pike asked the Paymaster General what trends he forecasts in the number of people employed in manufacturing industries in the north-west.

Mr. Lee: We do not make such forecasts of employment.

Inner Cities Initiative

Mr. Butterfill asked the Paymaster General what steps he is taking through his inner cities initiative to combat crime and the alienation of young people in inner city areas.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The aim of our inner cities initiative is to tackle the general problems of employment and disadvantage faced by inner city residents and young people in particular. We are undertaking a wide variety of relevant projects and I have now decided to provide the necessary finance to support two new schemes to combat crime and the alienation of some young people.

First, I have agreed to support the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders in establishing an inner cities crime prevention development unit. The five full-time staff of this unit will work alongside the Government's task force leaders in the eight areas where they are based in devising and implementing a programme designed to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

I have also agreed to support a consortium comprising the Apex Trust, the National Youth Bureau and the Intermediate Treatment Fund. The consortium will combine the central and local expertise of the participant organisations and will provide task forces with help and advice on tackling the problems, including the employment problems of alienated young people in the eight areas. In addition, the Apex Trust and the National Youth Bureau will each provide a member of staff to work alongside the Government's task force leaders in Handsworth and North Peckham.

Both NACRO and the consortium will be making the necessary appointments and secondments very shortly. The budget of our inner cities task force initiative is being used to provide funds of £214,194 to NACRO and of £99,450 to the consortium.

Industrial Disputes

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Paymaster General what was the total number of industrial strikes recorded for each year since 1975.

Mr. Lee: The available information on the number of stoppages through industrial disputes is given in table 4.2 of *Employment Gazette* (December 1986 issue).

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Paymaster General (1) how many production days were lost due to industrial strike action in each year since 1975;

(2) how many man-hours were lost due to industrial strike action in each year since 1975.

Mr. Lee: The available information on working days lost through industrial disputes is given in table 4.2 of *Employment Gazette* (December 1986 issue). Information on man hours lost is not available.

Smallpox

Mr. Hoyle asked the Paymaster General if he will list the premises which have handled or stored smallpox virus in the United Kingdom since 1975.

Mr. Trippier: The following premises are known to the Health and Safety Executive to have handled or stored smallpox virus since 1975:

Birmingham University
Centre for Applied Microbiology and Research, Porton
St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington

Stocks are no longer held at any of the above.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Paymaster General when smallpox SP22, 16.12.52 was discovered at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicines; and how it was labelled.

Mr. Trippier: Seven ampoules, contained in a cardboard box bearing the legend "smallpox SP22" and dated 16.12.52 were discovered at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on 3 December 1985.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Paymaster General whether all establishments known to have stored smallpox have been visited by the Health and Safety Executive since the discovery of smallpox SP22, 16.12.52 at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; if he will list all such visits since 1981 to date; and what were the findings of the inspectors.

Mr. Trippier: All establishments known to the Health and Safety Executive to have stored smallpox have been visited during 1986.

These establishments were also visited on several occasions between 1981 and 1985. However, to distinguish visits which may have been made in connection with smallpox from those made for other purposes could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Pathogenic Materials

Mr. Hoyle asked the Paymaster General (1) if the Health and Safety Executive is satisfied that all establishments handling and storing pathogenic materials in ACDP categories 3 and 4 have satisfactory arrangements for keeping inventories of such materials;

(2) if establishments handling and storing pathogenic materials in ACDP categories 3 and 4 have satisfactory systems for rendering potentially infective material safe before disposal.

Mr. Trippier: Establishments handling or storing hazard group 4 pathogens scheduled under the Health and Safety (Dangerous Pathogens) Regulations 1981, must notify the Health and Safety Executive. All establishments visited following such notifications had satisfactory arrangements for keeping inventories of such material and satisfactory systems for rendering potentially infective materials safe before disposal. Premises which handle hazard group 3 pathogens are not notifiable and it is not possible to retrieve information about the standards at these premises without disproportionate costs.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Paymaster General how many improvement or prohibition notices the Health and Safety Executive has issued in the current year in relation to an establishment's failure to maintain complete records of all human pathogens stored.

Mr. Trippier: Between 1 January and 31 March 1986 no notices relating to failure to maintain complete records of stocks of human pathogens were issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Statistics from April 1986 are not yet available centrally.

Mr. Hoyle asked the Paymaster General if the Health and Safety Executive has taken any prosecutions against establishments which fail to maintain records of the storage of human pathogens.

Mr. Trippier: No.

Official Secrets Act

Mr. Freud asked the Paymaster General what is his policy with regard to requiring officers of local authorities entering into agreements with the Manpower Services Commission to sign a declaration under the Official Secrets Acts; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The Manpower Services Commission rarely requires officers of local authorities to sign such a declaration. The Official Secrets Act is a consideration only when local authorities, or other contractors, need access to Manpower Services Commission information to fulfill an agreement. Such access is normally restricted to research and development or premises work, very little involves local authorities.

Skillcentre (Deptford)

Mr. Cartwright asked the Paymaster General what courses are currently offered at the Deptford skillcentre; how many places are available on each; and how many of these places are currently filled.

Mr. Trippier [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *369*]: There are 70 courses currently offered at the Deptford skillcentre. The type of course, the number of places available and the number of places filled on each course are shown in the following table.

Courses available at Deptford skillcentre—9 December 1986

Courses	*Places available*	*Places filled*
Bricklaying	14	11
Carpentry and joinery	28	23
Engineering production	14	7
Heating and ventilation	12	12
Industrial electronics	12	8

Courses	Places available	Places filled
Heavy vehicle repair and maintenance	12	10
Light fabrication and welding	12	9
Motor vehicle body repair and maintenance	10	9
Motor vehicle repair and maintenance	10	11
New technology access	24	24
Office machinery and servicing	12	9
Painting and decorating	12	6
Plastering	14	12
Plumbing	12	13
Radio and television service and maintenance	12	8
Sheet metal working	12	8
Silk screen printing	12	10
Specialist woodworking	14	13
Women introduction to [illegible]anual skills	10	3
Work related skills ass[illegible]nt	24	19
TOTAL	282	225

Mr. Cartwright asked the Paymaster General how many places for *(a)* bricklayers and *(b)* carpenters and joiners have been available at the Deptford skillcentre each year of its operation.

Mr. Trippier [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *369*]. The number of places for *(a)* bricklayers and *(b)* carpenters and joiners available at the Deptford skillcentre for each year of its operation is shown in the following table.

Year and Course	Places Available
1982-83	
Bricklaying	28
Carpentry and Joinery	28
1983-84	
Bricklaying	28
Carpentry and Joinery	28
1984-85	
Bricklaying	14
Carpentry and Joinery	14
1985-86	
Bricklaying	14
Carpentry and Joinery	28
1986-87	
Bricklaying	14
Carpentry and Joinery	28

Mr. Cartwright asked the Paymaster General what is the total capacity of the Deptford skillcentre; and how much of it is currently in use.

Mr. Trippier: [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *369*]. The Deptford skillcentre has a current capacity of up to 282 training places spread over a variety of trade groups. At present 225 of these training places are filled.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Uganda (Ministerial Visit)

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will report on the recent visit to Uganda by the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker); what is the current situation concerning the outstanding claims for compensation by Ugandan and Commonwealth refugees; and if he will give details of representations made by Her Majesty's Government.

Mrs. Chalker: I was warmly received by the Ugandan Government during my visit on 5 and 6 December and had substantive talks with President Museveni and other Ugandan Ministers and officials about ways in which we might further assist the Ugandan Government to restore peace and prosperity.

I raised for the third time this year the question of outstanding claims for compensation with President Museveni. The President has undertaken to look into the matter, particularly the process by which such claims are examined and verified by the Ugandan authorities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Initiatives (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list those initiatives of his Department which have been of benefit to women, since 1979, the cost or estimated cost of these initiatives, and the proportion of the total budget of his Department this represents.

Mr. Butcher: I am concerned about the under-representation of women in certain areas of industry, including management, information technology and engineering. My Department has therefore taken a number of initiatives including:

(a) Women into Science and Engineering Year 1984. My Department provided £27,000 to help fund an Equal Opportunities Commission-run double decker bus which toured the country providing teachers, parents and schoolgirls with an opportunity to gain knowledge of current technology and what is involved in an engineering career. It also contributed £8,000 to producing and distributing WISE literature;

(b) Women's Training Roadshows. The Women's National Commission has, with the help of £31,000 from my Department, run roadshows around the country to encourge women of all ages into a wider range of jobs;

(c) Challenge of Management. With the help of £5,000 from my Department, the Industrial Society has run courses to give sixth form schoolgirls an insight into industrial management;

(d) Executive Shadows Pilot Project. My Department has contributed £5,000 to a project encouraging able girls to consider a career in industry. Sixth form students "shadow" business executives, mainly on a one-to-one basis, at work for a week in 1986;

(e) Information Technology. My Department has sponsored, to the tune of £31,000, projects in Croydon, Sheffield and Cambridge to develop a strategy and materials for teaching girls and women about (and through) information technology;

(f) National Electronic Council Project. The Council has received a grant for £143,000 from my Department to promote a range of activities including, principally, a series of conferences aimed at teachers, with a view to influencing the subject choices of girls aged 13 and 14 and encouraging them to consider a career in electronics;

(g) Engineering and Technology programme. My Department has contributed to the programme which includes courses aimed at helping women gain qualifications making them better fitted for careers in areas of industry traditionally dominated my men;

(h) The Department's industry/education unit makes available to schools a series of videos on women and

engineering, information technology and related issues;

(i) As one of the sponsors of Industry Year, the Department has participated in the women's working group, which was formed to ensure that women take a full and active part in the initiative;

(j) The Department contributed £9,000 to the Sheffield local education authority information technology project to produce computer software to appeal equally to boys and girls;

(k) The Cambridge Women's Resource Centre has received £22,000 towards the purchase of computer software;

(l) My right hon. Friend has encouraged the invitation of more women to undertake public appointments for which he is responsible. Just over 23 per cent. of these appointments are now held by women.

The aggregate cost of all the Department's initiatives concerning women cannot be estimated precisely, since some costs are not individually recorded, but it is unlikely to exceed 1 per cent. of the Department's total budget. The Department follows a policy of equal opportunity for its own staff.

Spare Parts

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed in the manufacture, distribution and sale of spare parts for both imported and domestically produced goods of all types; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: I regret that this information is not available.

Vauxhall Cars

Mr. Woodcock asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any information on the level of imports of Vauxhall badged cars into the United Kingdom and the level of exports of Vauxhall badged cars from the United Kingdom.

Mr. Giles Shaw: What information is available is given in the table:

	New registrations in the United Kingdom of Vauxhall passenger cars built abroad	*Vauxhall United Kingdom production for export*
1985 Year	160,597	257
1985 January-November	155,137	n.a.
1986 January-November	[1]120,955	n.a.

n.a. Not available.

[1] Includes Opel registrations [1985 = 8,102]

Source: Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Strikes (Lost Production)

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the cost of production lost due to industrial strike action in each year since 1975.

Mr. Butcher: Figures for the overall cost of production lost due to industrial strike action are not available, but some indication may be obtained from the figures for working days lost.

Working days lost in all stoppages in progress in period
All industries and services

thousand

	Days lost
1975	6,012
1976	3,284
1977	10,142
1978	9,405
1979	29,474
1980	11,964
1981	4,266
1982	5,313
1983	3,754
1984	27,135
1985	6,402

Source: Employment Gazette.

Films (Release)

Mr. Favell asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is ready to make a final decision on the recommendations of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the early release of films.

Mr. Howard: No. I have not yet received the Director General of Fair Trading's assessment of the result of the pilot experiment on the early release of films which has been conducted in response to the recommendation of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in their 1973 report on the supply of films for exhibition in cinemas.

Regional Aid

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish his latest figures for the amount of regional development grant and regional selective assistance paid out for Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole for 1984-85, 1985-86 and so far in 1986-87.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Northern Ireland has its own forms of regional assistance which are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Payments of regional development grant[1] and regional selective assistance[2] in Great Britain in 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87 to date are:

£ million

	1984-85	*1985-86*	[3]*1986-87*
Regional Development Grants	411·0	358·5	346·9
Regional Selective Assistance	97·8	119·8	68·4

[1] Consists of old and new style RDGs; the new RDG scheme was introduced on 29 November 1984.

[2] Industrial and training grants only.

[3] April to November.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his budgeted figure for payments for Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole in *(a)* regional development grant and *(b)* regional selective assistance; and what is his best estimates of the amounts due.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Northern Ireland has its own forms of regional incentives which are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. For Great Britain, combined Supply Estimate and Winter Supplementary Estimate provisions for payments of regional development grant and regional selective assistance in 1986-87 are

£504·8 million and £160·6 million respectively. As I said in my reply to the hon. Member on 8 December 1986, at column 25, I am not yet in a position to give a clear estimate of the amounts due.

Food Products (Exports)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list information available to him on the consignments of food products exported from Britain since 1 January that have been rejected by the importing country; and what were the reasons for rejection.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have been asked to reply.

I regret that the information requested is not available.

SCOTLAND

Forestry Commission

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will indicate the work force levels for the Forestry Commission for forest planting, conservation, felling and clearing in 1970, 1980 and 1985.

Mr. John MacKay: The numbers of forest workers employed by the Forestry Commission in each of these years were as follows:

	1970		*1980*		*1985*	
Forest workers employed on forest management activities	4,168	(1,600)	2,528	(1,084)	1,964	(816)
Forest workers employed on harvesting activities	1,734	(666)	2,090	(896)	1,256	(522)
	5,902	(2,266)	4,618	(1,980)	3,220	(1,338)

Note: Figures in brackets denote those workers employed in Scotland.

Forest workers can be employed on a range of activities, and it is not possible to give a more detailed breakdown of the above figures.

Her Majesty's Inspectors

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the ways in which members of Her Majesty's inspectorate are accountable for their work, with particular reference to inspection of, and reporting on, schools and colleges; and what remedies are available to those who consider that they have been or may have been, unfairly treated in the course of Her Majesty's inspectorate's activities.

Mr. John MacKay: Her Majesty's inspectorate is part of the Scottish Education Department and is thus formally accountable to my right hon. and learned Friend. However, in practice it enjoys independence of professional judgment in the exercise of its functions, the conduct of its inspections and the content of its reports, although my right hon. and learned Friend is accountable for any decision to publish its advice. It is open to anyone who believes he has been unfairly treated in the course of Her Majesty's inspectors discharge of their duties to make representations to my right hon. and learned Friend or, in the last resort, to pursue complaints through the courts.

Geriatric Beds (Glasgow)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list, for each of the separate district areas of the Greater Glasgow health board, the number of beds provided for geriatric care in each of the general hospitals.

Mr. John MacKay: Those general hospitals in Greater Glasgow with beds for geriatric patients are as follows together with respective number of beds and the area of the former districts of the Greater Glasgow health board in which they are situated:

Hospital	*Number of beds*	*District*
Stobhill General	236	Northern
Victoria Infirmary	256	South-Eastern
Southern General	190	South-Western
Gartnavel District General	50	Western

Belvidere Hospital

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total area of land belonging to Greater Glasgow health board at Belvidere hospital; how much is built upon at present; and how much of the remainder is suitable for building.

Mr. John MacKay: The Belvidere hospital site comprises 13·9 hectares of land, of which 2·8 hectares are built upon at present. Most of the remaining land is taken up by access roads and land between individual blocks or is affected by a geological fault. About 0·6 hectares appear to be suitable for building.

Eventide Beds (Glasgow)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many people are on the waiting list for an eventide bed in the eastern district of Greater Glasgow health board;

(2) what is the average wait for admission to an eventide bed in the eastern district of the Greater Glasgow health board;

(3) what is the shortfall in the number of eventide beds in the eastern district of the Greater Glasgow health board as recommended by the SHAPE report; and what plans are in hand to remedy this situation.

Mr. John MacKay: I assume the hon. Member's question refers to residential rather than hospital accommodation.

Statistics collected centrally on services and accommodation provided by local authorities and voluntary bodies in the social work field are related to local authority rather than health board areas. Waiting lists are not required to be maintained by local authorities on a

uniform basis and the information collected on residential accommodation for the elderly and other client groups does not extend to any lists of this kind.

Hospitals (Visits)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many hospitals and which ones, within the eastern district area of the Greater Glasgow health board, have been visited within the last 12 months by *(a)* the general manager of health boards, *(b)* the chairman of the health board and *(c)* the Minister for health.

Mr. John MacKay: Although my noble Friend the Minister of State has visited hospitals elsewhere in Glasgow, neither he nor I have visited any hospitals in the former eastern district of the Greater Glasgow health board's area within the last 12 months. I am asking the chairman of the health board to write to the hon. Member about visits he has made.

Lightburn Hospital

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated cost, including alterations, of bringing Lightburn hospital up to the standards laid down by his Department; and when the necessary work will be completed.

Mr. John MacKay: This is a matter for the Greater Glasgow health board in the first instance and I shall ask the chairman of the board to write to the hon. Member.

Private Practice (Monitoring)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the arrangements for monitoring private practice carried out in National Health Service hospitals and health centres in Scotland; how many instances of monitoring have been carried out in the past two years; how many cases of abuse have come to light; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: Routine information is not held centrally. The monitoring of private practice in National Health Service premises is a matter for the appropriate health board in the first instance. The Scottish Home and Health Department has, however, issued to health boards for comment a draft document revising previous guidance on the management of private practice in National Health Service hospitals. This will be issued in final form early next year.

General Practitioners (Private Practice)

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many general practitioners in Scotland have declared that they have earned over 10 per cent. of the gross receipts of their practice by doing private practice within the past two years; and if he will break down these figures by health board areas.

Mr. John MacKay: One; in the Greater Glasgow health board areas.

Bathgate

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will outline his proposed timetable on the Rover plans for the Leyland site at Bathgate.

Mr. Ancram: I understand that a planning application was lodged with West Lothian district council on 15 December. It is a matter, in the first instance, for that council, but in view of the scale of the proposal my right hon. and learned Friend will be considering urgently whether to call it in for his own determination. He hopes to announce his decision next month.

Agricultural Buildings and Works

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he intends to seek to amend the planning laws in respect of agricultural buildings and works.

Mr. Ancram: Yes. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) on 13 November, at columns 5-6.

Shipping Services

Mr. Corrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what financial assistance he proposes for shipping services to the Scottish islands in 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I propose to give a deficit grant of £6·9 million to Caledonian MacBrayne. For the second year running the company has performed well and made significant cost savings, particularly on fuel, which it expects to continue next year. Its funding requirement is therefore lower than this year. For P and O services to the Northern Isles, I propose to make available grant of £4·0 million and for the bulk shippers with whom I have undertakings I will make provision for grant of £1·35 million.

Total revenue support next year will be £12·25 million.

Hill Farming Review

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the annual hill farming review.

Mr. John MacKay *[pursuant to his reply,* 16 December 1986]: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given today to my hon. Friend the Member for Devon North (Mr. Speller) by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Industrial Counterfeiting

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prosecutions have been instituted by the Director of Public Prosecutions or the police in the past five years in respect of industrial or commercial counterfeiting;

(2) how many defendants have been convicted in the past five years for industrial or commercial counterfeiting offences; and what was the average sentence they received.

Mr. Mellor: The available information which may be incomplete, covers prosecutions under section 1 of the Trade Descriptions Act, 1968, and is given in the following table. The fine was the most common penalty for those convicted. Prosecutions for offences involving industrial or commercial counterfeiting may be brought under other legislation, but such cases cannot be separately identified.

Persons proceeded against under Trade Descriptions Act 1968 Section 1

Year	*Total proceeded against*	*Total found guilty*
1981	1,090	850
1982	1,110	860
1983	1,520	1,230
1984	1,500	1,140
1985	1,310	1,050

Metropolitan Police (Women Officers)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the number of women police officers and the ranks they hold in the Metropolitan police force as of 1 December.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The total number of women police officers serving in the Metropolitan police on 30 November 1986 was 2,634. The breakdown by ranks is as shown in the tables below.

	Number
Uniformed	
Commanders	2
Chief Superintendent	2
Superintendent	3
Chief Inspector	5
Inspector	18
Sergeants	206
Police Constable	2,197
Total	2,433
CID	
Superintendent	3
Chief Inspector	4
Inspector	4
Detective Sergeant	29
Detective Constable	161
Total	201

Holloway Prison

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the therapeutic unit at Holloway prison was closed on 13 November; and what he is intending to do with the prisoners who were in the unit.

Mr. Mellor: The Holloway project committee noted (paragraph 6.11 of its report) that the pressure for remand places in recent years had made it impossible for the A5 therapeutic unit for drug dependents to continue as originally intended. It recommended (paragraph 6.21(ii)) that the unit should be discontinued until more sentenced women could be held in Holloway and that in the meantime individual and group psychotherapy should continue to be provided for a selected number of inmates. This recommendation was immediately accepted, and the unit was formally discontinued on 13 November. At that time, no prisoners on the unit were receiving group therapy; individual treatment is available for all prisoners at Holloway who are identified as having drug and other dependency problems.

Female Drug Addicts

Mrs. Renée Short asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has for the treatment of the increasing number of female drug addicts who are sentenced to terms of imprisonment by the courts.

Mr. Mellor: The prison and probation services are *jointly exploring* how opportunities for the continuing support of both female and male drug misusers sent to prison can be developed and better co-ordinated to help them resist a return to drugs after release.

Dog Fouling

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he intends to publish the model byelaws on dog fouling in public open spaces recommended by the recent working party on this subject; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether he will make a statement on the recent experiment involving four district councils which tested the suitability of draft model byelaws on dog fouling in public open spaces.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We are considering whether the results of the pilot scheme provide a sufficient basis on which to make the byelaws available for adoption by other local authorities, but expect to announce the conclusions we have reached shortly.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what representation he has recently received concerning the publication of model byelaws on dog fouling of public open spaces;

(2) which local councils have contacted his Department requesting model byelaws on dog fouling of public open spaces.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Since the pilot scheme ended on 1 September we have received representations from 12 hon. Members, 29 local authorities, and four other correspondents.

Since the pilot scheme began, the following local authorities have expressed interest in adopting the model byelaws:

(a) District and Borough Councils

Adur D.C.
Alnwick D.C.
Amber Valley D.C.
Arun D.C.
Aylesbury Vale D.C.
Babergh D.C.
Barnsley D.C.
Barrow-in-Furness B.C.
Basildon D.C.
Bath City C.
Basingstoke B.C.
Beverley B.C.
Birmingham City C.
Blaby D.C.
Blackpool B.C.
Blyth Valley B.C.
Bournemouth B.C.
Bradford City C.
Breckland D.C.
Brentwood D.C.
Brighton B.C.
Bristol City C.
Burnley B.C.
Bury M.D.C.
Cambridge City C.
Canterbury City C.

Caradon D.C.
Castle Point D.C.
Chelmsford B.C.
Cheltenham B.C.
Chester City C.
Chorley B.C.
Cleethorpes B.C.
Colchester B.C.
Congleton B.C.
Coventry City C.
Darlington B.C.
Derby City C.
Durham City C.
East Hampshire D.C.
East Staffordshire D.C.
Ellesmere Port B.C.
Epsom and Ewell B.C.
Gedling B.C.
Gillingham B.C.
Gloucester City C.
Great Yarmouth B.C.
Hatton B.C.
Hambleton D.C.
Harrogate B.C.
Hart D.C.
Havant B.C.
Hastings B.C.
Hertsmere B.C.
High Peak B.C.
Hove B.C.
Ipswich B.C.
Kirklees M.D.C.
Lancaster City C.
Leeds City C.
Leicester City C.
Lewes D.C.
Lincoln City C.
Liverpool City C.
Luton B.C.
Macclesfield B.C.
Maidstone B.C.
Mansfield D.C.
Medina B.C.
Merthyr Tydfil B.C.
Mid-Sussex D.C.
Milton Keynes B.C.
Mole Valley D.C.
Monmouth D.C.
Neath B.C.
Newark D.C.
Newcastle-upon-Tyne City C.
Newport B.C.
Northampton B.C.
Northavon D.C.
North Devon D.C.
North Tyneside B.C.
North Wiltshire D.C.
Nottinghamshire County C.
Oadby & Wighston B.C.
Ogwr B.C.
Oxford City C.
Pendle B.C.
Penwith D.C.
Plymouth City C.
Portsmouth City C.
Preston B.C.
Purbeck D.C.
Reading B.C.
Restormel B.C.
Rhondda B.C.
Rhuddlan B.C.
Richmondshire D.C.
Rossendale B.C.
Rother D.C.
Runnymede B.C.
Rushcliffe B.C.
Ryedale D.C.
St. Edmundsbury B.C.
Salford City C.
Scarborough B.C.
Scunthorpe B.C.
Sedgemoor D.C.
Sefton M.D.C.
Southampton City C.
S. Bedfordshire D.C.
Southend-on-Sea B.C.
S. Herefordshire D.C.
S. Kesteven D.C.
S. Tyneside B.C.
S. Wight B.C.
Spelthorne B.C.
Staffordshire Moorlands D.C.
Stockport B.C.
Stoke-on-Trent City C.
Stratford-on-Avon D.C.
Stroud D.C.
Suffolk Coastal D.C.
Swansea City C.
Taunton Deane B.C.
Teignbridge D.C.
Tendring D.C.
Test Valley B.C.
Tewkesbury B.C.
Thamesdown B.C.
Thanet D.C.
Torridge D.C.
Tunbridge Wells B.C.
Tynedale D.C.
Vale of Glamorgan B.C.
Vale of White Horse D.C.
Wakefield City C.
Walsall B.C.
Warrington B.C.
Warwick D.C.
Waveney D.C.
West Derbyshire D.C.
West Lancashire D.C.
West Wiltshire D.C.
Wimborne D.C.
Winchester City C.
Windsor and Maidenhead B.C.
Wirral B.C.
Wokingham D.C.
Wolverhampton B.C.
Woodspring D.C.
Worthing B.C.
The Wrekin D.C.
Wrexham Maelor B.C.
Wychavon D.C.
Wyre B.C.
Wyre Forest D.C.

(b) London Borough Councils

Barnet
Brent
Bromley
Camden
Croydon
Hammersmith
Harrow
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Kensington and Chelsea
Kingston-upon-Thames
Newham
Redbridge
Richmond-upon-Thames
Southwark
Sutton
Waltham Forest
Westminster

(c) Parish and Community Councils

Abbots Langley P.C.
Ampthill T.C.
Anstey P.C.
Anston P.C.
Bar Hill P.C.
Barwich in Elmet & Scholes P.C.
Bedfordshire Association of P.C.s

Biggleswade T.C.
Boston Spa P.C.
Bradford-on-Avon T.C.
Bridgnorth T.C.
Bromwich P.C.
Burton P.C.
Castle Bromwich P.C.
Chalfont St. Peter P.C.
Colwick P.C.
Congresbury P.C.
Countesthorpe P.C.
Crowland P.C.
Dunstable P.C.
Egglescliffe P.C.
Furlingbridge P.C.
Gretton P.C.
Hawarden Community C.
Hedge End P.C.
Histon P.C.
Hythe & Dibden P.C.
Illfracombe T.C.
Kennington P.C.
Lyme Regis T.C.
Meppershall P.C.
Newport Pagnell P.C.
Northallerton T.C.
North Hykeham T.C.
Old Basing P.C.
Oxted P.C.
Paddock Wood P.C.
Petersfield T.C.
Romsey T.C.
Ross-on-Wye T.C.
Salisbury P.C.
Shepherd P.C.
Shepshed P.C.
Sheritston P.C.
Shipston-on-Stow T.C.
Southwell P.C.
Skegness T.C.
Sprotbrough P.C.
St. Stephen P.C.
Steyning P.C.
Stone P.C.
Stotfold T.C.
Tackley P.C.
Tadley P.C.
Whitfield P.C.
Winterbourne P.C.
Woodley T.C.
Yateley T.C.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Redmond asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department's manual for guidance on the movement of nuclear weapons convoys has been issued to chief fire officers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Department does not produce such a manual. However, guidance on the role of the fire service at incidents involving radioactivity was given to the service in June 1984.

Police (Radioactivity)

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what training policemen receive in the use of personal dosimeters, radiac survey meters, decontamination meters, breathing equipment and protective clothing;

(2) how many persons are employed by the police to train policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity; and if he will list the areas of expertise covered;

(3) what facilities are available for the training of policemen in dealing with accidents involving radioactivity;

(4) how many days are allocated in the training of a police sergeant to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and what is the current amount of money allocated to the training of a police sergeant in dealing with such accidents;

(5) how many days are allocated in the training of a police constable to dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and what is the current amount of money allocated for the training of a police constable in dealing with such accidents.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Training of this type is not organised centrally and is a matter for individual police forces. The advice and assistance available to the police on accidents involving radioactivity is described in the emergency planning guidance to local authorities. A copy is in the Library.

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether organisations representing the police have been asked to make any submissions to the review of arrangements for nuclear accidents being undertaken by Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No, but there will be appropriate consultation on matters relevant to the police raised in the review.

Drink-Drive Campaign

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what response he has had from chief constables to the Government's Christmas drink-drive campaign;

(2) if he will call for reports from chief constables about what extra police manpower will be devoted to Her Majesty's Government's drink-drive campaign this Christmas for each of the different police authority districts.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Association of Chief Police Officers has welcomed the theme of the Department of Transport's Christmas publicity campaign against drinking and driving. Decisions on the deployment of resources are a matter for individual chief officers of police, and the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost, but the police service is committed to enforcing the law on drinking and driving all the year round.

Identification Cards

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Home Deaprtment what consideration has been given to the general adoption in the interest of security of a standard identification card for all representatives of public authorities in regular contact with members of the public.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: While it is most important that officials who may enter people's homes should carry proper identity cards and that the public should ask to see them before granting access, I am not convinced that their standardisation offers substantial advantages.

Martin Robert Rogers

Mr. Sedgemore asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which Martin Robert Rogers, a constituent of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch, collapsed in a coma at Brixton prison on 27 November;

(2) if the authorities at Brixton prison passed on all the personal and medical information needed by Kings College hospital on 27 November when Martin Robert Rogers was taken there in a coma; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he is satisfied with the treatment, medical and otherwise, received by Martin Robert Rogers whilst on remand at Brixton prison prior to his removal to Kings College hospital on 27 November.

Mr. David Mellor: We have no reason to doubt the adequacy of the treatment and medical attention Mr. Rogers received at Brixton prison where he was seen by a medical officer on reception on 26 November. He was given suitable medication for his immediate condition in the light of his account of his medical history. I understand that later on 26 November he had a fit from which he appeared to recover and sleep. He was observed at intervals during the night. Next morning he was examined by the medical officer and found to be comatose. The medical officer therefore arranged that he should be transferred to Kings College hospital accompanied by a letter giving details of his medical condition and history so far as it was known.

"Road Users and the Police"

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the conclusions regarding police/motorist relations in "Road Users and the Police".

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The research study by Mr. Dix and Mr. Layzell on "Road Users and the Police", carried out on behalf of the Police Foundation, was a small scale

exploratory study of the impact of road traffic law enforcement on police public relations. The study suggested that contacts between the police and the public in this context could have a favourable effect on public perceptions of the police, and emphasised the importance of the use of discretion by police officers.

Boundary Commission

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Boundary Commission for England intends to conduct any further interim reviews of parliamentary constituencies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: The Commission has informed me that, in addition to the interim review of 42 constituencies which it is presently undertaking, it intends to conduct interim reviews of 55 further constituencies under the powers provided in section 2(3) of the House of Commons (Redistribution of Seats) Act 1949. The constituencies to be included in this further review are as follows:

Counties and constituencies

Buckinghamshire
Aylesbury CC
Buckingham CC
Chesham and Amersham CC

Lancashire
Burnley BC
Chorley CC
Fylde CC
Hyndburn BC
Pendle BC
Preston BC
Ribble Valley CC
South Ribble CC
West Lancashire CC

Derbyshire
Amber Valley CC
Bolsover CC
Erewash CC
North-East Derbyshire CC
West Derbyshire CC

Devon
Plymouth, Davenport BC
South Hams CC
Teignbridge CC

Essex
Braintree CC
Brentwood and Ongar CC
Chelmsford CC
Epping Forest CC
Harlow CC
North Colchester CC

Hereford and Worcester
Hereford CC
Leominster CC
Mid-Worcestershire CC
South Worcestershire CC
Worcester BC
Wyre Forest CC

Humberside
Boothferry CC

Kent
Canterbury CC
Faversham CC
Folkestone and Hythe CC
Gillingham BC
Mid-Kent CC

Leicestershire
Bosworth CC
Loughborough CC
North-west Leicestershire CC
Rutland and Melton CC

North Yorkshire
Rydedale CC
Scarborough CC
Selby CC

Nottingham
Broxtowe CC
Newark CC
Nottingham East BC
Rushcliffe CC
Sherwood CC

Shropshire
Ludlow CC
Shrewsbury and Atcham CC
The Wrekin BC

Suffolk
Ipswich BC
Suffolk Coastal CC

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will announce the name of the next deputy chairman of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England.

Mr. Hurd: The Lord Chancellor has appointed Sir John Knox, QC, to be deputy chairman of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England. The appointment is for a four-year period with effect from 1 January 1987.

Representation of the People Act 1985

Mr. Lilley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1985 will come into force.

Mr. Hurd: The relevant provisions of the Act come into force on 1 January for the purpose of elections held on or after 16 February 1987. From 1 January anyone who cannot reasonably be expected to vote in person at a particular election will be able to apply to the electoral registration officer to vote by post or proxy. This means that holidaymakers and people away on business trips who previously were unable to vote will now be able to do so. Application forms and leaflets explaining the new provisions will be available from electoral registration officers. Application forms will have to be completed and returned to the electoral registration officer not later than noon on the 13th working day before polling day. But it will be possible for people taken ill shortly before polling day to apply no later than noon on the sixth working day before the poll.

Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

Mr. Butterfill asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 will come into operation.

Mr. Hurd: The main provisions of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 will be brought into force on 1 January 1987. The new Act was the result of painstaking work and close collaboration between Government, the scientific community and the moderate animal welfare movement. The new controls which it introduces will, when fully implemented, represent a real

advance in the welfare of animals used in research, providing for effective and rigorous control of all experimentation on animals whilst at the same time allowing essential research and safety testing to be continued.

All of the new Act with the exception of the controls on the sources of the most commonly used laboratory animals will come into force on 1 January 1987. The introduction of the new controls and the conversion of existing work is a major task involving sustained detailed effort. The major innovation of the new Act — the project licence — will be established in a planned programme of work which will be completed by the end of 1988. Once this task is completed work will start on the inspection of establishments for designation as breeding or supplying establishments under the Act, so that the controls on the source of laboratory animals may be introduced as soon as possible.

The coming into force of this new Act is a notable landmark in the history of animal welfare. When in full operation it will be seen to provide for a rigorous and effective system of control over experiments on living animals. We have increased the size of the Inspectorate and provided additional administrative resources to ensure this. I am sure that the confidence of the many groups which supported this legislation during its passage will be fully vindicated.

Industrial Counterfeiting

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations he is having with other Government Departments on the subject of industrial and commercial counterfeiting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: This is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who consults ministerial colleagues as appropriate.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Corporal Punishment

Mr. J. Enoch Powell asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under what powers he intends to make provisions for the cessation of corporal punishment in schools.

Dr. Mawhinney: Power to make such provision is contained in section 47 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Cigarette Tax

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax in total, including specific tax, and valorem tax and value-added tax, in pence per packet of 20 cigarettes is levied on *(a)* a packet of United Kingdom manufactured king size cigarettes retailing at £1·50 and *(b)* a packet of imported Virginia king size cigarettes retailing at £1·21.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Personal Incomes

Dr. McDonald asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make an estimate of the number of taxpayers earning less than two thirds of median male earnings in 1986-87; and what proportion this group represents of all taxpayers.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986, c. *776*]: It is estimated that, in 1986-87, about 6 million single people and married couples, representing about 30 per cent. of taxpayers, are liable to tax on gross incomes of less than two thirds of median male earnings. (Median full-time, adult male earnings in April 1986 were £185·10 per week.)

SOCIAL SERVICES

Breast Cancer

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what the trials of breast cancer screening techniques conducted at eight United Kingdom centres since 1979 have established about the total cost of screening and the additional cost of clinical examinations.

Mrs. Currie: Professor Sir Patrick Forrest's report on breast cancer screening has recently been received and we are arranging for it to be published. The report includes an estimate of the cost of introducing breast cancer screening. However it would be inappropriate for me to quote extracts from the report in advance of its publication.

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the planned expenditure on the breast cancer screening programme in England and Wales for the current financial year; and what are the figures envisaged for the three succeeding financial years;

(2) if he will provides estimates of the cost of establishing a high-quality nationwide breast cancer screening programme *(a)* for all women over 40 years of age and *(b)* for all women over the age of 50 years.

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total funding from his Department to London hospitals for breast cancer screening services.

Mrs. Currie: The sum of £556,000 is available this year from central expenditure to fund a series of trials on breast cancer screening. Decisions on whether to introduce a national screening programme will be made in the light of the report prepared by the working group chaired by Professor Sir Patrick Forrest which has recently been received by Ministers.

We are arranging for the report to be published. It includes an estimate of the cost of introducing breast cancer screening and its consequences. However it would be inappropriate for me to quote extracts from the report in advance of its publication.

Diabetics

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the estimated cost to the National Health Service for the treatment of diabetes sufferers in the current financial year.

Mrs. Currie: It is not possible to distinguish all the costs to the National Health Service for the treatment of

diabetes. The latest available information shows that the estimated cost of hospital in-patient treatment identified as being for diabetes was some £70 million in England in 1985-86, but this is likely to understate the cost of treating some secondary conditions which are identified under other headings. The cost of hyperglycaemic agents (including insulin), urine testing equipment and reuseable syringes and needles dispensed by community pharmacies under the NHS in England was some £35 million in 1985, the latest year for which figures are available. Separate costings are not available for other major elements in the treatment of diabetes — out-patient consultations and treatment, general practitioner services and drugs provided by hospital pharmacies.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish a table showing the number of cervical cancer smear tests conducted in each year from 1974 and the proportion of positive results;

(2) if he will publish a table showing the number of positive cervical cancer smear tests recorded in each year from 1974 and the proportion of those so detected who subsequently died.

Mrs. Currie: The available information is given in the table.

Information on the proportion of women with positive smear test results who subsequently die of cervical cancer is not held centrally. Some positive results indicate abnormalities other than cervical cancer or pre-cancer; some are from repeat tests on the same women; and some cancers or pre-cancers would never progress to more advanced stages of the disease. However it has been estimated that up to 80 per cent. of women who die from cervical cancer have never been screened.

Number of smears taken, positive results, results per thousand smears examined and number of deaths, England and Wales

Numbers (actual)

Year	*All smears*	*Positive results*	*Positive results per 1,000 smears examined*	*Deaths from malignant neoplasm of the Cervix Uteri (ICD 80)*
1974	2,476,000	11,556	4·7	2,068
1975	2,498,000	11,911	4·8	2,143
1976	2,568,000	13,336	5·2	2,206
1977	2,545,000	14,952	5·9	2,145
1978	2,587,000	16,260	6·3	2,153
1979	2,749,000	17,333	6·3	2,087
1980	2,928,000	19,923	6·8	2,068
1981	2,999,000	21,340	7·1	2,107
1982	2,951,000	22,370	7·6	1,932
1983	3,200,000	24,836	7·8	1,959
1984	3,417,000	30,331	8·9	1,899
1985	3,897,000	35,752	9·2	1,957

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what was the average screening take-up rate for those health authorities which had a cervical cancer call and recall scheme in operation in 1985-86;

(2) what arrangements he has made to monitor the screening take-up rates of cervical cancer call and recall schemes.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested about take-up rate is not yet collected centrally. From 1988 the standard returns completed by health authorities should include information on numbers of women invited for screening, numbers who accept, and the proportion of the at-risk female population who have had a cervical cancer smear test within the last five years.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. Anderson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average waiting time from the date of application for invalid care allowance; how many claimants are still waiting to be dealt with; and what steps he is taking to reduce this period.

Mr. Major: As at 5 December, the latest date for which information is available, about 75,000 claims are awaiting decision. Most of these claims are held up by the need to make inquiries of a variety of sources, including the claimants themselves, to obtain further information. The average time taken to process a claim is currently 22·5 weeks. We are taking all practical steps to reduce this period.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many of the people in the United Kingdom who received supplementary benefit in the latest year for which statistics are available were of no fixed abode.

Mr. Lyell: Separate statistical information on the number of claimants without accommodation is not maintained for Great Britain and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Separate information is also not routinely maintained for Northern Ireland but a count in May 1986 showed 1,285 people claiming as having no accommodation.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people aged over 70 years currently receive mobility allowance; and how many presently in receipt of such benefit will lose it in 1989 as a result of their age.

Mr. Major: At 10 December 1986, there were 15,335 recipients of mobility allowance who were age 70 or over. Of this number, 9,345 qualified under eligibility criteria which include the upper limit of age 75 for the payment of the allowance. Recipients are due to reach this limit from 29 November 1989 onwards, but I regret that the number due to reach it in 1989 cannot be identified separately.

Funeral and Maternity Payments

Mr. Andrew MacKay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will announce the arrangement for the introduction of funeral and maternity payments under the social fund.

Mr. Major: We have laid before Parliament regulations which provide for payments to be made from the social fund to people on low incomes—whether in or out of work—for maternity and funeral expenses.

The regulations replace the existing provisions for maternity and funeral expenses made by the maternity and

death grants of £25 and £30 respectively and the relevant supplementary benefit single payments for maternity and funeral needs. The new arrangements extend entitlement to people in low paid work as well as supplementary benefit claimants. Under these arrangements a maternity payment of £80 will be made for each new or adopted baby if the claimant or his/her partner is in receipt of supplementary benefit or family income supplement. For funerals, the full cost of a reasonable funeral will be paid if the claimant or his/her partner is in receipt of supplementary benefit, family income supplement, or housing benefit.

As with the existing supplementary benefit single payments scheme, any savings of over £500 held by the claimant or his family will be taken into account for both types of payment, the excess being offset against the amount paid. For funerals, provision is also made to take account of any of the assets of the deceased which are available to the claimant, when calculating the amount of any sum due. Any contribution made by another towards the cost of the funeral will also be taken into account. From April 1988, when a lump sum of £1,000 for widows will replace widows' allowance, amended regulations will ensure that this sum is disregarded for recent widows who need to claim either a maternity or funeral payment.

These regulations, the Social Fund Maternity and Funeral Expenses (General) Regulations 1986 and the Social Fund Maternity and Funeral Expenses (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1986, are made under sections 32(2) and 51(1) of the Social Security Act 1986 and will take effect from 6 April 1987. They include a number of consequential amendments to other regulations which arise out of these provisions. The regulations have not been referred to the Social Security Advisory Committee since, by virtue of section 61(5) of the Act, reference is not necessary for regulations made within twelve months of the Act coming into force.

Claim forms incorporating explanatory notes will be available to the public in the normal way from the middle of March 1987 onwards.

Registered Homes Act 1984

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he is satisfied with the working of the Registered Homes Act 1984; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has any plans to seek to amend the Registered Homes Act 1984.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) on 19 November at column *217*, covering a study of the effects of the Act on residential care homes. When the report of the study is available we shall be taking stock of these registration arrangements and considering whether changes in them are needed. We have no other plans at this stage.

Bayer UK (Inducements)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has received from the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries on its investigation into the allegation that Bayer UK is inducing doctors to prescribe its drugs on the false ground that they are contributing to a research project; and if it is normal practice for the results of such investigations to be sent to him.

Mr. Newton: In a letter of 15 December, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) has communicated to the Department the results of its investigation into the allegations publicised on 10 September about promotion by Bayer UK Limited of Adalot Retard.

Bayer admitted that during the period in question company representatives had given doctors fees for assessments. They stated that this had not been company policy and that they had taken steps in June 1985 to ensure that this practice ceased, that it would not recur, and that the ABPI code of practice would be observed in all respects.

ABPI decided that these methods had brought discredit upon the pharmaceutical industry and ruled that there had been breach of its code of practice. ABPI also took a very serious view of the breach and determined to suspend the company's membership of ABPI indefinitely with immediate effect, while continuing to expect it to comply with the code of practice. ABPI will make a further review of Bayer's promotional activity.

ABPI's normal practice is to communicate the findings of its code of practice committee not only to the Department but to the Secretaries of the British Medical Association and of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and to the editors of the *British Medical Journal* and of *The Pharmaceutical Journal.*

Community Care

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the proportions of the proceeds from sales of institutions emptied by the community care policy *(a)* remain in the hands of the health authorities and *(b)* are passed to social services departments of local authorities.

Mrs. Currie: It is open to health authorities to use the proceeds of sales for the development of local authority social services through joint financing arrangements, but the Department does not routinely collect information on the extent to which they do.

Health Service Pay (London Weighting)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the London weighting allowance for *(a)* nurses, *(b)* doctors and other members of the health service and *(c)* other employees associated with his Department.

Mr. Newton: The information is as follows:

1. Staff employed by health authorities within the former GLC area:

	£ per annum
a. Nurses, midwives, health visitors	877
b. Doctors and dentists	877
c. Ancillary staff	877
d. Staff employed in the London ambulance service	877

II. All other staff employed by health authorities:

	£ per annum
a. Inner London	1,133
b. Outer London	677

Notes
(i) The management side of the General Whitley Council's London weighting consortium recently offered increases on these rates back dated to 1 July 1986 to the staff side who, I understand, are currently consulting constituent associations on the offer.
(ii) Staff employed in certain extra-territorially managed units and in the so-called fringe area on the periphery of the former Greater London Council area receive allowances of £527 per annum and £149 per annum respectively.

III. Civil servants employed in the Department, depending on the location of their offices, receive the following allowances:

	£ per annum
a. Inner	1,465
b. Intermediate	840
c. Outer	615

These rates came into effect from 1 July 1986.

IV. Staff employed by social services Departments of local authorities, depending on the location of the centres from which they work, receive the following allowances:

	£ per annum
a. Inner	1,395
b. Outer	738
c. Inner fringe	333
d. Outer fringe	225

These rates came into effect on 1 July 1986.

Local Office (Archway Tower)

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements exist at his Department's Archway Tower offices for making special payments after 3.30 pm on working days.

Mr. Lyell: Arrangements exist at the Department's Archway Tower offices to make payments after 3.30 pm. Members of the public who request immediate financial assistance after 3.30 pm may be admitted to the offices at the discretion of the managers. An urgent counter payment can be authorised where it is clear that the claimant cannot wait until the next day for his money.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action has been taken since 1 May to improve the public areas of his Department's Archway Tower offices.

Mr. Lyell: The Department has two offices located in Archway Tower-Highgate and Finsbury park local offices. In Highgate local office new floor covering has been fitted in the public areas and new seating has been installed in the supplementary benefit reception area. At the Finsbury park office an additional interviewing position has been provided in the supplementary benefits reception area.

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action has been taken to *(a)* reduce asbestos, *(b)* repair the lifts, *(c)* clean the windows and *(d)* repair the staff door of Archway Tower since 1 May.

Mr. Lyell: The following action has been taken:

(a) The Property Services Agency regularly inspects all known asbestos in the building to ensure that it is in a safe condition. No asbestos has been removed since 1 May 1986.

(b) The lifts are routinely serviced and, in the event of a breakdown, an engineer is normally available within the building.

(c) External cradles have recently been commissioned and a window cleaning contract is being arranged to start in early 1987.

(d) The staff door was replaced on 16 September 1986.

Claims

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the number of London social security claims that have been referred to out of town offices of his Department.

Mr. Lyell: Currently the Department's London south region is arranging for arrears of claims for single payments in some London offices to be dealt with by outstationed units in Chatham and Broadstairs.

To date a total of 9,087 claims have been referred to these units. Of that number, 5,576 have been cleared completely and action continues on the remaining 3,511.

Medical Secretaries

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he has any plans to alter the present pay scales for medical secretaries working in the National Health Service;

(2) if he has any plans to alter the present gradings for medical secretaries working in the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton: Pay scales and gradings for medical secretaries are matters for the administrative and clerical staffs Whitley Council but it is for employing health authorities to determine the appropriate grades of individuals posts.

Abortions

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what percentage of abortions performed on girls under the age of 16 years have been carried out in *(a)* non-National Health Service premises and *(b)* pay beds in National Health Service hospitals in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: The available information is shown in the table. The category of bed occupied in NHS hospitals is not collected in the notifications of abortions under the Abortion Act 1967. However, from the Hospital in-patient inquiry, a one in 10 sample of hospital discharges and deaths, it is estimated that of all women aged under 16 years whose pregnancies were terminated under the Act during the period 1981 to 1984, less than 1 per cent. occupied pay beds in NHS hospitals.

Percentage of all legal abortions to women, resident and non-resident aged under 16 years which were carried out in non-NHS premises England and Wales 1981 to 1985

Year	Percentage
1981	39·8
1982	40·5
1983	41·6
1984	42·8
1985	42·3

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he has taken to monitor the

number of abortions performed upon girls aged under 16 years in which the girl concerned signed the consent form for general anaesthetic.

Mr. Newton: The General Medical Council has issued guidance to doctors about the considerations to which a doctor should have regard before offering advice or treatment to a child below the age of 16 who consults him and is not accompanied by a parent or person in loco parentis. The principles set out in that guidance apply equally to all forms of treatment, including where a general anaesthetic forms part of the treatment. The Department does not routinely monitor the operation of these procedures.

Kidney Transplants

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give for each year since 1976 the number of kidney transplants in the National Health Service, the estimated cost of the average kidney transplant in that year and the average period each kidney transplant patient lived after the transplant;

(2) what is the longest period anyone has lived after a kidney transplant in the National Health Service; and what are the mean and modal averages.

Mrs. Currie: According to data supplied by the United Kingdom transplant service, the number of cadaveric kidney transplants performed in the United Kingdom during the calendar years from 1976 was as follows:

	Number
1976	670
1977	779
1978	941
1979	842
1980	988
1981	905
1982	1,070
1983	1,144
1984	1,443
1985	1,334
[1]1986	1,363

[1] To end October.

A study undertaken in 1981 estimated the cost of a successful kidney transplant at between £5,000 and £5,700 in the year of operation (at 1981 prices). No other reliable financial information is available, but the real cost is likely to have risen because of the introduction of the drug Cyclosporin A, an immunosuppressant which significantly increases graft survival.

I am informed by European Dialysis and Transplant Association that, according to its latest information, a patient was living in 1985 whose implanted kidney had been functioning for 21 years.

Because of the number of variables involved (estimates of survival of patients still living who are on different immunosuppressive regimes, patients who have had more than one transplant, patients with a failed transplant now on dialysis etc.), it is impossible to derive meaningful "average" survival rates, whether the average be the arithmetic mean, the mode, the median, or any other measure.

Purine Research Laboratory

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about the future of the Purine research laboratory at Guy's hospital; whether additional funds will be made available to ensure its survival; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Two letters from hon. Members have been received, and one from the consultant in charge of the unit. The funding of the unit is a matter for the health authorities concerned. The Lewisham and North Southwark health authority has enquired about possible supra-regional status for the unit. Any application for such designation would have to be submitted by the South East Thames regional health authority.

Prevention of Accidents

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will make a statement about his response to goals for reducing traffic, home and occupational accidents by the year 2000 set out in target II of the World Health Organisation's "Targets for Health for All";

(2) if he will make a statement on his Department's contributions for the reduction in the incidence and severity of injury in transport accidents during European Road Safety Year.

Mrs. Currie: The Department supports any measures designed to promote safety and to avoid accidents of every type. Officials have worked with the Department of Transport in their contribution to the European Road Safety Year and in road safety considerations generally. In that connection, we have continued to develop a major health education campaign to discourage drug misuse, and are expanding treatment and rehabilitation services for drug misusers. In September 1986, we contributed to an international symposium on young drivers: on alcohol and drug impairment.

We are assisting in preparation by the medical commission on accident prevention to hold a medical colloquium on behavioural aspects of accident prevention early in 1987. Consultation will also take place with other government Departments on progress towards the goals in target II of the World Health Organisation's "Health for All" initiative.

Occupational Pensions

Mr. Andrew MacKay asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has decided on the circumstances in which the 2 per cent. incentive payment under the Social Security Act 1986 will be withheld from a personal pension held by someone who was previously in an occupational pension scheme.

Mr. Fowler: In draft regulations which are being issued for consultation today, we propose that the 2 per cent. incentive payment should not be made to a personal pension held by an employee who, without changing his employer, has left an occupational pension scheme which is contracted out of the State earnings-related pension scheme, after at least two years of membership. The incentive payment will be withheld if the only reason for the employee no longer being in the occupational scheme, when the necessary information is given to the Department by his employer, is that he chose to opt out.

Boarders

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he is considering for boarders under the reformed social security scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: In accordance with the undertaking that I gave to the House on 9 July at column 352, I am today issuing a consultative paper on the future benefit arrangements under the reformed social security scheme for the small minority of supplementary benefit claimants (about 2 per cent.) receiving ordinary board and lodging allowances. Copies of the document are available in the Vote Office.

Many of the difficulties which have arisen in this area stem from differences between the benefit arrangements for supplementary benefit boarders and other claimants which tend to create perverse incentives for landlords and claimants. Recent measures to tighten up the system have brought about improvements which could if necessary enable arrangements to continue on very similar lines into the future. However, the advent of the new income support scheme in April 1988 provides an opportunity to examine the scope for creating a simpler, more coherent framework for benefits to boarders while tackling effectively the problems of incentives and maintaining proper financial controls. The consultative document seeks views on the possibility that boarders as a group should no longer receive special higher rates but should instead be eligible for help with living costs from income support, including the premiums for family responsibilities, lone parenthood, old age and disability, in exactly the same way as other claimants.

Supplementary benefit boarders, like boarders in work and people paying rent, would thus get help with housing costs through housing benefit where it is already proposed to extend and strengthen the financial controls. If, subject to consultation, these proposals were implemented, whether from April 1988 or a later date, the present form of benefit limits would cease, but my Department would continue to apply special fraud and claims control procedures where appropriate. As local authorities are already responsible for help with accommodation costs for boarders in work, the proposals would not create a new responsibility. Nevertheless, the Government remain anxious to minimise the operational effects on authorities and are particularly anxious to take full account of the views of the local authority associations on these points.

In addition the paper invites comments on the future benefit treatment of people living in hostels. The current rules recognise the special nature of these establishments, and it is for consideration whether residents should continue to receive benefit on the same basis in future, or should be aligned with ordinary boarders or people in homes, in the light of the studies currently under way.

The Government will take careful account of the comments and representations received from the local authority associations and others by 20 February 1987 before reaching any final conclusions.

Agency Nurses

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he will make a statement as to his policy towards the role of agency nurses in meeting the demand for nursing manpower in the National Health Service;

(2) what efforts the Government are making to reduce the need to call upon the services of agency nurses.

Mr. Newton: Circular HC(83)2 recognised that whilst nursing posts in the National Health Service should ideally be filled with directly employed full and part-time staff in order to ensure maximum continuity of patient care, reduction of management and supervision difficulties and provision of clinical training for nurse learners, suitable qualified staff are not always available in the particular locality. Where recruitment difficulties are encountered or where particular short term needs arise, the use of qualified staff from nurses' agencies can prove valuable.

The number employed in England at September 1985 was 4,120, about 1 per cent. of the total nursing and midwifery staff. However the number of agency nurses employed in the NHS has fluctuated over the years with large fluctuations between quarters in the same year.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the proportion of the national nursing budget which was given to agency nursing in the years: *(a)* 1979-80, *(b)* 1980-81, *(c)* 1981-82, *(d)* 1982-83, *(e)* 1983-84, *(f)* 1984-85 and *(g)* 1985-86, respectively.

Mr. Newton: Following is the information, derived from the annual accounts of health authorities in England:

Expenditure on non-NHS staff (Agency etc)—Nursing: as percentage of total salaries and wages expenditure—Nursing

Year	*Per cent.*
1979-80	1·81
1980-81	1·89
1981-82	1·69
1982-83	1·26
1983-84	1·07
1984-85	1·31
1985-86[1]	1·57

[1] Provisional figure.

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of nursing manpower within the National Health Service is provided by agency nurses.

Mr. Newton: The number of agency nursing and midwifery staff employed in England at September 1985 was 4,120 in wholetime equivalent terms; about 1·0 per cent. of the total nursing and midwifery staff at that date.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for the latest available year the expenditure of each district health authority and special health authority on agency nursing and if he will give the totals for *(a)* Inner London, *(b)* Greater London, *(c)* each region and *(d)* England.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986, c. *48-9*]: Following are the provisional figures shown by the annual accounts of health authorities for 1985-86:

Expenditure on non-National Health Service staff (agency etc.)—nursing—1985-86

Regional Health Authority Districts	£
Northern Region	1,121
Districts:	
Hartlepool	—
North Tees	—
South Tees	—
East Cumbria	—
South Cumbria	—
West Cumbria	—
Darlington	—
Durham	—
North West Durham	—
South West Durham	—
Northumberland	—
Gateshead	—
Newcastle upon Tyne	—
North Tyneside	2,562
South Tyneside	6,514
Sunderland	—
Region total	10,197
Yorkshire Region	4,717
Districts:	
Hull	16,458
East Yorkshire	—
Grimsby	—
Scunthorpe	—
Northallerton	—
York	—
Scarborough	140,667
Harrogate	28,023
Bradford	70,618
Airedale	—
Calderdale	—
Huddersfield	—
Dewesbury	—
Leeds Western	49,763
Leeds Eastern	144,455
Wakefield	—
Pontefract	—
Region total	454,701
Trent Region	
Districts:	
North Derbyshire	—
South Derbyshire	—
Leicestershire	9,951
North Lincolnshire	1,317
South Lincolnshire	11,148
Bassetlaw	—
Central Nottinghamshire	—
Nottingham	—
Barnsley	—
Doncaster	33,512
Rotherham	—
Sheffield	610
Region Total	56,538
East Anglian Region	
Districts:	
Cambridge	470,974
Peterborough	152,248
West Suffolk	16,078
East Suffolk	23,068
Norwich	325,635
Great Yarmouth	301,864
West Norfolk and Wisbech	205,339
Huntingdon	57,941
Region Total	1,553,147
North West Thames Region	1,084
Districts:	
North Bedfordshire	2,633
South Bedfordshire	—
North Hertfordshire	150,320
East Hertfordshire	87,656
North West Hertfordshire	170,076
South West Hertfordshire	464,893
Barnet	1,072,112
Harrow	1,097,578
Hillingdon	1,150,361
Hounslow and Spelthorne	1,564,033
Ealing	305,119
Brent	973,835
Paddington	1,809,962
Riverside	3,051,438
Region Total	11,901,100
North East Thames Region	
Districts:	
Basildon and Thurrock	321,120
Mid Essex	276,866
North East Essex	108,796
West Essex	361,006
Southend	227,731
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	165,713
Hampstead	1,177,457
Bloomsbury	2,844,825
Islington	503,909
City and Hackney	1,428,515
Newham	1,079,930
Tower Hamlets	755,241
Enfield	517,293
Haringey	1,016,597
Redbridge	751,618
Waltham Forest	1,268,057
Region Total	12,804,758
South East Thames Region	21,289
Districts:	
Brighton	749,199
Eastbourne	281,942
Hastings	19,059
South East Kent	145,601
Canterbury and Thanet	361,265
Dartford and Gravesham	391,726
Maidstone	549,671
Medway	122,321
Tunbridge Wells	485,070
Bexley	175,445
Greenwich	509,913
Bromley	729,054
West Lambeth	1,486,611
Camberwell	1,983,298
Lewisham & North Southwark	1,924,776
Region Total	9,936,240
South West Thames Region	3,661
Districts:	
North West Surrey	525,323
West Surrey & North East Hampshire	228,546
South West Surrey	528,757
Mid Surrey	150,908
East Surrey	602,960
Chichester	19,030
Mid Downs	95,692
Worthing	312,813
Croydon	131,612
Kingston & Esher	520,643
Richmond, Twickenham & Roehampton	714,459
Wandsworth	1,684,512
Merton & Sutton	544,431
Region Total	6,063,347

Regional Health Authority Districts	£
Wessex Region	
Districts:	
East Dorset	289,250
West Dorset	49,453
Portsmouth & South East Hampshire	19,727
Southampton & South West Hampshire	50,328
Winchester	133,636
Basingstoke & North Hampshire	183,629
Salisbury	87,272
Swindon	228,353
Bath	—
Isle of Wight	—
Region Total	1,041,648
Oxford Region	12,051
Districts:	
East Berkshire	252,464
West Berkshire	262,202
Aylesbury	110,620
Wycombe	6,622
Milton Keynes	88,520
Kettering	891
Northampton	—
Oxford	—
Region Total	733,370
South Western Region	
Districts:	
Bristol and Weston	28,491
Frenchay	3,210
Southmead	4,156
Cornwall	1,767
Exeter	282,652
North Devon	3,989
Plymouth	1,641
Torbay	8,051
Cheltenham	32,584
Gloucester	—
Somerset	5,923
Region Total	372,454
West Midlands Region	
Districts:	
Bromsgrove and Redditch	80,499
Hereford	3,839
Kidderminster	12,084
Worcester	100,182
Shropshire	1,519
Mid Staffordshire	5,639
North Staffordshire	—
South East Staffordshire	—
Rugby	36,473
North Warwickshire	90,053
South Warwickshire	2,520
Central Birmingham	246,386
East Birmingham	273,551
North Birmingham	25,234
South Birmingham	116,774
West Birmingham	169,813
Coventry	12,651
Dudley	245,348
Sandwell	156,407
Solihull	—
Walsall	—
Wolverhampton	—
Region Total	1,578,972
Mersey Region	8,235
Districts:	
Chester	—
Crewe	4,257
Halton	38,345
Macclesfield	6,540
Warrington	—
Liverpool	426,854
St. Helens and Knowsley	—
Southport and Formby	2,862
South Sefton	—
Wirral	—
Region Total	487,093
North Western Region	
Districts:	
Lancashire	—
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	1,738
Preston	—
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	—
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	—
West Lancashire	2,024
Chorley and South Ribble	—
Bolton	—
Bury	—
North Manchester	—
Central Manchester	18,425
South Manchester	—
Oldham	—
Rochdale	—
Salford	1,999
Stockport	—
Tameside and Glossop	210
Trafford	—
Wigan	—
Region Total	24,396
Special Health Authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals	
Hospitals for Sick Children	1,040,037
National Hospital for Nervous Diseases	902,055
Moorfields Eye Hospital	323,507
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals	38,317
National Heart and Chest Hospitals	501,495
Royal Marsden Hospital	237,943
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's Hospitals	1,216,316
Eastman Dental Hospitals	19,599
Total	4,279,269
Total (England)	51,297,230

The totals for Inner London and Greater London were £24,009,743 and £37,216,616 respectively. Both figures include expenditure by the special health authorities (ie £4,279,269).

ENVIRONMENT

Homeless People

15. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to encourage greater use of empty homes to house homeless people.

Mr. John Patten: We are putting extra money in through housing associations and through our estates action initiative. I hope local authorities will now play their part in ending the scandal of council houses which stand empty when there are families without homes.

41. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of people in London who will be without shelter at Christmas.

Mr. Tracey: There is no comprehensive information on the number of people in London who will be without shelter at Christmas and my right hon. Friend is not in a position to make estimates.

Local Authorities (Privatisation)

16. **Mr. Wainwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the local authorities which, since 1980, have contracted out, respectively, refuse collection, street cleaning, building cleaning, catering, vehicle maintenance or parks services to private companies and have subsequently returned them to direct labour operation.

Mr. Chope: My Department does not collect up-to-date information on this subject.

"Paying for Local Government"

17. **Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many responses were received to Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government".

18. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of comments received on "Paying for Local Government" were in favour of the community charge.

19. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now publish the list of those individuals and organisations which responded to Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government".

Dr. Boyson: I received a total of 1,217 responses to the Green Paper. A summary of responses has been placed in the Library. It includes a list of those organisations which responded.

56. **Mr. Faulds** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now publish all the responses received by his Department to Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government".

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 4 November. A summary of responses has been placed in the Library.

70. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he proposes to publish a White Paper on local government finance in response to consultations on Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government".

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 4 November.

Wind Generators

20. **Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek powers to remove the application of rates from wind generators providing electricity in rural areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I have no plans to exempt electricity generating plants from rating. But all such plants, including wind turbines, are exempt when situated on agricultural land and used in connection with farming operations.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Yeo asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about his latest rate support grant proposals.

Mr. Ridley: I have received representations from a number of local authorities on my latest proposals for the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement. In addition, my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and I have seen deputations from a number of authorities and hon. Members.

29. **Mr. Barron** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many responses have been received by his Department to his latest rate support grant consultation paper.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo).

31. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the local authorities of which he has seen representatives as part of the consultation process on the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement for England.

Mr. Chope: The Secretary of State, the Minister for Local Government and I have seen representatives from a number of local authorities. I have arranged for a list of those authorities to be placed in the Library.

44. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he now proposes announcing the final rate support grant settlement for 1987-88.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend hopes to make a final announcement when the House returns in January.

57. **Mr. George Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now publish the responses to his latest rate support grant 1987-88 consultation paper.

Mr. Chope: No. I shall of course, take into account the representations and comments made to me during the consultation period before I make decisions about the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement.

71. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state when final details of the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement will now be announced.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend hopes to make a final announcement when the House returns in January.

Rivers and Canals (Pollution)

22. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will seek new powers to counter pollution in rivers and canals.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am satisfied that the powers in part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 are generally adequate to deal with pollution of our rivers and canals. However, the Government have already identified some further changes which may be necessary, including the need for legislation to allow the setting of statutory quality objectives.

Council of Environment Ministers

23. **Mrs. Roe** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met his colleagues in the European Council of Environment Ministers; and what was discussed.

Mr. Waldegrave: I chaired the Council of Environment Ministers on 24 November. Details of the meeting were

given in my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) on 27 November at columns *318-20*.

Ex-NCB Properties (Grants)

24. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what level of improvement grants has been paid in respect of former National Coal Board properties now in private ownership.

Mr. Tracey: No information is collected by the Department on the number of improvement grants paid on former NCB properties.

Arlington Securities (Office Development)

25. **Mr. John Hunt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek an early meeting with the London borough of Bromley to discuss the implications of his recent decision to allow the appeal by Arlington Securities against the refusal of planning permission by Bromley council in respect of the proposed office development at Bromley South; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: My hon. Friend is aware from the reply to his earlier question, answered on 19 November, that the London borough of Bromley has sought judicial review of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's decision to allow this appeal by Arlington Securities. Having given his decision, the Secretary of State has no further jurisdiction in the matter and is precluded from adding to or altering the decision in any way unless directed by the courts. My hon. Friend will appreciate that the matter is sub-judice and that in the circumstances it would not be proper for me to seek a meeting with the London borough of Bromley or to make a statement.

Run-down and Deprived Rural Areas

26. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to give assistance to run-down and deprived rural areas.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Development Commission, which is sponsored by my Department, is already carrying out an extensive programme of support, particularly in rural development areas, through factory building, advice and assistance for small businesses, and social, community and environmental improvements. As a measure of the importance the Government attach to this work, the commission received another £2 million in this year's public expenditure settlement.

M25 (Service Areas)

27. **Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to call in any planning applications for the provision of motorway service areas on the M25.

Mr. Waldegrave: Under the procedures for Crown development, as set out in my Department's circular 18/84, where the relevant local planning authority objects to what is proposed, the issue would normally come before me for decision. Where, however, the local planning authority does not object, the matter would not normally come to me for decision unless there were other objections which the developing Department considered were of such substance that it would be appropriate for me to make the decision.

Irish Sea (Pollution)

28. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the level of pollution caused by the recent accidental release of radioactivity into the Irish sea from Sellafield; and what representations he has received on this matter.

Mr. Waldegrave: There are no environmental or radiological implications from the incident at Sellafield on 27 November 1986. The only representations I have received were in the form of a question to which an answer is being sent.

49. **Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to meet his Irish and Norwegian counterparts to discuss the radioactive contamination of the Irish Sea by the plant at Sellafield.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have received no request from either the Irish or the Norwegian Ministers for such a meeting.

Wildlife and Countryside Act

30. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to seek to amend the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am satisfied that the Act is generally working well and have no immediate plans to amend it.

Sports Council (Grant)

32. **Mr. Pendry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of the Sports Council to discuss the Sports Council grant for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: My right hon. Friend met the chairman and vice-chairmen of the Sports Council on 2 December. There was a useful exchange of views on the background of its grant settlement for 1987-88. The council's programmes and priorities for the future were also discussed.

Urban Development Corporations

33. **Mr. Knowles** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received about the setting up of four new urban development corporations.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend and I have received many representations about the new urban development corporations. We have been encouraged by the positive response these proposals have received.

International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

34. **Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to mark the 1987 United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

39. **Mr. Squire** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his Department has any plans to mark the 1987 United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

Mr. Tracey: I refer my hon. Friend and the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Members for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) and Knowsley, South (Mr. Hughes) on 8 December.

National Parks

40. **Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next plans to meet the Countryside Commission to discuss the conservation powers and duties of national parks.

Mr. Waldegrave: Although my right hon. Friend has no immediate plans to meet the Countryside Commission, we are currently consulting it, and other interested bodies, about proposals to empower local planning authorities to make landscape conservation orders in the national parks and the Broads.

Rating Reform

35. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the outcome of his meeting on 25 November with the joint delegation of local government associations on the Government's proposals for reform of the rating system.

Mr. Chope: The meeting referred to was with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, together with my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment, for Scotland and for Wales.

There was agreement on all sides that the present rating system is unsatisfactory. The local authority associations asked for time to find a consensus on an alternative to the present system which would meet the Government's objectives of greater fairness and accountability. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister drew attention to the fact that the associations' individual responses to the Green Paper provided no basis for believing that a consensus which met those objectives could be found and pointed out that such a consensus had not emerged over the many years in which this question had been under consideration by successive governments.

London Docklands Development Corporation

36. **Mr. Ottaway** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has had from the local authorities which cover London docklands about the work of the London Docklands Development Corporation.

Mr. John Patten: Representations from the three docklands boroughs over the past 12 months have included four letters about individual planning applications, and two joint memoranda about the LDDC's approach to regeneration.

Historic Buildings and Monuments

37. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list his responsibilities for the conservation of historic buildings and monuments.

Mr. Waldegrave: Besides his statutory powers in connection with the listing of historic buildings and scheduling of ancient monuments, my right hon. Friend is responsible for the care of many historic buildings and monuments in Crown ownership or guardianship, including those managed on his behalf by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, to which my Department provides grant in aid. The Department also provides financial support to the National Heritage Memorial Fund and certain other bodies concerned with the built heritage.

Inner Urban Areas

38. **Mr. Corbyn** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to examine the social problems of inner urban areas before deciding the 1987-88 rate support grant.

Mr. Chope: Grant-related expenditure assessments reflect the social problems of inner urban areas. My right hon. Friend announced in a consultation paper issued on 3 October changes he proposed to make to those assessments for 1987-88.

Estuarial Development

42. **Mr. Kenneth Carlisle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will undertake a study to assess the effect on wildlife of the present proposals to carry out a range of developments in the estuaries of England and Wales.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have no plans for an overall study at present. However, we shall continue to ensure that the effects of estuarial developments in particular areas on wildlife are fully examined, together with all other relevant factors.

Development Commission

43. **Mr. Key** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he is satisfied with the structure and funding of the Development Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Development Commission keeps under review ways of improving its organisation, and that of its agency the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, so that it can respond more effectively to rural needs. In recognition of the important part the commission plays in rural areas the Government have increased the funds available to it next year by £2 million.

Waverley Borough Council

45. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how his revised rate support grant proposals affect Waverley borough council.

Mr. Chope: Waverley borough council's block grant entitlement for spending at the level of expenditure assumed in the revised proposals for the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement is £621,000, an increase of £124,000 on the earlier proposals. These figures imply an increase in Waverley's local rate of about 3·7 per cent. If Waverley keeps its spending down to the level of inflation, its local rate could rise by less then 1 per cent.

Noxious Emissions

46. **Mr. Dixon** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action the Government are taking to curb the emission of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide into the atmosphere; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Central (Mr. Lord) on Wednesday 19 November.

Home Improvement Grant

47. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received regarding the operation of home improvement grant schemes.

Mr. John Patten: I have received no recent representations about the operation of the home improvement grant system. However, I have just received proposals by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities for major changes to the legislation, which we are currently studying.

Nature Conservancy Council

48. **Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next plans to meet the Nature Conservancy Council to discuss environmentally damaging operations within sites of special scientific interest.

51. **Mr. Cunliffe** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next plans to meet the Nature Conservancy Council to discuss planning controls.

Mr. Waldegrave: I and my officials will continue to meet and work closely with the Nature Conservancy Council whenever circumstances require.

Planning Circulars

50. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about planning circulars currently emanating from his Department.

Mr. Tracey: Only one planning circular has been issued in the last six months: circular 17/86 (Welsh Office 50/86), which explains the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Agricultural and Forestry Development in National Parks etc) Special Development Order 1986. The circular was issued in draft for public consultation. We have received no representations on its contents since it was issued.

Performance Reviews

52. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent measures he has taken or proposes to take to encourage councils and local authority auditors to conduct performance reviews for services.

Dr. Boyson: The Audit Commission's auditors regularly review performance of local authorities as part of their statutory duty to make recommendations for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of services. They have identified vast scope for improvements which I continually encourage councils to make. The authorities which complain most about lack of resources are all too often the ones whose existing services provide poorest value for money.

Public Sector Housing

53. **Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the Government's plans for future investment in public sector housing.

Mr. Tracey: As my right hon. Friend announced on November 6, the gross provision for capital expenditure on housing by local authorities in England in 1987-88 will be £2,922 million. It is for local authorities to decide how to use these increased resources, but we look to them to give first priority to renovation and maintenance of their existing housing stock. Investment plans for the Housing Corporation were announced in the answer given by my hon. Friend on 9 December to the hon. Member for Sherwood (Mr. Stewart).

Community Architecture

54. **Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to encourage community architecture.

Mr. Tracey: The Department already supports community architecture through its funding of the Housing Corporation, estate action, the urban programme, and its special grants programme.

Council House Sales

55. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council tenants have exercised their right to buy to date since the enactment of the Houseing Act 1980.

Mr. Tracey: Up to June 1986, 554,800 council tenants in England had exercised their right to buy their home.

Inner City Regeneration

58. **Mr. Rowe** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the expenditure in 1979-80 and what it will be in 1987-88 on programmes and grants funded by his Department for the purpose of regenerating the inner cities.

Mr. John Patten: In 1979-80 expenditure on the urban programme and derelict land reclamation in England and totalled £197 million. In 1987-88 provision for the urban group of programmes, which is comprised of the urban programme including urban development grant, urban regeneration grant, derelict land reclamation and the urban development corporations, is £532 million (net of reciepts). This is an increase of about 62 per cent. in real terms.

In addition, a number of the Department's other expenditure programmes contribute to the regeneration of the inner cities, including the additional housing allocations provided by estate action for tackling run down housing estates.

PRC Homes

59. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish an up-to-date list of approved schemes for the repair of PRC homes and of the contractors responsible for each such scheme.

Mr. John Patten: Yes, as I indicated in my reply of 1 December to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Bar

(Mr. Rooker) at column 522 I have arranged for PRC Homes Ltd's progress reports, which give this information, to be placed in the Library as they become available.

Planning Controls

60. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider extending the present system of planning controls to agricultural land.

Mr. Tracey: No.

European Year of the Environment

61. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the European Year of the Environment.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend, my noble Friend and I have received a number of representations about European Year of the Environment which begins next March. These illustrate a growing interest in the preparations of the United Kingdom's national committee (on which my right hon. Friend serves) and an eagerness to participate. Our recent announcement that HRH the Prince of Wales has agreed to become United Kingdom patron of EYE is a further great encouragement to all concerned. My department is providing financial and administrative support to the national committee and, along with other departments, will be contributing directly to the programme of events and activities. I shall give my personal support to as many events in Britain as possible. I was particularly happy, during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the Community, to be able to welcome Commissioner Clinton Davis and his EC-wide steering committee to a London meeting this week and to hear about the development of its plans.

Domestic Rates

62. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the average domestic rate demand per capita in 1979-80; what is the figure in the current year; and what percentage change this represents.

Mr. Chope: The average unrebated domestic rate bill per capita of the adult population in England was £77·9 in 1979-80 and £203·9 in 1986-87. This represents a change of 162 per cent.

Rent Arrears

63. **Mr. Heddle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate what steps he is taking to encourage local authorities to reduce rent arrears.

Mr. John Patten: I refer to the answer I gave my hon. Friend on Wednesday 10 December 1986 at column *188*.

North-East (New Town Corporations)

64. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the future of the north-east new towns corporations.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Home Improvement Agency Centres

65. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will report progress on the setting up of 50 home improvement agency centres.

Mr. Tracey: Responsibility for establishing agency service schemes rests with Care and Repair Ltd. and with the National Home Improvement Council. Care and Repair Ltd. have now given approval in principle to five schemes which are expected to start early in the new year: in Wigan, Newham, Bristol, Leicester and Liverpool. I understand that the National Home Improvement Council is in discussion with a number of local authorities and hopes to reach agreement shortly on schemes in Buxton and Coalville.

Right to Repair Scheme

66. **Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the operation of the tenants' right to repair scheme.

Mr. Tracey: I have nothing to add to the answer that I gave the hon. Member on Monday 1 December 1986 at columns *520-1*.

Acid Rain

67. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has plans to revise Her Majesty's Government's proposals for measures to combat acid rain following the breakdown of talks between European Economic Community Environment Ministers in Brussels on 25 November.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. Although some countries regarded the proposals tabled by the United Kingdom Presidency as too onerous, and so were unable to agree to them, we continue to hope that these proposals may help find a basis for agreed Community-wide measures to tackle the problem of acid rain. Talks on the United Kingdom Presidency proposals are continuing at official level.

Departmental Land Register

68. **Mr. Heywood** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much land has been removed from his Department's register of unused and underused land since it was established; and for what reasons.

Mr. John Patten: Since the registers were first established in 1981, some 45,000 acres of land have been removed. The main reasons for removal are sales (25,000 acres) and because the owner has brought the land back into use (8,000 acres).

Peak Park Planning Board

69. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many people appointed by county councils to serve on the Peak park planning board live within the area of the board's jurisdiction.

Mr. Waldegrave: Of the 12 members of the Peak park joint planning board appointed by the county councils of Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, two currently live within the national park.

Council Laundries

72. **Mr. Forth** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what effect losses sustained by council laundries have on those councils' grant-related expenditure.

Mr. Chope: No specific provision is made in grant related expenditure assessments for losses sustained by council laundries.

Haringey Borough Council

73. **Mr. Powley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek a meeting with the leaders of Haringey borough council.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has no plans for such a meeting at present.

Green Belt Development

74. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on the Government's policy towards applications to build large shopping and leisure centres in the green belt.

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall answer this question shortly.

Derelict Urban Areas

75. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures his Department is taking to improve the environment in derelict urban areas.

Mr. John Patten: We have increased the resources available for derelict land grant in England from £23·5 million in 1979-80 to £84·4 million in 1986-87, targeting this money on urban and particularly inner city areas. Thirteen rolling programmes totalling over £24 million have been established this year in areas of extensive dereliction to uplift the environment and encourage new private sector activity. We have also increased urban programme resources since 1980 from some £90 million to over £300 million now.

This year alone some £35 million will be spent on environmental improvement to derelict or degraded land in urban areas under this programme. In addition urban development grant of £70 million has been approved since its inception in 1982 which will result in the reuse of some 560 acres of urban land or buildings that were derelict. The hon. Gentleman will also know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has recently announced the setting up of four further urban development corporations.

Urban Programme (Job Creation)

76. **Mr. Gale** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has estimates of the numbers of jobs created or retained by urban programme funding.

Mr. John Patten: It is estimated that expenditure under the urban programme in 1986-87 on projects designed to improve employment prospects in partnership and programme authority areas will create or preserve about 24,000 jobs. This figure excludes temporary jobs created by some £110 million of UP funded construction work in these areas, and around 5,000 workers in UP-funded posts. In addition, schemes approved since 1983 for urban development grant, which forms part of the UP, are expected to create or retain about 23,000 jobs.

Political Advisers

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many political advisers and equivalent staff are employed, and at what full year cost, by each of the following local authorities *(a)* Liverpool, *(b)* Knowsley, *(c)* St. Helens, *(d)* Manchester, *(e)* Oldham, *(f)* Rochdale, *(g)* Kirklees, *(h)* Leeds, *(i)* Brent, *(j)* Haringey *(k)* Southwark and *(l)* the Inner London Education Authority.

Mr. Chope: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has made any recommendations to local authorities concerning the appointment of political advisers and equivalent staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: No, we are considering the question in the light of responses to the Widdicombe report.

Unemployed Workers Centres

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has made any recommendations to local authorities concerning expenditure on unemployed workers' centres and similar establishments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: We have made no general recommendations to local authorities on this subject.

Housing

Mr. Anderson asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy towards the role of local housing authorities in providing new accommodation for categories other than special needs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The main priority for local authorities must be the renovation and repair of their existing housing. For new accommodation to rent, our main aim is to diversify the supply and increase the choice available to tenants by creating opportunities for private sector organisations to become involved in meeting a wider range of housing needs. Local authorities are ideally placed to co-ordinate and encourage participation in this task by a variety of agencies, including building societies, other financial institutions, private developers, and housing associations.

Mr. Janner: asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many applicants were waiting for housing in the city of Leicester in January 1979, January 1986 and at the latest date for which records are available; and how many individuals it is estimated that such applications represent.

Mr. Tracey: The only available information is from the 1986 housing investment programme returns. These returns included the number of households on the waiting list at 1 April 1986 and the increase or decrease since April 1985, and the figures for Leicester are listed in columns B51 and B53 on page 4.11 of the "HIP1 (1986) all items print" which is available in the Library.

Information on the number of people within these households is not available centrally, but the hon. and learned Member may be able to obtain figures from the city council.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he intends to make an announcement before the parliamentary Adjournment for Christmas concerning the proposed transfer to Edinburgh of the Glasgow area office of the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Chope: I am still considering various aspects of the reorganisation of the Property Services Agency. I will announce my decision as soon as possible.

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Eastwood on 5 November, *Official Report*, column 441, he is now able to estimate the costs of transferring the Glasgow area office of the Property Services Agency to Edinburgh in the 1987-88 and 1988-89 financial years.

Mr. Chope: There is nothing I can add to my reply to the 5 November at column 441.

Housing (Multiple Occupation)

Mrs. Golding asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he completed his study of houses in multiple occupation in England and Wales published by his Department; what were his conclusions; whether he plans to further control and improve conditions in this type of accommodation; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The report of the first stage of the research "Houses in Multiple occupation in England and Wales —a report of a postal survey of Local authorities" was published on 29 May 1986. The report of the second stage, a physical and social survey of some 550 HMOS will be published early next year. The response to the research will follow.

Mr. Kevin Finch

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he is taking in relation to the correspondence sent to him by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe from Mr. Kevin Finch of 29 Parkend road, Manchester 23; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: A reply by my right hon. Friend will be sent to the right hon. Member shortly.

Home Owners

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest figures available for the number of home-owners in *(a)* Derbyshire and *(b)* Amber Valley; how this compares with the years 1979 and 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The latest available figures for Derbyshire are from the 1981 census which counted 198,453 households who were owner-occupiers, representing 59·9 per cent. of all the households present on census night. The corresponding figures for Amber Valley are 28,099 and 69·3 per cent.

Since 1979 there has been an unparalleled growth in owner-occupation in Britain, as a result of the measures introduced to enable tenants to buy council housing. The following sales of council houses and flats in Derbyshire have been reported:

	Derbyshire	*Amber Valley*
April 79-March 83	[1]10,725	931
April 83-Sept 86	[2]6,247	681

[1] Quarterly return from 1 authority missing.
[2] Quarterly returns from each of 2 authorities missing.

Agriculture Buildings and Works

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning his proposals for extending planning controls over agricultural buildings and works; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: Following my right hon. Friend's announcement on 13 November of our proposals to extend planning controls to new livestock buildings and associated structures erected within 400 metres of residential and other property, we have received several representations; the majority seeking clarification of the proposed controls.

Urban Programme

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will exercise flexibility in applying during the current financial year the criteria governing distribution of urban programme funding to economic, environmental and social projects, and between capital and current projects when he considers applications for funding of projects in the voluntary sector in Southwark; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: Any further bids in the current financial year will be considered on their merits against Ministerial guidelines.

In considering the bids put forward by Southwark for urban programme funding in 1987-88, all existing commitments to voluntary sector projects approved under the traditional urban programme will be honoured. New projects in 1987-88 will have to comply with guidelines which emphasise the importance of capital, economic and environmental schemes. Nevertheless, the new Programme Authority status of Southwark means that the level of resources available for new projects in 1987-88 from the voluntary sector is likely to be higher than this year.

Mortgage Arrears

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the number and names of local authorities which publish the names of people in mortgage arrears in publicly available committee minutes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: None. It is for each local authority to decide what to include in its council or committee minutes. They have a discretion, under the provisions of schedule I to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, not to make public information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, or to any particular applicant for, or recipient of, any service provided by the authority, which they would otherwise be required to make public under that Act.

Costing Figures (Review)

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment further to his reply to the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) on 8 December, *Official Report*, column 28, whether the review of costing figures now in progress will take account of compensation measures; if he will describe the extent of this review; when he expects this review to be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The current review of disposal costs is in the first instance a matter for UK NIREX Ltd.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will direct the London residuary body to pay the fees associated with a transfer of ex-Greater London Council mortgagers to building societies.

Mr. Tracey: No. It is for borrowers themselves to decide whether or not they wish to pay such fees in order to have their mortgage transferred to building societies.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply of 12 December, *Official Report*, column 280, why only 5,000 ex-Greater London Council mortgagors were written to by the London residuary body with an offer to refinance their mortgages; and what information he has on the take-up.

Mr. Tracey: These are matters for which the London residuary body is responsible.

London Marathon

Mr. Canavan asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has now received about the future organisation of the London marathon.

Mr. Chope: None since my hon. Friend's answer of 19 November at column *236*.

Planning (Select Committee Report)

Sir Hugh Rossi asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he is ready to respond to the Fifth report of the Select Committee on the Environment of Session 1985-86, relating to appeals, call-in and major public inquiries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: The Government are responding today to the Select Committee's Fifth Report, on "Planning: Appeals, Call-in and Major Public Inquiries", in the form of a command paper. They welcome the Committee's report and set out in detail the measures the Government are taking to improve the operation of these aspects of the planning system.

The Government's policy is to simplify the planning system and to improve its efficiency without reducing the quality of decision or the ability of those who may be affected to make representations which are relevant to the decision. It remains the Government's objective to strike the right balance between the needs of development and the interests of conservation, and I believe that the measures described in the Government's response will ease the burden on all those involved in disputed planning cases while still ensuring that the interests of conservation remain fully protected.

The Select Committee's report recorded the initiatives which the Government are taking towards these objectives — in the Housing and Planning Act 1986, through changes to secondary legislation, and in other ways. The Government are grateful that many of its measures have the support of the Select Committee.

The response explains that procedural changes are being introduced which will cut out unnecessary delays in the handling of planning appeals, particularly those requiring public local inquiries. The changes include the setting of strict target timetables for the procedural stages, and proposals for streamlining inquiry procedures through a revision of the inquiries procedure rules supported by a code a practice on preparing for major inquiries. A special study to identify ways of speeding up long-running inquiries has also been put in hand.

The Government's objective for major inquiries is that the system should be as efficient and effective as possible, while not impairing in any way the fairness and impartiality of the procedures. A consultation paper with the proposals for revision of the inquiries procedure rules and a revised draft of the code of practice is being issued today. The texts are appended to the command paper.

London (Barrier Flood Plan)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) why the Greater London Council's flood control centre has been closed;

(2) what arrangements he has made to maintain the former Greater London Council's post barrier flood plan;

(3) which authority is responsible for operating the Greater London co-ordination centre in the Kingsway; and what financial and staffing resources are available to operate it.

Mr. Chope [*pursuant to his reply*, 8 December 1986, c. *30*]: The operation of the post barrier flood plan is a matter for the London boroughs to consider in consultation with the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority. In 1982 the Greater London council's flood control centre was subsumed in the Greater London emergency co-ordination centre which is now operated by the LFCDA. My right hon. Friend has given the authority sanction, under section 19 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982, to incur expenditure of £76,000 in the current financial year towards the costs of operating the centre.

DEFENCE

Defence Depots

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if the reports of the central contracts team looking into the putting out to contract of defence depots are to be issued to trade unions; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what information has been given to trade unions regarding contract compliance as to conditions of employment and so on, where putting out to contract has taken place at defence depots.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the current work of the central contractorisation team at the RAOC Central Ordnance Depot, Bicester, in preparing a statement of requirement for the administrative support functions which the Department proposes to put to contract. This will form the

basis of invitations to tender and will be sent to the trade unions when they are issued. The terms and conditions of service of a contractor's employees are matters to be decided between the contractor and his employees or the trade unions representing them.

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the measures followed by his Department to ensure the security of defence depots in cases where contracts are put out to tender; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: MOD will retain overall responsibility for security at all defence establishments, including those where work has been placed out to contract. Contractors' personnel will be subject to the establishment's security regulations and procedures. MOD headquarters approval will be required before they can be allowed access to classified information.

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the policy of his Department as to the security classification of work, papers and so on in the event of contracts being put out to tender at defence depots.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Contractors having access to classified information or materials will be required to protect them to the same standards as are required of MOD personnel. The effectiveness of their security measures is monitored by or on behalf of MOD.

Pensions

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will now seek to pay pensions for retired service personnel linked to the full rate of salary as recommended by the review body during 1976 to 1977 and 1983 to 1986; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The rates of salary recommended by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in 1976 and 1977 were implemented, and pensions awarded to service personnel retiring in the periods during which those rates were in force were linked to rates of pay in the normal way. Service personnel retiring in the period 1983 to 1986, when implementation of pay levels recommended by review bodies were staged or delayed, received pensions related to the salaries of their rank current at the date of retirement with the exception of the special arrangements described in the written answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) on 13 April 1984, at column 383. There are no plans to depart from the principles described in that answer.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from the Officers' Pensions Society regarding retired pay for those who retired before 1960 without recognition for their service beyond the age of 55 years; and what action he intends to take in this matter.

Mr. Freeman: No representations have been received and no action is contemplated. Cost considerations and the likely repercussions on other service and public service pensions rule out any possibility of giving retrospective effort to changes made to the armed forces pension scheme since 1960.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will seek to amend the service retired pay code so that a service man or woman retiring during 1986 before 30 June receives the same rate of pension as someone retiring after 1 July; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: No. All new pensions beginning before and after 30 June 1986 have been or will be correctly related to salaries in payment at the time of retirement in accordance with the principles set out in my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's written answer to the hon. Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) on 13 April 1984, at column 383.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Defence what would be the cost to public funds of uprating the pensions of all service widows on the pre-1960 service retirement codes from one-third of the forces family pension to one-half; what is the number of widows on the pre-1960 codes; and what action he intends to take in this matter.

Mr. Freeman: There are about 40,000 service widows on pre-1960 pension codes. Some receive pensions based on the minimum rate for their husbands rank, others receive pensions based on one third of their husbands pensions. Data from which to estimate the cost of increasing these pensions to half rate forces family pensions are not readily available. I regret I am unable to single out these particular widows for exceptional treatment from all the others receiving pensions at the third rate.

Mr. Latham asked the Secretary of State for Defence how much a colonel retiring from the Army *(a)* at the compulsory retirement age in April after 37 years' service and *(b)* after 1 July with 35 years' service will receive by way of pension; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The maximum rate of pension for an officer is achieved on completing 34 years reckonable service. On compulsory retirement at age 55 in April 1986, or after 1 July 1986, the maximum rates of pension applicable to a colonel were £13,224 pa and £14,323 pa respectively.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many Civil Service jobs in his Department have been lost due to contracting out in the past five years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Between 1 April 1981 and 31 March 1986 there was a manpower saving of 7,025 United Kingdom-based civilians as a result of contracting out defence tasks.

Non-combatant Duties (Injuries)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men in the Army have been invalided out due to injuries received during non-combatant duties, in the last 10 years.

Mr. Freeman: Six hundred and sixty-nine United Kingdom Regular British Army personnel have been medically discharged in the period 1976 to 1985 inclusive principally because of injuries sustained in the course of service non-combatant duties.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men in the Royal Air Force have been invalided out, due to injuries received during non-combatant duties in the last 10 years.

Mr. Freeman: Sixty-nine United Kingdom Regular Air Force personnel have been medically discharged in the period 1976 to 1985 inclusive principally because of injuries sustained in the course of service non-combatant duties.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men in the Royal Navy have been invalided out, due to injuries received during non-combatant duties in the last 10 years.

Mr. Freeman: Two hundred and two United Kingdom Regular Navy and Royal Marine personnel have been medically discharged in the period 1976 to 1985 inclusive principally because of injuries sustained in the course of service non-combatant duties.

Nuclear Weapons Convoy, Burghfield

Mr. Redmond asked the Secretary of State for Defence who was officially informed of the passage through south Yorkshire of a nuclear weapons convoy on 27 November en route to the Royal Ordnance Factory at Burghfield.

Mr. Stanley: For security reasons, it has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on the routes or methods used to transport nuclear weapons. I also refer the hon. Member to the replies that I gave to the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) on 11 December 1984, at column 900.

Nimrod

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many Nimrod aircraft are currently in service with the armed services.

Mr. Stanley: I refer my hon. Friend to annex E "Strength of the Royal Air Force" in vol. 1 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1986" (Cmnd. 9763-1). It is not our practice to reveal details of numbers of operational aircraft.

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cost at 1986 prices of the Nimrod aircraft currently in service with the armed services *(a)* when they were first commissioned and *(b)* at the present day, including the costs of any updating or improvements.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I shall answer shortly.

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the expected life of the Nimrod aircraft at present in service with the armed services.

Mr. Stanley: We expect Nimrods to be in service with the RAF into the early years of the next century.

Flight Simulator Training System

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Defence what factors led to his decision to accept an American bid in preference to Marconi for supply to the RAF of a flight simulator training system for the Harrier jet.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The decision was based on the results of a wide-ranging technical and commercial assessment of all the alternatives. The selected system was both demonstrably cheaper and technically superior to the other proposals.

Airborne Early Warning System

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the cost to date of payments to the General Electrical Company and associated contractors; and how much has been committed for subsequent payments in connection with the airborne early warning system.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: To date some £660 million at outturn prices has been spent or committed on the Nimrod AEW project. This equates to £930 million at average 1986-87 outturn prices. Both figures include VAT.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Council of Agriculture Ministers

Sir Peter Mills asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Council of Agriculture Ministers' meeting on 13 and 14 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement I made in the House earlier today.

Brazil (Exports)

Mr. Foulkes asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give details of the exports from the United Kingdom of milk and milk products to Brazil since 1 January.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is set out in the table:

United Kingdom Exports of Milk and Milk Products to Brazil from January to October 1986

	Tonnes	*£'000*
Fresh milk and cream	—	—
Butter	—	—
Cheese and curd	—	—
Skimmed milk powder	3,814	1,774
Whole milk powder	1,978	1,312
Other milk products	—	—
Total	5,792	3,086

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom.

Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances

Mr. Speller asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has completed the review of the economic conditions in the hill and upland areas; and if he will make a statement on the rate of hill livestock compensatory allowances and associated conditions for 1987.

Mr. Jopling: My right hon. Friends and I have now completed the annual autumn review of economic conditions in the hills and uplands.

The Government continue to recognise the fundamental importance of the livestock sector to the less favoured areas of the United Kingdom and, following the average increase of 11 per cent. in the 1986 compensatory allowances, total HLCA payments are currently running at about £110 million a year. The 1986 increase in rates, and the special aid of about £16·9 million paid to those livestock farmers most seriously affected by last year's exceptionally bad weather conditions, have contributed

significantly to the returns of farmers in the LFAs. Although we recognise that some sectors and some areas are doing less well than others, the economic outlook for hill and upland livestock producers generally is very much better than it appeared this time last year. Moreover, producers with beef cows and sheep in the LFAs will benefit from the green rate devaluations which have just been agreed. In the light of our review, and having regard to the public expenditure position, my colleagues and I have decided that the rates of hill livestock compensatory allowance should be maintained at their present levels for 1987, and that the associated conditions should also remain unchanged.

Farmers

Mr. Geraint Howells asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers in England are owner-occupiers ; how many tenant farmers there are farming over three hectares; and what were the corresponding figures for 1966 and 1976.

Mr. Donald Thompson: At the 1985 agricultural census, the last available, the recorded number of wholly or mainly owner-occupied farms in England was 109,000. There were 44,800 wholly or mainly rented farms and, of these, 42,500 were over 3 hectares. The corresponding figures for 1976 are not comparable with these because of the change of threshold in 1980 for inclusion in the annual census. There are no corresponding statistics for1966.

Trent Grain Company

Mr. Ashley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what comments, and when, were made by the business reporting agency used by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce to report on the financial position of the Trent Grain Company;

(2) on which dates a stock loss at Trent Grain was *(a)* suspected and *(b)* confirmed; and what action was taken after the earlier date to (i) minimise the possibility of further stock losses, (ii) recover the suspected loss and (iii) investigate the financial position of the company;

(3) whether his Department has obtained a copy of the 1985 annual report of the Trent Grain Company.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to the right hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Parry asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will now make it his practice to list the sites of European Economic Community intervention butter stores.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1986]: The locations of all United Kingdom intervention stores including those containing butter were given in my reply to the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) on 2 December 1986, at column 589.

Mr. Parry asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many locations in Liverpool are used for European Economic Community intervention butter stores.

Mr. Jopling [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1986]: There are at present five stores in Liverpool containing intervention butter.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 18 December 1986

TRANSPORT

Merchant Ships (Surveys)

Mr. Sayeed asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report* those types of survey of merchant ship hulls and machinery carried out on his behalf; how many surveys of each type were undertaken in the most recently available 12-month period; how many of these surveys were carried out by his own surveyors and how many by outside agencies acting on his behalf; how many of the surveys carried out by his surveyors duplicated surveys carried out by other agencies; and what assessment he has made of the scope for further simplification or delegation of his survey work.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Statutory survey of hulls and machinery of merchant ships are carried out in respect of the issue of passenger ship safety certificates, cargo ship safety construction certificates and load line certificates. These surveys are undertaken on a continuous basis over a five-year cycle and the figures requested are not readily available in any 12-month period.

Surveys required for the issue of the cargo ship safety construction certificate and the load line certificate—which constitutes a major proportion of this work—have been delegated to five classification societies—the Department's surveyors dealing only with those ships which are not "classed". Although precise figures are not available for the classification societies involved it is estimated that they issue more than six times the number of certificates issued by my Department. There is no duplication of work.

In the case of foreign-going passenger ships the survey of hull and machinery is undertaken by my Department and where a ship is "classed" also by the classification society. In 1985 a total of 85 passenger ship safety certificates were issued in respect of foreign-going ships. To reduce as far as possible any duplication, my Department will accept work undertaken by a classification society up to 50 per cent. of all running surveys on class I passenger ships. In addition, other measures have recently been agreed with the industry to cut costs as I stated in reply to a question tabled by my hon. Friend on 24 November 1986. In assessing the scope for further delegation I must take into account, in the public interest, the safety of the many who travel on passenger ships.

Ships (Investors)

Mr. Sayeed asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the net present value per £100 of investment of the tax allowances granted to investors in ships in the United Kingdom; and what information he has on the tax allowances, including accelerated depreciation, investment grants and interest-free loans available in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The net present value to companies of tax relief on annual writing down allowances at the rate of 25 per cent. of the reducing balance per £100 of the cost of a ship, will be about £28 if there are profits sufficient to absorb the full amount of the allowances. Additionally, this year the business expansion scheme was extended to companies engaged in ship chartering. The value of the income tax relief will depend upon the tax position of the investor but might typically be about £50 for every £100 invested.

With regard to tax allowances in the Federal Republic of Germany, I cannot add to the information given to my hon. Friend in my reply of 26 November 1986, at column 276.

Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950

Mrs. Golding asked the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made towards the implementation of the report of the review chaired by Professor Michael Home of the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I announced the Government's response, accepting the great majority of the report's recommendations, on 24 July at columns. 455-56. We plan to introduce amending legislation at a suitable opportunity. I hope soon to announce appointments to the proposed streetworks advisory committee. Good progress is also being made on other measures to follow up the report.

Joint working parties between utilities and highway authorities have been established to draw up the new specifications that will be needed to reinstatements, to prepare a system for the training and certification of workmen and to develop the computerised streetworks register. In addition the local authorities have agreed to enter into discussions with the utilities on the arrangements for diversionary works. I will consider in the light of these discussions whether to bring forward proposals for a cost-sharing solution.

Severn Bridge

Mr. Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, in order to ensure a freer flow of traffic on the Severn bridge, he will make it his policy to forgo the collection of tolls.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. Toll collection at estuarial crossings does not by itself restrict the flow of traffic, provided the number of toll booths is adequate.

Mr. Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will investigate the causes of recent delays and hold-ups on the Severn bridge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Delays to traffic using the Severn crossing and their causes are monitored continuously. The following table summarises the position for the three-month period ending 8 December.

Cause	*Numer of occasions*
Vehicle breakdown	55
Vehicle accident	16
High winds	7
Maintenance work	2

Mr. Richard Page asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the tolls on the Severn bridge following the decision of the House of Lords.

Mr. Moore: The Appeals Committee of the House of Lords has refused leave to Gwent county council and other local authorities to appeal to the House of Lords against the decision given by the Court of Appeal on 31 October concerning the Severn Bridge Tolls Order 1985. The Appeals Committee's decision removes any doubt about the vires of that order. The higher tolls it prescribes will be reintroduced on Sunday 4 January.

Shipping Investment (West Germany)

Mr. Sayeed asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information is available to his Department about aids made available to shipowners by the Länder Governments in West Germany in addition to those aids to shipping investment available to German shipowners listed in the answer of 26 November, *Official Report*, column *276*.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Motorways

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total mileage of motorways in England *(a)* in use, *(b)* under construction and *(c)* planned at 1 April.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The total mileage of motorways in England at 1 April 1986 was as follows:

	Miles
(a) In use	1,556
(b) Under construction	30
(c) Planned	98

M25 (Traffic Studies)

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport which sections of the M25 are currently the subject of traffic monitoring studies; and by whom the studies are being carried out.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department monitors traffic on the M25. Automatic counting loops are being installed on all sections of the motorway. Further specific studies will be undertaken as necessary.

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Transport when we will announce his Department's decision on the West Yorkshire passenger transport authority and executive's application for redetermination of its 1987-88 expenditure level.

Mr. David Mitchell: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on Tuesday 16 December.

Warminster Bypass

Mr. Walters asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will announce the date for the start of the Warminister bypass.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Tenders have been received and are currently being appraised. Works may start around the end of January.

Buses (West Sussex)

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress of bus deregulation in West Sussex.

Mr. David Mitchell: I am pleased that there has in general been a smooth transition to deregulation in West Sussex. The county council has worked hard to ensure that the previous service levels were broadly maintained, and at the same time has been able to achieve subsidy savings of over £1 million under the new arrangements for competitive tendering. I understand that the council is already acting to ensure that service levels continue to be maintained after full deregulation on 26 January 1987.

Driving Tests

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the average waiting time for a driving test in Portsmouth, Fareham and Southampton.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The current waiting times are:

	Weeks
Portsmouth	20
Gosport (Fareham)	19
Southampton	15

The target is 11 weeks.

The Minches

Mr. Maclennan asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the possible designation of the Minches as an area of water to be avoided by oil tankers; and what reply he has sent.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has received a letter on this matter from Friends of the Earth, Scotland, and a reply was sent on his behalf on 15 December.

In commenting on the Friends of the Earth's suggestion of an area to be avoided, the reply said:

"In considering the problems regarding tanker traffic in the Minches Ministers have been anxious to make a positive contribution to safety, as opposed simply to shifting the casualty risk from one place to another. Your paper rightly makes the point that an oil spill to the west of the Hebrides would still be likely to cause widespread pollution of the Scottish Islands and the mainland coast, and it was precisely because of this that Ministers were reluctant to promote a measure which might deny smaller vessels the option of using the shelter of the Minches during rough weather. In submitting proposals for a deep water route to IMO, a specific recommendation has been made that it should be used, weather conditions permitting, by laden tankers over 10,000 grt. You will note that this will tend to separate northbound and southbound vessels in exactly the same way as would your proposal. There is however the additional advantage that vessels over 10,000 grt are required to carry two radars, which introduces a redundancy factor in the navigational aids of such vessels and hence reduces their risk of stranding or collision.

Having carefully considered all the options the Secretary of State believes that the choice of a deep water route is the right one".

Drink-Drive Campaign

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Transport what advice he has given chief constables about Her Majesty's Government's drink-drive campaign this Christmas.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Association of Chief Police Officers was consulted about the theme of the campaign and participated in its launch. We have taken its advice and are grateful for its help at the launch of the campaign.

London Road Assessment Studies

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many meetings between his Department and the consultants there have been to discuss the London road assessment studies since they were first received;

(2) when each of the four consultants' reports on the London road assessment studies were received by his Department.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Three of the reports published on 12 December were received on 31 October and the fourth on 7 November. There have been frequent discussions with the consultants about arrangements for printing, publication and distribution.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will detail the costs incurred by his Department in the preparation of the four London road assessment studies;

(2) what was the total cost for consultants involved in producing the London road assessment studies.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The cost of managing these commissions is not readily distinguishable from other work carried out in respect of the Department's road and traffic responsibilities for London. Consultancy costs were given in an answer to the hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 10 December, at column 154.

London Regional Transport

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* new and *(b)* second-hand double-deck buses were either bought or leased by London Regional Transport or its subsidiaries in (i) 1985-86 and (ii) 1986-87; and how many are proposed to be either bought or leased in 1987-88.

Mr. David Mitchell: Decisions on bus procurement are a matter for London Regional Transport and its subsidiary London Buses Ltd. I understand that London Buses Ltd. purchased 266 new double-deck buses in 1985-86 and expects to have purchased a further 209 new double-deck buses by the end of 1986-87.

The requirement for 1987-88 is a matter for the judgment of LRT, in the light of anticipated demand and the condition of its existing vehicles.

MV Kowloon Bridge

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his statement of Friday 12 December, *Official Report*, columns 699-702, when he expects to be in a position to announce a starting date for the inquiry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Arrangements for the public formal investigation are being made. The starting date will depend on a number of factors such as the selection and appointment by the Lord Chancellor of a senior member of the Admiralty Bar as Wreck Commissioner, the time required for the detailed case to be prepared and the need for the parties to have time to prepare their cases.

Traffic Order Schemes

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the average incidence of delay for traffic order schemes planned by the former metropolitan county councils and passed on to city councils on abolition.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This information is not available centrally.

CIVIL SERVICE

Former Crown Servants (Business Appointments)

Mr. Lawrence asked the Minister for the Civil Service whether he will publish a report on business appointments of former Crown servants.

Mr. Luce: I have today placed copies of a statistical report entitled "Acceptance of Outside Appointments by Crown Servants" in the Libraries of Parliament.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Recorders

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General whether there is a compulsory retirement age for recorders.

The Attorney-General: Under section 21(5) of the Courts Act 1971, neither the initial term for which a recorder is appointed, nor any extension of that term, can continue his appointment after the end of the completed year of service in which he reaches the age of 72.

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General how many recorders over the age of 70 years continue to sit.

The Attorney-General: According to such information as is available, there are nine serving recorders who have reached the age of 70.

Mr. Alton asked the Attorney-General how long it takes the Lord Chancellor's Department to process appointments to recorderships; and whether any appointments have been outstanding for six months.

The Attorney-General: The question is misconceived in terms of the modern system of judicial appointments. The hon. Member is referred to the booklet "Judicial Appointments", published by the Lord Chancellor's Department in May 1986, which sets out the Lord Chancellor's policies and procedures in relation to the appointment of recorders, among other judicial officers. The Lord Chancellor is sending the hon. Member a copy of this booklet. There is and can be no fixed timetable. Recorders are appointed from among those who have sat as assistant recorders and no application is necessary. Assistant recorders automatically begin to be considered for promotion to full recordership when they have gained a sufficient experience of sitting, which is normally between three and five years. If they are not promoted to a full recordership within a reasonable time thereafter, their assistant recordership is usually terminated.

Sir Arthur Franks

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Attorney-General when he hopes to complete his consideration with the Director of Public Prosecutions of allegations against Sir Arthur Franks.

The Attorney-General: There has been a careful investigation in this case. The Director of Public Prosecutions and I are satisfied that there is no evidence whatsoever to substantiate any of the allegations made.

State Security

Mr. Patrick Thompson asked the Attorney-General when, pursuant to his answer of 28 November, *Official Report*, column *393*, he hopes consideration will be completed or whether steps are to be taken against Sir Dick White and others in respect of information which they are alleged to have given to the authors of the book "Conspiracy of Silence".

The Attorney-General: Consideration of the matter is complete. As I said in the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) on 20 November, at columns 264-65, former and present servants of the Crown are well aware that they may not make unauthorised disclosure of information acquired in their work. Formal letters underlining the duty of confidentiality have been sent to a number of former officials whom Mr. Penrose and Mr. Freeman purport to quote in their book "Conspiracy of Silence". I do not propose to identify the individuals concerned.

Judges (Drink-Driving Offences)

Mr. Willie W. Hamilton asked the Attorney-General if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the names of judges and former judges who have been convicted of a drunken driving offence in the last two years, indicating the sentence in each case.

The Attorney-General: The table gives the names of full-time judges in England and Wales who have been convicted of an offence of driving with an alcohol concentration above the prescribed limit since 1 November 1984, and the sentence imposed in each case in relation to that offence.

Judge Bolland—Fined £200, disqualified 18 months, pay £10 costs.

Judge Morrison—Fined £150, disqualified 12 months.

Judge D. B. Williams QC—Fined £150, disqualified 2 years, pay £50 costs.

Records are not kept about judges who have retired from full-time service.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Rolls-Royce plc

Mr. Warren asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a further statement about the privatisation of Rolls-Royce plc.

Mr. Channon: Subject to market conditions, the Government intend to return Rolls-Royce to the private sector in April or May 1987.

The Government will retain a special share in the company, which will enable them to ensure that Rolls-Royce remains under United Kingdom control. Under the articles of association the proportion of foreign-held shares in the company will be limited to 15 per cent., and these provisions will be protected by the special share. In addition, disposals of more than 25 per cent. of the company's assets, or of significant assets used for nuclear business, will be subject to the special shareholder's consent. It will also be a requirement that the chairman, managing director and at least 75 per cent. of the board shall be United Kingdom citizens. Finally, individual shareholdings will be limited to 15 per cent. The limit on individual shareholdings will also be protected by the special share, but will lapse on 1 January 1989.

The Government have also reached a decision on the appropriate capital structure for Rolls-Royce following privatisation. At present, the company operates with the backing of assurances first given by my hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) on 22 February 1973, and confirmed by successive Governments, that the Government would ensure that the debts of the company would be met in the extremely unlikely event of a liquidation. As previously announced to the House, it is the Government's view that following privatisation the company should have a capital structure such as to enable it to operate without the need for such Government assurances.

The Government have decided accordingly that, as part of the arrangements for and at the time of the proposed offer for sale, they will subscribe an amount of new ordinary shares which, after deducting such expenses of the offer as are payable by Rolls-Royce, will give net proceeds to the company equal to the net borrowings of the company and its subsidiaries (including obligations under finance leases) as recorded in the consolidated audited balance sheet as at 31 December 1986. These new ordinary shares (which will be subscribed conditional on the offer for sale being completed) will form part of the shares made available under the offer for sale.

From the time of the completion of the offer for sale the previous Government assurances referred to above will cease to have effect.

The Government have informed Rolls-Royce of their decision on these matters and the company has welcomed the Government's commitment as a sound base for its future operations.

Film Industry

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make an estimate of foreign investment in the British film industry for the most recent 12-month period for which figures are available.

Mr. Butcher: The available information relates to inward direct investment in the United Kingdom film industry. It was £4·6 million in 1984, the latest year for which the data are available.

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what were the foreign earnings of the British film industry for the most recent 12-month period for which figures are available.

Mr. Butcher: The latest available information relates to 1985 and was published in *British Business*, 19 September 1986, page 41.

Vauxhall Cars

Mr. Woodcock asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on the level of United Kingdom content in Vauxhall cars which are assembled in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: Although Vauxhall has undertaken a significant amount of component resourcing into the United Kingdom, it has been affected by exchange rate movements and now expects to achieve only a 50 per cent. level of United Kingdom content in its cars and car-derived vans by the second quarter of next year. We shall be pressing hard for an improvement in this situation.

General Motors

Mr. Woodcock asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any information on the net effect on the United Kingdom balance of payments of combined operations of General Motors in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Giles Shaw: This information is not available from the trade statistics. Such detailed information as we have is provided to us by the company on a commercially confidential basis. In general there is an inbalance between GM's export and import performance, but we are maintaining regular contact with the task force set up by General Motors in 1985 to identify steps which can be taken to reduce this inbalance.

Greek Cement

Mr. Jackson asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the volume of imports of Greek cement for each of the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement on the outcome of discussions within the European Commission and the Council on the future of Greek subsidies.

Mr. Alan Clark: 18,025 tonnes of White Portland cement were imported from Greece in August 1986. There are no indications that much of this has yet found its way on to the market. There have been no other imports of cement from Greece in the last 12 months. on the future of the Greek subsidies, I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) on 10 December, at column 175.

Radio Regulatory Division (Annual Report)

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the first annual report of radio regulatory division, as recommended by the Merriman committee, will be published.

Mr. Pattie: I am pleased to say that the first report was published today and that copies have been placed in both Libraries.

Vosper Shiprepairers

Mr. Colvin asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what were the conditions of sale for the management buy-out of Vosper Shiprepairers of Southampton;

(2) what was the total price paid to Government in the management buy-out for Vosper Shiprepairers of Southampton.

Mr. Giles Shaw: These matters are commercial in confidence between British Shipbuilders and the purchasers of Vosper Shiprepairers Limited.

Research and Development

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will identify the various programmes promoted by his Department within the United Kingdom and through collaborative ventures within the European Economic Community to promote research, development and production; when these programmes were inaugurated; and what are the financial resources devoted to each of them.

Mr. Butcher: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Lloyd's (Neil Inquiry)

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has now received the report of the Neil inquiry into Lloyd's; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: No, but I understand that the committee of inquiry into regulatory arrangements at Lloyd's hopes to be able to submit its report to my right hon. Friend shortly.

Japan

Mr. Hunter asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what has been the volume of United Kingdom exports to Japan each year since 1975 to date expressed in cash terms, real terms on 1975 and as an annual percentage increase or decrease on the previous year and on 1975;

(2) what has been the volume of Japanese imports into the United Kingdom each year since 1975 expressed in cash terms, real terms on 1975 and as an annual percentage increase or decrease on the previous year and on 1975.

Mr. Alan Clark: Estimates of trade statistics expressed in real terms are not available. Trade with Japan from 1975 is as follows:

United Kingdom trade with Japan

Year	*£ millions*	*Percentage increase (decrease) on previous year*	*Percentage increase on 1975*
Imports			
1975	674·1		
1976	797·6	18	18
1977	1,060·6	33	57
1978	1,283·0	21	90
1979	1,488·2	16	121
1980	1,707·2	15	153
1981	2,206·2	29	227
1982	2,658·8	21	294
1983	3,355·4	26	398
1984	3,771·9	12	460
1985	4,115·5	9	511
Exports			
1975	310·7		
1976	361·7	16	16
1977	470·9	30	52
1978	541·8	15	74
1979	606·2	12	95
1980	596·5	(−2)	92

Year	£ millions	Percentage increase (decrease) on previous year	Percentage increase on 1975
1981	620·3	4	100
1982	680·9	10	119
1983	799·2	17	157
1984	926·6	16	198
1985	1,012·3	9	226

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics of United Kingdom.

British Steel Corporation

Mr. Hickmet asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he is in a position to announce a revised external financing limit for the British Steel Corporation.

Mr. Giles Shaw: BSC's external financing limit was reduced from £146 million to £51 million in July. BSC's performance in the first half of the year has been good, despite the uncertainty affecting some markets, including those elsewhere in Europe. I am glad to say that the corporation's latest forecasts for the rest of the current financial year indicate that a further reduction of £25 million in the EFL, from £51 million to £26 million, is practicable, and this change has now been made.

Financial Services

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will bring into force section 105 of the Financial Services Act; and how he proposes to use its powers.

Mr. Howard: Section 105, which enables the Secretary of State to investigate investment businesses, comes into force today.

Subsection (2) makes special provision for members of recognised self-regulating organisations and professional bodies. It is not yet possible for an organisation or body to apply for recognition. In the meantime, the Secretary of State will consult an organisation or body which he believes is likely to receive recognition, before deciding whether to use the section 105 powers to investigate any part of its member's affairs regulated by that organisation or body.

Rover Group

Mr. Forth asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recommendation he has received from the Rover Group board concerning its information technology subsidiary, ISTEL; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Giles Shaw: My right hon. Friend has accepted the board's recommendation that Rover Group should proceed to detailed negotiations with the management buy-out as the preferred route for selling a majority stake in ISTEL.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Plutonium

Mr. Foulkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will specify the details of the standard format introduced for plutonium trade within the European Communities.

Mr. Eggar: Details of the standard format used for plutonium transfers within the European Communities are set out in a ministerial declaration of common policy on the consequences of the adoption of the NSG guidelines by the ten member states of the Community dated 20 November 1984. A copy of this is in the Library.

Syria

Mr. Adley asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make an estimate of the costs incurred by British industry arising from the severing of diplomatic links with Syria; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: No. It is not possible to quantify what, if any, costs to British industry can be directly attributed to the break in relations.

Corporal Punishment

Mr. Sedgemore asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to secure the publication of the report of the European Commission on human rights which is going to the Committee of Ministers into complaints brought against the British Government on corporal punishment in schools by Ms. Karen Warwick and her mother, constituents of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch.

Mr. Eggar: The Commission's report is confidential. It is for the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to decide whether the report should be published. It is not our practice to disclose how we intend to vote on issues considered by the Committee of Ministers.

PRIME MINISTER

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. Cash asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the review of contingency plans following the Chernobyl accident.

The Prime Minister: The first stage of a thorough review of existing emergency plans and procedures in the light of experience of the Chernobyl accident has now been completed by the Cabinet Office in consultation with the appropriate Government Departments and agencies concerned.

The existing plans are addressed specifically to an accident occurring within the United Kingdom and cover both the emergency procedures at the site and offsite arrangements to protect the public. They continue to provide a valid basis for the response to any nuclear accident in the United Kingdom. However, the Government have decided that planning needs to provide more specifically for the response to a nuclear accident outside the United Kingdom.

Detailed planning is now in hand. Among other things this will need to ensure nationwide monitoring coverage and, in the light of expert assessment of the results of monitoring, for the dissemination of appropriate advice and information to the general public. In the event of any future nuclear accident overseas affecting the United Kingdom the Secretary of State for the Environment will take the lead in co-ordinating Government action.

At the same time, the Government will continue to work with our international partners both in the

International Atomic Energy Agency and elsewhere to improve the arrangements for co-ordinated international action. In the meantime, the two recently signed International Atomic Energy Agency sponsored conventions should ensure earlier and more effective notification and dissemination of information than occurred in the case of the Chernobyl accident.

I shall make a further statement when the detailed planning now in hand has been completed and appropriate steps will be taken to make the new arrangements known to the public and to all the authorities concerned.

Lord Rothschild

Q77. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister whether she will now release Lord Rothschild from his obligations of confidentiality as a former member of the security services; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: All present and former members of the security services owe a life-long duty of confidentiality to the Crown. They may not make unauthorised disclosures of information acquired in their work. Any requests for authorised disclosure would be considered in the normal way.

Nurses and Midwives

Mr. Pavitt asked the Prime Minister if Sir James Cleminson has yet presided over meetings of the review body for nurses and midwives remuneration; how many meetings have been held in connection with the 1987 award; when she is hoping to receive the report; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I understand that Sir James Cleminson chaired his first meeting of the Review Body for Nursing Staff, Midwives, Health Visitors and Professions Allied to Medicine earlier this month and that this was the review body's third meeting since completing its 1986 reports. I have as yet received no indication of when the review body's next report will be submitted. We look forward to receiving the recommendations of the review body in due course.

Civil Servants (West Germany)

Mr. Steel asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the level of take-home pay received by British civil servants working in West Germany relative to their British based counterparts.

The Prime Minister: British civil servants serving in West Germany receive a supplement to salary known as foreign service allowance. This compensates for the extra cost of having to live outside the United Kingdom in order to perform their duties. The allowance is adjusted to reflect movements in local prices or exchange rates to ensure that the purchasing power of take-home pay and the allowance can maintain a standard of living which is at least equivalent to that of civil servants in the United Kingdom.

Westland plc

Mr. Dalyell asked the Prime Minister what action was taken in connection with the report by the then Secretary of State for Defence alleging that the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry had urged the managing director of the leading company in the European Westland consortium to withdraw in the national interest, during the period between the receipt by the private office of that report on 8 January and the discussion of Westland plc by the Cabinet on 9 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 17 November, at columns 49-50.

Police and Military Establishments

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister how many police and military establishments she has visited since 1979.

The Prime Minister: I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Visits

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Prime Minister if she will publish in the *Official Report*, Prime Ministerial visits overseas in each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: The information is as follows (holiday visits have been excluded):

1979	
June	France (two visits)
June-July	Japan
	Soviet Union (Stop-over)
	Australia
July-August	Zambia
October	Italy
	Luxembourg
	Germany
November	Republic of Ireland
December	United States of America
1980	
April	Luxembourg
May	Yugoslavia
June	Italy (two visits)
September	France
	Greece
	Yugoslavia
November	Germany
	Italy
December	Luxembourg
	Republic of Ireland
1981	
February	Netherlands
February-March	United States of America
March	Netherlands
April	India
	Saudi Arabia
	Abu Dhabi
	Dubai
	Oman
	Qatar
June	Luxembourg
July	Canada
September-October	Kuwait
	Bahrain
	Australia
	Pakistan
October	Mexico
November	Germany
December	France
1982	
March	Belgium
June	France
	Germany
	United States of America
	Belgium
July	Italy
September	Hong Kong

	China
	Japan
October	Germany
November	France
December	Denmark
1983	
January	Falkland Islands
March	Belgium
May	United States of America
June	Germany
September	Germany
	Netherlands
	Canada
	United States of America
November	Germany
	India
December	Greece
1984	
January	France
	Italy
February	Hungary
	Soviet Union
March	Belgium
April	Portugal
May	France
June	France
November	India
November-December	France
December	Republic of Ireland
	China
	Hong Kong
	United States of America
1985	
January	Germany
February	United States of America
March	Soviet Union
	Belgium
April	Malaysia
	Brunei
	Indonesia
	Singapore
	Sri Lanka
	India
	Saudi Arabia
May	Germany
June	Italy
July	United States of America
September	Egypt
	Jordan
October	Bahamas
	United States of America
November	Belgium
December	Luxembourg
1986	
January	France
March	Italy
May	Korea
	Japan
	Israel
June	Netherlands
July	Canada
September	Norway
	Federal Republic of Germany
November	United States of America
	France
December	France

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* all Prime Ministerial visits to *(a)* the city of Manchester and *(b)* the city of Salford in each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: The information requested is as follows:

(a) *City of Manchester*
31 August 1979
15 January 1982
11 December 1986

(b) *City of Salford*
31 August 1979
15 January 1982
12 December 1986

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* all Prime Ministerial visits to *(a)* Humberside, *(b)* South Yorkshire, *(c)* Greater Manchester, *(d)* Merseyside, *(e)* the West Midlands and *(f)* Cleveland in each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: The information requested is as follows:

(a) *Humberside*
March 1980

(b) *South Yorkshire*
April 1983

(c) *Greater Manchester*
August 1979
January 1982
August 1985
December 1986

(d) *Merseyside*
April 1981
July 1981
October 1984

(e) *West Midlands*
July 1979
April 1980
October 1980
February 1984
September 1985

(f) *Cleveland*
September 1985
September 1986

Mr. Terry Lewis asked the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* all Prime Ministerial visits to *(a)* Scotland, and *(b)* Wales in each year since 1979.

The Prime Minister: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Scotland
1979 — 10-11 July and 5-7 September
1980 — 4-5 July and 4-5 September
1981 — 15-16 May and 3 September
1982 — 15 May, 31 July and 1-2 September
1983 — 28-29 January, 31 August and 1 September
1984 — 5-6 September
1985 — 5-6 and 9-10 September
1986 — 25-26 April, 31 July, 1 August and 3-5 September

(b) Wales
1980 — 17-18 July
— 11 December
1982 — 2 July
1984 — 21 September
1985 — 26 April
1986 — 21 June

I have omitted from the above any dates on which I was solely engaged on party business or was a guest of Her Majesty The Queen.

Engagements

Mr. Parry asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

Mr. Fallon asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

Mr. Greenway asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

Mr. Pike asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 18 December.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

International Development Association

Mr. Lawler asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the negotiations for the eighth replenishment of the International Development Association; and what the United Kingdom will contribute as a result.

Mr. Chris Patten: Negotiations ended successfully in Rome on 15 December. The total replenishment for commitment over the three years from 1 July 1987, including a negotiated element of $11·5 billion and voluntary additional contributions, will be nearly $12·4 billion. This is a much better result than had earlier been expected. In addition the IDA should be able to lend a substantial further amount on the basis of the repayments it expects to receive over the next few years.

Forty-five to 50 per cent. of all IDA lending will go to sub-Saharan Africa, and up to 30 per cent. to India and China; $3 billion to $3·5 billion will be available to support economic adjustment.

I am glad to say that the United Kingdom offered a voluntary additional contribution of $15 million (about £10 million) on top of our 6·7 per cent. share of the negotiated replenishment, to help achieve this result. Our total contribution, subject to Parliament's approval, will be nearly £525 million.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND

Mrs. Catherine MacInnes

Mr. Craigen asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland when he hopes to reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill's letter of 15 November 1986 regarding matters raised by his constituent Mrs. Catherine MacInnes.

The Solicitor-General for Scotland: I wrote to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mr. Craigen) on 16 December 1986 in reply to his letter of 15 November 1986.

WALES

A55

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Wales what were the traffic considerations that determined that the A55 dual carriageway Bangor bypass should continue into the A5 as a dual-carriageway around the Llanfairpwll bypass rather than continuing to Caernarfon.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The generation of traffic over the reconstructed Britannia bridge resulted in estimated design year traffic flows at Llanfairpwll bypass which justified the provision of a dual carriageway.

Improvement of the A487 trunk road between Bangor and Caernarfon is included in the programme of trunk road improvement schemes as set out in "Roads in Wales 1985". The standard of road to be provided will be determined following detailed consideration of all relevant factors including traffic need, cost and environmental implications.

Cardiac Surgery Unit, Cardiff

Dr. Roger Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales, further to the answer of 5 December to the hon. Member for Carmarthen, *Official Report*, column *803*, if he will detail the timetable for the establishment of a cardiac surgery unit at Cardiff.

Mr. Mark Robinson: There is already a cardiac surgery unit at Cardiff, which in 1985 performed 605 operations. We intend to expand this unit but the timetable depends on a current strategic review of services, which is nearing completion.

Motorways

Mr. Roy Hughes asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the mileage of trunk motorways in Wales in use, under construction and planned as at 1 April.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: At 1 April 1986, 1,102 miles of motorway and trunk roads were in use, 26 miles under construction and 100 miles of improvement planned.

Planning Appeals

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the planning appeals decided by him since May 1979.

Mr. Mark Robinson: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Wales Tourist Board

Mr. Best asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will indicate the level of resources he will make available to the Wales Tourist Board for 1987-88.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: I hope to make about £8·5 million available to the Wales Tourist Board in 1987-88 subject to the usual scrutiny of the Supply Estimates when they are presented to Parliament, probably in March.

Housing

Mr. Anderson asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy towards the role of local housing

authorities in providing new accommodation for categories other than special needs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I shall continue to encourage local authorities to put their main effort into the repair and renovation of the existing housing stock. Outside the private sector, we are looking to the housing association movement to provide the bulk of new build or renovated rented housing required, using private finance wherever possible, thus seeking to achieve greater diversity of provision than exists today. Local authorities remain free to undertake new build within the resources available in accordance with their own assessment of local needs and priorities.

ENERGY

Plutonium

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy to answer questions on the value of contracts with foreign countries for the reprocessing of plutonium.

Mr. Goodlad: No. This information is commercially confidential between BNFL and its customers.

Severn Barrage

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will list the long-term studies being undertaken by, or on behalf of, his Department into tidal power;

(2) if, in the light of the recommendations of the Severn barrage committee in 1982 that designs and economic studies into a Severn barrage should proceed in parallel with the investigation of environmental issues, he will ask the Severn Tidal Power Group to produce such studies; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what steps will be taken to ensure that the Severn Estuary studies in relation to the proposed tidal barrage adequately cover the complete winter season of wading birds; if, in the light of the fact that work on the studies has not yet begun, he still expects them to be completed within two years from July 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The Secretary of State announced in July a £5·5 million extension to the investigation into the United Kingdom's tidal resources. This work includes advanced investigations into a Severn barrage on a line near to Cardiff and Weston; a contribution towards studies into a Mersey barrage; and generic studies including construction techniques, environmental impact, and the potential of smaller sites around the United Kingdom.

The report on the Severn barrage by the Severn Tidal Power Group published in July discussed environmental issues and recommended that further study was necessary. The work programme for the Severn Estuary studies and other related work of a generic nature not necessarily restricted to the time scale of the study carried out by the Severn Tidal Power Group will include an examination of the impact of a tidal barrage on wildlife. Details of the Severn work programme, related studies, and procedure for consultation are still being discussed by the Central Electricity Generating Board, the Severn Tidal Power Group, and my Department. It is intended that full details of the studies and consultation procedures will be widely circulated for comment initially and that there should be an ongoing consultation process with all interested parties.

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for Energy what percentage of the country's present energy needs would be provided by the proposed Severn barrage; and what is the expected annual increase in energy demand over the period of construction of the barrage.

Mr. David Hunt: If a Severn tidal barrage were to be built near to Cardiff and Weston, it would provide about 5 per cent. of Britain's current electricity demand, about 2 per cent. of the current simultaneous maximum electricity load at the time of winter peak, or about 1 per cent. of current United Kingdom final energy demand. The sales forecast adopted by the Electricity Council, October 1986, implies an annual increase of 1·6 per cent. per annum to the middle of the next decade.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will take steps to suspend fact-finding visiting by the general public to the British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. Sellafield site until all of the safety requirements stipulated by the nuclear installations inspectorate's special safety audit are fully implemented; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: Arrangements for visits to the Sellafield site are the responsibility of BNFL.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has on the specific access permitted to the nuclear installations inspectorate safety audit team to full records of *(a)* spent Magnox fuel received and *(b)* plutonium reprocessed each week at Sellafield from 1 June.

Mr. Goodlad: Nuclear installations inspectorate may have access to any information relevant to nuclear safety.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) which particular safety modifications of the Sellafield site, since included in the list of changes stipulated by the nuclear installations inspectorate's safety audit, have been undertaken and made known to his Department by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. since March;

(2) whether British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. had, prior to March, conveyed details to his Department of the safety problems identified by the nuclear installations inspectorate in its safety audit.

Mr. Goodlad: Responsibility for safety at nuclear sites, under both the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 and the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 falls on the operator. Compliance with the legislation is overseen by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive. The safety audit of Sellafield was established by the Health and Safety Executive at the end of February 1986. My Department has received a copy of the report.

I am advised that a number of specific requirements for the improvement of plant highlighted by the nuclear installations inspectorate team and listed in the report were undertaken during the course of the audit and are now either completed or in the course of completion by British Nuclear Fuels.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will make available finance to British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. to support the implementation of the safety changes stipulated in the nuclear installations inspectorate's safety audit report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: Financing the implementations of the recommendations of the nuclear installations inspectorate report is a matter for British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), *Official Report*, column 112, of 9 December, if he will make it his policy to publish safeguards agreements covering civil nuclear materials at Sellafield.

Mr. Goodlad: I have nothing to add to my earlier reply.

Gas and Electricity Disconnections

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to the number of domestic gas and electricity consumers who have had their supply disconnected for each of the last three years.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: This is a matter for the industries themselves. I have asked the chairmen of British Gas and the Electricity Council to provide the information direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy what communications and consultations he expects to have with *(a)* Euratom, *(b)* the International Atomic Energy Agency and *(c)* DECD Nuclear Energy Agency on the implications of the nuclear installations inspectorate's safety audit of Sellafield.

Mr. Goodlad: Safety of nuclear installations is a matter for national authorities.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to meet trades union officials at the Sellafield plant to discuss improvements in safety and operational practice resulting from the recommendations of the nuclear installations inspectorate safety audit of the Sellafield nuclear plant.

Mr. Goodlad: This is a matter for British Nuclear Fuels plc.

CEGB (Financial Control Systems)

Mr. Barron asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Rother Valley on 4 December, *Official Report*, column *740*, whether the exercises observed by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate at each named power station included full exercises performed by all shifts and teams at the station; what proportion of duly authorised persons was observed in the performance of full exercises; what proportion of other personnel was observed in the performance of full exercises; whether the content and duration of exercises observed varied between shifts and teams; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1986, c. *477*]: The timing and exercising of those staff with direct responsibilities for dealing with an emergency is carried out routinely at power stations, and there is a statutory requirement for emergency arrangements to be fully rehearsed regularly. In practice this means at least once a year at each location. A different shift is chosen each time for these exercises which are witnessed by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate. For operational reasons, it is only possible for a proportion of the staff on any shift to participate in an exercise.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Firearms Licences

Mr. Budgen asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new firearms licences for sporting guns were issued in Northern Ireland in 1984, 1985 and to date in 1986; and how many of these were issued to members of gun clubs.

Mr. Scott: In Northern Ireland, a person may hold several firearms for different purposes by the authority of one firearm certificate. The information requested is therefore being given as the number of firearms held in Northern Ireland for sporting purposes and not the number of certificates issued. At 31 December 1984, 96,404 firearms were held in Northern Ireland for sporting purposes by authority of firearm certificates granted or renewed by the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. At 31 December 1985 the number was 98,359 and at 30 November 1986 the number was 99,928.

Information regarding the numbers of firearm certificates and the number of firearms held by virtue of those certificates on issue to members of firearms clubs authorised under the provisions of article 54 of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Flannery asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to visit the Republic of Ireland to discuss the Anglo-Irish Agreement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I have no plans at present to visit the Republic of Ireland. The Anglo-Irish Agreement continues to offer a good framework for making progress on Northern Ireland's problems, and much work has already been done.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what figures are available to indicate the numbers unemployed in each electoral ward, each local government district and each parliametary constituency in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: There are 526 electoral wards in Northern Ireland and the information in the form requested is not readily available and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost. The numbers of unemployed claimants in each local government district and parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland at 13 November 1986 are as follows:

District Council Area	Male	Female	Total
Antrim	2,380	959	3,339
Ards	2,135	1,184	3,319
Armagh	2,552	1,102	3,654
Ballymena	2,399	1,163	3,562
Ballymoney	1,479	477	1,956
Banbridge	1,174	649	1,823
Belfast	23,581	8,026	31,607
Carrickfergus	1,555	870	2,425
Castlereagh	2,012	1,032	3,044
Coleraine	3,170	1,094	4,264
Cookstown	2,002	751	2,753
Craigavon	4,343	1,771	6,114
Derry	7,755	2,042	9,797
Down	2,181	1,011	3,192
Dungannon	2,950	1,025	3,975
Fermanagh	3,413	1,111	4,524
Larne	1,757	629	2,386
Limavady	2,087	678	2,765
Lisburn	4,242	1,922	6,164
Magherafelt	2,185	818	3,003
Moyle	1,163	317	1,480
Newry and Mourne	5,656	1,952	7,608
Newtownabbey	3,476	1,700	5,176
North Down	1,831	1,194	3,025
Omagh	2,549	1,003	3,552
Strabane	3,201	696	3,897
Northern Ireland Totals	93,228	35,176	128,404

The figures are based on district councils boundaries as established by the Local Government (Boundaries) Order (Northern Ireland) 1972.

Parliamentary constituency	Male	Female	Total
Belfast East	3,410	1,483	4,893
Belfast North	6,628	2,237	8,865
Belfast South	4,237	2,058	6,295
Belfast West	9,674	2,438	12,112
East Antrim	4,907	2,171	7,078
East Londonderry	6,987	2,406	9,393
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	6,363	2,136	8,499
Foyle	9,403	2,384	11,787
Lagan Valley	4,348	1,990	6,338
Mid-Ulster	6,559	2,292	8,851
Newry and Armagh	6,430	2,242	8,672
North Antrim	5,041	1,957	6,998
North Down	2,738	1,546	4,284
South Antrim	4,261	1,987	6,248
South Down	4,496	2,072	6,568
Strangford	2,766	1,606	4,372
Upper Bann	4,980	2,171	7,151
Northern Ireland Totals	93,228	35,176	128,404

Benefits

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what figures are available to indicate the total number of claimants of supplementary benefit pensions and allowances in each social security office in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: The information is as follows:

Numbers receiving benefit at 18 November 1986

Social Security Office	Supplementary pensions	Supplementary allowances	Total
Andersonstown	1,011	6,680	7,691
Antrim	1,125	4,189	5,314
Armagh	1,477	3,240	4,717
Ballymena	1,675	4,165	5,840
Ballymoney	1,195	3,221	4,416
Ballynahinch	530	856	1,386
Banbridge	1,022	2,128	3,150
Bangor	1,617	3,090	4,707
Carrickfergus	696	2,239	2,935
Coleraine	1,420	4,441	5,861
Cookstown	1,018	2,529	3,547
Corporation Street	2,614	9,187	11,801
Downpatrick	749	1,696	2,445
Dungannon	1,739	4,064	5,803
Enniskillen	2,855	5,154	8,009
Falls Road	1,591	7,380	8,971
Holywood Road	2,516	5,918	8,434
Kilkeel	442	860	1,302
Knockbreda	2,581	3,814	6,395
Larne	649	2,203	2,852
Limavady	730	2,581	3,311
Lisburn	2,112	4,370	6,482
Londonderry	2,709	12,012	14,721
Lurgan	1,435	4,341	5,776
Magherafelt	1,621	3,451	5,072
Newcastle	608	1,205	1,813
Newry	2,719	6,674	9,393
Newtownabbey	1,464	4,445	5,909
Newtownards	1,299	2,684	3,983
Omagh	1,717	4,147	5,864
Portadown	1,178	2,439	3,617
Shaftesbury Square	1,602	4,936	6,538
Shankill	1,676	3,901	5,577
Strabane	1,602	4,373	5,975
Total	50,994	138,613	189,607

Mr. Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what figures are available to indicate the total number of claimants receiving unemployment benefit but not also in receipt of supplementary benefit in each social security office in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: The numbers of claimants receiving unemployment benefit in each social security office in Northern Ireland at 8 May 1986 were as follows:

Social Security Office	Number
Andersontown	800
Antrim	735
Armagh	605
Ballymena	930
Ballymoney	460
Ballynahinch	250
Banbridge	570
Bangor	890
Carrickfergus	585
Coleraine	1,000
Cookstown	390
Corporation Street	1,020
Downpatrick	570
Dungannon	675
Enniskillen	750
Falls Road	745
Holywood Road	1,250
Kilkeel	310
Knockbreda	845
Larne	430
Limavady	400
Lisburn	1,001
Londonderry	1,585
Lurgan	950
Magherafelt	600
Newcastle	235
Newry	925
Newtownabbey	1,210
Newtownards	860
Omagh	715

Social Security Office	Number
Portadown	665
Shaftesbury Square	825
Shankill	845
Strabane	435
Northern Ireland Total	25,061

Mr Hume asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what figures are available to indicate the numbers of claimants in receipt of supplementary allowances who are not required to be available for work on grounds of age or disability at each social security office in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: The available information is as follows:

Numbers of supplementary allowance recipients not required to be available for work on grounds of age, sickness or disability at 18 November 1986

Social Security Office	Number
Andersontown	757
Antrim	548
Armagh	569
Ballymena	669
Ballymoney	623
Ballynahinch	205
Banbridge	370
Bangor	490
Carrickfergus	292
Coleraine	632
Cookstown	494
Corporation Street	1,168
Downpatrick	325
Dungannon	697
Enniskillen	1,030
Falls Road	903
Holywood Road	837
Kilkeel	179
Knockbreda	680
Larne	304
Limavady	373
Lisburn	665
Londonderry	1,422
Lurgan	629
Magherafelt	673
Newcastle	235
Newry	1,169
Newtownabbey	670
Newtownards	426
Omagh	784
Portadown	413
Shaftesbury Square	536
Shankill	558
Strabane	702
Total	21,027

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Trent Grain Ltd.

Mr. Maclennan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has regarding the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce's investigations into the grain holding of Trent Grain Ltd.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Potatoes

Mr. Gale asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will place copies of submissions made by the Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives (UK) Ltd. and the Processed Vegetable Growers Association to the Potato Review Group in the Library.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Sheep (Radioactivity)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if further to his reply of 5 December, *Official Report*, column *848*, to the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Dr. Thomas) about radioactivity in sheep, he will state the precise location of the readings of radioactive caesium listed in Cumbria.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Rhizomania

Sir Anthony Grant asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the extent of the disease rhizomania in Cambridgeshire; what he estimates its effects will be on sugar beet growing land; what steps are being taken by his Department to eradicate the disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: There have been no outbreaks of rhizomania in the United Kingdom; the disease causes serious loss of yield and reduction of sugar content in sugar beet. I itemised the steps being taken by my Department to guard against rhizomania in the reply which I gave to the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Freud) on 1 December at columns *475-476* and I refer my hon. Friend to the statement I made then.

Milk Production

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if the provisional European Economic Community agreement on milk production reached on 16 December places any additional financial responsibility directly on member states; and who will be responsible for the payment of subsidies (i) to buy out milk quotas and (ii) to dispose of existing butter surpluses;

(2) what surplus production of milk and milk products has been estimated for the European Economic Community in the current year, 1987, 1988 and 1989, respectively, in the event of implementation of provisional agreement on the milk sector reached on 16 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Hunter asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the designation of environmentally sensitive areas.

Mr. Jopling: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I have today laid before Parliament six orders designating the areas whose selection we announced on 14 August. The areas are West Penwith, the Somerset Levels and Moors, the South Downs, the Norfolk Broads, the Pennine Dales and the Cambrian Mountains. In presenting the orders we have been guided

by the formal reports submitted to us by the Countryside Commission and the Nature Conservancy Council. Our Departments have also undertaken extensive consultations with a range of local and national representatives of environmental, farming and other interests. Our objective has been to remain as faithful as possible to the original recommendations while ensuring that the schemes will be sufficiently attractive to generate the high level of uptake on which the achievement of their environmental aims will depend. We shall be encouraging farmers not simply to refrain from damaging operations but to play an active part in conserving landscape, wildlife and historic features. We look forward to inviting applications from farmers in the six areas during the spring.

In each area an ADAS officer has been nominated to co-ordinate the technical aspects of the schemes. These officers are all qualified surveyors and are already in contact with local farming and environmental representatives. They will play a major part in monitoring the progress of the schemes on which I shall produce public reports from time to time.

I am also making available to Parliament maps which show the boundaries of the areas. The rates of payment and management prescriptions are shown in the orders themselves. Farmers who wish to participate in the schemes will be invited to do so for an initial period of five years. I am pleased to announce that the rate of payment will be reviewed in three years' time to take account in particular of economic developments over the period. The rates of payment are as follows:

	per hectare £
The Broads	125 and 200
Pennine Dales	100
Somerset Levels	82 and 120
South Downs	35 and 160
West Penwith	60
Cambrian Mountains	30 and 45

Animal Welfare

Mr. Greenway asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will introduce legislation to lay down humane standards of treatment and care for animals in parks kept by local authorities and to define the circumstances in which such parks may be closed on the grounds of animal welfare; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have been asked to reply. I shall reply as soon as possible.

THE ARTS

Royal Opera House

Mr. Pollock asked the Minister for the Arts what assets purchased from public funds have been made available for the development of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Mr. Luce: The arrangements have evolved over several years in response to changes in circumstances.

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Ltd., a body partly financed by the Arts Council of Great Britain out of a grant-in-aid from a Vote of the Office of Arts and Libraries, has completed the first phase of a scheme for the improvement and enlargement of the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (providing better facilities for artists and staff) and is currently planning a second phase to modernise the building. Government approval to proceed with the second phase has not yet been given, pending discussion of the latest financial projections. The Arts Council made a direct grant of £1 million towards the first phase of the scheme in 1979 but, by agreement between the parties and with the approval of my office, the major contribution from public funds is to come from the proceeds of an eventual sale of all or part of a site adjacent to the Opera House, which the Arts Council acquired several years ago for the purpose of facilitating the development.

This site was bought out of parliamentary funds by the Arts Council in 1975 for £3·1 million in order to provide an extension to the present building. The scope, cost and financing of the scheme being necessarily uncertain at that time, it was not considered appropriate to convey outright title to Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Ltd. There were, however, strong practical reasons for giving it some legal powers over the land, pending final dispositions, and these were provided in 1981 through the creation of a trust, known as the Royal Opera House Development Land Trust, the co-trustees of which are the Arts Council and Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Ltd.

The land trust deed, the terms of which were agreed by my predecessor, set out the rights and interests of the parties, and a framework for action, and its terms were designed to be adaptable to changed conditions as the project developed, and to provide safeguards for the public funds invested.

The land trust deed allowed for the possibility that part of the land should be used for the purpose of extending and improving the opera house and part should be commercially developed. Expenses incurred by Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Ltd. in connection with the land commercially developed would be a first charge on the proceeds of the sale of that land, but any excess of those proceeds over such costs would be paid to the Arts Council; expenditure on the improvements of the opera house itself would be borne by Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Ltd. alone. If any land was neither developed nor used for the improvement of the opera house, it would return to the sole ownership of the Arts Council. The value of the site was shown at cost price in the accounts of the Arts Council.

In 1985 it was agreed by the Arts Council and Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Ltd. that, in the light of the experience gained in the first part of the scheme, it would be possible to carry out the further improvement of the opera house only by either making a further call on public funds or drawing on the revenues and eventual proceeds of sale of the developed site. The Arts Council therefore sought and received my predecessor's approval to an agreement with Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Ltd., which would give the latter body a first-class claim on those revenues and proceeds of sale.

The relative interests of the two parties to the trust became such that it was no longer appropriate to show the value of the site in the accounts of the Arts Council. The asset has accordingly been written out of the Council's 1985-86 accounts, which now ascribe no value to the council's interest. Correspondingly, the asset has been written into the balance sheet of the trust (under whose

aegis the opera house development is nominally being conducted) at the 1975 cost price of £3·1 million, although it is likely to realise considerably more.

Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art

Mr. Moynihan asked the Minister for the Arts whether he is able to announce the publication date of the report of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art for the year ended 30 June.

Mr. Luce: I have today presented the 32nd report of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art for 1985-86. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the achievements of the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Council of Ministers in respect of cultural matters.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Public and Private Bodies (Expenditure)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts what monitoring is undertaken by his Department in respect of the total amount spent on the arts by public and private bodies.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Arts Council (Grant)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts (1) what has been the change in the core grant paid to the Arts Council in each year between 1979-80 and 1987-88 *(a)* using the average earnings index and *(b)* using the retail price index;

(2) what are the reasons for using the gross domestic product deflator in calculating the year-on-year grant charge made in respect of the Arts Council grant; and how the gross domestic product deflator is calculated;

(3) what has been the total grant by his Department to the Arts Council between 1979-80 and 1987-88.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Visits

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts which countries he has visited in an official capacity since taking up his position as Minister for the Arts; and which arts institutions he visited in those countries.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Funding

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts (1) if he is prepared to fund the National Theatre, The Royal Opera House, the English National Opera and the Royal Shakespeare Company directly from his Department; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what has been the total amount spent by his Department both directly and indirectly on funding literature in each of the past six years.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Paintings Sale (Levy)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he will introduce legislation to require 10 per cent. of the purchase price of all paintings sold at public auction to be used to finance the visual arts through means of a statutory levy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts to what extent his Department is monitoring the effect on the arts of the abolition of the Greater London council and the metropolitan councils.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Sponsorship

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts what information he has as to the amount of arts sponsorship undertaken by business in the United Kingdom for each year since 1982-83: and on what information his statistics are based.

Mr. Luce: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

EMPLOYMENT

Job Training Programme

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General what recognised qualification participants in the new job training programme will receive.

Mr. Trippier: Managing agents delivering the new job training scheme pilots are being encouraged to make full use of existing vocational qualifications. The qualifications which participants will receive will vary with the needs and abilities of individuals, and the occupations for which they are being trained.

Print Workers

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General what training courses are organised by his Department for unemployed print workers to train in new technology.

Mr. Trippier: Former employees in the printing industry are eligible with other unemployed people to participate in a wide range of training provision supported by the Manpower Services Commission in skills relevant to new technology.

Particular help is available through the job training programme in London for training in new technology for the printing industry. Discussions are also taking place to determine how some more traditional training provision can be updated to meet current and future skill needs in the industry.

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General how many people, having completed a publicly funded training course, have been found permament work within the print industry in the past three years.

Mr. Trippier: This information is not available in the form requested.

For those completing courses funded by the Manpower Services Commission under its job training programme in printing skills in the past three years, well over 50 per cent. confirmed, three months after completing training, that they had gained work using the skills learnt.

Those completing courses under YTS are questioned about the kind of employment they have taken but are not asked to state the industry in which they gained work.

Training Colleges (Entrant Selection)

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General what criteria are laid down by the principals of publicly funded training colleges when selecting entrants.

Mr. Trippier: The question of criteria used by principals of publicly funded colleges when selecting entrants is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science. For adult training provisions financed by the Manpower Services Commission, selection criteria will be largely determined by the demands of the course, and the qualifications, experience and personal qualities necessary to complete it successfully. Consideration will also be given to any specific requirements within the occupations and industry to which the training is directed.

Trainees (Employment)

Mr. Leighton asked the Paymaster General when people have completed a publicly funded training course what restrictions are placed by his Department or the Manpower Services Commission on them finding employment.

Mr. Trippier: None. Quite the opposite; we actively encourage and assist people to find suitable jobs after training.

Power Stations (Asbestos)

Mr. Cox asked the Paymaster General what *(a)* information and *(b)* medical tests are available for people working in power stations in the United Kingdom who come into contact with asbestos.

Mr. Trippier: If power station workers are liable to come into contact with asbestos, they should be provided with adequate information on the health risks involved and the precautions they should take. The Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983 require that those who intend to work with asbestos insulating and coating be medically examined before they start work and at two-year intervals while they are engaged on such work.

Pregnancy

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Paymaster General what representations his Department has received on the advisability of women continuing to work in the third trimester of pregnancy.

Mr. Trippier: I am not aware of any representations, but if the hon. Member has any particular points in mind I should be glad to consider them.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Paymaster General what advice is issued to employers and employees on working during pregnancy.

Mr. Trippier: The Health and Safety Executive has issued guidance where there are specific health hazards, such as lead and ionising radiations. At present there is no general guidance on working during pregnancy, but the Executive's employment medical advisory service is available to give advice in individual cases.

Small Businesses

Mr. Ashdown asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to change the collection of data undertaken by his Department so as to increase its value in analysing trends within the small business sector.

Mr. Trippier: The Department recognises the importance of reliable data concerning the small business sector and is continually seeking ways of more effectively exploiting existing sources of information, both official and non-official.

However, further large-scale data-gathering exercises would prove costly and time-consuming, as well as representing an additional burden on those who run small businesses.

Employment, Training and Enterprise Programmes

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently participating in each of the government-funded employment, training and enterprise programmes in the borough of Southwark; and what were the comparable figures for 1979 and 1983.

Mr. Lee: It is not possible to give figures for all schemes for the borough of Southwark because of the various bases on which information is collected. The number of people participating in the following employment and enterprise measures and training in the borough of Southwark on 31 October were:

	Number
Youth Training Scheme	473
Adult Training	429
Young Workers Scheme	11
Job Splitting Scheme	1
Voluntary Projects Programme	54

In addition, in the area covering the boroughs of Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, and Wandsworth there are 893 people receiving the enterprise allowance and 3,100 participants on the community programme. There is no community industry office in Southwark. However, in Lewisham, Wandsworth and Lambeth, which attract residents of Southwark, there are 227 participants in community industry. In London and the south-east there were 5,005 people participating in the new workers scheme.

Comparable figures for 1979 and 1983 for all of the measures which were then operating are available only at disproportionate cost.

New Businesses (Southwark)

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Paymaster General (1) what has been the net change in the number of new businesses in the borough of Southwark since *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1983; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what are the latest figures available for the number of new businesses registered in the borough of Southwark since 1979.

Mr. Trippier: I regret that the information is not available.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Paymaster General, how many people have received assistance under the enterprise allowance scheme since its inception and *(a)* how many and *(b)* what proportion of these were in Wales.

Mr. Trippier: At the end of November 1986, 191,145 people had received assistance under the enterprise allowance scheme since its inception. This included 12,601 people in Wales which is 6·6 per cent. of the total for Great Britain.

BNFL (Safety Audit)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Paymaster General why copies of the Health and Safety Executive's safety audit of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. Sellafield 1986 were not made available for hon. Members in the Vote Office.

Mr. Trippier: It is not customary to make published reports by the Health and Safety Executive available for hon. Members in the Vote Office. However, copies were placed in the House Library on 16 December. I apologise that this was not done earlier.

Claims Adjudication, Birmingham

Mr. Terry Davis asked the Paymaster General (1) how many claims were under consideration at the adjudication office in Birmingham on 30 November; and how many of these claims had been held there for more than a month;

(2) how many claims were under consideration at the adjudication office in Birmingham on 30 November 1979, 30 November 1983 and 30 November 1985.

Mr. Trippier: The number of cases under consideration at the Birmingham adjudicaton office on 30 November 1986 was 6,326, of which 1,514 cases were held there for one month or more.

The number of cases under consideraton at the adjudication office in Birmingham on 30 November 1985 was 4,959, and on 30 November 1983 was 3,303. Figures for November 1979 are no longer available.

YTS

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Paymaster General how many young people have completed their YTS course within the *(a)* city of Leicester and *(b)* East Leicester constituency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: In the most recent complete year (April 1985 to March 1986) 2,831 young people left YTS in the city of Leicester. Of these, 76 per cent. were in work or further education/training some three months after leaving. The comparable figure for Great Britain as a whole is 67 per cent. These figures are very encouraging and provide clear confirmation that, not only in Leicester but throughout the country, YTS is proving a help to considerable numbers of young people. I am grateful to all those in industry, commerce and elsewhere who provide the opportunities for young people to develop their potential through YTS.

Separate information is not available for the Leicester, East constituency.

Mr. Lawler asked the Paymaster General what ethnic breakdown he has of YTS premium place participants and of those on employer-led schemes.

Mr. Trippier: The most recently available information on the ethnic group of YTS participants in employer-led schemes who entered under two-year YTS rules relates to trainees in training at 10 November 1986. The data are as follows.

	Number
Ethnic group 1 (White)	265,237
Ethnic group 2 (Black/African/Caribbean descent)	3,736
Ethnic group 3 (Indian Sub-continent descent)	3,443
Ethnic group 4 (None of these)	1,492
Ethnic group 5 (Prefers not to say)	2,651
Total	276,559

Information on the ethnic group of premium place participants is not yet available on a comparable national basis. Premium places are available in both employer-led and non-employer led schemes. Therefore, the figures above include some premium place participants.

North Liverpool Music Resource Centre

Mr. Alton asked the Paymaster General (1) what funding has been made available to date via the Manpower Services Commission by his Department to the north Liverpool music resource centre; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what funding has been made available by his Department for equipment used by the north Liverpool music resource centre; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether schemes which receive European social funding can also qualify for Manpower Services Commission funding;

(4) what information he has as to how many trainees have been given positions with the north Liverpool music resource centre during the past 12 months;

(5) what criteria were used in determining the funding of the north Liverpool music resource centre by the Manpower Services Commission.

Mr. Lee: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Small Firms (Debts)

Mr. Ottaway asked the Paymaster General, pursuant to the answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *258*, on the basis of what research or statistical evidence the Government have reached the conclusion that a statutory

right to interest on overdue debts would not necessarily improve small firms' ability to secure payment in time; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: On the basis of discussion with individual businesses and small firms representative organisations.

Speech Therapists (Pay)

Mr. Rowe asked the Paymaster General if, pursuant to his answer of 8 December, *Official Report*, column *15*, he has yet received the transcript of the judgments referred to; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: We have now received the written reasons for the tribunal's decision. I understand that the applicants are considering the possibility of an appeal.

Training and Employment Schemes (Bolton)

Mr. Thurnham asked the Paymaster General if he will list the monthly figures for the Bolton area for those employed on *(a)* the community programme, the enterprise allowance scheme and the YTS since each scheme began and *(b)* the youth opportunities programme and community enterprise programme schemes since January 1979.

Mr. Trippier: The available monthly figures for the Bolton area for those employed on the community programme for participants on YTS and for entrants to the enterprise allowance scheme are as follows:

Community Programme

1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	
January	5	2,165	2,852	3,557
February	14	2,430	2,878	3,764
March	41	2,602	2,825	3,945
April	127	2,553	2,856	1,925
May	215	2,708	2,900	2,086
June	460	2,677	2,439	2,298
July	539	2,667	3,036	2,332
August	840	2,595	3,003	2,424
September	1,502	2,615	3,153	2,342
October	2,008	2,699	3,221	4,737
November	2,146	2,801	3,415	4,838
December	2,184	2,825	3,504	N/A
	YTS			
January	N/A	N/A	1,742	1,680
February	N/A	1,583	1,654	N/A
March	N/A	1,560	1,595	N/A
April	N/A	N/A	1,586	N/A
May	N/A	N/A	1,529	N/A
June	N/A	N/A	1,890	N/A
July	N/A	1,921	1,936	N/A
August	N/A	1973	1,871	N/A
September	N/A	1,942	1,807	N/A
October	N/A	1,849	1,895	N/A
November	N/A	1,824	1,817	N/A
December	N/A	1,845	1,797	N/A
	EAS			
January	N/A	22	18	26
February	N/A	16	23	18
March	N/A	13	29	30
April	N/A	18	18	27
May	N/A	25	24	41
June	n/a	13	21	40
July	N/A	23	23	31
August	27	13	14	27
September	30	15	7	45
October	20	21	21	40
November	18	17	30	43
December	7	14	23	N/A

Figures for YTS before February 1984 and after February 1986 are not readily available. However, the most recent figures available (provided by careers service) show 2,144 young people on YTS as at the end of November 1986.

Figures for the community enterprise programme and the youth opportunities programme are not available.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Paymaster General if he will publish a table showing the numbers and percentages of jobs lost, or gained, in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole between June 1979 and June 1986, or the latest month for which figures are available, in *(a)* all industries *(b)* all manufacturing industries, *(c)* all service industries, *(d)* shipbuilding and repairing *(e)* metal goods engineering and vehicles, *(f)* mechanical engineering *(g)* electrical electronic engineering and instrument engineering, *(h)* health, education and personal social services, *(i)* retail distribution *(j)* banking, insurance and financial.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1986, c, *539-40*]: Information about job gains and losses is not available from the Department's statistics, but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates.

Estimates of the numbers of employees in employment in the shipbuilding and repairing industries in Northern Ireland are not available for June 1979 or June 1986. The available information is given in the following table.

Employees in employment
Net changes between June 1979 and June 1986

	Northern Ireland		*United Kingdom*	
	Change	*Percentage change*	*Change*	*Percentage change*
All industries and services (0-9)[1]	−64,000	−12	−1,632,000	−7
Manufacturing industries (2-4)	−48,000	−33	−2,007,000	−28
Service industries (6-9)	2,000	1	858,000	6
Shipbuilding and repairing (3610)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Metal goods, engineering and vehicles (32)	−13,000	−31	−1,037,000	−31
Mechanical engineering (32)	−5,000	−45	−314,000	−30
Electrical and electronic engineering, instrument engineering (34,37)	−4,000	−40	−215,000	−24
Education health and other services (93-99)	6,000	4	342,000	8
Retail distribution (64/65)	1,000	2	−77,000	−4
Banking, insurance and finance (8)	1,000	4	560,000	34

[1] Figures in brackets denote the division, class or activity heading of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.
n/d Not available.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Deaths at Sea

7. **Mr. Loyden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce legislation to amend the law relating to inquests on those presumed to have died at sea.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no immediate plans to do so.

Burglaries

15. **Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the percentage increase in burglaries in England and Wales in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what was the comparable figure for the 12 months ended March 1979.

Mr. Mellor: In the 12 months to March 1979, the police recorded 8 per cent. fewer burglaries in England and Wales than in the previous 12 months. In the 12 months to September 1986, recorded burglary increased by 4·7 per cent. However, recorded burglaries fell in 1985 by 3 per cent. Too much weight should not be placed on the figures for any particular 12-month period.

Air Weapons

16. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce legislation to tighten further the restrictions on the sale, possession and ownership of air weapons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no plans to do so at present. The controls on air weapons in the Firearms Act 1968 are already strict. They have recently been the subject of local publicity campaigns in the west midlands and Greater Manchester police force areas. When we have evaluated these campaigns, we shall consider whether to run similar ones next year in other areas where the incidence of misuse is high.

Victims of Crime

17. **Mr. Patchett** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department has any proposals to publish more detailed statistics on the age, sex or race of victims of crime.

Mr. Mellor: We already include analysis of the relevant characteristics of victims in appropriate publications and will continue to do so. This year, for example, we have published two reports — the research study "Personal Violence" and Statistical Bulletin 29 of 1986 — giving detailed information on victims of violent crime.

49. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state for each year since 1978 the number of victims of crime recorded by his Department who were *(a)* children under the age of six years, *(b)* children aged six to 15 years inclusive.

Mr. Mellor: Information on the ages of victims of crime is not regularly collected centrally except in the case of homicide. Estimates of the numbers of children under 16 who were victims of certain violent and sexual offences recorded by the police in 1984 have been published in table 2 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin issue 29/86. The readily available information on the number of defendants proceeded against for certain sexual offences against children is given in the tables for the years 1979 to 1985. For other types of offence it is not possible, from the results of court proceedings held centrally, to distinguish the age of the victim. The information provided on those offences marked with an asterisk in the tables is published in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales", supplementary tables vols 1 and 4 S1·1 (A) and S4·1 (A-D). Figures for offences of this kind are liable to be affected by variations in reporting and recording of offences and in the practice of bringing prosecutions.

Defendants proceeded against and found guilty of certain sexual offences where the victim is known to be aged 16 or under
England and Wales

Year	*Number proceeded against*	*Number found guilty*
1979	3,819	3,465
1980	3,746	3,418
1981	3,296	2,979
1982	3,343	2,921
1983	3,233	2,855
1984	3,167	2,732
1985	3,356	2,983

Table A—Defendants proceeded against at all courts for sexual offences where the victim is known to be aged 16 or under
England and Wales

Number of persons

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	139	199	192	139	200	172	180
Attempt to commit buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	20	9	10	5	8	12	14
Indecent assault on a male person under 16	581	610	571	613	597	592	578

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Indecent assault on a female person under 16	1,915	1,869	1,624	1,694	1,573	1,531	1,705
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13*	102	104	87	87	126	115	137
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16*	728	571	500	449	425	434	405
Incest with a girl under 13	40	62	37	54	38	54	55
Inciting girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	10	5	8	8	3	—	1
Householder permitting unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16	10	5	7	9	7	11	5
Person responsible for girl under 16 causing or encouraging her prostitution etc.	2	4	4	5	1	3	—
Abduction of unmarried girl under 16	20	16	10	11	12	11	11
Gross indecency with children[1]	252	292	246	269	243	232	265
Total	3,819	3,746	3,296	3,343	3,233	3,167	3,356

Table B—Defendants found guilty at all courts for sexual offences where the victim is known to be aged 16 or under
England and Wales *Number of persons*

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	123	147	147	126	149	118	150
Attempt to commit buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	20	15	10	5	12	22	17
Indecent assault on a male person under 16	533	562	509	506	533	511	526
Indecent assault on a female person under 16	1,700	1,685	1,458	1,492	1,356	1,281	1,445
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13*	85	102	81	71	103	83	110
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16*	663	566	487	419	422	414	395
Incest with a girl under 13	51	52	32	45	40	49	57
Inciting girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	8	6	7	7	7	—	3
Householder permitting unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 16	5	5	7	7	3	6	3
Person responsible for girl under 16 causing or encouraging her prostitution etc.	3	3	4	3	4	3	—
Abduction of unmarried girl under 16	19	11	8	9	6	8	11
Gross indecency with children[1]	255	264	229	231	220	237	266
Total	3,465	3,418	2,979	2,921	2,855	2,732	2,983

Table C

Defendants proceeded against at all courts for certain offences of violence against the person where the victim is known to be aged 16 or under
England and Wales *Number of persons*

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Indictable offences							
Murder of infant under 1 year of age	6	1	1	5	7	—	6

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Infanticide*	5	6	9	3	4	4	4
Cruelty to a child	145	141	105	116	105	104	112
Summary offence							
Cruelty to a child	6	6	8	14	6	2	3
TOTAL	162	154	123	138	122	110	125

Table D

Defendant found guilty at all courts for certain offences of violence against the person where the victim is known to be 16 or under England and Wales

Number of persons

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Indictable offences							
Murder of infant under 1 year of age	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
Infanticide*	8	7	11	3	9	7	3
Cruelty to a child	139	147	104	103	87	104	91
Summary offence							
Cruelty to a child	4	4	5	10	2	1	2
TOTAL	152	158	120	116	99	112	96

Birmingham Pub Bombings

18. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to state the result of his consideration of representations concerning the conviction of the Maguires for explosives offences.

Mr. Mellor: We are examining the points raised by Mr. Kee, and my right hon. Friend hopes to be able to reach a decision before long.

23. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in his review of the case of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

26. **Mr. Mallon** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to be in a position to make a decision about the case of those imprisoned for the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave today to a question from the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Miss Maynard).

25. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received any further representations regarding the six men imprisoned for the Birmingham pub bombings of 1974.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question by the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 20 November at column *288*. Since then we have received about 50 letters from members of the public, 20 of which have been forwarded by right hon. and hon. Members. The Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs has written to my right hon. Friend about the case, and officials of the Irish embassy have also raised the matter. We have received petitions bearing a total of 280 signature. In addition, my right hon. Friend and I recently met representatives of the parliamentary Labour party.

47. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the Justice Minister of the Government of the Irish Republic concerning the case of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. Mellor: We have received representations from the Government of the Republic on several occasions urging us to review these convictions.

Frontiers (Weapons Control)

19. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has now received from the EEC Commission its draft directive on the abolition of controls on weapons at internal Community frontiers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No.

Drug Control

20. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for extending collaboration on anti-drugs work with other member states of the Council of Europe and the European Community.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: On 20 October I chaired a meeting of EC Ministers which adopted a seven-point plan to step up the fight against the drugs problem. At the ministerial meeting on 9 December we pursued in particular the possibilities of intensified co-operation between European drug liaison officers in Third-world countries. In January, under United Kingdom chairmanship, Ministers of the Council of Europe's Pompidou group will be meeting in London in order to exchange views about current developments in the drugs field and to agree upon a programme of work for the group to pursue in the next two to three years. We shall seek to ensure that the programme is both constructive and realistic and that it serves to improve the already high level of co-operation on drugs matters in western Europe.

BBC

21. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to seek powers to impose guidelines of conduct on the BBC.

Mr. Mellor: No. It is the responsibility of the board of governors of the BBC to set guidelines for programme makers and to see that they are properly fulfilled in the light of their public service obligations.

Crimes of Violence

22. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state for the most recent 12 months for which figures are available, the percentage increase in crimes of violence against the person since the 12 months ended March 1979.

Mr. Mellor: In the 12 months to September 1986 the incidence of crimes of violence against the person was 42 per cent. higher than in the 12 months to March 1979. Between 1979 and 1985 there was a lower rate of increase than between 1975 and 1979.

Crime Statistics

24. **Mr. Ashton** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the total number of crimes *(a)* in the 12 months ended March 1979 and *(b)* in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Mellor: In the 12 months ending March 1979 police in England and Wales recorded some 2,154,700 notifiable offences, compared with 3,794,400 in the 12 months ending September 1986.

53. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state, in respect of the most recent 12 months for which figures are available, the percentage increase in all crimes since the 12 months ended March 1979.

Mr. Mellor: In the 12 months ending 30 September 1986 the police in England and Wales recorded 51 per cent. more notifiable offences than in the 12 months ending 31 March 1979. Statistics of notifiable offences recorded are published each quarter in a Home Office statistical bulletin (issue number 39/86 being the most recent).

Maxwell Fyfe Directive

27. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to amend the Maxwell Fyfe directive of 1952; and if he will make a statement.

51. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to issue revised guidelines to the security services to replace the Maxwell Fyfe directive of 1952.

Mr. Hurd: No.

Domestic Violence

28. **Mr. Barron** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last discussed with chief officers of police the nature of police response to cases of domestic violence.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: During the course of this year we have been engaged regularly in discussions with the Association of Chief Police Officers about the police response to the recommendations made by the Women's National Commission in its report on violence against women. This included domestic violence, and guidance was issued to chief officers in Home Office circular 69/1986 on 15 October 1986.

54. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on the subject of police response to domestic violence.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Since 15 October, when Home Office circular 69/1985 on violence against women was issued, we have received two letters from hon. Members and one letter from a member of the general public.

Drugs Squad (Merseyside)

29. **Mr. Allan Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Merseyside on the number of drug squad policemen deployed on Merseyside.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable that Merseyside central drugs squad has a complement of 39 officers.

Firearms

31. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any proposals to review legislation on firearms.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We keep all matters concerning the possession and use of firearms under constant review but there are no plans at present to amend the Firearms Act 1968.

Fine Defaulters

32. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fine defaulters were imprisoned in 1985; how this compares with previous years; and what measures he is taking to divert fine defaulters from custody.

Mr. Mellor: The number of persons received into prisons in default of payment of fine is published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales." Table 3 of the latest issue (Cmnd. 9903) for 1985, gives figures for the last 11 years. The number of receptions has been falling and was around 20,500 in 1985.

Courts have a statutory duty to take offenders' means into account when setting the level of a fine and have other powers to prevent default, including power to order payment by instalments, or to make attachment of earnings orders and money payment supervision orders. We are considering whether there are further ways of improving fine enforcement.

Drug Liaison Officers

33. **Mr. Sayeed** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the present position in regard to the posting of drug liaison officers overseas.

Mr. Mellor: The Government attach considerable importance to strengthening the network of United Kingdom drug liaison officers overseas. Now that the Indian Government have agreed to the postings of drug

liaison officers in Delhi and Bombay, there will shortly be a total of 12 police and customs officers in post in western Europe, the Mediteranean, the Asian sub-continent, South America and the Caribbean.

At their meeting on 20 October EC Ministers invited officials to examine the scope for creating a co-ordinated network of drug liaison officers to monitor developments in producer countries. The work which has already been put in hand was endorsed by their Ministers, meeting on 9 December; a meeting of experts is being held today and work continues under the Belgian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Nuclear Accidents

34. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has plans for specific emergency arrangements to deal with consequences for the population at large of accidents involving nuclear facilities or vehicles carrying nuclear materials; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Specific emergency arrangements are the responsibility of the operators together with other relevant authorities within the framework of Government guidance.

Prisoners (Statistics)

35. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women are in prison at present.

Mr. Mellor: On Friday 12 December there were 46,443 men and 1,635 women in prison service custody in England and Wales.

Child Abuse

36. **Mr. Maclean** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the action being taken by his Department to prevent child abuse and to improve the likehood of prosecutions where child abuse has taken place.

62. **Mr. Watts** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what initiatives have been taken by his Department to combat child abuse.

Mr. Hurd: A "Stranger Danger" campaign has been in operation for some years. It aims to increase the awareness of children, parents and teachers; to get across an easily understood set of simple rules for children to follow; and to alert parents and teachers to the need to ensure children know and follow these rules. The national standing conference on crime prevention agreed last month to set up a working group to review existing publicity and publications on child molestation and abuse and to make recommendations on the most appropriate messages, presentation and audience for future publicity on this subject. The group has asked to complete its work by next November.

A Home Office-led review is examining the disclosure of criminal backgrounds of those seeking to work with children. As a result new arrangements have been introduced for checks on newly recruited staff and volunteers in the education, social and probation services with substantial access to children, registered child minders and foster and adoptive parents and adults in their households. We are preparing circulars on children in long-term care in the National Health Service and on staff in independent schools. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986 ensures that all those seeking or holding positions which give access to children may be required to declare convictions which are spent under the Act, and may be excluded or dismissed on account of such convictions.

I have requested the Inspectorate of Constabulary to gather information about arrangements which police forces make in child abuse cases. On the basis of this information, and in consultation with chief officers, I will consider the need to issue a circular to the police later next year on the investigation of such offences and the treatment of victims.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 made a spouse a competent and compellable witness against a person accused of a sexual offence or an offence of violence against a boy or girl aged under 16. That Act also permits a jury to treat an unjustified refusal to provide an intimate sample as evidence corroborating, for example, the unsworn testimony of a child victim of a sexual assault. We gave full support to the Sexual Offences Act 1985, introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes), which increased the penalty for indecent assault on a woman or a girl to 10 years. If enacted, clause 21 of the Criminal Justice Bill will permit a child witness in the case of a sexual offence or offence of violence to give evidence before the Crown court via a live video link.

Those sentenced to life imprisonment for the sexual or sadistic murder of children must normally expect to remain in custody for at least 20 years; and those sentenced to more than five years for physical or sexual abuse of children will be granted parole only when release under supervision for a few months before the end of a sentence is likely to reduce the long-term risk of re-offending or in circumstances which are genuinely exceptional.

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

37. **Dr. Twinn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the first national conference of neighbourhood watch schemes.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The first national neighbourhood watch conference was held by Northumbria police and the Home Office on 8 December. Two hundred and fifty delegates, a mixture of volunteer co-ordinators and police officers from throughout the United Kingdom, met to discuss how the achievements of the neighbourhood watch movement, and the lessons learned from existing schemes, could be used to develop further schemes in communities which would welcome neighbourhood watch, but where no schemes as yet exist.

50. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the present coverage of neighbourhood watch schemes; and what plans he has to encourage their extension.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) today.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many operational neighbourhood watch schemes have been established in the Metropolitan

police area in each year since the scheme was introduced; and when the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis will publish details of research analysing the effectiveness of the schemes.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner that neighbourhood watch was introduced in the Metropolitan police district in September 1983 and, by the end of 1984, 1,282 schemes had been established. A further 2,488 schemes were established by the end of 1985 and 1,855 more schemes were established up to 31 August 1986. The Home Office has commissioned evaluation research by the Cambridge institute of criminology which will be completed in early 1987. The Commissioner tells me that an evaluation study is being carried out by the Metropolitan police management services department. This study should be completed next spring.

Unsolved Crimes

38. **Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state for each calendar year since 1978 the total number of crimes which were not cleared up.

Mr. Mellor: Numbers of notifiable offences recorded and cleared up by the police in each of the past 10 years are published in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 1985" (Cmnd. 10, tables 2.2 and 2.17). Some offences are recorded and cleared up in different years and so it is possible only to estimate the number not cleared up in any year.

Identity Cards

39. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will seek to arrange for standard identity cards for those who call at private houses on behalf of public utilities, Government or councils.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Member to a reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on 17 December.

Violent Offenders

40. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received about statutory sentence limits for violent offenders.

Mr. Mellor: We receive many letters from Members of Parliament, the public and interested organisations about sentences for violent offenders. Some of them propose the re-introduction of capital or corporal punishment for particular offences of violence; others propose mandatory sentences. In our view, existing maximum penalties are generally satisfactory.

State Security

41. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make arrangements for the early release of papers relating to the actions of the security service in the mid-1970s.

Mr. Hurd: No.

Drug Control (International Collaboration)

42. **Mr. Richard Page** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans for increasing collaboration between European Community countries at posts overseas in combating the drugs trade.

Mr. Mellor: Our posts keep closely in touch with their EC counterparts in the major drug-producing and trafficking countries. Following the recommendation of EC Ministers at their meeting on 20 October, posts in a number of countries have been asked to co-ordinate the preparation of joint assessments of their local drug situation and recommendations for further action by the twelve. As my reply to a question today to my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) indicates, work is well in hand to examine the scope for creating a co-ordinated network of EC drug liaison officers to monitor developments in producer countries.

Emergency Services

43. **Mr. Spearing** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is satisfied with the operation of the London fire and police inquiry telephone service in respect of police and fire services; and if he has been consulted in respect of changes in its operation.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I presume that the hon. Member is referring mainly to the 999 system run by the Metropolitan police, and I would refer him to a reply given on 8 December to a question from the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson). No difficulties have been brought to our attention in relation to the London fire service.

Commercial Television

44. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards competition in commercial television.

Mr. Mellor: The Government paved the way for increased competition in commercial television through the new technologies of cable and satellite broadcasting in the Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984. The Peacock committee's emphasis on the expansion of consumer choice is one we share, and we support the committee's view that there should be increased competition in the supply of broadcast programmes through substantially greater use of independent productions. We are still considering other proposals which the committee saw as paving the way for the introduction of a competitive broadcasting market, including the possibility of pay television systems.

Crown Immunity

45. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department in respect of how many premises under the control of his Department Crown immunity is claimed from prosecution in relation to food hygiene and health and safety legislation.

Mr. Hurd: Three hundred and forty-five.

Crime Prevention

46. **Mr. Lofthouse** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to reduce the incidence of robbery, burglary and theft.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We shall continue to make provision for a strong and efficient police service. We shall also continue the development of a multi-agency approach to crime prevention at national and local level, disseminating good practice to reduce the opportunities available for these crimes to occur.

Private Security Companies

48. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will facilitate the use of the services of private security companies to assist police in the maintenance of law and order.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Private security companies have an important role to play — for example, in protecting private property—but their role is not to patrol streets or other areas of public resort. The maintenance of law or order must remain the task of a properly trained and equipped police force with the support of the public as members, for example, of the special constabulary or of neighbourhood watch schemes.

Stocken Prison

52. **Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a statement on the additional expenditure over the original estimate which has taken place at Her Majesty's prison, Stocken, since its opening.

Mr. Mellor: Following the completion of the main contract for Stocken prison, further expenditure totalling £1,103,000 has been authorised. Of this, £336,000 provides the commissioning fund which is customarily established to meet the various expenses that arise in commissioning a new prison; and £430,000 has been allocated to fit out the workshops to the required specifications within the shell building provided under the main contract. The remaining £337,000 covers additional security fencing which it had similarly been agreed to undertake during the commissioning period; modifications to the gate house to bring the equipment and operating systems up to the department's current requirements, which are aimed at achieving efficiency of operation with maximum economy of staffing levels; and modifications to the sewage pumping station, including the provision of a macerator to deal with the problem of foriegn objects discharged into the sewage system.

Licensing Law Reform

55. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received on reform of the licensing laws in 1986.

Mr. Waddington: Since 1 January 1986, 704 representations have been received in support of relaxation of the present liquor licensing hours and 44 against.

Royal Prerogative of Mercy

56. **Mr. Clay** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions since 1979 he has recommended the exercise of the Royal prerogative of mercy in respect of persons convicted of criminal offences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Following is the information:

Exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy
1 January 1979 to 30 November 1986

Year	*Remission of sentence (including fines)*	*Free Pardon*	*Total*
1979	367	136	503
1980	273	282	555
1981	219	168	387
1982	229	84	313
1983	192	143	335
1984	98	60	158
1985	141	92	233
1986[1]	106	24	130
Total	1,625	989	2,614

[1] To 30 November.

Notes:

1. In most of the cases where the royal prerogative has been exercised, action was taken on grounds other than those affecting the original conviction, for example, a reward for assistance to the authorities, tragic family circumstances, terminal illness of prisoner.
2. The great majority of free pardons granted relate to road traffic convictions in the magistrates' courts.
3. Figures relate to the number of defendants in respect of whom action was taken.

Drinking Age

57. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce legislation to raise the minimum legal drinking age; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: We have no plans to do so.

Cruelty to Animals

58. **Mrs. Shields** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to seek to combat the incidence of the maltreatment of animals used as pets.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There is already a substantial body of law which provides for the welfare of pet animals. The principal legislation is the Protection of Animals Act 1911 under which it is an offence to cause (or being the owner, permit to be caused) any unnecessary suffering to any domestic or captive animal. We believe that the existing legislation provides an adequate and appropriate remedy for abuse of pet animals, however it may be caused.

Civil Defence

59. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will review the present arrangements for the provision of civil defence.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Civil defence arrangements are kept under constant review.

Prisoners (Protests)

60. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on current contingency plans for dealing with protests which involve the taking of hostages in Her Majesty's prisons.

Mr. Mellor: Contingency plans for dealing with such incidents in prison establishments in England and Wales are currently being reviewed, taking account of the experience of recent incidents.

Peremptory Jury Challenge

61. **Mr. Jessel** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received concerning the inclusion in the Criminal Justice Bill of the abolition of peremptory jury challenges.

Mr. Mellor: Fifty-eight Members of Parliament, interested bodies and members of the public have made their views on the subject known to us during the course of this year.

Radio and Television (Current Affairs Programmes)

63. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to enshrine in statutory form the ethical guidelines relating to the making of current affairs programmes on television and radio; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We do not consider that it would be appropriate or practicable for matters of this kind to be dealt with in legislation.

Offensive Weapons (Children)

64. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to ban the sale of all offensive weapons to children under 18 years of age; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Falkirk, West, (Mr. Canavan) today.

Amyl Nitrite

65. **Dame Jill Knight** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to end the manufacture and sale of amyl nitrite; and if he will make a statement.

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the extent of drug abuse on amyl nitrite, popularly known as "poppers"; and when he intends to bring amyl nitrite within the scope of existing anti-drug regulations.

Mr. Mellor: The alkyl nitrite group of chemicals, which includes amyl nitrite, was considered in 1984 by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs which concluded that there were insufficient grounds to justify recommending their control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. We have no plans at present to introduce controls over the sale and manufacture of these substances but continue to monitor the situation in consultation with the Secretaries of State for Social Services and for Trade and Industry. To this end we have recently asked chief constables to include information about "poppers" in their annual reports on drug misuse.

Shops (Violence)

30. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider the establishment of a special departmental study group into ways of combating violence in shops.

Mr. Hogg: Not at present. However, various research projects by the Home Office crime prevention unit have a bearing on the issue of violence in shops. For example, a project carried out for the Home Office by Birmingham university into crime and disorder in shopping centres, including assaults on store staff, has just begun and a report to the Home Office is due next April. A survey of crime and racially-offensive behaviour occurring in over 200 small retail stores in London is currently under way and the report, due by summer 1987, will deal with the incidence of all types of offence, the preventive measures shopkeepers now take and the scope for improving the nature and delivery of preventive advice. From a broader perspective, the work of the crime prevention unit in encouraging stores to tackle shoplifting by prevention has the potential to avoid the violence which can occur when staff attempt to stop suspects (about one in a hundred such arrests lead to violence according to the records of one major retail chain).

Departmental Initiatives (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those initiatives of his Department which have been of benefit to women, since 1979, the cost or estimated cost of those initiatives, and the proportion of the total budget of his Department this represents.

Mr. Waddington: Since 1979, the Home Office has taken or been closely concerned with the following initiatives which have been of particular benefit to women:

(i) Arrangements for the recovery of maintenance payments under parts 1 and 2 of the Maintenance Orders (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act 1972 have been extended to a further four countries and to 13 additional states of the United States of America;

(ii) Section 2 of the British Nationality Act 1981 has given women the same right as men to transmit their British citizenship to their children born abroad. The Act has also enabled women, but not men, to transmit citizenship to illegitimate children;

(iii) The Government gave full support to a Bill (now the Sexual Offences Act 1983), introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes) which increased the maximum penalties for attempted rape and for indecent assault on a woman or girl and penalised kerb-crawling;

(iv) A ministerial group on women's issues was established in May 1986 under Home Office chairmanship to consider the Government's response to the forward-looking strategies produced by the United Nations conference at the end of the Decade for Women;

(v) A circular was issued to the police on 15 October 1986 urging them to improve the way they assist women who have been the victims of violent attack;

(vi) The Criminal Justice Bill, now before this House, would extend anonymity for rape victims and would empower the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to make an additional payment to a woman who keeps a child conceived as a result of rape;

(vii) The procedures for making appointments to public bodies have recently been reviewed with

the object of making information on the appointments and the qualifications required available to women's organisations, and of ensuring that suitable women are included on short lists for appointments;

(viii) Funding has been provided for the standing conference of women's organisations from 1980 to 1986.

It is not possible to calculate the cost or estimated cost of all these initiatives.

London Fire Brigade

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether he will publish details of the current London fire brigade policy of stand-bys of fire appliances in relation to C25 Dowgate fire station, C26 Barbican, C27 Clerkenwell, C28 Islington, C21 Shoreditch, C22 Kingsland and A23 Euston;

(2) if he will provide details of the types and manufacturers of pump escape appliances, pump appliances, and pump ladder appliances, in use in the London fire brigade since 1 April 1973 and the maximum speeds attainable by each.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will indicate what action his Department intends to take in relation to the principle of round-the-clock equal cover for the London fire service, in the light of the Home Office/Scottish Home and Health Department Green Paper, "Future Fire Policy, A Consultative Document" of 1980 and the Audit Commission Paper, "Value for Money in the Fire Service" of 1 September.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The recommendation on this matter in the Audit Commission occasional paper No. 1, together with the other recommendations in the paper, are being considered by the Department. The local authority associations, as the representatives of the employers, and the fire service trade unions will also be looking closely at the recommendations.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether he intends to take steps to ensure the return of the pump appliance, based at C26 Barbican fire station of the London fire brigade until March 1979, to that station, within the 1987-88 London Fire and Civil Defence Authority establishment scheme; and if he will make a statement.

(2) whether he will grant his consent to proposals submitted to him in the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority establishment schemes for the London fire brigade for the loss of the pump appliance from C27 Clerkenwell fire station.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have received no proposals from the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority in respect of the establishment scheme for the London fire brigade for 1987-88. Such a scheme has to be submitted by 1 January 1987 and when received it will be carefully considered on its merits.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide details of the establishment of fire appliances and of all ranks of firefighters at the C26 Barbican fire station in the London fire brigade *(a)* currently and *(b)* at the date of the opening of the present station; and if he will also indicate the establishment of fire appliances and of all ranks of firefighters, and the addresses of those fire stations closed as a result of C26 Barbican being opened, immediately prior to their closure, indicating also the risk categories of those fire station grounds.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The establishment of fire appliances at C26 Barbican fire station is one pump ladder and one damage control tender. The ranks of firefighters are as follows:

	Number
Assistant Divisional Officer	1
Station Officer	4
Sub Officer	8
Leading fireman	8
Fireman	28
Total	49

The other information requested is not held centrally.

Overseas Police

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for reports from chief constables as to any visits that have taken place so far in 1986 to British police forces by members of overseas police or security forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I see no need to do so. If the hon. Member has a particular visit in mind perhaps he would write to me.

Prisoners (Life Sentences)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of *(a)* men and *(b)* women serving life sentences in prisons in the United Kingdom on 30 November.

Mr. Mellor: According to the records held centrally, which are approximate, on 31 October 1986, the latest date for which figures are readily available, about 2,180 males and 70 females in prison department establishments in England and Wales were serving life sentences, including custody for life and detention during Her Majesty's pleasure or for life under section 53 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Martial Arts Paraphernalia

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to seek to curb the sale of *(a)* six-pointed metal stars and *(b)* other martial arts paraphernalia to those who are not bona-fide enthusiasts.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The possession of an offensive weapon in a public place without reasonable excuse is an offence under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953. We have already taken steps to curb the sale of martial arts weapons to persons with no valid reason to possess them. Earlier this year, in conjunction with the Martial Arts Commission, we issued guidelines to traders urging that such items should not be sold to persons under 18 or to those who cannot produce evidence of membership of a

bona fide martial arts club. We look to traders to act responsibly and to pay close attention to the guidelines, copies of which are in the Library.

Prisoners (Smoke-free Environment)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements exist to enable prisoners to live in a smoke-free environment.

Mr. Mellor: It is open to a prisoner who prefers a smoke-free environment and who is not located in a single cell to apply to the governor to be located in one shared with a non-smoker. We would expect governors to treat such applications sympathetically, but the scope for granting such requests will vary from establishment to establishment. The prison department is preparing guidance to governors and medical officers, one purpose of which is to encourage the creation of a smoke-free environment in certain communal areas.

Immigration

Mr. Marlow asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the total level of immigration to the United Kingdom for each of the last 18 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: The numbers of persons accepted for settlement in the United Kingdom during each quarter of 1985 and the first three quarters of 1986 were published on 11 December in table 1 of "Control of Immigration: Statistics—Third Quarter 1986" (Home Office statistical bulletin 38/86).

Detained Children

Mr. Mark Carlisle asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether young persons sentenced under section 53(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and detained in detention centres or prisons throughout the period of their sentence are entitled to remission.

Mr. Mellor: No. Section 53(2) sentences do not attract remission: those detained under this power are eligible for release on licence under the terms of section 61(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 throughout their sentence.

Police Training (Radioactivity)

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many days are allocated to the training of police officers above the rank of sergeant in dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination; and what is the current amount of money allocated to the training of such officers in dealing with such accidents.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 17 December. The information requested is not available centrally.

Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to *(a)* progress with police inquiries into the break-in in October at the offices of the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, at Stamford street, London SE1 and into the theft of confidential documents from those offices and *(b)* in particular, whether the police have reached any conclusion about any positive political motivation for the break-in; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Police inquiries into this incident are continuing. I am not able to comment on the possible motives for the alleged offence.

Official Information

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a complete list of statutory provisions bearing upon the disclosure of official information, other than the Official Secrets Acts, in order to update the list of provisions published in appendix V of the Franks report.

Mr. Waddington: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Wheel-clamping (London)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria were used in awarding the tender for the operation of wheel-clamping in the Greater London area to Private Parking Protection.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the two contracts for wheel-clamping in the existing clamping zone were awarded to Bilpot Ltd and Unitrust Protection Services Ltd because their tenders provided the best value for money, taking account of the service to be provided and the cost.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number and names of companies submitting tenders for contracting out of wheel-clamping in the Greater London area.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner that tenders were invited and received from eight companies for the contracting out of wheelclamping in the existing clamping zone. These were:

A-Z Couriers
Bilpot Limited
Group 4 Securities
Metropolitan Wheelclamps
Securicor
Securiguard Group PLC
Unitrust Protection Services Limited
Thorn EMI Protech

Community Relations

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many estate-based liaison committees have been established between tenants, police and other social agencies;

(2) how many sector working parties have been established in each London borough;

(3) what is the composition of each consultative committee in the Metropolitan police area; how many times each committee meets; who provides the clerking and research support for each committee; and what is the annual budget for each consultative arrangement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police consultative

committees are currently operating within the Metropolitan police area; and in which London boroughs they are established.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis informs me that there are 38 formal police community consultative committees operating in the Metropolian police district and another will hold its first meeting in January 1987: 22 of these have been approved by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis under section 106 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. All London boroughs other than Hackney and Newham have consultative committees and 19 of these have been approved.

Community Radio

Mr. Favell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress on the introduction of community radio.

Mr. Mellor: The Green Paper on radio policy, which the Government hope to publish early next year, will consider possible legislative changes permitting the introduction of community radio.

News International, Wapping

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner as to how many Metropolitan police officers were deployed from the King's Cross road division on 15 December, to attend to duties in connection with the News International plant at Wapping, and as to how many home beat officers were on patrol in the King's Cross road division on that day.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Commissioner informs me that on 15 December no officers from the King's Cross road division were deployed on duties connected with the News International dispute at Wapping. Eleven home beat officers were on patrol in the King's Cross road division on that day.

Official Secrets Legislation (Nuclear Power Industry)

Mr. Campbell-Savours asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will review the operation of official secrets legislation with respect to the civil nuclear industry.

Mr. Goodlad: I have been asked to reply.

With my encouragement, the civil nuclear industry makes information on its activities widely available to the public. I have no plans to conduct such a review.

SCOTLAND

Labour Statistics

Mr. David Marshall asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the numbers of *(a)* adult males, *(b)* adult females, *(c)* young males and *(d)* young females who are (i) short-term unemployed and (ii) long-term unemployed in the *(w)* Baillieston, *(x)* Barrowfield, *(y)* Dalmarnock and *(z)* Wester (South) Carntyne areas of Glasgow; and what percentage of the economically active in each category this represents.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available in the precise form requested. The numbers of (i) young males and females under the age of 25 and (ii) adult males and females aged 25 and over who have been unemployed for *(a)* up to one year and *(b)* one year and over in each electoral ward in the Glasgow, Shettleston parliamentary constituency on 9 October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, were as shown in the tables. This information is available in the Library. Comparable figures of the economically active are not available.

Claimants unemployed under one year

Ward	*Aged under 25*			*Aged 25 and over*		
	Males	*Females*	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*
Baillieston	195	129	324	180	91	271
Belvidere	201	97	298	215	60	275
Carntyne	195	95	290	203	54	257
Mount Vernon	179	93	272	199	89	288
Parkhead	194	104	298	228	78	306
Shettleston	134	90	224	196	78	274
TOTAL	1,098	608	1,706	1,221	450	1,671

Claimants unemployed for one year and over

Ward	*Aged under 25*			*Aged 25 and over*		
	Males	*Females*	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*
Baillieston	68	35	103	232	53	285
Belvidere	123	61	184	566	64	630
Carntyne	113	59	172	413	75	488
Mount Vernon	80	28	108	233	41	274
Parkhead	117	40	157	389	61	450
Shettleston	70	33	103	283	74	357
TOTAL	571	256	827	2,116	368	2,484

Torness Nuclear Power Station

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the calculated figures for maximum radiation exposure of any member of the public during normal operations of Torness nuclear power station after full commissioning of both reactors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: I am advised by the South of Scotland Electricity Board that it estimates that the maximum annual radiation dose to the most exposed member of the public will be 87 microsieverts. The average annual radiation dose received by the public in the United Kingdom from all sources, natural and artificial, exceeds 2,200 microsieverts.

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment level has been used in the safety case for Torness nuclear power station in respect of the maximum radiation exposure of any member of the public during normal operations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: I am advised by the South of Scotland Electricity Board that for design purposes the assessment level of the maximum annual dose to members of the public from Torness nuclear power station is 170 microsieverts.

Local Enterprise Grant

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the bodies assisted during the past two years by the local enterprise grant for urban projects schemes and the amount of LEGUP grant obtained.

Mr. Lang: I have arranged for a list of those projects approved in principle for assistance under the local enterprise grants for urban projects scheme since 1 April 1984 to be placed in the Library. The list excludes cases where an offer of assistance was made but not subsequently taken up by the applicant.

The assistance provided by the Scottish Development Agency under the scheme can take a variety of forms and is not restricted to grant. The list shows the amount of assistance approved. The actual amount of assistance finally provided will depend on the outcome of the individual project.

EEC (Intervention Stores)

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much of the food currently held in EEC intervention food stores in Dundee has been held there *(a)* for up to six months and *(b)* for up one year.

Mr. John MacKay: 540 tonnes of butter and 425 tonnes of beef have been in store in Dundee for the last six months. The figures for the last year are 540 tonnes and 415 tonnes respectively.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a list of area health boards in rank order according to the number of patients awaiting urgent treatment.

Mr. John MacKay: Information is not available centrally which distinguishes between those waiting for urgent and non-urgent treatment.

National Health Service

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of Scottish gross domestic product was spent on the Health Service in *(a)* 1960 and *(b)* 1983.

Mr. John MacKay: The first year for which the Central Statistical Office prepared a figure for the Scottish gross domestic product was 1966. For a comparison based on that year, the information requested is as follows:

	1966 £ *million*	*1983* £ *million*
1. Gross Domestic Product (Scotland) at factor cost	2,803	21,905
2. Expenditure on Health[1]	133·27	1,686·9
3. Proportion 2/1 (percentage)	4·75	7·70

[1] The expenditure figures used may not be strictly comparable because of changes in classification of expenditure.

Health and Social Work (Expenditure)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* a breakdown by programme and region of the planned expenditure figures for health and social work he announced on 9 December, *Official Report*, columns 184-86 in his statement to the House.

Mr. John MacKay: The breakdown of planned provision for health and social work announced by my right hon. and learned Friend by programme is as follows:

	Health £ *million*	*Social Work* £ *million*
1986-87		
Cmnd 9702-II Provision	2,080	363
Estimated Outturn	2,086	378
1987-88		
Cmnd 9702-II Provision	2,170	360
Revised Provision	2,216	389
1988-89		
Cmnd 9702-II Provision	2,260	360
Revised Provision	2,310	400
1989-90		
Provision	2,410	410

The figures for 1988-89 and 1989-90 have been rounded to the nearest £10 million.

The allocations to be made to health boards for current and capital expenditure on hospital and community health services in 1987-88 will be announced in due course. It is not possible to anticipate accurately expenditure in the forward years by health board area on the demand-led family practitioner services.

The greater part of the social work programme is local authority current expenditure. Local authorities do not receive specific allocations for current expenditure on individual programmes. Within their overall current expenditure guidelines local authorities are free to determine their own priorities. It is not possible therefore to break down the provision by region. Allocations to local authorities for social work capital expenditure in 1987-88 (and provisional allocations for later years) will be announced in February.

Radioactive Discharges

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will describe how the authorisation presently in force for discharges of radioactive waste at each licensed nuclear site is related to target levels or assessment levels of exposure for members of the public; whether in each case the maximum exposure calculated for any member of the public at 100 per cent. of authorised discharges is within the latest target level or assessment level applicable to a new nuclear installation; when each authorisation is next due to be reviewed; what target level or assessment level is expected to be introduced at the next review in respect of the maximum exposure of any member of the public during normal operations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: The procedure for deciding nuclear site authorisations, and for relating the effects of discharges to the internationally recommended dose limits, are described in Scottish Development Department "Statistical Bulletins" No. 4/1984 and No. 1/1986 which are available in the Library.

Annual levels of exposure arising from waste disposals from Scottish nuclear installations have remained well within the limits set by the International Commission on Radiological Protection and would have done so had discharges been up to the maximum permitted levels. However, the Government have accepted the most recent recommendations of the commission, and all Scottish nuclear site authorisations are being reviewed to establish what changes, if any, are required on this account. The review should be completed by 1988.

Eventide Homes

Mr. Martin asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the provision of eventide homes in the east end of Glasgow.

Mr. John MacKay: Regional and Islands Councils have a statutory responsibility to provide, or arrange for the provision of, residential and other accommodation required for their social work functions. The level of service to be provided in particular localities is for decision by the local authority concerned in accordance with its perception of needs and the availability of other relevant services in the area in question.

Certificate of Education

Mr. George Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many appeals against gradings in the 1986 Scottish certificate of education were received by the Scottish Examination Board; and, of them, how many were for *(a)* H-grade and *(b)* O-grade;

(2) how many appeals for regrading in the 1986 Scottish certificate of education were successful; how many for each of H-grade and O-grade led to upgrading; and if he will give comparable figures for 1985 and 1984.

Mr. John MacKay: The figures requested for 1986 are as follows. These include for the first time appeals submitted in respect of standard grade and the certificate of sixth year studies.

	Number of appeals	*Successful appeals*
Scottish certificate of education ordinary grade	25,990	8,742
Scottish certificate of education standard grade	[1]214	148
Scottish certificate of education higher grade	16,463	4,332
Certificate of sixth year studies	370	85
TOTAL	43,037	13,307

[1] The figures for standard grade do not include awards upgraded because of late submission of internal assessment.

The statistics for appeals in 1984 and 1985 are published in the board's annual reports, which are available in the House of Commons Library, but the figures are not directly comparable. This is because in those years the appeal arrangements were more limited. Appeals were not possible for CSYS and in 1984 were confined to candidates receiving band D at ordinary grade or less than band C at higher. In 1985 schools were invited to appeal on behalf of candidates for regrading to bands A, B, or C at either higher or ordinary grade, provided the head teacher concerned certified that significant disruption had taken place in the school as a result of the teachers' action and that the candidates' results had been adversely affected. In 1986 for the first time schools were given an unqualified right to appeal on behalf of candidates for regrading to bands A, B, C or D at higher, grades 1, 2 or 3 at ordinary grade, bands A, B, or C at CSYS, and at standard grade for upgrading of a full award to grade 1, 2 or 3 or for the conversion of a partial to a full award. Appeals continue to be assessed solely on the basis of the evidence of attainment available to the examiners.

Scottish Amateur Music Association

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the withdrawal of the Scottish Education Department grant to the Scottish Amateur Music Association.

Mr. Rifkind: The association's grant was reduced in 1984-85 and withdrawn the following year as part of a policy of phasing out small recurrent grants. I understand that an application for grant in 1987-88 is to be submitted. It will be given consideration together with applications from other voluntary organisations.

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received about the withdrawal of the Scottish Education Department grant from the Scottish Amateur Music Association.

Mr. Rifkind: To date representations have been received from the hon. secretary of the association and from 14 hon. Members to whom Mr. Catto, the hon. secretary, has written.

AIDS

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what extra resources are being made available to Scottish health boards to provide counselling facilities to those who are found to be HIV positive.

Mr. John MacKay: The question whether additional resources should be allocated to health boards in respect

of services for patients who are HIV positive will be considered in the light of the recommendations of the national working party which my right hon. and learned Friend has set up to advise on the most appropriate and cost-effective method of organising services for such patients in Scotland.

Scottish Health Education Group

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has proposals to reconstitute the Scottish Health Education Group as a special health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: No. The Scottish Health Education Group, as a division of the common services agency of the Scottish Health Service, is already part of a health authority in Scotland; and I have no plans to change the present arrangements.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many of his Department's staff, and of which grades, are involved in all aspects of the proposal for establishing city technology colleges.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has established a small unit within the Department as the focal point for work on city technology colleges. This has a complement of two posts at grade 5, one at grade 7, one administration trainee and two personal secretaries.

Ealing College of Higher Education

Sir George Young asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he plans to designate Ealing college of higher education as a polytechnic.

Mr. Walden: Following the decision of the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education (NAB) to defer offering advice about further polytechnic designations, my right hon. Friend contemplates no immediate announcement.

Schools (Staffing Levels)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidelines are issued by his Department on staffing levels and the provision of facilities for primary schools with a roll of 200 children; and what information he has as to the extent to which voluntary-aided schools are resourced to this level.

Mr. Dunn: Specific guidance on these matters is not issued, but the Department discusses with the local authority associations the assumptions and policies underlying the Government's expenditure plans. It is for local authorities to decide, in the light of local circumstances, on the resourcing of individual county and voluntary aided schools.

Primary Schools (Repairs)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of his Department's budget is available for repairs to voluntary-aided primary schools in the current fiscal year; and what were the comparable figures in each of the past five years.

Mr. Dunn: Provision is not made separately for grant-aiding repair work at voluntary aided primary schools. The table shows planned provision for the current year and the outturn for the past four years (comparable figures for 1981-82 are not available) for grant payments on repair work at all aided and special agreement schools in England.

	DES vote[1] expenditure	*Provision for repairs at aided schools*	*Repair provision as percentage of vote*
1986-87[2]	2,469	23·0	0·93
1985-86	[3]2,383	[4]22·6	0·95
1984-85[4]	2,259	20·1	0·89
1983-84[4]	2,173	17·7	0·81
1982-83[4]	2,070	15·5	0·75

Notes:

[1]Total Government expenditure voted in estimates which is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science as shown in the 1986 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 9702).

[2]Planned provision.

[3]Estimated outturn.

[4]Actual outturn.

Examination Statistics

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will detail the percentage of pupils gaining *(a)* five or more O level passes grades A to C, grade 1 CSE and *(b)* two or more A levels in (i) comprehensive, (ii) grammar, (iii) secondary modern and (iv) independent schools in 1956, 1966, 1976 and 1986 respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: Statistics for 1960-61, 1965-66, 1975-76 and 1984-85 are as follows. Data prior to 1960-61 are not available on a consistent basis and 1985-86 figures are not yet available.

School leavers, England[1]

Academic year and type of school	*Percentage of leavers with 5 or more higher[2] [3] grade passes at GCE O-level or CSE*	*2 or more A-level passes*
1960-61		
Comprehensive[4]	10·9	2·3
Grammar	53·2	23·6
Secondary modern and all age	0·6	—
Independent	61·0	30·5
All schools	15·3	6·5
1965-66		
Comprehensive	11·6	5·4
Grammar	63·7	35·4
Secondary modern and all age	2·0	0·1
Independent	68·2	40·7
All schools	20·8	10·9
1975-76		
Comprehensive	17·5	8·8
Grammar	69·7	44·6
Secondary modern	5·4	0·5
Independent	73·3	53·8
All schools	22·9	12·8
1984-85		
Comprehensive	22·7	10·5
Grammar	78·0	47·9
Secondary modern	9·6	1·1
Independent	75·8	58·8
All schools	26·9	14·1

[1] England and Wales for 1960-61 and 1965-66.

[2] O-level only for 1960-61 and 1965-66.

[3] For 1975-76 and 1984-85 O-level grades A-C, CSE grade 1. For 1960-61 and 1965-66, O-level pass.
[4] Includes technical, bilateral, multilateral and comprehensive schools and secondary schools which were not separately classified.

Liverpool University

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has discussed with the vice-chancellor of the Liverpool university the discontent of students and ancillary staff at the university, details of which have been sent by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Riverside.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: No. Employment matters of this kind are the proper responsibility of individual universities, not of the Government. I understand that the vice-chancellor has written to the hon. Member.

Mr. Parry asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on his recent visit to the University of Liverpool.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My visit was interesting and useful. I formally switched on the university's combined heat and power system, inaugurated the scanning Auger microscope in the electron microscope unit and had informal but informative discu sions with the vice-chancellor and other senior academics.

Higher Education

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to the latest percentage of 18-year-olds entering full-time higher education in Leyton.

Mr. Walden: The information is not available in the form requested. In 1984-85, 163 students per thousand of the average of the 18 and 19-year-old population in the London borough of Waltham Forest received a new mandatory or full-value discretionary award.

University of Wales (Welsh Language)

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what funds have been made available to the University of Wales board for Welsh medium teaching by the University Grants Committee in each year since its establishment.

Mr. Walden: Provision for Welsh medium teaching has been made to the University of Wales through the registry, which supports the board for Welsh medium teaching, and to University College of Wales, Aberystwyth and University College of North Wales, Bangor. The University Grants Committee does not as a general rule identify to institutions on its grant list the elements which comprise the block grant.

Down's Syndrome

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what training is recommended by his Department for teachers of pupils suffering from Down's syndrome.

Mr. Dunn: All teachers in maintained schools must have qualified status, but except in the case of teachers of deaf, partially hearing or blind pupils, no further qualifications are required. A number of courses are available leading to specialist qualifications in special education. However, it is for local education authorities to decide whether to recruit particular individuals as teachers of children with special educational needs, and what qualifications to require.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidance his Department gives to education authorities regarding provisions to be made for the education of pupils with Down's syndrome.

Mr. Dunn: Advice to assist local education authorities in revising and reviewing their procedures in the light of the Education Act 1981 in order to secure that adequate provision is made for all children with special educational needs was contained in the Department's circular 1/83 issued jointly with the DHSS on 31 January 1983. The circular should be read with DES circular 8/81 which explains the provisions of the Act. I am sending the hon. Member copies of both these documents. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland is responsible for special education provided by education authorities in Scotland.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many Down's syndrome children are being educated in ordinary nursery, primary and secondary schools; and what proportion that number is of all school age children who suffer from Down's syndrome;

(2) how many education authorities teach Down's syndrome children in special schools.

Mr. Dunn: This information is not collected by my Department. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland is responsible for special education provided by education authorities in Scotland.

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the extent to which the aims of the Education Act 1981 relating to education for Down's syndrome children are being met.

Mr. Dunn: The statistical returns submitted to my Department by schools and local education authorities have never recorded separately the number of Down's syndrome children or the details of the educational arrangements made for them. Accordingly no assessment can be made of the extent to which the aims of the Education Act 1981 are being met for children with this particular disability.

AIDS

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to increase the resources available for AIDS research.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The Government have had urgent discussions with the Medical Research Council on immediate and longer-term aspects of research into Aids. The MRC requested an increase in its grant-in-aid of £1 million a year for work that can be put in hand straightaway, and we have agreed. This money will enable a range of projects to go ahead, including a new laboratory at the National Institute for Medical Research; various epidemiological studies; and research into vaccines and chemotherapy. The Government will be considering further with the MRC and others how the overall research

effort against AIDS in this country can best be carried forward and co-ordinated, and related to that going on in other countries.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Departmental Initiatives (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those initiatives of his Department which have been of benefit to women, since 1979, the cost or estimated cost of these initiatives and the proportion of the total budget of his Department this represents.

Mr. MacGregor: My right hon. Friend published on Budget day this year a Green Paper on the "Reform of Personal Taxation", which includes proposals to enable married women to have privacy and independence in their tax affairs. One of the Government's first tax measures was to exempt war widows' pension from tax: this will cost an estimted £20 million in 1986-87. We have also introduced the widows' bereavement allowance which helps a newly bereaved widow by giving her the equivalent of the married man's allowance for the tax year in which her husband died and for the following tax year. The cost of this measure in 1986-87 is estimated at £30 million.

Changes to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme are under discussion, to provide the same benefits to the spouses and children of women civil servants as are given to men. Benefit expenditure is a charge on the civil superannuation vote; the accruing liability would require an additional employer contribution of £12 million annually, equivalent to about 1 per cent. of the Vote.

With regard to its own staff, the Treasury has nominated an equal opportunities officer, and personnel policies and procedures have been reviewed and are being monitored to ensure that they do not discriminate against women. In addition, a number of initiatives to help women combine a career with domestic commitments have been undertaken. These include increasing the opportunities for part-time work, improving the arrangements for taking career breaks, and making non-residential management training available to those with domestic commitments. All staff have been sent a booklet publicising these arrangements. The cost of the initiatives cannot be separated from the total cost of personnel management.

Profit Sharing

Mr. Steel asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the total number of participants, including employees and employers, in profit sharing schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lawson: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer given on 15 December, at column 425.

Wholesale Finance Markets

Mr. Maples asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he proposes to publish a consultative document on the wholesale financial markets.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Treasury and the Bank of England are today publishing a consultative document, entitled "The future regulation of the wholesale markets in sterling, foreign exchange and bullion". This was foreshadowed in my answer to a question by the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) on 7 May 1986, at columns 133-34. Copies of the consultative document are available from the Bank and the Treasury, and are being distributed by the Bank to interested parties in these markets. Comments are invited by the end of February 1987. I am also placing copies in the Library.

Personal Taxation

Mr. Wrigglesworth asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the research report produced for the Government by Professor C. V. Brown of Stirling University on the incentive effects of tax cuts.

Mr. Norman Lamont: 22 technical working papers have already been published. The Treasury has no plans to publish the final report itself, but Professor Brown will be free to publish his results if he wishes.

Domestic Leasehold Rental Payments (Taxation)

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of revenue to be received in 1986-87 from tax on domestic leasehold rental payments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Syria

Mr. Adley asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has of the costs incurred by nationalised industries, directly as a result of the severing of diplomatic relations with Syria.

Mr. MacGregor: Estimates of costs incurred by the nationalised industries as a direct result of the severing of diplomatic relations with Syria cannot be given for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Film Production

Mr. Dormand asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will urgently review the fiscal arrangements in the United Kingdom for film production; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the amount of rebate due to the United Kingdom which fell to be deducted at source from value added tax contributions in the current calendar year in consequence of the Fontainebleu agreement; what estimate he has made of the corrected final rebate which will fall to be payable by direct payments from the EEC; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: Our abatement in the 1986 Community budget is 1,900 mecu (£1,250 million). We have deducted accordingly over £100 million per month from our VAT contributions to the Community. The 1,900 mecu figure has been increased from 1,400 mecu (£920 million), the figure in the original 1986 draft budget. We do not expect a further significant correction.

Mr. Robert Sheldon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the increase in

revenue for 1986-87 and 1987-88 arising from the introduction of new penalties for late value added tax returns.

Mr. Lawson [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1986, c. *488*]: When these changes were announced in 1985 it was expected that the introduction of default surcharge would result in an improved revenue flow of £60 million in 1986-87 and £350 million in 1987-88. However, receipts of value added tax have so far this year been running above expecttions. Although it is too early to assess the reasons with confidence, it is possible that this is due in part to greater than forecast effects on revenue flow of the introduction of surcharge.

Unitary Tax

Mr. Grylls asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a further statement on unitary tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The following statement is being issued today by Her Majesty's Government:

On 5 September 1986 the British Government issued a statement welcoming the passage of legislation in California to limit the use of worldwide unitary taxation. At the same time it expressed reservations about some aspects of the legislation and restated its objective of achieving a comprehensive solution to the problem.

Since then the Government has discussed developments in California with senior Parliamentarians and representatives of British industry. And the United States Administration, in testimony to Congress, has stated that, while a final resolution to the unitary tax problem has not yet been achieved, such significant progress has been made that federal legislation, or a solution by amendment of the United States-United Kingdom Double Taxation Treaty, would not be appropriate at this stage.

The British Government shares the concerns of the United States authorities that, under the Californian legislation, a foreign company should have to pay a substantial election fee in order not to be taxed by the state on its foreign income; and, further, that in three states worldwide unitary taxation remains on the Statute Book. Over the coming months it will continue to work with British business interests for improvements in the Californian legislation, for acceptable arrangements for administering the new law and for legislative change in the remaining unitary states.

The British Government welcomes the support which the Federal Administration is giving (for example, through the filing of *amicus curiae* briefs) to companies presently involved in unitary tax court cases brought against the Californian tax authorities. It will itself continue to support such litigation.

In recognition of the progress which has been made in the last year towards resolving the unitary tax issue, the British Government is not proposing to take action under Section 54 of the Finance Act 1985 for the present. Equally, however, in view of the further progress that is necessary, it does not intend to recommend to Parliament that Section 54 should be repealed. Both the British Government and the United States Administration will continue to keep developments under careful review.

European Community (Duty-free Sales)

Mr. McCrindle asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with fellow European Community Ministers about the continuation of duty-free sales within member states; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1986, c. *488*]: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) on 15 December, at column 421, which gave an account of the meeting at the Economic and Finance Council in Brussels on Monday 8 December at which this subject was discussed.

Cigarettes

Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax in total, including specific tax, ad valorem tax and value added tax, in pence per packet of 20 cigarettes is levied on *(a)* a packet of United Kingdom manufactured king size cigarettes retailing at £1·50 and *(b)* a packet of imported Virginia king size cigarettes retailing at £1·21.

Mr. Peter Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1986]. The information is as follows:

	Total tax *p*
United Kingdom king size cigarettes	112·3
Imported Virginia king size cigarettes	102·4

ENVIRONMENT

Urban Regeneration Grants

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his planned annual expenditure on urban regeneration grants.

Mr. John Patten: Urban regeneration grant will be paid under the authority of part III of the Housing and Planning Act 1986 towards the cost of regeneration programmes carried out by the private sector. The explanatory and financial memorandum to the Housing and Planning Bill estimated that there would in 1987-88 be voted expenditure under part III by the Department of the Environment in the range £10 million to £20 million. The level of expenditure in later years will depend upon the success of the initial programmes and the public expenditure provision that can be made.

County and District Councils

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the names of those district councils which have not yet commenced parish reviews; and what action he intends to take.

Mr. Chope: The duty of councils under section 48(8) of the Local Government Act 1972 to keep the parish arrangements in their districts under review does not extend to an obligation to carry out parish reviews under section 60. My right hon. Friend would not normally seek to question the exercise of their discretion in this. They are not required to notify him when they commence a review, and I am therefore unable to provide the list requested.

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of electors per councillor in county and district councils in England and Wales.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have been asked to reply.

The table gives for each county in England and Wales, the number of electors per county councillor and the number of electors per district councillor, based on the number of local government electors on the 1986 electoral registers as shown in "Electoral Statistics — Local Government 1986" (OPCS Monitor EL 86/1).

Number of electors [1] on the 1986 electoral registers per county and district councillor in each county of England and Wales

County	Number of Electors per county Councillor	Number of Electors per District Councillor
	England	
Avon	9,588	2,235
Bedfordshire	5,227	1,843
Berkshire	7,120	1,926
Buckinghamshire	6,366	1,772
Cambridgeshire	6,030	1,688
Cheshire	10,214	1,663
Cleveland	5,500	1,970
Cornwall	[2]4,411	[2]1,410
Cumbria	4,571	1,336
Derbyshire	8,510	1,823
Devon	8,940	1,711
Dorset	6,570	1,692
Durham	6,513	1,303
East Sussex	7,843	1,887
Essex	11,918	1,794
Gloucestershire	6,327	1,527
Greater London	—	[3]2,687
Greater Manchester	—	3,067
Hampshire	11,367	2,002
Hereford & Worcester	6,613	1,453
Hertfordshire	9,700	1,620
Humberside	8,793	1,695
Isle of Wight	2,294	1,644
Kent	11,580	1,633
Lancashire	10,735	1,501
Leicestershire	7,782	2,005
Lincolnshire	5,711	1,456
Merseyside	—	3,205
Norfolk	6,673	1,597
Northamptonshire	6,142	1,606
Northumberland	3,548	1,014
North Yorkshire	5,577	1,976
Nottinghamshire	8,783	1,942
Oxfordshire	5,880	1,627
Shropshire	4,489	1,255
Somerset	6,076	1,487
South Yorkshire	—	3,578
Staffordshire	9,593	1,736
Suffolk	5,777	1,530
Surrey	10,460	1,636
Tyne & Wear	—	2,647
Warwickshire	5,969	1,630
West Midlands	—	4,139
West Sussex	7,712	1,789
West Yorkshire	—	4,135
Wiltshire	5,472	1,661
England	7,463	2,038
	Wales	
Clwyd	4,688	1,351
Dyfed	3,275	1,202
Gwent	4,301	1,568
Gwynedd	2,768	942
Mid Glamorgan	4,764	1,576
Powys	1,675	668
South Glamorgan	4,671	2,609
West Glamorgan	4,093	1,936
Wales	3,856	1,436
England and Wales	6,897	1,991

[1] Includes attainers, service voters, voluntary patients and peers
[2] Excludes the Isles of Scilly
[3] Excludes the City of London

Voluntary Housing Sector

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to review the Housing Act 1974, with particular regard to the funding of the voluntary housing sector; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We have no such plans at present.

Public Safety (Exhibition)

Mr. Squire asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to public safety to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Chope: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 6 to 10 April 1987.

Bed-and-Breakfast Accommodation

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of people in each of the London boroughs who were on 30 November living in hotel bed-and-breakfast accommodation.

Mr. Tracey: The table gives the number of households living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation at the end of June, the latest date for which information is available.

HOMELESSNESS

Number of households living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation at the end of June 1986

	Number
Inner London	
City	0
Camden	n/d
Hackney	450
Hammersmith	n/d
Haringey	307
Islington	80
Kensington	37
Lambeth	n/d
Lewisham	n/d
Newham	n/d
Southwark	133
Tower Hamlets	n/d
Wandworth	185
Westminster	331
Outer London	
Barking	n/d
Barnet	3
Bexley	n/d
Brent	689
Bromley	0
Croydon	0
Ealing	117
Enfield	50
Greenwich	0
Harrow	42
Havering	0
Hillingdon	169
Hounslow	55
Kingston	85
Merton	4
Redbridge	0
Richmond	20
Sutton	30
Waltham Forest	n/d

n/d = No data yet supplied by borough.

Secondary Mortgage Market

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has yet received the working group's first report on the examination of the secondary mortgage market; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Thurrock on 8 December, at column 29.

Conservation

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is now able to list the areas referred to in his answer of 25 July, *Official Report*, column 555-56, under the Ramsar convention on the EEC directive in the conservation of wild birds.

Mr. Waldegrave: Loch Eye and Loch Skene have been listed under both the EEC directive and the Ramsar convention. Priest Island has been listed under the directive. No decisions have yet been reached on the remaining sites.

Mr. Hardy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) which areas have been listed to date as special protection areas under the EEC Directive 79/409 in England, Scotland and Wales, respectively; and which southern areas have been identified by the Nature Conservancy Council as meeting the criteria for listing under that directive;

(2) which areas have been listed to date under the Ramsar convention in England, Scotland and Wales, respectively, and in respect of each country; and which further areas have been identified by the Nature Conservancy Council as meeting the criteria for listing under that convention.

Mr. Waldegrave: The following areas have been designated under the EC directive on wild birds and the Ramsar convention:

		Type
Scotland		
Loch Druidibeg, a Machair	Western Isles	R/SPA
Lock Leven	Tayside	R
Rhum	Highland	SPA
Lock Lomond	Strathclyde and Central	R
Loch Eye	Highland	R/SPA
Cairngorm Lochs	Grampian and Highland	R
Loch of Skene	Grampian	R/SPA
Claish Moss	Highland	R
Priest Island	Highland (Summer Isles)	SPA
Loch Lintrathen	Tayside	R
Silver Flowe	Dumfries and Galloway	R
Rannoch More	Tayside	R
England		
Bridgewater Bay	Somerset	R
Bure Marshes	Norfolk	R
Hickling Broad and Horsey Mere	Norfolk	R
Lindisfarne	Northumberland	R
Minsmere—Walberswick	Suffolk	R
North Norfolk Coast	Norfolk	R
Ouse Washes	Cambridgeshire and Norfolk	R
Abberton Reservoir	Essex	R
Rostherne Mere	Cheshire	R
Chesil Beach and The Fleet	Dorset	R/SPA
The Dee Estuary	Merseyside, Cheshire	R/SPA
Derwent Ings	North Yorkshire and Humberside	R/SPA
Holburn Moss	Northumberland	R/SPA
Irthinghead Mires	Cumbria and Northumberland	R
The Swale	Kent	R/SPA
Alt Estuary	Merseyside	R/SPA
Leighton Moss	Lancashire	R/SPA
Martin Mere	Lancashire	R/SPA
Rockcliffe Marshes	Cumbria	R/SPA
Farne Islands	Northumberland	SPA
Coquet Island	Northumberland	SPA
Chew Valley Lake	Avon	SPA
Ribble Estuary	Lancashire	SPA
Orfordness—Havergate	Suffolk	SPA
Moor House	Cumbria	SPA
Wales		
Skomer	Dyfed	SPA
Grassholm	Dyfed	SPA
The Dee	Clywd	R/SPA
Cors Fochno and Fyfi	Dyfed, Cwyneed and Powys	R

Note:
R = Ramsar.
SPA = Birds Directive.

In addition, Lough Neagh and Lough Beg in Northern Ireland has been designated as a Ramsar site.

Details of the sites which in the opinion of the Nature Conservancy Council would be suitable for consideration as special protection areas or Ramsar sites were given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkins) on 18 July 1985 at columns 241-42.

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will name those of the British wetlands

identified at the Groningen conference in 1984 of the Ramsar convention as eligible for listing under the convention which have so far been listed; and when he expects designation of the remaining wetlands to be completed.

Mr. Waldegrave: The United Kingdom has so far designated the following sites under the Ramsar convention:

Bridgwater Bay
Bure Marshes
Cors Fochno and Dyfi
Hickling Broad and Horsey Mere
Lindisfarne
Loch Druidibeg, loch a 'Machair and Loch Stilligary
Loch Leven
Loch Lomond
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg
Minsmere—Walberswick
North Norfolk Coast
Ouse Washes
Rannock Moor
Abberton Reservoir
Cairngorm Lochs
Claish Moss
Loch Lintrathen
Rostherne Mere
Silver Flowe
Chesil Beach and the Fleet
The Dee Estuary
Derwent Ings
Holburn Moss
Irthinghead Mires
The Swale
Alt Estuary
Leighton Moss
Martin Mere
Loch Eye
Loch Skene
Rochliffe Marshes

Sites to be considered for designation must first be notified as sites of special scientific interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. We consider such sites on their merits as and when they are recommended by the Nature Conservancy Council.

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made with the designation of the Severn Estuary as a special protection area under article 4(2) of EEC directive 79/409 on the conservation of wild birds; and when he expects the designation to be completed.

Mr. Waldegrave: The first requirement for designation as a special protection area is that the area should have been notified as a site (or sites) of special scientific interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The Nature Conservancy Council has not yet completed all the necessary preparation work for notification under the Act. Any subsequent proposal for designation as a special protection area will be considered on its merits.

Reema Conclad Houses

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is now in a position to decide whether Reema Conclad houses are to be designated as defective under the housing defects legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The Secretary of State has no plans to designate Reema Conclad houses under the housing defects legislation.

Severn Barrage

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include researches into water quality in the Severn Estuary;

(2) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include researches into primary production, zooplankton and benthos in the Severn Estuary;

(3) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include research into wildfowl and waders in the Severn Estuary;

(4) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include researches into migratory fish in the Severn Estuary;

(5) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include researches into saltmarshes adjacent to the Severn Estuary;

(6) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include studies of the potential impact of the construction and operation of the barrage on the existing moulting ground for shelduck, Tadorna tadorna, in the Severn Estuary and its surroundings;

(7) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include studies of the potential impact of the contruction and operation of the barrage on the winter population of European white-fronted geese, Anser albifrons, in the Severn Estuary and its surroundings;

(8) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include studies of the potential impact of the construction and operation of the barrage on the population of dunlin, calidris alpina, in the Severn Estuary and its surroundings;

(9) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include studies of the potential impact of the construction and operation of the barrage on the population of redshank, Tringa totanus, in the Severn Estuary and its surroundings;

(10) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include studies of the potential impact of the construction and operation of the barrage on the population of curlew, Numenius arqueta, in the Severn Estuary and its surroundings;

(11) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include studies of the potential impact of the construction and operation of the barrage on the population of grey plover, Pluvialis squatrola, in the Severn Estuary and its surroundings;

(12) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include studies of the potential impact of the construction and operation of the barrage on the population of ringed plover, Charadrius hiaticula, in the Severn Estuary and its surroundings;

(13) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include researches into wetlands adjacent to the Severn Estuary.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer on 24 November 1986, at column 42. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy informed my hon. Friend on 10 December that the work programme and proposed procedures for consultation in the Severn Estuary studies will be widely circulated for comment and copies will be placed in the Library of both Houses. I will ensure my right hon. Friend is aware of the subjects my hon. Friend mentions.

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage should include consultations with the Environmental Department of the European Economic Community;

(2) if he will make it his policy that the Severn Estuary studies to be carried out into the proposed Severn barrage will include consultations with the parties to Ramsar.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the implications of the Severn barrage for nature conservation and the environment are adequately taken into consideration.

Mr. Stern asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if his Department will commission individual and specific environmental impact assessments on the sites of national importance for nature conservation which may be adversely affected by the construction and operation of the proposed Severn barrage;

(2) what provision he is making to compensate or assist the workers and managers of the nature reserves and wildfowling preserves in or near the Severn Estuary in the event that they are adversely affected by the construction of the proposed Severn barrage.

Mr. Waldegrave: It is too early to say whether any site-specific environmental impact assessments will be commissioned as part of the Severn barrage studies, and it is premature to consider any question of compensation.

Southwark

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has received any representations concerning the time take by Southwark council to carry out searches and inquiries of the local land register for the sale of property; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: I have received representations from my hon. Friend on this subject. I wrote to him on 8 December.

West Yorkshire Residuary Body

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make a statement on how many individual units of property and land at the present time held by the West Yorkshire Residury Body, have been empty and not fully occupied since the abolition of West Yorkshire metropolitan county council; and what is the estimated loss of revenue returns from such properties not being occupied;

(2) if he will make a statement on the percentage increase of rented properties held by the West Yorkshire Residuary Body, as a proportion of property within the Wakefield metropolitan district council area;

(3) if he will make a statement on the total receipts received from the disposal and sale of property and land by the West Yorkshire Residuary Body since its inception to the present date.

Mr. Chope: I have no information on these matters. They are issues for the residuary body.

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on how many individual units of property and land have been transferred to the Wakefield metropolitan district council by the West Yorkshire Residuary Body with his approval under section 67 of the Local Government Act 1985.

Mr. Chope: To date, no section 67 order has been made under the Local Governement Act 1985 relating to the West Yorkshire area.

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the dates of meetings and discussions that took place between his Department and the chairman and officials of the West Yorkshire Residuary Body regarding the future use of County Hall, Wakefield; and when it was decided not to implement section 67 of the Local Government Act 1985, in relation to the possible sale of County Hall to the private sector.

Mr. Chope: I met the chairman and officers of the WYRB on 6 October 1986. I also took the opportunity of looking round County Hall when I was in Wakefield on 23 October. There have been a number of meetings between my officials and officers of the WYRB. I understand that County Hall is now being marketed by the residuary body for the benefit of all the ratepayers of West Yorkshire; they have not therefore applied for an order under section 67 of the Local Government Act 1985.

West Sussex Structure Plan

Mr. Soames asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publish his observations on the West Sussex county council structure plan.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend hopes to publish his proposed modifications to the alteration to the plan shortly.

Football Supporters

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what recent representations he has received concerning the possible introduction of a supporter's recognition card by the Football League;

(2) if he will report on any recent meetings with representatives of the Football League concerning the possible adoption of a standard membership or identification card.

Mr. Tracey: I met the Football League together with the Football Association on 9 October. At that meeting I asked the league to develop proposals, within six weeks, for the wider adoption of membership schemes at league clubs. Its report was submitted on 18 November and is being studied by the Department of the Environment and the Home Office. During the same period we have received 40 representations from members of the public, commercial organisations, football clubs, supporters' clubs and hon. Members about the introduction of membership schemes.

A series of meetings are planned during the next few weeks between Government Departments and interested bodies and I plan to meet football authorities to discuss this issue early in the new year.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many metropolitan district authorities have applied in the abolished metropolitan county council areas for the former county headquarters and county hall to be transferred to them; and how many such requests have been granted.

Mr. Chope: One metropolitan district council has applied for the freehold of the former county headquarters to be transferred to it at nil cost. The residuary body for the area concerned will be marketing the building in both the public and private sectors.

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many chairmen of residuary bodies for the abolished metropolitan county councils hold other official positions on other Government bodies; what are their respective salaries or emoluments; and if he will identify their positions on such bodies.

Mr. Chope: Mr. T. McDonald, OBE, currently receives £16,544 per annum as chairman of the West Yorkshire Residuary Body. He is also chairman of the Yorkshire and Humberside and East Midlands Regional Industrial Development Board. This is an unpaid position. Mr. J. P. B. Hadfield, JP, currently receives £18,198 per annum as chairman of the Greater Manchester Residuary Body. He has accepted an invitation from my right hon. Friend to serve as chairman of the Trafford Park Development Corporation, which, subject to approval of both Houses, is to be established shortly. The terms of his appointment, including remuneration, have not yet been finalised.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies are currently being undertaken by his Department in connection with the reorganisation of local government.

Dr. Boyson: No special studies are being undertaken but proposals under part IV of the Local Government Act 1972 from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England are regularly considered. We also take note of reports and studies sent in by a variety of organisations.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any proposals to establish further non-departmental public bodies in London to assume functions currently undertaken by local government; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has no such proposals at present.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to be able to lay before the House the information provided under section 56 of the Local Government Act 1985 about the effect on abolition of the Greater London council and metropolitan county councils on local authority manpower; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: The information to which the hon. Member refers has today been laid in the Library of the House.

I am very pleased to see that the manpower savings which were expected to flow from the removal of this unnecessary and expensive tier of local government have been achieved. Information provided to the "Joint Manpower Watch" and the returns from London boroughs and metropolitan districts indicates that the equivalent of 8,100 fewer full-time staff were employed by local authorities in June 1986 than in June 1985 as a direct result of abolition.

After taking into account those staff which transferred to other public bodies at abolition, it is clear that the Government's forecast of 7,000 posts to be saved, which was made as long ago as November 1984, have been fully realised. This will bring a continuing annual saving to ratepayers of approximately £100 million, with further significant savings to come as the residuary bodies wind down their activities.

In the first year following abolition the one-off cost of payments to staff made redundant at abolition will reduce these savings by an estimated £60 million. This also includes the cost in 1986-87 of detriment payments to compensate staff for loss of earnings on transfer to successor authorities; these will continue — albeit at a much lower level — for seven years. The estimated number of claims for redundancy is 6,310. The great majority of these staff have left local government willingly, generally by taking early retirement; and in some areas posts have been available for all employees of the abolished authorities who wanted them.

It is not possible to equate posts saved to cost reduction in individual areas. However, in London net savings of 4,600 full-time equivalent (fte) local government staff have been realised and in the metropolitan areas savings of 3,500. The London boroughs and metropolitan districts report that in June 1986, 2,700 fte staff in London boroughs and 12,200 in the metropolitan districts were engaged on work assumed following abolition. The new authorities, including ILEA, which assumed certain GLC and metropolitan county council functions were employing some 124,200 staff at that time, and the residuary bodies 4,500. These increases have to be set against the 151,700 (full-time equivalent) staff no longer employed by GLC and MCCs.

These savings will bring an immediate benefit to ratepayers. It is up to successor authorities to ensure that the benefits are passed on to them and continue to be achieved.

I was therefore dismayed that the June "Joint Manpower Watch" returns showed a continuing underlying growth in local authority manpower. The actual annual increase reported in the year to June is 0·5 per cent. But for the effect of abolition and the transfer of staff from local government to the new Manchester airport public limited company, the overall annual growth in manpower would have been 1 per cent. This is the fourth successive quarter in which manpower has risen.

This is very disappointing. Despite the savings which the Government have achieved, local government continues to employ more staff. There is ample evidence that further savings can be made through the more economical provision of services and greater efficiency in their management, and local government has a duty to ratepayers and the public at large to ensure that these are achieved.

Old Bell's School, Portsmouth

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will be making his decision with regard to the request to demolish the Old Bell's school, Portsmouth, a listed building.

Mr. Waldegrave: Following the recommendations of his advisers, English Heritage, the Secretary of State has today informed the Portsmouth city council that the decision on the application for listed building consent to demolish all but the facade of Old Bell's school, Portsmouth, has been left to the council.

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received opposed to the demolition of the listed building, the Old Bell's school, Portsmouth.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Secretary of State has received a number of objections from interested bodies and societies to the proposed demolition of all but the facade of Old Bell's school, Portsmouth.

Birmingham

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has yet received the information he requires in respect of the proposed urban development agency organised by the private sector and Birmingham city council; and when he expects to make a decision.

Mr. Ridley: I discussed the council's urban development agency proposals when I met Councillor Knowles and others on 8 December. The council said that it would put further proposals to me in January.

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why he has included the proposed inner city shopping complex at Perry Barr, Birmingham on the list of those he requires planning authorities to send to his Department.

Mr. Waldegrave: This scheme is one of several major retail proposals before planning authorities in the west midlands conurbation and totalling over 4 million sq ft in area. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment decided that nine of these schemes —

including the one in Perry Barr, should not be considered in isolation from each other and issued a direction that the authorities responsible should not give planning consent without his special authorisation. Birmingham metropolitan borough council has applied for my right hon. Friend's authorisation and the hon. Member will be informed of his eventual decision.

Homelessness

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what reasons were given by the London borough of Camden for its failure to respond to his Department's requests for statistics on homelessness as indicated in the *Official Report*, 4 December, columns 757-58.

Mr. John Patten: None.

Council Housing

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses have been sold; how many council houses have been built; and what is the size of the council house waiting list for each year, to the latest available date, for each year since 1983 in (i) Gosport borough council, (ii) Fareham borough council, (iii) Portsmouth city council, (iv) Winchester city council, (v) Havant borough council, (vi) Eastleigh borough council, (vii) New Forest district council, (viii) Test Valley district council, (ix) East Hampshire district council, (x) Basingstoke and Deane district council, (xi) Rushmoor district council, (xii) Hart district council and (xiii) Southampton city council.

Mr. John Patten: Numbers of new dwellings completed for each of the local authorities in Hampshire and numbers of council dwellings sold by them, appear in the following issues of "Local Housing Statistics", which are available in the Library.

Dwellings completed for the local authority

	Number
1983	77
1984	78
1985	79
1986[1]	79

[1] First half 1986.

All sales of council houses

	Number
1983-84	75
1984-85	79
1985-86	79

Since publication of issue No. 79, late returns of completions in the first half of 1986 have been received and the full figures for Fareham, New Forest and Rushmoor are, respectively, 16, 87 and 12.

Also, a return of 150 council house sales in 1985-86 has since been received from Havant. Sales figures for the June quarter of 1986-87 are as follows:

	Number
Basingstoke and Deane	80
East Hampshire	37
Eastleigh	32
Fareham	23
Gosport	32
Hart	11
Havant	39
New Forest	48
Portsmouth	106
Rushmoor	38
Southampton	120
Test Valley	44
Winchester	65

The only available figures on councils' housing waiting lists are from the 1986 housing investment programme returns. The numbers of households on the lists at 1 April 1986 and the increase or decrease since 1 April 1985 appear in columns B51 and B53, respectively, of the "HIP1 (1986) all items print", which is available in the Library.

Mr. Andy Stewart asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to review local authority housing revenue accounts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Following discussions with the local authority associations, I have concluded that it would now be timely to review the operation of the present system of local authority housing revenue accounts. The legislation governing these accounts has remained essentially unchanged for 50 years. During that period there have been considerable developments in housing policy, and in accounting and financial management techniques. One purpose of the review will be to assess the implications of these developments for housing finance. The terms of reference for the review, which have been agreed with the local authority associations, are as follows:

To review the present legislation and conventions relating to housing revenue accounts, in the light of the other responsibilities of local authorities and current best practice, in order to devise a modified financial structure for the provision of housing by local authorities under part II of the Housing Act 1985 which will encourage effective financial management.

The review, which will also extend to Wales, will be carried out by a joint working party of officials from my Department, with Welsh Office and the local authority associations. They will consult as necessary with the Audit Commission and the professional bodies, and submit a report to the housing consultative council.

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will take action against local authorities whose revenue expenditure on management and maintenance of their housing stock is less than the amount reckonable for housing subsidy.

Mr. John Patten: My Department has written today to the local authority associations to consult them on proposals for modifying the provisions of the general determination of reckonable expenditure on management and maintenance to be made for 1987-88. It is proposed that entitlement to housing subsidy should be based either on a notional amount obtained by adding a percentage increase to reckonable expenditure for the previous year, in accordance with previous practice, or on an authority's actual expenditure on management and maintenance, whichever is the lower.

A small number of authorities have been changing their method of financing repairs in such a way as to reduce their revenue expenditure and increase their entitlement to

housing subsidy. To prevent further authorities doing so, my Department is also proposing to the local authority associations that the general determination of reckonable expenditure for 1986-87 should be amended by deducting from reckonable expenditure any shortfall in an authority's actual expenditure on management and maintenance in 1986-87 which is attributable to a change in financing practice made after today.

Comments on these proposals have been invited by 19 January so that they can be considered alongside the responses by the associations to proposals about other aspects, and the general determinations for 1987-88 can be made before the end of January.

Nitrates

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, following the publication of the report "Nitrates in Water, DOE Pollution paper No 26," he intends to seek to reduce the concentrates of nitrogen oxide per litre in public water to 50 mg; what would be the estimated cost of reducing nitrate concentrate in all such water to (i) 80 mg/litre, (ii) 70 mg/litre, (iii) 60 mg/litre and (iv) 50 mg/litre; if he intends to consult with farmers on making a contribution to the costs of any reduction in nitrate levels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The current policy of ensuring that no public supplies exceed 80 milligrammes of nitrate per litre on a three-monthly average and a maximum of 100 mg-litre is consistent with advice received from the chief medical officer and is therefore being maintained. The estimated cost of reducing nitrate concentrations in public supplies below 80 mgl now is estimated to be £0·1m, and below 50 mg/1, £50 m. Estimates are not available for 60 mg/1 or 70 mg/l but most public supplies which exceed 50 mg/l are below 70mg/1. However, cost is not the only consideration because processes available to reduce nitrate content may lead to a deterioration in water quality in other respects. Consultations will be held with farming interests on the contribution farmers can make to a reduction in nitrate levels.

Water Legislation

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, further to his reply of 4 December, *Official Report*, column 769, he will provide a detailed analysis of the other expenditure incurred in 1985-86 and 1986-87 in respect of preparations for water legislation.

Mr. Ridley: The "other" expenditure referred to in my reply of 4 December, at column 769, represents fees paid to advisers engaged on water privatisation plus various items of office service expenditure (stationery, photocopying, and so on) incurred within the Department. The detailed breakdown is as follows:

	1985-86 (actual) £	*1986-87 (estimated)* £
Fees	90,185	1,275,000
Office services	13,376	25,000
Total	103,561	1,300,000

County Hall, London

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will arrange for publication of the report on the disposal of County Hall prepared by Richard Ellis for the London Residuary Body.

Mr. Ridley: The report was commissioned by the London Residuary Body. It is for it to decide about publication.

Inner London Education Authority

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make an order to transfer County Hall riverside building to the Inner London education authority, together with appropriate financial provision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Such a request has been made by the Inner London education authority and a reply will be sent soon.

Dr. Cunningham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to ensure that the cost of any new accommodation for the Inner London education authority does not fall as a further charge on the ratepayers of Inner London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: This is being discussed between the Inner London education authority and the London Residuary Body.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the standards of treatment, feeding and housing of the animals living in the animals parks of the London borough of Ealing.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have received no representations on this matter.

Premises open to the public which contain animals not normally domesticated in this country are subject to licensing under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981. Acceptable levels of animal husbandry are monitored through a system of mandatory local authority inspections and by conditions on licences.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total amount spent by the Property Services Agency on works of art in each of the past five years.

Mr. Chope: There is no single budget to cover the costs of works of art and the information is not available.

Mr. Chapman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what fee reductions have been achieved in the Property Services Agency as a result of fee competition for consultants' commissions on major works projects.

Mr. Chope: The Property Services Agency introduced fee competition in July 1984 for all consultants' commissions relating to works projects over £2 million in value. Below that value, fees are the subject of negotiation.

A recent Property Services Agency report, "Fee Competition Review Committee Report", showed that the initial fee savings which were being achieved as a result of fee competition were as follows:

	Per cent.
Architectural Commissions	15
Quantity Surveying Commissions	26
Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Commissions	15
Civil and Structural Engineering Commissions	10

These figures represent average savings of approximately 17 per cent.

A copy of the report has been placed in the House Library.

Atmospheric Pollution

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publish the consultative document on the control of atmospheric pollution.

Mr. Ridley: We propose new powers to set air quality standards and emission limits. We also propose to extend to local authoritis powers to control what is emitted by potential pollution sources in advance. They do not have such powers now.

This will be done in conjunction with a system of consents for safe emissions to which there would be full public access. There would be national guidelines to ensure consistency between different parts of the country. The proposals base themselves on the United Kingdom's "best practicable means" approach to the control of industrial emissions.

Taken with the Government's decision to form Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution, these proposals constitute a major rationalisation and updating of British air pollution control practice.

The paper is being sent to local authority and industrial trade associations environmental organisations and others with an interest. Comments have been asked for by 31 March 1987. Copies of the paper have been placed in the Library.

Heating Charges

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, pursuant to his reply of 20 November to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), *Official Report*, columns 261-62, he has yet reached a decision on the introduction of heating charges regulations under section 108 of the Housing Act 1985.

Mr. John Patten: I am grateful to all those who responded to the consultation letter on proposed regulations under section 108 of the 1985 Act issued by the Department on 16 June 1986. We have decided to look again at these proposals in the context of the review of the present system of local authority housing revenue accounts, which I announced today. A decision on the proposed heating charges regulations will therefore be made in the light of the outcome of that review.

Green Belt (Shopping and Leisure Centres)

Mr. Hunter asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on the Government's policy towards applications to build large shopping and leisure centres in the green belt.

Mr. Waldegrave [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1986]: Policy on green belts remains as set out in DOE circular 14/84. My right hon. Friend and I have made it clear that large new shopping and leisure centres do not belong in green belts. When I spoke on 14 October to a conference organised by the Confederation of British Industry, entitled "The Future of Shopping—In or Out of Town?" I said:

"Hardly a week goes by without our reading in the Press of yet another vast shopping centre — or more often a 'shopping leisure complex'—which it is proposed to build in the middle of the Green Belt. Any such proposal has, of course, to be considered on its merits and in the light of general policy. Some may come to me on appeal, so I must not name names. There is provision, as there must be, for exceptions to be made in very special circumstances. But by way of general policy I would say that the promoters of some of the wilder schemes have no reason to think that they will succeed in breaching Green Belt policy. We are certainly not opposed to new methods of retailing and the benefits that modern retail stores can bring to the customer. But they do not belong in the Green Belt policy. We are certainly not opposed to new methods of retailing and the benefits that modern retail stores can bring to the customer. But they do not belong in the Green Belt. Let that be understood".

I also announced that we proposed to issue a direction requiring local planning authorities to consult the Department before granting permission for certain large new retail stores.

That direction has been issued today as an annex to a circular entitled "Policy on Major Retail Developments" published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office on behalf of my Department and the Welsh Office. A copy of the circular (21/86, Welsh Office 58,86), which also repeats Government policy on planning and large new retail developments, has been placed in the Library.

Housing Investment Programme

Mr. Simon Hughes asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the percentage change in the housing investment programme allocation for England between the financial years 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. John Patten [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *283*]: Total provision for housing investment by local authorities in England in 1987-88 has been increased by 15 per cent. (11 per cent. in real terms) over provision for 1986-87. Because an increased proportion of this total will be taken up by the spending power local authorities possess in the form of capital receipts, the proposed allocation total, which will determine the amount of borrowing approved for housing purposes, has been reduced by 7 per cent.

United Nations Commission on Human Settlements

Mr. Bowen Wells asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether further consideration has been given to rejoining the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements.

Mr. John Patten: Following election in May of this year the United Kingdom will resume membership of the commission with effect from January 1987.

DEFENCE

Sri Lanka

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any British service men have been made available to the Sri Lanka Government for any purposes during the last three years.

Mr. Stanley: No loan service personnel have been made available to the Government of Sri Lanka in the last three years. Three RAF officers from the central flying school paid short advisory visits to the Sri Lankan air force in 1984. In addition, a small number of places on United Kingdom training courses are taken up by Sri Lankan personnel, but, as was made clear by my hon. Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement on 14 February 1985, at column *286*, no British personnel are specifically dedicated to training Sri Lankan students.

Spending

Dr. Hampson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of his Department's current spending, its manpower and the jobs it supports directly and indirectly through procurement, are estimated to be in each of the following regions in England *(a)* the north, Yorkshire and Humberside, *(b)* the east midlands, *(c)* East Anglia, *(d)* the south-west, *(e)* the south-east, *(f)* the west midlands and *(g)* the north-west, and also in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The percentage of the Ministry's procurement expenditure in each region in 1985-86 was as follows (figures are individually rounded):

	Percentage
North, Yorkshire and Humberside	5
East Midlands	4
East Anglia	3
South West	12
South East (including London)	50
West Midlands	4
North West	14
Scotland	6
Wales	2
Northern Ireland	1

These estimates refer to direct payments to main contractors and do not take account of payments made to subcontractors.

The percentage of the 168,000 MOD civilian staff (industrial and non-industrial) in each region at 1 October 1986 was as follows (figures are individually rounded):

	Percentage
North, Yorkshire and Humberside	6
East Midlands	3
East Anglia	2
South West	25
South East (including London)	38
West Midlands	5
North West	2
Scotland	11
Wales	4
Northern Ireland	2

The percentage of the 228,000 United Kingdom service personnel deployed in the United Kingdom in each region at 30 June 1986 was as follows (figures are individually rounded):

	Percentage
North, Yorkshire and Humberside	7
East Midlands	6
East Anglia	7
South East (including London)	37
South West	21
West Midlands	4
North West	1
Scotland	9
Wales	3
Northern Ireland	5

Estimates of the total number of jobs in United Kingdom industry sustained by defence expenditure are derived from generalised statistical information. It is not possible to give separate figures for individual regions.

Overseas Personnel (Training)

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Defence what monitoring takes place of the training of overseas military and security personnel by British commercial companies *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* overseas.

Mr. Stanley: Such training is a matter for the companies themselves. However, my Department liaises as necessary both at home and abroad with British companies engaged in the sale of defence equipment or defence services.

ROF Leeds

Mr. Meadowcroft asked the Secretary of State for Defence what indication he was given prior to the purchase of the royal ordnance factory, Leeds, by Vickers as to the level of subsequent redundancies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: At the time of the planned flotation in the summer, the Government were fully aware that, with limited prospects for further MOD orders for main battle tanks, the Leeds factory faced possible closure within a few years. In the short term, we were also aware that Royal Ordnance was having to contemplate significant redundancies. It therefore came as no surprise that Vickers viewed prospects in a similar light. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence indicated on 24 July 1986, at column *621*, he expected the new factory Vickers undertook to build on the site to employ most, but not all, of the existing work force. At that stage it was not possible for Vickers to be precise about the level of of possible redundancies but it did not hide from us or from the work force that redundancy was inevitable if the future of the site was to be assured.

Nuclear Reactors (Training)

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for defence whether he will describe the nature and duration of the courses relating to nuclear reactor technology and operations given to Royal Navy personnel selected to operate and supervise pressurised-water reactor type nuclear reactors in Her Majesty's submarines; and whether a reactor is used in such training.

Mr. Freeman: The courses are as follows:

Title	Duration	Nature
Nuclear Reactor Course	26 weeks	To provide students with the necessary knowledge to operate and supervise naval nuclear propulsion plants
Officers' Nuclear Operator Course	10 weeks	To provide students with detailed knowledge of the submarine propulsion plant and experience in operating a plant simulator under normal and emergency conditions
Nuclear Propulsion Short Course	11 weeks	To ensure that Marine Engineering Artificers have a general understanding of reactor principles, and an adequate knowledge of systems and major equipment of a submarine plant.
Nuclear Propulsion Long Course	26 weeks	To ensure that senior technical ratings are fully aware of the principles underlying the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the pressurised water reactor and associated propulsion plant, and auxiliary machinery fitted in nuclear submarines.

Reactors are not used in these courses, although students may be shown a reactor during their training.

Nuclear-powered Submarines

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence what exchange of information has taken place between his Department and the United States Navy regarding operational and experimental experience of nuclear reactors for nuclear-powered submarines.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Exchanges with the United States of information concerning military aspects of nuclear technology are made under the aegis of the 1958 "Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes".

For reasons of national security, I cannot give details of specific items of information exchanged.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence what are the ranks, experience and qualifications of Royal Navy personnel selected to operate and supervise PWR-type nuclear reactors in Her Majesty's submarines.

Mr. Freeman: The operation of nuclear reactors in Her Majesty's submarines is supervised by officers of the rank of commander, lieutenant commander or lieutenant and senior ratings of the rank of warrant officer or charge chief petty officer. Operators are chief petty officers and petty officers.

Officers require a B Eng honours degree and senior ratings must have completed a four year artificer apprenticeship. In addition, the following specific nuclear qualifications and experience are required:

Officers
- —Nuclear Reactor Course
- —Officers' Nuclear Operator Course
- —A minimum of 3 months on-board experience, during which the officer must qualify in all watchkeeping positions, and pass a "Flotilla Board", consisting of nuclear qualified and approved officers, to qualify for an Engineer Officers' Nuclear Watchkeeping Certificate.

Warrant Officers and Charge Chiefs
- —Nuclear Propulsion Short Course
- —Nuclear Propulsion Long Course
- —Over 6 months' operating experience and success at a Flotilla Board.

Chief Petty Officers
- —Nuclear Propulsion Short Course
- —Nuclear Propulsion Long Course
- —Over 3 months' operating experience and success at a Ship Board consisting of nuclear qualified officers

Petty Officers
- —Nuclear Propulsion Short Course
- —8 weeks' on-board training.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence in respect of the PWR mark II reactor currently being installed at HMS Vulcan, if he will state *(a)* the expected date of criticality, *(b)* the expected date of full commissioning and *(c)* the number of years' operating experience intended before a similar reactor is installed in one of Her Majesty's submarines.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The expected date of criticality is mid-1987 and full commissioning should follow within a few months.

We plan to operate the prototype reactor for approximately four years before a similar reactor is used in a submarine.

Mr. Wallace asked the Secretary of State for Defence when, in respect of the PWR mark I reactor unit formerly operating at HMS Vulcan *(a)* the reactor first become critical and *(b)* commissioning was completed; how many years' operating experience have to be gained by Royal Navy personnel before being permitted to operate such a reactor in one of Her Majesty's submarines; and when the reactor unit was shut down.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The reactor first went critical in January 1965 and commissioning was completed in February 1965. The reactor was shut down in July 1984.

An operator is usually expected to spend a minimum of 15 months training, of which 12 months are spent in the classroom and simulators. At least 3 months is then spent at sea training in a nuclear submarine under experienced supervision.

Nimrod

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the total expenditure by the Government to date on the Nimrod project.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 17 December. 1986.

Departmental Land Sales

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his reply of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *311*, how many freehold and leasehold acres have been disposed of by his Department in each of the past five years.

Mr. Freeman: The information is not maintained in the form required and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, solicitors were instructed to proceed with the sale of the following freehold land in the financial years shown:

	acres
1985-86	2,720
1984-85	2,668
1983-84	2,999
1982-83	3,282
1981-82	2,865

In addition, some 7,000 acres were transferred to Royal Ordnance plc on 2 January 1985.

Airborne Early Warning System

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence why the firm CAP Scientific was engaged by his Department to do an independent assessment of the airborne early warning requirement for the Royal Air Force; and why it was dismissed after two days by his Department.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Because we were concerned that the vital question of the risk associated with the further development necessary in either of the two AEW systems in contention in the final stages of the competition — Nimrod and E-3A — should be assessed as fairly as possible, CAP Scientific was approached to provide assistance. We quickly realised, and the firm acknowledged, that the assistance we required could not be made available in the time scale to which we were working.

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for Defence if any of the advance warning and control system offset work being offered by the Boeing company will be carried out under the terms of the Export Administration Act 1985 of the United States of America; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We will answer shortly.

Retired Service Men (Pay)

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take remedial action over disparities in rates of retired pay for service men who left in code years 1976 and 1977 and receive less than those who retired before and after those years.

Mr. Freeman: No. After considering the matter in 1979, the Government made it clear that measures to improve public service pensions affected by the previous Administration's income policy could not be given priority over the many other pressing claims on limited resources. That remains the position.

Iran (Military Equipment)

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consignments of spare parts and replacements for military equipment have been dispatched to Iran from the port of Liverpool.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have no knowledge of any spare parts or replacement for military equipment dispatched to Iran from the port of Liverpool recently.

Harrier Aircraft

Mr. McNamara asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, following his statement on 30 June, *Official Report*, columns *713-4*, he can now announce his decision on the size of the second batch of Harrier GR5s; when he expects them to go into production and be delivered to the Royal Air Force; and what is the size of the batch compared with his Department's earlier plans.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No decision has yet been taken on this matter.

NATO

Mr. Stevens asked the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to introduce international staff into the headquarters of the UKAIR major subordinate command of NATO; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: Headquarters United Kingdom Air Forces (UKAIR) was first established in 1975 at HQ RAF Strike Command, High Wycombe, and since that time has been manned by RAF personnel. It is however one of SACEUR's major subordinate command headquarters, the remainder of which, like SHAPE itself, are manned by international staffs drawn from our NATO allies. A proposal has been made that in future HQ UKAIR should also have an international staff whose membership would of course include United Kingdom military personnel. This proposal has been endorsed by the NATO Defence Planning Committee and, subject to parliamentary approval of UKAIR's formal designation as a NATO HQ, I have agreed that a small international staff be established at HQ UKAIR at the earliest opportunity.

To designate UKAIR formally as a NATO headquarters and provide the standard facilities required for an international staff stationed at a NATO HQ in the United Kingdom, orders amending the International Headquarters and Defence Organisations (Designations and Privileges) Order 1965, and the Visiting Forces and International Headquarters (Application of Law) Order 1965, will be introduced. These amending orders will be subject to affirmative resolution.

War Casualties

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy in relation to informing *(a)* relatives and *(b)* the House of Commons about fatalities in times of war known by the Ministry of Defence to be the result of action by Her Majesty's forces.

Mr. Stanley [*pursuant to the reply*, 2 December 1986, c. *600*]: Fatalities to British service men arising as a result of action by our own forces arise very infrequently. Every incident requires very careful investigation to establish the facts as accurately as possible, after which each case is treated according to its particular circumstances, and the need to alleviate distress. Normally the operational commander will inform the next of kin as fully as possible of the relevant details once the correct facts have been established beyond all reasonable doubt except in exceptional circumstances, such as the needs of security or the risk of adding unjustifiably to distress. He will normally therefore have discretion as to the manner and timing of his explanation. Out of consideration for the relatives it is not our normal practice to give publicity to

the details or circumstances of death in such cases unless the relevant information is already public knowledge or is likely to become so.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Supplementary Pensions

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the capital limit for claims for supplementary pensions for each year since 1980, in cash terms and in real terms using 1980 as a base year, and the change in the retail price index over that period.

Mr. Lyell: The information is provided in the following tables:

Supplementary benefit capital limit

Date[1]	£
November 1980	2,000
November 1981	2,000
November 1982	2,500
November 1983	3,000
November 1984	3,000
November 1985	3,000
July 1986	3,000

[1] Dates of uprating of benefits.

£2,000 limit in November 1980 expressed in real terms[1] [2]

Period	£
November 1980 to November 1981	2,239
November 1980 to November 1982	2,379
November 1980 to November 1983	2,494
November 1980 to November 1984	2,618
November 1980 to November 1985	2,761
November 1980 to July 1986	2,807

[1] Based on the movement in the retail price index (all items) between dates shown.

[2] Increase in retail price index (all items) for period November 1980 to July 1986 = 40·4 per cent.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many of the people in the United Kingdom who received supplementary benefit in the latest year for which statistics are available were staying in board and lodging houses.

Mr. Lyell: The latest available information on the numbers of people claiming supplementary benefit for charges in all types of ordinary board and lodging accommodation including hostels is for December 1985 for Great Britain and February 1986 for Northern Ireland and shows 127,000 and 1,000 recipients respectively.

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many exceptionally severe weather payments were made to recipients of supplementary benefit for the month of February 1986 in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Greenock and Port Glasgow; what was the total amount paid out; and what was the average payment in (i) Scotland, (ii) Strathclyde and (iii) Greenock and Port Glasgow.

Mr. Lyell Final figures for Scotland and Strathclyde are not yet available. The latest available information is as follows:

Local office/region	*Total number of payments*	*Total amount paid* £	*Average payments* £ p
Scotland	84,000	1,922,578	22·89
Strathclyde	50,969	1,172,877	23·01
Greenock[1]	1,920	49,911	26·00
Port Glasgow[1]	1,072	25,666	23·94

[1] These are final figures.

Retirement Pension (Automated Credit Transfer)

Mr. Andrew Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people are currently receiving retirement pension payments by means of automated credit transfer direct to a bank or building society account.

Mr. Lyell: About 1·1 million people received retirement pension payments by means of automated credit transfer in November 1986 (latest available figures). About 29 per cent. of newly-retiring pensioners choose this method of payment (July 1986 figure).

Coronary Heart Disease

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the actions taken by his Department since the publication of the COMA report, designed to assist in the prevention of coronary heart disease.

Mrs. Currie: We are deeply committed to reducing the toll of coronary heart disease which is the major cause of premature death in Britain. The Department, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, has started a national survey of the diet and nutritional status of adults, including measurements of clinical and biomedical risk factors for coronary heart disease. The Health Education Council has produced guidance for the public based on the COMA report.

We continue the Government's anti-smoking effort, and are planning a new national campaign, "Look After Your Heart", which will inform people of the risk of heart disease and promote healthier living.

The Committee on the Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA) has set up a panel to continue to review the relation between diet and cardiovascular disease.

Handicapped Children

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement about current provisions for the welfare of handicapped children.

Mrs. Currie: Government policy has been increasingly directed towards improving support for handicapped children and their families to enable them to remain at home or, if that is not possible, in small homely units in or near to the local community.

We have asked health authorities to ensure that by the end of 1988 no mentally handicapped child receiving long-term care should be required to live in a large mental handicap hospital. Additional central funding (£11·5 million) has been made available for this purpose and progress so far has been good. We have continued to encourage the development of joint planning of health and personal social services by the statutory agencies and voluntary bodies.

Local authorities have a duty under the provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 to

inform themselves of the needs of disabled children ordinarily resident in their area and to meet those needs. The Education Act 1981 placed a duty on local education authorities to identify children with special educational needs and learning difficulties. Sections 5 and 6 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, when implemented, will require social services departments to assess the needs of young disabled people leaving school.

Housing Benefit

Ms. Clare Short asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish, in the same format as the reply given on 5 July 1985, *Official Report*, column *301*, the latest available estimates of recipients of housing benefit not on supplementary benefit; if he will publish estimates of the numbers of households affected by the rent taper change to be introduced in April 1987 and the number of households losing entitlement to rent rebates, again in the same format used in the information given on 5 July 1985, *Official Report*, columns *305-3*;

(2) if he will give information on the changes to the housing benefit needs allowance by publishing a table showing the real value of the April 1987 needs allowances and disregards compared with the level at which they stood before the change to the updating formula; and if he will also publish a table giving a detailed breakdown of the numbers of households losing *(a)* less than 25p, *(b)* 26p to 50p, *(c)* 51p to £1 and such other ranges of losses as may be appropriate as a combined result of both the taper and needs allowance changes, distinguishing as far as possible between pensioners, those in work and other households.

Mr. Lyell: The information requested is given in the following tables. Table 1 shows the estimated potential standard housing benefit caseload at April 1987, using a traditional uprating and without a taper change. Table 2 shows the numbers affected by the rent taper change and the numbers losing all entitlement to rent rebates or allowances. Table 3 shows the proposed April 1987 needs allowances and earnings disregard and the levels implied by the traditional uprating formulae. Table 4 shows a detailed breakdown of the combined effect of the two measures.

It should, however, be borne in mind that the majority of standard housing benefit recipients will not actually face cash losses next April: for one thing, increased benefit resulting from increases in rent and rates will normally outweigh the effect of the taper change. Also, the proposed increases in the needs allowances will normally lead either to the same level of entitlement (when combined with the retirement pension increase) or to higher entitlement (for example, for most working families). Table 4 therefore represents not actual cash losses, but rather a comparison between the effects of an uprating based on the traditional formula with no taper change, and the effects of the proposed changes, with other parameters such as rent and rate levels held constant.

Any discrepancies in the totals are due to rounding. The tables show the effects on standard housing benefit only —for approximately a quarter of a million people also getting housing benefit supplement there will be no net effect because increases in the latter benefit will automatically compensate them for the changes.

Table 1
Estimated maximum standard housing benefit caseload at April 1987[1]

Thousands, Great Britain

Household type	*Rate rebate recipients*			*Rent rebate or allowance recipients*		
	Above needs allowance	*Below needs allowance*	*Total*	*Above needs allowance*	*Below needs allowance*	*Total*
Pensioners	1,210	1,340	2,550	620	820	1,440
Working	190	170	370	140	100	240
Others	250	520	770	190	370	570
All	1,650	2,030	3,680	950	1,290	2,240

[1] This table represents the estimated caseload which would arise from an uprating using the traditional formula, without a taper change, including those who would have been brought into entitlement for the first time.

Table 2
Estimated number affected by the rent taper change
Thousands, Great Britain

Household type	*Number affected by rent taper change*	*Number losing all rent rebate/allowance*
Pensioners	620	60
Working	140	30
Others	190	20
All	950	110

Table 3
Needs allowances and earnings disregards from April 1987

Category	*Proposed April 1987 rate* £	*Rate implied by traditional formulae* £
Needs allowances		
single person	48·90	49·65
couple-single parent	72·15	72·85
single handicapped person	54·50	55·35
couple (one handicapped) or handicapped single parent	77·75	78·55
couple (both handicapped)	80·45	81·25
pensioner addition	0·85	0·90
dependent child addition	14·75	15·10
Principal earner's disregard	17·30	17·10

Table 4

A comparison of the proposed measures with an uprating according to the traditional formula (without a taper change), showing recipients of any housing benefit broken down by the extent of the difference in total entitlement

thousands, Great Britain

Household type	*1p-25p*	*26p-50p*	*51p-100p*	*101p-200p*	*over £2*
Pensioner	1,380	300	810	140	10
Working	230	40	50	80	20
Other	490	130	120	90	10
All	2,100	470	980	310	40

Elderly People (Homes)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the private registered homes for elderly people in each of the 32 London boroughs.

Mrs. Currie: "The Directory of Private Hospitals and Health Services" includes a list of registered homes for elderly people in Greater London and elsewhere. I understand that a copy of the most recent edition, published in November 1986, will be available in the Library soon.

Drug Addicts (In-patient Beds)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the number of in-patient beds for registered drug addicts in each of the regional health authorities covering London.

Mrs. Currie: In-patient beds are not set aside for the treatment of registered drug addicts and most people admitted for drug misuse are treated in general psychiatric wards. At December 1985 the numbers of beds available in the four Thames regional health authorities in special in-patient units for the treatment of drug misuse were 48 beds in South-East Thames regional health authority (exclusively for drug misusers) and 50 beds in North-West Thames regional health authority (for drug and/or alcohol misusers).

J. E. Hanger and Co. Ltd.

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what discussions he has had with the management of J. E. Hanger and Co. Ltd. of Roehampton to try and resolve the recent dismissal of 300 people by that company: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: I met the managing director of J. E. Hanger and Co. Ltd. on 26 November 1986, as I reported to the House on that day at column 330. He confirmed that the company is taking all possible steps to maintain its services to patients which remains our prime concern in this dispute.

The Government, who are not a party to the dispute, have urged both parties to avail themselves of ACAS, and have been encouraged that a series of talks have taken place. Both sides are remaining in contact with ACAS and it is hoped that a speedy settlement to the dispute will be reached.

Single Payments

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any information on waiting times to an appeal hearing against refusal of single payments or other benefits in Scotland.

Mr. Lyell: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 16 December at columns *471-72*.

Occupational Pensions

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what account was taken of the Occupational Pensions Board report, Cmnd. 8649, in the formulation of the Bill which led to the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Major: Pension reforms in the Social Security Act 1986 implement proposals in the White Paper "Reform of Social Security", Cmnd. 9691. Recommendations in the Occupational Pensions Board's report "Greater Security for the Rights and Expectations of Members of Occupational Pension Schemes", Cmnd. 8649, were reflected in the new rights to information for members of occupational pension schemes in the Social Security Act 1985.

Health Personnel (Southwark)

Mr. Gerald Bowden asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the numbers of doctors, nurses, midwives, dentists, opticians and pharmacists in the borough of Southwark in 1979, 1983 and the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: I regret that the information on National Health Service manpower is not available on a local authority basis. The figures shown in the table relate to the Lewisham and North Southwark health authority and Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham family practitioner committee.

It is not possible to go back to 1979 for the health authority figures because of the Health Service reorganisation that took place in 1982, but data for 1983 and 1985 are as follows:

Health Authority Manpower[1]	*1983*	*1985*
Doctors[2]	470	450
Nurses[3]	3,490	3,390
Midwives[3]	160	150
Dentists[2]	50	80
Opticians	—	—
Hospital Pharmacists	50	50

[1] all figures rounded to nearest 10 whole-time equivalents.

[2] excludes senior registrars with contracts held by Regional Health Authority and occasional sessional staff in Community Health Services.

[3] includes agency staff.

Figures are given for staff employed at 30 September 1983 and 30 September 1985.

Family Practitioner Committee Manpower	1979	1983	1985
Doctors	380	393	408
Dentists in General Dental Service	236	267	275
Clinical Dental Staff[1] in Community Dental Service	25·9	35·8	24·9
Opticians	280	307	325
Ophthalmic Dispensing Opticians & Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners			
Retail Pharmacists	160	176	188

[1] Whole Time Equivalents.

Some midwives and (increasingly for routine investigation and treatment) nurses are employed directly by general practitioners who are then reimbursed by family practitioner committees. No figures on such midwifery and nursing staff are as yet, however, compiled centrally.

Widows Pensions

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the difference between the standard widows pension and industrial widows pension in each year since 1956; and if he will publish the corresponding real value of this differential on the movement of the retail price index.

Mr. Major: The information requested is shown in the table:

Uprating date	1 Rate of industrial widows' pension £	2 Rate of standard widows' pension £	3 Difference between columns 1 and 2 £	4 Difference expressed at July 1986 prices £
October 1956	2·25	2·00	0·25	2·11
January 1958	2·80	2·50	0·30	2·40
April 1961	3·20	2·875	0·325	2·49
May 1963	3·75	3·375	0·375	2·66
March 1965	4·50	4·00	0·50	3·35
October 1967	5·05	4·50	0·55	3·21
November 1969	5·55	5·00	0·55	3·04
September 1971	6·55	6·00	0·55	2·61
October 1972	7·30	6·75	0·55	2·41
October 1973	8·30	7·75	0·55	2·19
July 1974	10·55	10·00	0·55	1·93
April 1975	12·15	11·60	0·55	1·64
November 1975	13·85	13·30	0·55	1·47
November 1976	15·85	15·30	0·55	1·28
November 1977	18·05	17·50	0·55	1·13
November 1978	20·05	19·50	0·55	1·04
November 1979	23·85	23·30	0·55	0·89
November 1980	27·70	27·15	0·55	0·77
November 1981	30·15	29·60	0·55	0·69
November 1982	33·40	32·85	0·55	0·65
November 1983	34·60	34·05	0·55	0·62
November 1984	36·35	35·80	0·55	0·59
November 1985	38·85	38·30	0·55	0·56
July 1986	39·25	38·70	0·55	0·55

Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current state of the waiting lists for orthopaedics, orthodontics and oral surgery in Queen Alexandra hospital, Portsmouth.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks in precisely the form requested. The latest information centrally available is given in the table. For current information and for out-patient waiting list figures the hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of the Portsmouth and South-East Hampshire district health authority.

Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham
Cases on in-patient waiting list at 31 December 1985

Specialty	Number
Traumatic and orthopaedic surgery	967
Oral surgery	378

Limited List Prescribing

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what economies have been achieved by limited list prescribing; and to what end the resultant savings have been put.

Mr. Newton: The latest data available to the Department indicate that the savings have been in line with the original estimate of £75 million in a full year. These savings were taken into account when planning the NHS expenditure for 1985-86. The savings were not allotted to any specific purpose but form part of the general increase in resources made available to the NHS.

National No Smoking Day

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what will be the cost to public funds of supporting National No Smoking Day 1987.

Mrs. Currie: Up to £80,000, including the costs of evaluating the results.

AIDS

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of staff of the new special health authority to replace the Health Education Council will be employed on AIDS education.

Mr. Newton: This will be a matter for the new authority to consider.

Mr. Galley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to reduce the spread of AIDS among drug misusers.

Mr. Fowler: Drug misuse is a matter of grave concern. The Government are determined to do all that they can to tackle this problem. But in addition we have to recognise that the use of contaminated needles and syringes is one of the major ways by which the AIDS virus is spread to the general population. Worst of all, it is leading to the birth of babies already infected with the AIDS virus. Therefore, the Government propose to take two further measures.

First, we believe that it is essential to do all we can to reach drug misusers to explain both the dangers of drug misuse and of AIDS. We therefore propose to provide an extra £1 million in 1987-88 to enable drug misuse agencies to reach more drug misusers and to provide more counselling on AIDS.

Secondly, we intend to establish a number of special schemes in different parts of the United Kingdom. In addition to providing counselling as part of our wider programme, these schemes will include the exchange of used and possibly infected needles and syringes.

The first step will be to begin consultations with those most concerned locally — particularly the medical profession, the police and voluntary organisations.

The location and number of schemes will be settled in the light of these consultations.

In taking this initiative and in deciding which schemes should be chosen, the Government are taking into account that there are already some projects in operation that provide clean needles and syringes. We will wish to build on at least some of these projects in carrying forward the proposal.

An important part of these schemes will be to assess the effectiveness of such steps in preventing the spread of AIDS among drug misusers and hence to the general community.

These proposals take account of the recommendations in Dr. McClelland's report on the problem to the Secretary of State for Scotland. The Government, through more counselling, are aiming both to curtail the spread of AIDS and also to reduce the extent to drug misuse.

Severe Disability Premium

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish the full text of the letter that he sent to Ian Bruce of the Royal National Institute for the Blind on 11 December, concerning the severe disability premium;

(2) what is the number of people whom Her Majesty's Government estimates will be eligible for the severe disability premium;

(3) if the 1982 survey of attendance allowance claimants was used as the basis of the original estimates of the number who would qualify for the severe disability premium.

Mr. Major: The text of the letter sent to Ian Bruce of the Royal National Institute for the Blind on 11 December is as follows. It contains an estimate of the number of people who would be eligible for the severe disability premium and information about the data on which the original and revised estimates were based.

11 December 1986

Dear Mr. Bruce,

Severe Disability Premium

I gave the Government's general response to the concerns expressed by you and other organisations representing disabled people in my letter of 4 November. My office will be in touch to arrange a meeting to discuss our proposals for the Severe Disability Premium. But I thought it might be helpful if, before we met, I gave you the results of some further work to assess the numbers who might qualify for the new premium and the policy conclusions we have drawn.

Our original estimate in the closing stages of the Social Security Bill was that up to 10,000 severely disabled people might qualify for the premium at a cost of up to £12 million. This estimate was derived from information contained in the supplementary benefit annual statistical enquiry (ASE) for December 1984, the latest date available. It was based on the numbers of single housholders shown in the enquiry as also receiving the higher rate of attendance alllowance.

In view of the doubts which you and others expressed about the estimates, I asked my officials to re-examine the data; in particular to examine how many might have others living with them who, while not being part of the supplementary benefit assessment unit, could prevent the claimant receiving the premium. In fact, the ASE returns record few deductions for non-dependants living in the same household as the 10,000 single householders. But the absence of any deduction is not conclusive, since it is possible for a claimant to have non-dependants living in the household without a deduction from supplementary benefit housing costs being appropriate.

We have therefore examined whether the estimate can be checked against other data. As you know, we do not directly collect information on other members of the household in relation to attendance allowance claims. We have, however, been able to examine a special survey of 1,600 attendance allowance recipients which the Department carried out in 1982. The 1982 survey showed that over 90 per cent. of the sample had a carer living with them. In some other cases, the person was in hospital or in a home. In less than 5 per cent. of cases was the person shown as having no carer either in the household or elsewhere. These results cannot be used as precise estimates because they refer to all attendance allowance recipients, not just those on supplementary benefit, and because the sample was drawn from a population of attendance allowance recipients which was smaller than that of today.

It is clear, however, that this further examination bears out the doubts that you have expressed. I have to say, therefore, that although the data does not enable us to produce reliable separate estimates for those receiving the higher and lower rates, it does suggest that a relatively small number of people would have qualified under our original criteria. That was, and remains, far from our intention in introducing the higher premium.

In consequence we have reviewed the qualifying rules for the severe disability premium in the light of this new information. We propose to make a significant amendment so that the premium should be available also to those receiving the lower rate of attendance allowance. That is consistent with the conditions for invalid care allowance itself, which is payable where the person being looked after receives attendance allowance at either the higher or lower rate. Receipt of constant attendance allowance under the industrial injuries and war pensions scheme would also satisfy the first qualifying condition for the severe disability premium.

So far as the other qualifying rules are concerned, we think it is right to retain the emphasis on help for those living

independently in the community. That is consistent with our objectives on community care; there is a similar emphasis on helping to maintain independence in the domestic assistance addition. We propose a two fold test of independent living. First, it would be a condition that the severely disabled person lived alone in the house, although couples would qualify if both partners were receiving attendance allowance. Second, the person should not be looked after by someone receiving the Invalid Care Allowance. In that case we would be concerned with receipt rather than an attempt to test eligibility.

Applying the results of the 1982 survey to the total number of attendance allowance recipients (at both the higher and lower rate) on supplementary benefit we estimate that around 7,000 people would benefit at a cost of £8 million. The comparable figures for the domestic assistance addition, which the higher premium is designed primarily to replace, are some 3,000 cases (over 90 per cent. of whom receive payments of under £10) at a total cost of under £1 million.

There are two factors which it is reasonable to assume could increase the numbers helped. First, we are attaching considerable importance in the reforms to the alignment of the income-related benefits. The rules for the severe disability premium will also apply in setting the needs level in housing benefit. It is difficult to quantify the effect of this as the data source for the housing benefit estimates — the family expenditure survey — is not sufficiently precise to enable reliable estimates on this matter to be made. But we would certainly expect there to be other severely disabled people, in particular pensioners, with incomes high enough not to need income support who would benefit from the value of the premium being taken into account when their housing benefit is assessed. Second, as was frequently pointed out to us in debate, and borne out in some of the individual examples quoted in letters, arrangements to enable severely disabled people to live independently have increased in recent years. I do not think it would be safe to try to quantify the effects of these two factors but they would imply some increase in the numbers who would be helped by the new premium.

It is clear that your doubts about the earlier estimates were justified. However, I hope you will accept that they were provided at the time on what was thought to be a reasonable basis. Our intention throughout has been to help with the extra needs of severely disabled people which it is appropriate for social security to meet. I hope you will recognise this and welcome the new proposals outlined above. I look forward to our meeting. A copy of this letter goes to the signatories of your letter of 7 August.

Yours sincerely,
John Major

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will define the term living alone in the qualifying conditions for the new severe disability premium; and if it includes disabled people living with *(a)* children, *(b)* pensioner parents and *(c)* disabled people receiving mobility allowance, invalidity benefit, severe disablement allowance or benefits under the war or industrial pension schemes.

Mr. Major: Living alone means living without a partner, unless the partner is also receiving attendance allowance, and without non-dependent people over the age of 18 in the household. People living with dependent children, other disabled people themselves receiving attendance allowance, or volunteers who live with them to care for them and where a charge is made for the service by the voluntary organisation providing it, would not be excluded under these conditions for the premium.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if a couple living together and in receipt of attendance allowance will both be eligible for the new severe disability premium.

Mr. Major: Where both members of a couple receive attendance allowance, they will both be eligible for the severe disability premium, providing the other qualifying conditions for receipt of the premium are satisfied.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if a disabled person in receipt of the severe disability premium will lose the severe disability premium when he begins to have a carer looking after him who is entitled to invalid care allowance.

Mr. Major: Receipt by a carer of invalid care allowance in respect of a person receiving the severe disability premium would end entitlement to the premium. The intention is that the premium would be set at the same level as invalid care allowance.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many of the people who will be eligible for the severe disability premium will be better off than under the present system of supplementary benefit; and how many people currently receive more than £23·25 in the form of *(a)* the domestic assistance addition and *(b)* additional requirements generally;

(2) Under the proposed new arrangements for the severe disability premium, how many people with disabilities will have a lower entitlement under the new income support scheme than they presently have under the supplementary benefit scheme.

Mr. Major: I refer the right hon. Member to tables 1A and 1B, and 10A and 10B of the technical annex to the White Paper, "Reform of Social Security" (Cmnd. 9691), which give the latest information available on the effects of the reform. Separate information on the effect of the severe disability premium on entitlement to income support is not available.

At December 1984, the latest date for which information is available, the number receiving an additional requirement for domestic assistance worth more than £23·25 was extremely low: the annual statistical inquiry revealed only one such sample case. The number receiving an aggregate of additional requirements higher than £23·25 was too small to estimate reliably but is unlikely to exceed 4,000. This figure may be inflated by the inclusion of some meals allowances paid to boarders.

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for the Social Services what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on future uprating of domestic assistance additions; and how the relationships with severe disability premiums will be dealt with.

Mr. Major: My predecessor explained on 23 July 1986 at column 397 our intention to give improved transitional protection for severely disabled people receiving extensive support by way of the domestic assistance addition. The detailed provisions have not yet been finalised.

Mucodyne

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Social Services what decision he has taken in respect of Mucodyne syrup following the meeting of the Advisory Committee on National Health Service Drugs held on 28 October.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

Juveniles (Secure Care)

Mr. Bermingham asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many secure unit places are available for those juveniles held in secure care in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Greater London area;

(2) how many secure unit places for those juveniles held in secure care were in use at the latest available date in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Greater London area.

Mrs. Currie: There are currently 325 approved secure places in the community home system in England, of which 63 are provided or managed by local authorities in the Greater London area. In addition, there are 58 secure places in youth treatment centres provided by the Department.

Information about children accommodated in secure units is routinely collected on a financial year basis. The provisional figures for 31 March 1986 were 264 children accommodated in secure units in community homes in England of which 45 were in units provided or managed by local authorities in the Greater London area. On the same date there were 55 children accommodated in secure units in the youth treatment centres. An ad hoc survey of the current occupancy of secure units has just been completed and I shall write to the hon. Member when the results have been collated.

Information about the provision and use of secure accommodation in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Medicines Commission (Homeopath)

Mr. Craigen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration he has given to the appointment of a homeopath or expert in natural medicines to the Medicines Commission.

Mr. Newton: The chairman of the British Holistic Medical Association was appointed to the Medicines Commission at the beginning of this year.

"Nitrates in Water"

Mr. Boyes asked the Secretary of State for Social Services following publication of the report "Nitrates in Water", if he will make a statement as to health implications of reducing the nitrate/litre concentrates in public water from 80 mg/litre to 50 mg/litre; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The health implications of nitrate in drinking water are set out in a letter from the Government's Chief Medical Officer to local medical officers on 27 November 1985; this letter is reproduced as appendix B to the report, "Nitrates in Water", a copy of which is available in the Library.

I am advised that there is no reason to consider that nitrate levels averaging 80 mg/litre over three months with a maximum of 100 mg/litre adversely affect health in the United Kingdom. There is therefore no health requirement for reducing the nitrate concentration in drinking water from 80 mg/litre to 50 mg/litre.

Nucleus Hospital Programme (Exhibition)

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the National Health Service nucleus hospital programme to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 12 to 16 January 1987.

Nurses

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish the results of the National Health Service Management Board's inquiry into nurse recruitment in the London area.

Mr. Newton: The team studying the nursing services in London is aiming to complete its study and report to the National Health Service management board by late spring 1987. The board will then consider what local or national action may be required to remedy any problems revealed.

Local Office Staff

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the ratio of staff to claimants in the Department of Health and Social Security office, Roebuck House, Cosham, Portsmouth; and what are the ratios for 1985 and 1984.

Mr. Lyell: The ratio of staff to supplementary benefit claimants at August 1986 and for comparable times in 1984 and 1985, is as follows:

	Number
1984	1:138
1985	1:137
1986	1:128

Similar information for other benefits is not available.

Hillingdon Health Authority

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the extent to which funding of Hillingdon health authority has changed in real terms between 1982-83 and 1986-87, taking account of (i) changes in demography, (ii) medical technology, and (iii) the effects of national and regional reallocation processes.

Mr. Newton: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the source of the information on which the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for South Derbyshire, based her statement on 4 December, *Official Report*, column 1162, that Hillingdon health authority had a reserve of more than £1 million; if he will give a breakdown of this total; and if he has anything to add.

Mr. Newton: Information on Hillingdon health authority's financial position was provided by the North-West Thames regional health authority. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of the regional health authority for a fuller account of Hillingdon's present financial position.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what the total number of staff working for the Department of Health and Social Security in Portsmouth is now; and whether the number will increase after the opening of the new office in Commercial Chambers, Montgomery Way.

Mr. Lyell: The number of staff allocated to the Department's office in Portsmouth is 223. The reorganistion of office boundaries following the opening of the new office in January 1987 will also affect the Department's two offices at Havant, whose current combined complement is 142. No change is the overall complement is currently envisaged.

Health Authorities (Resources)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the variation between district health authorities in their use of their overall cash resources as shown by their net asset or liability position.

Mr. Newton: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Agency Nurses

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many agency nurses have been used by the North East Thames region during the most recent 12-month period for which figures are available; and what are the comparable figures for the North West Thames region.

Mr. Newton: The precise information requested is not available centrally. However, at 30 September 1985, 850 agency nursing and midwifery staff in whole-time equivalent terms were employed by North East Thames region and 1,080 in whole-time equivalent terms were employed by North West Thames region.

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what consultations he has had with the Royal College of Nursing about the survey being carried out into the reasons why some nurses opt for agency rather than permanent employment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I understand that the Royal College of Nursing, as part of its evidence to the Review Body for Nursing Staff, Midwives, Health Visitors and Professions Allied to Medicine, has commissioned a survey from the Institute of Manpower Studies on, among other things, the reasons why some nurses opt for agency rather than permanent employment. There is no consultation between the parties on review body evidence, but we shall be studying the RCN's survey with interest in due course.

Doctors (Shortages)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has received from the National Association of Health Authorities about shortages of doctors in particular specialties; and if he has anything to add to the statement made by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) on this subject on 4 December, *Official Report*, column 1154.

Mr. Newton: We have received from the National Association of Health Authorities a copy of its survey of difficulties in the recruitment of junior doctors. Representatives of NAHA have also met with departmental officials on the matter to consider how such difficulties could be avoided. The possible means of resolving the current difficulties that emerged from these and other discussions were discussed on 4 December and I have nothing to add to my hon. Friend's statement.

NHS (Speech Therapists)

Mr. Rowe asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to his answer of 8 December, *Official Report*, column 69, the health authorities involved in the cases referred to have yet received the formal judgment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The health authorities concerned have now received the written reasons for the tribunal's decision. I understand that the claimants are considering the possibility of an appeal.

National Association of Family Support Groups

Mr. Terry Fields asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met the National Association of Family Support Groups; what was discussed; and when he intends to meet them again.

Mrs. Currie: The National Association of Family Support Groups has not approached us for a meeting.

We have not met it and have at present no plans to do so.

Mr. Terry Fields asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what funding, in the fight against drugs, has been given to the National Association of Family Support Groups; and through which agency.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that the national association has not applied to any statutory agency for funding.

Drug Abuse

Mr. Terry Fields asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many voluntary organisations have received finance in the fight against drug abuse; to what level; what criteria must be met for funding; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Department makes grants to voluntary organisations under section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968. Under these powers, 75 voluntary organisations are receiving a total of £6,387,000 over three years under the central funding initiative to pump-prime local projects for the development of services to people with drug-related problems. The criteria for receiving grants under the initiative are set out in circular HN(83) 13/LSSL(83)1.

In addition, three national voluntary organisations working in the drug misuse field are receiving grants totalling £438,000 in 1986-87 under the general scheme of grants under section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968. This scheme, in the main, is to assist with the central costs of national voluntary organisations which cannot readily be financed otherwise. The scheme also enables grants to be awarded for limited periods for experimental or innovative local projects of potential

national significance. Individual applications are carefully considered for value for money in relation to policy objectives for the personal social services and health services.

NHS (Equal Opportunities)

Mr. Sackville asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on current personnel policies and procedures within the National Health Service in respect of provision of equal opportunities for employees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Three quarters of a million women work in the National Health Service which is greatly dependent on them for the delivery of patient care. Health authorities need to ensure that women enjoy equal opportunities with men to develop and deploy to the full their talents, professioanl skills and expertise. In particular, their policies should take account of the fact that many women take a break in service in order to care for young children. They should not be disadvantaged in their career development as a result. We need to retain these staff and to encourage those who have left the service to come back.

With the agreement and support of the chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, I have invited the regional personnel manager of North-West Thames regional health authority to lead a small working group to consider the personnel policies and practices needed in the NHS to provide equality of opportunity in employment and in particular to make recommendations for management of the career break. The working group includes representatives of NHS staff interests, the Department, the National Health Service training authority and the Equal Opportunities Commission. I have asked them to liaise closely with the task force on racial equality established earlier this year by the King Edward fund for London.

Census

Mr. Nicholls asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what public tests are being carried out for the next census of population.

Mrs. Currie: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland have asked the Registrars General to conduct a voluntary census test in April 1987.

This test will cover about 80,000 households in parts of Amber Valley, Hammersmith and Fulham, Reading, Middlesbrough, Dundee city, Angus and Ross and Cromarty. Specimen forms will be placed in the Library of the House when they become available. The test is mainly concerned with procedures for collecting census forms from households but the opportunity is being taken of trying out revised forms of census question also. The questions asked on the forms will not necessarily be those used in the next full census. I hope all members of the public invited to take part in the test will do so.

The answers given in these voluntary tests will be entirely confidential and no information about individual persons or households will be passed outside the census offices.

RAWP Formula (Review)

Mr. Wood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the report of the National Health Service Management Board on the review of the resource allocation working party formula; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fowler: I have now received a report from the NHS management board on its review of the resource allocation working party (RAWP) formula for calculating targets for regional health authorities. I am publishing that report today. Copies are available from the Vote Office.

The Government remain committed to the principle of allocating resources more fairly across the country. Substantial progress has been made towards bringing regions closer to their target fair shares. As they move closer to target, it becomes increasingly important that the targets themselves should be as soundly based as possible.

The board's report confirms the need for a formula approach at a national level. It also confirms the general principles underlying the present formula. But it concludes that there are aspects where there is scope for improvement. These include my original concerns about the way the formula estimates relative need for health services, taking account of such factors as the pattern of illness across the country, the effects of social deprivation on health service use, and the costs of teaching hospitals and of patients living in one region but being treated in another. Other areas of concern are also identified, including the way the formula allows for higher than average labour costs in some regions. The board was able to draw on the work already done within certain regions to improve some aspects of the present formula. But this work, and other existing data and research, did not in themselves provide a basis for deciding on the precise form of the changes which should be made to the national formula. The report therefore proposes a programme of further work next year. I endorse this proposal, and the necessary further work is being pursued.

The review was concerned with the distribution of national resources to regions. However, the consultation process on the review also highlighted that many of the problems of resource allocation arise at sub-regional level. The main areas where there is scope for improvement have a much greater impact on relative need between districts within a region than between regions. I hope, therefore, that the research which we are now going to carry out will be a great help to regions in allocating resources to districts.

Meantime, I firmly endorse the report's conclusions that allocations to districts must be based on a realistic and manageable plan for services, not on the mechanistic application of a financial formula. The report recommends that I should issue planning guidelines to regions which re-emphasise the need for them to have plans which are manageable and sensitive to factors affecting service provision locally, and for allocations to be based on those plans. Regions also need to plan explicitly for factors which are not fully covered by the present formula. I welcome these recommendations and will be in touch with regional health authorities about them. In addition, I shall be using the special fund, announced last month, to provide transitional help to those regions which received the lowest growth next year under national RAWP. This is to ensure that they are able to continue to make progress

towards improving services for priority groups and for patients living outside the main cities, without damaging inner city services. I shall be announcing details of the arrangements for distributing that special fund when I announce details next week of the cash increases for regions for 1987-88.

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Winnick asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is the estimated number of non-pensioners in the United Kingdom whose income is based on supplementary benefit and other forms of benefit received from his Department; what was the number in May 1979; and what was the percentage change;

(2) if he will list the total number of those in the west midlands region of working age who are in receipt of supplementary benefit or other forms of benefit from his Department, the number in May 1979; and the percentage change.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 November 1986, c. *75-76*]: Information on the numbers of persons under pension age in receipt of supplementary benefit with or without another benefit in November 1979 and December 1984 is as follows: information for May 1979 is not available.

	Number of claimants (thousands)		*Percentage change*
	November 1979	*December 1984*	
West Midlands[1]			
Supplementary benefit with another benefit	60	152	+153
Supplementary benefit with no other benefit	48	177	+269
Total	108	329	+205
Great Britain			
Supplementary benefit with another benefit	647	1,373	+112
Supplementary benfit with no other benefit	485	1,553	+220
Total	1,132	2,926	+158

Note: [1] By December 1984, the former west midlands social security region had been amalgamated with the new midlands region. The figures for December 1984 relate to those offices which formerly formed the west midlands region.

It is not possible to divide the figures in respect of Northern Ireland between those with other benefits and those without. The total figures are as follows:

Number of claimants (thousands)		*Percentage change*
1979	*1984*	
59	126	+114

Source: Annual statistical inquiries 1979 and 1984.

Patient Care

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each year since 1979 the number of *(a)* in-patient discharges and deaths and *(b)* new out-patients treated among patients receiving acute treatment under contractual arrangements with institutions outside the National Health Service in England.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 24 November 1986, c. *129-30*]: The information requested is given in the table.

Patients receiving acute[1] *treatment under contractual arrangements with institutions outside the National Health Service—England.*

Year	*Discharges & Deaths*	*New Out-Patients*
1979	21,976	40,202
1980	21,011	12,435
1981	21,463	12,229
1982	22,150	14,785
1983	22,360	13,327
1984	23,887	13,650
1985	25,132	13,744

[1] Acute is defined as all specialties except geriatrics, mental handicap, mental illness and maternity.

Children's Medicines

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people were dependent on supplementary benefit in London, broken down into local authority boroughs, in 1979 and on the latest available date.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986, c. *729*]: The following numbers of people were dependent upon supplementary benefit in the area previously covered by the Greater London council, in 1979 and 1984 (the latest date for which information is available):

	Number
1979	602,000
1984	996,000

Source: Supplementary benefit annual statistical inquiry 1979 and 1984.

Cervical Cancer Smear Tests

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish a table showing the number of cervical cancer smear tests conducted in each year from 1974 and the proportion of positive results;

(2) if he will publish a table showing the number of positive cervical cancer smear tests recorded in each year from 1974 and the proportion of those so detected who subsequently died.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 17 December 1986]: I regret that my earlier reply contained an error. In the reply I said,

"some cancers or pre-cancers would never progress to more advanced stages of the disease"

This should have read,

"some pre-cancers would never progress to more advanced stages of the disease".

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 19 December 1986

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

BICC (Fibre Optics Unit)

Mr. George Howarth asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public money from whatever sources has been paid to British Insulated Callendar Cables towards the costs of developing and setting up the fibre optics unit on the Knowsley South industrial park.

Mr. Butcher: None.

Ault and Wiborg Factory, Perivale

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to receive the report of the Office of Fair Trading on the take-over bid for the Ault and Wiborg paint factory, Perivale by Bergers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: The Director General of Fair Trading expects to submit his advice to my right hon. Friend on this case shortly.

Marking Orders

Mr. Arnold asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to his answer of 1 December, *Official Report*, columns *434-35*, when he expects consultations with consumer and trade associations about the possibility of making an order under section 8 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 to be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: The associations concerned have been asked to submit their comments by 30 January 1987 on a consultation letter from my Department dated 4 December. The Government will study the responses carefully and it may be necessary to clarify certain points further with those who submit comments. At present I think it unlikely that consultations will have been completed before the middle of March.

Iraq

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who represented Her Majesty's Government on the recent trade delegation to Iraq; and what their itinerary was.

Mr. Alan Clark: I visited Baghdad in November for the annual meeting of the United Kingdom/Iraq joint commission. I was accompanied by DTI and ECGD officials. I remained in the city throughout my visit.

Rolls-Royce plc (Redundancies)

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Trade and industry what representations he has received regarding possible redundancies at the Rolls-Royce plant, Hatfield.

Mr. Pattie: None.

Lloyd's (PCW Syndicate)

Mr. Robin Cook asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on the current state of progress in the negotiations with Lloyd's insurance in formulating a settlement on members of syndicates managed by Peter Cameron Webb.

Mr. Butcher: The formulation of any settlement is a matter for Lloyd's itself and the other parties involved, but I am informed that intensive negotiations are proceeding.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

Mr. Knox asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the timetable for implementing the bilateral agreements for the multi-fibre arrangement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The bilateral agreements will be implemented in the Community under regulations already agreed by all member states. The regulations are expected to be adopted by the Industry Council on 22 December following the lifting of the United Kingdom's parliamentary scrutiny reserve. This will enable the agreements to come into operation as planned on 1 January.

Quality Assurance Support Scheme

Mr. Porter asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the assistance to companies made available under the quality assurance support scheme.

Mr. Butcher: The quality assurance support scheme, which was launched in 1983 to run for four years, provides assistance to firms employing up to 500 people to introduce quality management systems and to demonstrate their quality achievements through independent assessment. The aim of the scheme was to provide clear evidence of the benefits to smaller firms of good quality management and certification by building up a portfolio of successful case studies, the lessons from which could then be disseminated more widely.

To date over 600 applications have been made for assistance under the scheme, of which 372 have been received this year. This reflects growing awareness on the part of industry and commerce of the importance of quality to Britain's competitiveness, a message which the Government has been promoting vigorously through its national quality campaign. The quality assurance support scheme, which is part of that campaign and on which £3·8 million will have been spent once outstanding applications have been processed and the projects completed, has thus fulfilled its objective. It has therefore been decided that no further applications under the scheme can be accepted as from midnight today. A full evaluation of the scheme will be conducted in 1987 and its results made public.

Research and Development

Mr. D. E. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will identify the various programmes promoted by his Department within the United Kingdom and through collaborative ventures within the European Economic Community to promote research, development and production; when these programmes were inaugurated; and what are the financial resources devoted to each of them.

Mr. Pattie [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. 610]: The information requested is given in the table below. Further information on research and development programmes is contained in the annual review of Government funded research and development 1985 and on measures under the Industrial Development Act 1982 in the annual report for the year ended 31 March 1986 (HC 552).

Research, development and production programmes promoted by DTI

Programme	*Inaugurated*[1]	*1986-87 estimates provision (£ million)*
United Kingdom activities		
Research establishments	na	46·2
Support for innovation[2]	1982	221·6
Aircraft and aeroengine research and development[3]	na	29·9
Space technology programmes[4]	na	64·0
Launch aid[5]	na	100·4
Industrial Development Act:—	1982	
Section 7—Regional support		226·8
Section 8—Industry schemes		35·8
Part III—Assistance to the shipbuilding industry		28·0
European Community industrial research and development programmes[6]		
ESPRIT (Information technology)	1984	21·0
RACE (Telecommunications)	1985	1·4
BRITE (Industrial technologies)	1985	4·4
Biotechnology	1985	1·5
Materials	1986	2·0
Technical reference standards	1983	0·7

[1] Not applicable if inaugurated prior to 1979-80.
[2] Includes support for United Kingdom companies involved in EUREKA projects.
[3] Includes contribution to the European Transonic Wind tunnel.
[4] Includes contribution to the European Space Agency.
[5] Includes support for BAe's part in Airbus Industries A320 civil aircraft.
[6] Expenditure is the expected United Kingdom share of the average annual programme budget.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Telephone Calls

Mr. Cohen asked the Lord Privy Seal whether the log of telephone calls made within the Palace of Westminster is stored in machine readable form; how long copies will be kept; and where the log is kept.

Mr. Biffen: The telephone logging equipment which is attached to the Palace of Westminster telephone exchange stores the information on telephone calls in a machine readable form. The printing out of this information is subject to very close controls.

The equipment is capable of storing information only for the current month and the preceding month. When a print-out is taken it is kept only for as long as it is necessary to carry out the particular work for which it was obtained. The information logged for telephone extensions other than those in public places has not, and will not, be printed out without the specific authorisation of the person concerned. The equipment is located on the third floor of the Palace of Westminster.

I also refer the hon. Member to the replies which I have already given on this subject to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell); on 5 and 10 December at columns *802* and *203*.

Mr. Cohen asked the Lord Privy Seal whether the system whereby telephone calls made within the Palace of Westminster are logged will be registered under the terms of the Data Protection Act.

Mr. Biffen: I am advised that the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984 do not apply to the information stored in the call logging equipment attached to the Palace of Westminster telephone exchange. The question of registration therefore does not apply.

Mr. Dalyell asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will raise the matter of the alleged interceptions of hon. Members' telephones with the Select Committee on House of Commons Services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Biffen: The tandem exchange referred to in the letter which the hon. Member read to the House on 15 December (*Official Report*, c. *824-5*) forms part of the Government telecommunications network, and as such comes under the responsibility of the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has recently reiterated the assurances that have been given by successive Governments with regard to the interception of the telephone calls of Members of Parliament on 10 December 1986, at column 161. In these circumstances I do not consider it necessary or appropriate to raise this matter with the Services Committee.

WALES

Selective Industrial Assistance

Mr. Dewar asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the level of uptake of selective assistance to industry under section 7 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 in cash terms for Wales in each year since 1982 and *(b)* the percentage change in level of uptake between years.

Mr. Nicholas Edwards: The value of regional selective assistance grant offers accepted in Wales in the financial years 1982-83, 1985-86 together with the percentage change between those years is as follows:

	£ million	*per cent.*
1982-83	22	—
1983-84	51	+131
1984-85	39	-23
1965-86	48	+23

Scheduled Monuments

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) whether his Department has at any stage made an application to CADW for scheduled monument consent; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many scheduled monument clearance applications have been received for sites in Wales since CADW came into existence; how many of these have been determined; and if he will list them indicating the determination in each case;

(3) what is the role of his Department in the procedures relating to scheduled document clearance determinations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Bypasses

Mr. Barry Jones asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the length, cost or estimated cost, start and finish date for the Newbridge, Chirk Gresford bypasses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Work on the Newbridge bypass and Whitehurst link (3.1 miles) is scheduled to start before the end of December 1987, subject to the completion of remaining statutory procedures and the availability of resources. The estimated cost is approximately £12 million at current prices. Work on the Chirk bypass (1.6 miles in Wales, 0.4 miles in England) is planned to start between January 1988 and December 1990, subject to the completion of statutory procedures and the availability of resources. The estimated cost of the Welsh section is approximately £8 million at current prices. Work started on the Gresford-Pulford bypass in early December. The Welsh section is 4.5 miles (total length 6.3 miles) and the estimated cost of that section is approximately £20 million at current prices. The work is expected to take two and a half years to complete.

Poor Housing (Research)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what studies his Department has undertaken into an association between damp housing, mite infestations and allergic reactions;

(2) what studies his Department has undertaken into an association between the incidence of visible moulds on house walls and the incidence of asthma;

(3) what evidence his Department has compiled about an association between damp patches on bedroom walls and persons complaining of wheezing and breathlessness.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

House Condition Survey

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales if the 1986 Welsh house condition survey will include comprehensive data on temperatures in occupied homes.

Mr. Mark Robinson: That is not part of the survey.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Gower on 25 November, *Official Report*, column *173*, if he will place in the Library the result of question 96 of the schedule section M of the Welsh housing condition survey of 1981, disaggregating the figures by each county in Wales and also presenting the figures in percentage terms.

Mr. Mark Robinson: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Infant Mortality

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information his Department holds on the seasonal mortality of babies on the first year of life.

Mr. Mark Robinson: The Registrar General is responsible for the registration of all deaths in England and Wales. Details of infant mortality in Wales, on a quarterly basis are published in table 9 of "Population Trends", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Housing (Central Heating)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information his Department holds on (i) the proportion of all homes in Wales which have central heating and (ii) the proportion of homes in Wales which have central heating where all the occupants are over 65 years of age.

Mr. Mark Robinson: It is estimated from the Welsh house condition survey that, in 1981, 55·1 per cent. of all dwellings in Wales, and 42·2 per cent. of those dwellings in which the head of household was over 65, had central heating. Figures cannot be reliably estimated for pensioner households for later years; but the family expenditure survey suggests that in 1982-83, 59·1 per cent. of households in Wales had full or partial central heating.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what will be the capital costs of establishing each city technology college in *(a)* a new building or *(b)* a converted building.

Mr. Dunn: It is impossible to give detailed costings at this stage. The capital costs of establishing a city technology college will depend on various factors such as local property prices, the extent of any gifts or loans of furniture and equipment, and the size of the school. However, as a guide the Department has estimated that on average the total capital cost of a city technology college in converted premises would be between £3 million and £6 million, and that on average the total capital cost of a city technology college in new premises would be between £7 million and £10 million.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of the capital costs for the establisment of a city technology college his Department intends to be provided by *(a)* local business, commerce and industry, *(b)* his Department, *(c)* local authorities and *(d)* charities.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend intends that all or a substantial part of the capital costs for the establishment of a city technology college will be met from private sources such as industry and commerce or educational charities. Some assistance towards capital costs may be available from the Department. It is open to local education authorities to assist promoters by releasing surplus buildings for this purpose. The exact mix of funding will depend on the local circumstances of each individual CTC.

Church-aided Schools

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what funding for new works has been granted by his Department to church-aided schools in each of the last five years; and how this has been disbursed among the main denominations.

Mr. Dunn: The annual allocations made for capital work at voluntary aided and special agreement schools take account of expenditure on specified major projects on which work is due to begin in the forth-coming year. The table shows the expenditure allowed for on such projects in each of the last five years.

£000's England only

	Roman Catholic	*Church of England*	*Other Aided Schools*
1986-87	4,831	647	396
1985-86	1,916	1,180	411
1984-85	1,390	1,172	295
1983-84	1,275	1,233	(nil)
1982-83	957	1,484	(nil)

Notes

(1) The sums allocated relate only to major projects costing £120,000 or more.

(2) The allocations are those announced before the beginning of the year in question and do not include subsequent revisions.

(3) The figures shown are for the expected expenditure in the first financial year on each new project and are related neither to the total value of the work to be undertaken nor to the total of allocations made.

(4) The religious denomination of a school may not be shown in its name. For the purposes of this table such schools have been included with non-denominational schools in the "Other Aided Schools" column.

(5) The 1986-87 Roman Catholic figure reflects expenditure on major reorganisations in Manchester and Liverpool.

Student Grants

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to complete his comprehensive review of future arrangements for students financial support; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: The work of the student support review is expected to be completed next year.

Careers Advice

Mr. Lawler asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any proposals for the review of provision of careers advice in schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer which I gave him on Tuesday 2 December at column *564*.

Higher Education

Mr. Fatchett asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the projects which will be included in the public sector higher education capital programme for 1988-89.

Mr. Walden: The National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education, which advises my right hon. Friend on both capital and recurrent expenditure allocations, has deferred consideration until the new year of its advice on the projects to be included in the public sector higher education capital building programme for 1988-89.

Mr. Dover asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will now announce his decisions on public sector higher education provision in 1987-88 and on the distribution of the advanced further education pool and voluntary sector quantum for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have today written to the chairman of the committee of the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education (NAB) in response to the committee's advice on the disposition of student numbers in public sector higher education in 1987-88, and on the basis for distributing the advanced further education quantum of £716·5 million and voluntary sector quantum of £48·85 million for the financial year 1987-88 which I announced in the House on 6 November. I have accepted this advice except for recommendations on town and country planning education and as it bears on fine art provision.

Following my announcement that the resources available for polytechnics and colleges in 1987-88 would be nearly 8·5 per cent. up on the current year, NAB recommends that student access should be further extended in 1987-88. The target numbers now set for 1987-88 provide for nearly 3,000 more student places compared with plans for 1986-87 and a growth in recruitment of 2·5 per cent. over planned 1986 intakes. They also look forward to expansion in the priority areas of science, engineering and other vocational disciplines.

As in previous years, the greater parts of the advanced further education quantum and of the voluntary sector quantum are being allocated to local education authorities and voluntary colleges in relation to target student numbers. The allocations have been made to allow every institution a standard teaching unit of resource for each student. This is supplemented in the case of institutions whose advanced provision exceeds a quarter of the total in recognition of the higher costs associated with advanced further education.

The allocations announced today include £15 million for a range of selective initiatives in areas of high priority and in institutions of recognised strength. Polytechnics and colleges have bid competitively for funds and these have been awarded as follows:

£5·5 million for new courses in science and engineering, particularly conversion courses which will equip those with non-science backgrounds to enter advanced courses in the technologies, and on the development of new courses of teacher training in shortage subjects for non-traditional students;

nearly £4 million to develop further a capacity for applied research of relevance to industry;

£2·5 million to provide for an increase in technicians in support of high technology courses;

£3 million to expand continuing education and professional updating (PICKUP).

A total of £0·25 million is included in the voluntary sector allocations to support the development of new courses of teacher training.

In addition, £1·418 million has been allocated to eight polytechnics to meet the recurrent costs of their continuing participation in phase II of the engineering and technology programme, and £2·948 million has been allocated to continue for a third year the research and biotechnology initiatives which began in 1985-86.

I have provisionally accepted NAB's advice that intakes to three public sector undergraduate courses in town and country planning should cease in order to bring

about a desirable concentration in centres of strength. I propose, however, not to bring the decision into effect until 1988-89 to give the institutions affected time to make representations to me if they wish. Meanwhile, and so as not to pre-empt my final decision, I have made allowance for all existing public sector undergraduate town and country planning courses in financial allocations for 1987-88.

As regards fine art, I have decided to allocate modest additions of numbers—in all over 40 places—to certain institutions in order to moderate the overall reduction of over 20 per cent. in fine art intakes recommended to me by the NAB.

Letters are being sent today to local education authorities and institutions notifying them of my decisions. Copies of my letter to the NAB committee chairman, and of a note explaining the method by which the two quanta for 1986-87 are being distributed, together with full details of the allocations, have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Polytechnics

Mr. Dover asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures the Government are taking to increase the number of places available for students in polytechnics; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer which I gave him today on public sector higher education provision in 1987-88.

Comprehensive Schools

Mr. Merchant asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) to what factors he attributes differences between the examinations attainment of Catholic and non-Catholic comprehensive schools;

(2) what information is available to his Department about the comparative achievements in terms of numbers of pupils achieving five or more O-levels of Catholic and non-Catholic comprehensive schools, respectively in *(a)* Newcastle upon Tyne and *(b)* England and Wales as a whole.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information is not available centrally: the Department's examination statistics are not classified by the religious denomination of the school.

Fine Art Students

Mr. Gale asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received about advanced fine art student numbers in Kent; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Walden: My right hon. Friend has received a large number of representations about fine art numbers in Kent following the recommendations to him from the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education (NAB) that the planned intake for 1987 should be substantially reduced compared with previous years. My right hon. Friend has carefully considered these representations. He has decided to accept NAB's advice for 1987-88, but is persuaded tht it would be right in the longer term to look for a restoration of fine art numbers in Kent to their existing level.

In so deciding, my right hon. Friend had particular regard to the desirability, following the creation of the Kent Institute of Art and Design of phasing out provision duplicated in the three constituent colleges. He understood that the reduction in numbers for 1987 recommended by NAB was consistent with the rationalisation of existing provision which the authority itself intends to carry through. My right hon. Friend understands, however, that the authority plans to continue the rationalisation process by launching new, replacement courses. He was not satisfied that the authority's plans to introduce new courses were sufficiently far advanced to justify the allocation of numbers in 1987, but looks to the authority to bring forward proposals for 1988 and expects then to make financial provision for them.

In-service Training

Mr. Key asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what improvement he expects in local authority arrangements for the in-service training of teachers next year as a result of his intended new grants scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Local education authorities have responded to my proposals to improve in-service training with plans for a 17·5 per cent. increase in training expenditure from £225 million to £265 million and for better systems to identify training needs and priorities and to ensure the effectiveness of that training.

I have therefore decided to confirm my indicative allocation of £200 million aided expenditure for the scheme. I intend to confirm allocations to each authority after regulations have been laid before Parliament and come into force.

This is a major commitment by the Government to the improvement of teaching quality and to the professional development of teachers. Central Government training grants to local authorities will total £114 million. Training should be more evenly spread throughout the country. In monitoring the implementation of these plans I shall look at the extent to which authorities take account of the needs of individual teachers, of their schools and colleges and of the others covered by the scheme, and of the effectiveness of the training in improving the quality of teaching.

Advisory Board for the Research Councils

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science who will succeed to the chairmanship of the advisory board for the research councils when the term of appointment of the present chairman, Professor Sir David Phillips, expires on 22 January 1987.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have decided to reappoint Professor Sir David Phillips, FRS, professor of molecular biophysics at the university of Oxford for a further period of four years.

Disruptive Behaviour

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action he proposes to take in relation to disruptive behaviour by younger pupils in primary schools in the light of the paper by Lawrence and Steed in "Educational Studies."

Mrs. Rumbold: The greater authority which the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 will confer on governing

bodies and headteachers in relation to the conduct of schools will do much to secure better standards of discipline. In addition Her Majesty's inspectorate of schools is conducting a survey of good practice in the matter of behaviour and discipline which will be published in the near future.

My right hon. Friend is concerned about disruptive behaviour wherever it occurs. However the many visits to schools which the inspectorate is constantly making show that most primary and secondary schools are well ordered communities and that the overwhelming majority of pupils are well behaved for most of the time. Evidence from the inspectorate does not support the suggestion that the onset of disruptive behaviour in primary schools is getting earlier. In comparison, the studies made by Lawrence and Steed were limited in scope, sample size and duration; and I do not believe that they are a sufficient basis on which to reach any firm conclusion.

Stoker Report

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action he is taking following the Stoker report about the clinical research centre.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The Stoker report recommended that a multi-speciality national centre for postgraduate medical education and research should be formed by merging the MRC clinical research centre at Northwick park and the royal postgraduate medical school at Hammersmith hospital with basic medical science as an integral part of the new institution. This recommendation has been approved in principle by the Medical Research Council, which has so informed my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services and me. Detailed studies of the ways and means of implementing it are now being undertaken by the council in collaboration with the other bodies directly concerned with the proposal. No decision can, of course, be taken until these studies are complete.

The Government note this interesting and constructive initiative by the Medical Research Council, aimed at creating a new national centre of excellence in clinical research by merging these two institutions. If a practical and cost-effective scheme can be devised, it will open up new possibilities with the potential to be of great benefit, not only to medical research and the development of medical care but to our pharmaceutical and biotechnological industries. The Government will consider the results of the detailed studies, and the council's conclusions, when they are presented, with particular interest.

Captial Expenditure (Schools)

Mr. George Gardiner asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the amount available for capital expenditure on schools in 1987-88 including the voluntary aided sector.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Local education authorities have today been informed of their allocations of prescribed capital expenditure for 1987-88, and of the allocations for capital spending by the governors of voluntary aided and special agreement schools in their area. These are as follows:

Education capital expenditure 1987-88
Allocations for each local education authority

£'000

LEA	Capital expenditure at county and controlled schools and further education establishments	Capital expenditure by the governors of aided and special agreement schools
Greater London		
Barking	806	—
Barnet	1,744	880
Bexley	1,641	126
Brent	2,514	613
Bromley	1,618	20
Croydon	2,428	503
Ealing	2,147	762
Enfield	1,222	93
Haringey	1,121	75
Harrow	2,952	25
Havering	393	—
Hillingdon	1,059	230
Hounslow	1,255	153
Kingston upon Thames	1,683	—
Merton	1,054	65
Newham	1,165	60
Redbridge	1,761	5
Richmond upon Thames	115	12
Sutton	247	—
Waltham Forest	2,585	50
Inner London	14,957	862
Metropolitan Districts West Midlands		
Birmingham	3,860	985
Coventry	5,709	340
Dudley	1,329	858
Sandwell	576	15
Solihull	500	166
Walsall	824	50
Wolverhampton	1,932	8
Merseyside		
Knowsley	1,108	570
Liverpool	1,885	2,239
St. Helens	855	888
Sefton	1,790	50
Wirral	1,316	327
Greater Manchester		
Bolton	645	734
Bury	320	120
Manchester	8,968	2,831
Oldham	2,799	274
Rochdale	2,220	335
Salford	1,882	750
Stockport	1,243	122
Tameside	389	35
Trafford	1,064	30
Wigan	2,717	1,045
South		
Barnsley	530	5
Doncaster	365	—
Rotherham	287	69
Sheffield	3,197	130
West Yorkshire		
Bradford	6,303	270
Calderdale	1,883	25
Kirklees	1,664	14
Leeds	2,802	20
Wakefield	2,074	47

LEA	*Capital expenditure at county and controlled schools and further education establishments*	*Capital expenditure by the governors of aided and special agreement schools*
Tyne and Wear		
Gateshead	1,112	895
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,369	338
North Tyneside	1,935	275
South Tyneside	1,932	251
Sunderland	2,305	375
Non-metropolitan Counties		
Isles of Scilly	30	—
Avon	4,386	885
Bedfordshire	1,248	4
Berkshire	3,597	593
Buckinghamshire	6,004	1,701
Cambridgeshire	3,399	465
Cheshire	5,043	393
Cleveland	4,351	130
Cornwall	5,645	116
Cumbria	2,852	596
Derbyshire	9,036	685
Devon	4,734	372
Dorset	4,349	1,267
Durham	1,371	449
East Sussex	4,884	1,620
Essex	11,600	420
Gloucestershire	7,467	412
Hampshire	10,918	130
Hereford and Worcester	2,585	654
Hertfordshire	4,100	457
Humberside	10,753	2,684
Isle of Wight	1,375	70
Kent	7,514	534
Lancashire	5,994	793
Leicestershire	5,526	592
Lincolnshire	4,625	65
Norfolk	5,019	41
North Yorkshire	2,035	45
Northamptonshire	1,726	205
Northumberland	655	110
Nottinghamshire	2,379	322
Oxfordshire	1,942	273
Shropshire	5,257	45
Somerset	2,626	50
Staffordshire	7,591	489
Suffolk	6,683	68
Surrey	3,828	1,079
Warwickshire	1,101	80
West Sussex	1,739	420
Wiltshire	3,177	35
England	297,000	39,104

Voluntary Aided and Special Agreement Schools
Major projects to start in 1987-88 (Expenditure for 1987-88 is included in the Governors column of the main list.)

Local Education Authority and Name of School	*Expenditure £000s 1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Barnet			
St. Mary's CE	350	750	50
Berkshire			
Slough, Holy Family	233	18	—
Bexley			
St. Columba's	116	464	104
Birmingham			
St. Thomas Aquinas RC	30	580	20
St. Philip's RC Sixth Form College	10	270	20
Archbishop Ilsley RC	50	135	15
Bury			
St. Monica's RC High	66	1,000	500
Cumbria			
Bothel CE	50	223	40
Devon			
Brixton CE	348	17	—
Dorset			
Colehill, St. Catherine's	120	—	—
Durham			
Consett, St. Patrick's	63	95	—
East Sussex			
East Brighton RC Primary Reorganisation	450	140	10
ILEA			
Our Lady and St. Joseph RC	80	333	—
Isle of Wight			
Newport CE	70	595	207
Lancashire			
Blackburn, Our Lady and St. John RC	138	1,118	746
Blackburn, St. Bede's RC	140	1,134	756
Leicestershire			
Leicester, St. John's CE	97	41	—
Warner/Emmanuel CE	207	497	124
Liverpool			
RC Reorganisation Phase V	1,586	—	—
Nottinghamshire			
Mansfield, Queen Elizabeth Boys	110	42	6
Oldham			
St. Anselm's	90	950	405
Oxfordshire			
Bishop Carpenter CE	212	—	—
St. Helens			
RC Secondary Reorganisation	876	2,420	1,421
Solihull			
St. Peters RC	35	100	15
Staffordshire			
Stone, St. Dominic's	50	350	240
Surrey			
Redhill, St. Bede's Ecumenical	209	865	865
Warwickshire			
Southam, St. Mary's	20	370	10
West Sussex			
Worthing, Chatsmore RC	250	750	750
Wigan			
Abram CE	75	70	—

Local Education Authority and Name of School	Expenditure £000s 1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
Wirral			
Birkenhead, St. Joseph's	40	170	20
Plessington High Phase 2A	200	170	30

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisons (Sleeping Arrangements)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the prisons in the United Kingdom where on 1 December prisoners were sleeping three to a cell.

Mr. Mellor: Information on prisoners sharing cells in prisons in England and Wales is collected on the second Sunday of every month. The prison establishments in which some inmates were sleeping three to a cell certified for one prisoner on 9 November, the latest date for which information is available, were as follows:

Bedford
Birmingham
Brockhill
Canterbury
Cardiff
Dorchester
Durham
Exeter
Gloucester
Hull
Leeds
Leicester
Lewes
Lincoln
Liverpool
Manchester
Norwich
Oxford
Reading
Shepton Mallet
Swansea

Convicted Persons (Statistics)

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many men and women, respectively, who were sentenced after deferment in 1985 following conviction for indictable offences received immediate custodial sentences;

(2) how many men and women, respectively, who were convicted of indictable offences in 1985 had their sentences deferred.

Mr. Mellor: The readily available information is published in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 1985, Supplementary Tables, Volume 4" in tables S4.8(a), S4.8(b), S4.9(a) and S4.9(b).

Police (Radioactive Incidents)

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Cleveland as to the training which police in Stockton on Tees, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Langbaurgh areas receive in dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Cleveland as to the equipment available to the police and as to the conduct of emergency and evacuation exercises, in the Stockton on Tees, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Langbaurgh areas.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: All officers of Cleveland constabulary are made aware of the national arrangements for dealing with incidents involving radioactivity (the NAIR scheme). Officers attend initial and refresher courses in dealing with incidents involving hazardous materials, including radioactive substances. Course open to officers of other forces and emergency services are also run. Relevant equipment is held by the fire service. Contingency plans are regularly tested in exercises held with industry, including the CEGB at Hartlepool.

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Durham as to the training which police in the Sedgefield, Easington, Darlington, Teesdale, Derwentside, Wear Valley, Chester-le-Street and Durham areas receive in dealing with accidents involving radioactive contamination;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Durham as to the equipment available to the police, and as to the conduct of emergency and evacuation exercises, in the Sedgefield, Easington, Darlington, Teesdale, Derwentside, Wear Valley, Chester-le-Street, and Durham areas.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: All officers of Durham constabulary are made aware of the existence of the national arrangements for dealing with incidents involving radioactivity (the NAIR scheme). Some officers of the rank of sergeant and above attend training courses in dealing with incidents involving radioactive substances run by Cleveland constabularly. Relevant equipment is held by the fire service and is also available from industry. During 1986 one major incident exercise has been held, and plans for the evacuation of premises were used operationally twice.

Police Widows

Mr. David Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the remaining numbers of pre-1956 preserved rate police widows and of the cost of implementing the police negotiating board's recommended award for them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The number of police widows in England, Wales and Scotland in receipt of preserved-rate pensions whose husbands retired before 1 April 1956 is estimated as 6,500. The initial cost of awarding the increase recommended by the police negotiating board is estimated as £455,000 per annum.

With regret my right hon. Friend felt unable to implement the recommendation because to do so would have been a breach of the long standing principle that entitlement under public service schemes should not be improved retrospectively. Such a breach could not be justified for this group of police widows in isolation from claims on behalf of other groups of public service widows, the cost of meeting which would in total be unacceptably high.

London Fire Brigade

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change there has been in the standards of fire cover by the London fire brigade since 31 March 1979; and whether he plans to permit any increase in the net number of fire appliances or in the recruitment of firefighters for the brigade.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There has been no change since 1979 in the nationally applied recommended minimum standards of fire cover. Comprehensive information is not

held centrally about the changes made by individual fire authorities to the level and disposition of fire cover in their areas.

We have received no proposals from the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority in respect of the establishment scheme for the London fire brigade for 1987-88. Such a scheme has to be submitted by 1 January 1987 and when received it will be carefully considered on its merits.

West Mercia Police Authority

Mr. Hawksley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been provided by his Department for the West Mercia police authority in each of the last five years; and what has been the authorised strength of the force at the end of each of those years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Until this financial year, the Home Office met 50 per cent. of the expenditure of the West Mercia police authority through police grant. The Department of the Environment also made a contribution to the remaining expenditure through block grant. Police grant is paid in advance on the basis of estimates and any under-or over-payment is corrected by adjustments to advances in later years. The actual sums paid out in each year will, therefore, be more or less than 50 per cent. of the police authority's actual expenditure in that year.

We have increased the rate of police grant for 1986-87 from 50 per cent. to 51 per cent. The table below sets out for each year the sum of police grant paid by the Home Office to the West Mercia police authority, the authorised establishment of the West Mercia police at 31 March and the actual strength of the force at that date.

	Police grant paid £ million	*Authorised establishment at 31 March*	*Actual strength at 31 March*
1981-82	14·77	1,921	1,926
1982-83	16·48	1,923	1,916
1983-84	18·13	1,923	1,920
1984-85	20·55	1,923	1,919
1985-86	20·61	1,953	1,939

Security Lists

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used in deciding which categories of person should be included in lists maintained by the Metropolitan policy for intelligence purposes; if the possession of a criminal record is a condition for inclusion on the list; who has access to such lists; and what safeguards exist to ensure that unauthorised persons do not gain access to such lists or that unauthorised use is not made of them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: These are operational matters for the Commissioner, but the Home Office has issued guidance in a circular of 17 July 1986 on the disclosure of information—a copy of which was placed in the Library—and in guidelines on the work of Special Branch, which was published in the Fourth report of the Home Affairs Select Committee in April 1985. The guidance emphasises that only necessary and relevant information should be recorded, and that police information should not be disclosed unless there are important considerations of public interest to justify departure from that rule.

Visas

Mr. Tony Lloyd asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement concerning his decision to refuse to extend the temporary admission of J. S. (Home Office reference S579 717/3(S)) on the ground of the expected confinement of his wife in December, when requested to do so by the hon. Member for Stretford;

(2) if he will make a statement concerning his decision to extend temporary admission to J. S. (Home Office reference S579 717/3(S)) on the ground of the expected confinement of his wife in December, when requested to do so by the right Reverend S. Booth-Cliborn, Bishop of Manchester.

Mr. Waddington: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Bidwell asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average time a person seeking to appeal against a refusal to issue a visa for a visit to the United Kingdom from the Indian sub-continent has to wait before the case is dealt with by an adjudicator; what proposals are being considered to speed up this process; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: No appeals against refusal in the Indian sub-continent of a visa to visit the United Kingdom have yet been received by the appellate authorities and it is understood that very few have so far been lodged. Consequently it is too soon to provide the information required. The situation is being closely monitored in consultation with the appellate authorities.

Immigration

Dr. Michael Clark asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish the figures of those admitted to the United Kingdom for settlement over the past 12 months and state their country of origin.

Mr. Waddington: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Welsh Prisoners

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy that every prisoner whose home is in Wales may be held within a prison in Wales if he or she so wishes.

Mr. Mellor: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Community/Police Consultative Group

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the reasons for writing to the community/police consultative group for Lambeth on 23 September to say that the Government have allowed the Metropolitan Police (Compensation) Act 1886 to remain on the statute book even though the Government no longer accepts the principles upon which it is based; and if he will specify the principles with which his Department disagrees.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Prisoners (Rule 43)

Mr. Soley asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number and proportion of

prisoners held on rule 43 in the prison department's south-east region at the end of October in 1976, 1985 and 1986, respectively.

Mr. Mellor: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Immigrants

Mr. John Mark Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information his Department collects on the number of immigrants who have entered the United Kingdom with the stated intention of working, but who have not worked for a five-year period.

Mr. Waddington: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Tamils

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of Sri Lankan Tamils *(a)* men and *(b)* women, who were held in detention on 10 December 1986.

Mr. Waddington: I shall reply as soon as possible.

Mental Health Act 1983

Mr. Nicholas Baker asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in the light of responses to the consultation document issued by his Department and the Department of Health and Social Security, a decision has been reached on whether to seek to amend the Mental Health Act 1983 in respect of offenders suffering from psychopathic disorder.

Mr. Hurd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services and I are grateful for the many comments which we received in response to the joint consultation document. We have decided not to proceed with an amendment to the Mental Health Act. But we shall be giving further consideration to the procedural measures proposed in the document.

Visitors

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many *(a)* passengers in total and *(b)* people seeking admission as visitors who arrived at Heathrow from the Indian sub-continent on any of the days from 11 to 15 October for which figures are available were (i) granted admission, (ii) refused entry and detained, (iii) refused entry and granted temporary admission, (iv) returned to the Indian sub-continent within that period and (v) are still waiting for a decision on whether to grant leave to enter.

Mr. Waddington [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *252-53*]: The available information relates to arrivals at terminal 3, Heathrow only in the period 11 to 15 October inclusive and is given in the table. Column *(b)* refers to all passengers from the Indian sub-continent; no separate information is available about those seeking entry as visitors.

(a) All passengers subject to control	*(b) Passengers from the Indian sub-continent*
i. Approximately 27,600	i. Approximately 5,000
ii. 244	ii. 240
iii. 323	iii. 273
iv. See *(b)*iv	iv. 226 (includes 60 passengers who returned voluntarily having been required to submit to further examination)
v. 586 on 12 December 1986	v. 554 on 12 December 1986

The replies at *(a)* ii and *(b)* ii refer to those detained overnight on the day of arrival.

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passengers from the Indian subcontinent who were detained or granted temporary admission pending further examination between 11 and 16 October were subsequently (i) refused entry but granted temporary admission, (ii) refused entry without the grant of temporary admission, (iii) granted leave to enter and (iv) still await decisions on whether to grant leave to enter the United Kingdom.

Mr. Waddington [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *252-53*]: The available information which relates only to those passengers who arrived at terminal 3, Heathrow between the 11 and 16 October is as follows:

(i) 245
(ii) 248
(iii) 50
(iv) 554 on 12 December 1986

Note: The figure at (ii) relates to those who were detained overnight on the day of arrival.

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those who sought entry to the United Kingdom as visitors between 11 and 16 October are *(a)* still in detention, *(b)* still on indefinite temporary admission and *(c)* still awaiting an interview before a decision on whether to grant leave to enter.

Mr. Waddington [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. 252-53]: The following is the information.

(a) none
(b) No separate figure is available.
(c) 586 on 12 December 1986

The available information relates to passengers who arrived at terminal 3, Heathrow in the period and sought entry in any capacity. Separate statistics are not kept of passengers who seek entry as visitors.

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people *(a)* in total and *(b)* from the Indian subcontinent, sought leave to enter the United Kingdom as visitors on the days from 11 to 16 October for which figures are available.

Mr. Waddington [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. 252-53]: The available information relates to the total number of passengers arriving at terminal 3, Heathrow. No separate statistics are kept of passengers who seek leave to enter as visitors.

In the period about 29,000 passengers sought entry. About 7,200 passengers arrived on flights either from or having connections from the Indian subcontinent.

Mr. Madden asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passengers *(a)* in total and *(b)* from the Indian subcontinent, arrived at Heathrow airport on any of the days from 11 to 15 October for which figures are available.

Mr. Waddington [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *252-53*]: The available information relates to the

total number of passengers arriving at terminal 3, Heathrow. In the period about 36,500 passengers arrived of whom about 6,500 arrived on flights from or having connections from the Indian subcontinent.

Amyl Nitrite

Dame Jill Knight asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to end the manufacture and sale of amyl nitrite; and if he will make a statement.

Sir David Price asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the extent of drug abuse on amyl nitrate within the scope of existing anti-drug regulations.

Mr. Mellor [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *651*]: In the light of comments which I have recently received, I am asking the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to consider whether there now appear to be sufficient grounds to justify controlling the alkyl nitrite group of chemicals under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

THE ARTS

Funding

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he is prepared to fund the National Theatre, the Royal Opera House, the English National Opera, and the Royal Shakespeare Company directly from his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *629-30*]: In 1984, the Government rejected the proposal by the Education, Science and Arts Committee that these bodies should be directly funded, and I see no present reason to change that decision.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts what has been the total amount spent by his Department both directly and indirectly on funding literature in each of the past six years.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *630*]: My Office gives no direct support to literature. It does, however, give substantial indirect support through three main channels: the Arts Council, the public lending right scheme, and the acquisitions budget of the public library service. Further indirect support comes through the availability of the magnificent collections of the British Library which are extensively used by scholars and authors, the reference part of which will be re-housed in the new building at St. Pancras. The relevant figures, in cash terms, are as follows:

£ million

	1980-81	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Public lending right	—	—	—	2	2	2·75
Book purchases by public libraries in England	40·2	43·3	49·2	54·1	53·7	n/a
British Library	33·5	35·7	39·6	48·8	45	46·2

I shall supply the hon. Member with details of the Arts Council funding for literature as soon as possible.

Paintings Sale (Levy)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he will introduce legislation to require 10 per cent. of the purchase price of all paintings sold at public auction to be used to finance the visual arts through means of a statutory levy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *630*]: No. Matters relating to taxation are for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Arts Council (Grant)

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts what has been the total grant by his Department to the Arts Council between 1979-80 and 1987-88.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *629*]: The information is as follows:

	£ million
1979-80	61·476
1980-81	70·470
1981-82	80·361
1982-83	90·856
1983-84	94·580
1984-85	100·000
1985-86	105·000
1986-87	135·600
1987-88	138·400

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts what are the reasons for using the gross domestic product deflator in calculating the year on year grant charge made in respect of the Arts Council grant; and how the gross domestic product deflator is calculated.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c.*629*]: The gross domestic product deflator provides a broad measure of inflation in the domestic economy and as such is appropriately used for public expenditure work.

The deflator is calculated by dividing gross domestic product at cash prices by gross domestic product at constant prices.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts, what has been the change in the core grant paid to the Arts Council in each year between 1979-80 and 1987-88 *(a)* using the average earnings index and *(b)* using the retail price index.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *629*]: Forecasts for the two indices are not published.

The change in the Arts Council's grant year on year to 1985-86, for which the indices are available, is as follows:

Per cent.	Using average earnings index	Using retail price index
1980-81	−3·9	−1·4
1981-82	+2·1	+2·3
1982-83	+3·2	+5·6
1983-84	−2·7	−0·6
1984-85	−0·8	+0·7
1985-86	−3·3	−0·8

Council of Ministers

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the achievements of the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Council of Ministers in respect of cultural matters.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *629*]: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Mr. Alexander) on 15 December at column *406*.

Visits

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Minister for the Arts which countries he has visited in an official capacity since taking up his position as Minister for the Arts; and which arts institutions he visited in those countries.

Mr. Luce [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *629*]: I shall write to the hon. Member.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Income Tax

Mr. Penhaligon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage share of income tax was paid by the top 0·25 per cent., 0·5 per cent. and 0·75 per cent. of income earners for each of the years since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information for the years 1978-79 to 1983-84 (the latest year for which reliable estimates are available) is as follows: The analysis is of single people and married couples and the quantiles are determined by reference to income tax liability.

Quantile shares of income tax

Per cent.

	Quantile group of tax units		
	Top 0·25 per cent.	*Top 0·5 per cent.*	*Top 0·75 per cent.*
1978-79	5·6	8·0	9·7
1979-80	5·1	7·3	9·0
1980-81	5·4	7·7	9·4
1981-82	5·5	7·9	9·7
1982-83	5·9	8·4	10·2
1983-84	5·6	8·0	9·8

Mr. Penhaligon asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of income tax was paid by those taxpayers whose earnings are *(a)* twice, *(b)* two and half times, *(c)* three times, *(d)* three and a half times, *(e)* four times and *(f)* 10 times the average wage and above; and what percentage of income tax was paid by each equivalent group in 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The table shows the percentage shares of total income tax liability for single people and married couples with gross incomes for income tax purposes above the multiples of average earnings specified. The figures for 1978-79 are based on the survey of personal incomes for that year. For 1986-87 they are based on a projection from the 1983-84 survey and are therefore provisional. I regret that it is not possible to make reliable projections of the percentage of income tax liability for taxpayers with incomes 10 times average earnings and above.

Shares of income tax liability

Per cent.

Gross income[1]	*1978-79*	*1986-87*
2 and above	24·1	31·1
2½ and above	16·6	22·6
3 and above	12·4	17·0
3½ and above	9·9	13·4
4 and above	8·1	10·8
10 and over	1·9	—

[1] As multiples of average earnings based on estimated mean earnings for full time adult males of £92·90 per week for 1978-79 and £213·40 per week for 1986-87.

Mortgage Interest Tax Relief

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing, for the financial year 1986-87, the number of taxpayers in each income group expected to be receiving relief on mortgage interest and the anticipated average relief per mortgagor, together with the assumed rate of interest, in the following income bands; less than £4,000 per year, £4,000, £5,000, £6,000 £7,000, £8,000 £9,000 £10,000, £12,000 £15,000, £20,000, £25,000 and over £30,000 per year.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information is given in the table. The estimates by income range are based on projections to 1986-87 of information in the 1984-85 survey of personal incomes and the 1985 family expenditure survey. The estimates include mortgages formerly under the option mortgage scheme, now subsumed under MIRAS.

The average rate of interest for 1986-87 is expected to be 11·5 per cent.

Tax units[1] *receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income—1986-87*

Range of total income (£000)	*Numbers receiving mortgage relief*[2] *('000)*	*Average value of relief per mortgagor (£)*	*Total cost of relief (£ million)*	*Percentage of total cost (per cent.)*
Under 4	690	350	240	5
4 to 5	110	360	40	1
5 to 6	240	390	90	2
6 to 7	270	400	110	2
7 to 8	410	430	180	4
8 to 9	490	450	220	5

Range of total income (£'000)	Numbers receiving mortgage relief[2] ('000)	Average value of relief per mortgagor (£)	Total cost of relief (£ million)	Percentage of total cost (per cent)
9 to 10	680	460	310	7
10 to 12	1,160	530	620	14
12 to 15	1,570	550	870	19
15 to 20	1,480	570	850	19
20 to 25	450	630	290	6
25 to 30	300	870	260	6
over 30	350	1,210	420	9
	8,200	550	4,500	100

[1]single persons and married couples
[2]including about 500,000 non-taxpayers

Business Expansion Scheme

Mrs. Roe asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money has been invested through venture capital funds into companies employing fewer than 500 people since the inception of the business expansion scheme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information is currently available for the years 1983-84 and 1984-85 only. In this period £85 million was invested in companies through Inland Revenue approved venture capital funds. Information centrally available on company size indicates that all companies employed fewer than 500 people.

Film Industry

Mr. Shersby asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he will investigate the possibility of revising the present conditions of the business expansion scheme to enable the scheme to play a more effective part in attracting capital investment into British feature film production business;

(2) what is his policy towards fiscal incentives for the British film production industry, in the light of the report from the British Film and Television Producers Association, of which he has been supplied with a copy, setting out the tax allowances and other fiscal incentives available to the film industry in other countries.

Mr. Dormand asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will urgently review the fiscal arrangements in the United Kingdom for film production; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *668*]: The film industry is taxed on the same broad lines as other businesses and we do not believe that films should be subject to a different system of taxation. But we have introduced into this system some special measures where they can be justified by the special nature of the film industry. These include alternative systems for writing off expenditure on films, and the extension of the business expansion scheme to film production companies. We believe that BES can help film companies attract equity finance and have suggested that the industry should examine ways of making better use of the scheme. If difficulties emerge we shall of course consider whether a change in the legislation would be justified.

Leasehold Rentals

Mr. Ron Davies asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of revenue to be received in 1986-87 from tax on domestic leasehold rental payments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *668*]: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Venture Capital

Mrs. Roe asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many venture capital companies have qualified for tax relief under section 79 of the Finance Act 1972.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Section 79 of the Finance Act 1972 is a tax charging provision relating to gains made by directors and employees on shares acquired by virtue of their employment other than under an approved share scheme. I regret that information is not available as to the number of companies which have directors and employees benefiting from the exemptions from the charge contained in the provision.

Personal Taxation

Mr. Forman asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the draft regulations concerning the withholding tax arrangements for non-resident entertainers and sportsmen are available.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The draft regulations are being published today and copies are available in the Library. Comments should be sent to the Inland Revenue by 16 February 1987. I am sending copies to those Members who participated in the Standing Committee debates last June on the Finance Bill as promised by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary.

VAT

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations have been received in response to a consultation document issued by Customs and Excise on 7 August entitled, "VAT: Input Tax: Origin and Scope of the Right to Deduct"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lawson: Over 100 responses were received in writing and 23 meetings have been held with trade and professional bodies. In the light of these, I propose to introduce the following measures:

1. *Right to Deduct Input Tax.*—The right to deduct the input tax as expressed in section 14 and 15 of the Value Added

Tax Act 1983 is expressed in wider terms than in the EC Sixth Directive on VAT and allows businesses to recover input tax not related to the making of taxable supplies. The right to deduct will be restricted to only such input tax as is incurred in the making of taxable supplies. An exception would be required to give effect to article 17.3 of the Sixth Directive in favour of input tax incurred in the United Kingdom in respect of certain overseas and other non-taxable transactions.

2. *VAT Group Registrations*

a Power to Restrict Grouping. I do not propose to introduce new legal provisions restricting the present rights of companies to form VAT groups or to add or remove companies from existing groups. But Customs and Excise will in future exercise more strictly its power to refuse applications for group treatment where this appears necessary for the protection of the revenue.

b Transfer of Going Concerns. Where a business or its assets is transferred as a going concern to a VAT group which is or becomes partly exempt during the tax year in which the transfer takes place, the transaction will be treated as a supply to and by the group. The group would be responsible for accounting for the tax due.

3. *Valuation of Exempt Supplies*.—The provision of the Value Added Tax Act 1983 governing valuation of certain supplies not made in open market conditions at present apply only to taxable supplies. To prevent input tax deduction calculations being distorted by undervaluation of exempt supplies, these provisions will be extended to exempt supplies.

1-3. Where the above proposals require legislation, I intend to include this in the 1987 Budget and Finance Bill, to take effect from 1 April 1987.

4. *Partial Exemption "de minimis" Rules*.—The present partial exemption rules are open to serious distortion because they require proportional calculations to relate to the outputs of a business and not to its inputs. To protect against such distortions, it is necessary to prescribe that, as a normal rule, all calculations should relate directly to the input tax, including those calculations which show whether the business may reclaim all its input tax on de minimis grounds. In response to representations about the possible complexities for businesses, it is proposed that these rules should be as generous and simple as possible, so that a business can readily establish whther it is eligible for "de minimis" treatment, while not open to manipulation and substantial revenue loss.

The partial exemption rules will be amended to provide as follows:

(a) Where a taxable person's input tax attributable to exempt supplies amounts to less than any of the following:

(i) £100 per month on average;

(ii) Both £250 per month on average and 50 per cent. of all his input tax;

(iii) Both £500 per month on average and 25 per cent. of all his input tax;

all such input tax for the relevant period may be attributed to taxable supplies. For group registrations, the provisions will apply to the group as a whole.

(b) For the purpose of the above calculations, certain exempt supplies may be ignored. These supplies will be prescribed by regulation and will include:

deposit interest;
rent (where the input tax directly attributable to lettings is less than £1,000 a year);
insurance commissions;
mortgage commissions;
assignment of debts.

Businesses will not be allowed to take advantage of these simplification measures if they are within the financial sector or within other categories, which will be prescribed, which make these supplies as a significant part of their business.

These measures will have the effect of substantially reducing the numbers of businesses needing to do calculations in order to establish whether they fall within the partial exemption "de minimis" rules.

5. *Partial Exemption Standard Method*. Where the "de minimis" rules do not apply, the taxable person must apportion his input tax between that which relates to taxable and that which relates to exempt supplies. The rules for attribution of input tax will be revised as follows:

(a) Input tax must be identified and attributed to the greatest possible extent, as between taxable and exempt supplies and any other activity and only that tax attributable to taxable supplies may be deducted.

(b) The remaining input tax which cannot be directly attributed is to be apportioned by reference to the use made of the goods and services to which it relates. Customs and Excise will accept any method of calculation which produces a fair and reasonable apportionment between the taxable and exempt activities which these goods and services (or the largest conveniently ascertainable part of them) are used to support. An apportionment which attributes this remaining input tax in the same proportion as the input tax directly attributed under (i) will always be accepted. But in making such an apportionment, no account is to be taken of input tax on goods supplied in the same state, on supplies by agents under section 32(4) of the Act, on supplies which are subject to specific restriction, e.g. motor cars, or on supplies of transfers of going concerns treated as taxable under paragraph 2*(b)* above.

(c) Customs and Excise would also be enabled to allow the use of a method other than those specified above. This would include in appropriate cases a special method based on the ratio of the taxable supplies made by a business to its total supplies.

Taxable persons who have existing approval to operate a special method may continue to operate that method. Agreements negotiated between representative trade bodies and Customs and Excise would also continue unchanged. These approvals and agreements remain subject to review in the normal way. Taxable persons operating the existing standard method or becoming partly exempt because of changes in the "de minimis" rules will have to adopt the new standard method at (i) and (ii) above. *If this is impractical or it is thought that it will not produce an accurate or fair result, Customs and Excise will consider allowing an appropriate special method.* Individual businesses should apply to their local office; representative trade bodies should approach Customs and Excise headquarters.

6. *Minor Amendments to the Partial Exemption Regulations*:—The following minor amendments will also be made:

(a) Regulation 29(5). Amend to read: "The Commissioners may approve or direct different provisions for different circumstances and in particular may approve or direct, . . ."

(b) Regulation 32*(a)*. Delete "an exempt supply" and replace with "a supply".

(c) Regulation 32*(e)*. Delete "exempt".

4-6. These changes will be implemented by revised regulations made by the Commissioners of Customs and Excise and will come into operation from 1 April 1987. Drafts of the regulations will be circulated as soon as possible to those bodies which expressed an interest in seeing the text during the consultation. I will place copies in the Library of the House. The regulations are subject to the negative parliamentary procedure.

7. *Appeals*. There is at present no specific right of appeal to the VAT Tribunal regarding the use of partial exemption methods. Such a right will be proposed in the 1987 Finance Bill.

8. *Deduction of Input Tax on Capital Goods*. The EC Sixth Directive, Article 20.2, requires the input tax on capital goods to be adjusted annually over a period of five years. The United Kingdom has not implemented this measure, even though it would be desirable for the protection of the revenue. It will now be introduced (by a further amendment to the partial exemption regulations) but with effect from 1 April 1988.

9. *Other Matters*. Concern has been expressed that the revised partial exemption rules could have an adverse and distortive effect on recovery of input tax, in respect of capital

issues, including Eurobonds. Consideration is being given to exempting from VAT the supply of services in relation to such issues.

The revenue effect of all these changes is estimated to be an increased yield of VAT in 1987-88 of £300 million.

Mr. Tim Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many responses Her Majesty's Customs and Excise have received to the consultative document "VAT Input Tax: Origin and Scope of the Right to Deduct"; how many of the responses supported the proposals set out in the consultation document and how many opposed them; and if he will arrange for copies of the responses to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Brooke: There were 105 written responses to the Customs consultative document. While almost all of them accepted the need to counter tax avoidance they drew attention to the potential compliance costs and the likely difficulty in meeting the proposed timetable. As the responses varied from the very general to a detailed comment on each option no meaningful count of those for and against each item is possible. I regret that I could not place copies of the responses in the Library without the consent of their authors, especially since some have provided detailed figures which they would regard as confidential. To seek such consent would require a disproportionate use of resources.

My right hon. Friend is announcing separately today the measures it is proposed to introduce.

Mr. Madden asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will seek powers to make relief available to companies, charged value added tax on imported raw materials, who encounter cash flow problems caused by the delay between value added tax being charged and being repaid; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: It would be neither practicable nor compatible with EC legislation to give preferential VAT treatment to imports of raw materials. Cash flow problems can be minimised, and in some cases eliminated, by taking advantage of the deferment facility for payment of import charges.

Mr. Wiggin asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what gross and net revenue he expects to receive if Her Majesty's Customs and Excise implement the proposals contained in the consultative document on value added tax, "Input Tax, Origin and the Scope of Right to Deduct", issued in August; and what he estimates will be the compliance costs.

Mr. Brooke [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. 426]: My right hon. Friend is announcing separately today the measures it is proposed to introduce following consideration of the responses to the consultation document on VAT input tax deduction. The revenue effect of the changes is estimated to be an increased yield of VAT in 1987-88 of £300 million.

In responding to the consultation document, many organisations and individuals drew attention to the compliance costs of the proposals particularly in relation to partial exemption. There are two major elements: first, the calculations which may have to be done by a business making some exempt supplies, to ascertain whether it can be treated on de minimis grounds as fully taxable; and, secondly, the calculations which a partly exempt business must make in respect of its entitlement to deduct input tax.

The proposed new de minimis rules have been devised in order to be as generous and simple as possible while not open to manipulation and substantial revenue loss. There will be generous monetary limits for the benefit of small businesses and a list of certain exempt supplies which may be ignored by businesses outside the financial sector. In consequence, most businesses will be readily able to establish whether they are eligible for de minimis treatment without having to make detailed calculations.

Where partial exemption calculations have to be made, there will inevitably be compliance costs. But the businesses involved will for the most part be large, with well developed accounting systems. While the proposed new partial exemption rules lay down a standard method for apportioning input tax, Customs and Excise will allow alternative methods, as they do now. The critieria for these alternative methods are simply that they should be practical, accurate and fair. Past experience is that in almost every case Customs and Excise have been able to agree either with a trade association or individual business a basis of calculation which utilies existing information systems and thereby minimises compliance costs.

EC (Own Resources)

Mr. Nicholas Baker asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the recent judgment by the European Court of Justice concerning advance payments of traditional own resources to the European Community.

Mr. Brooke: The European Court of Justice gave a ruling yesterday in case 93/85 brought by the European Commission against the United Kingdom. The case concerned non-payment by the United Kingdom of an interest rate penalty claimed by the Commission when we delayed complying with a Commission request for an advance payment of levies and duties to the Community in May 1983.

The background to this delay was that the Government took the view that there was no clear legal obligation to make this advance payment and that Parliament's approval was therefore required through the Supply procedure: this approval could not, however, be obtained until Parliament had returned after the 9 June 1983 election. The Government's later decision not to pay the interest penalty was based on the same ground that there was no clear legal obligation to comply with requests for advance payments. The amount of interest claimed by the Commission was some £2 million.

The court's judgment finds that member states are legally obliged to meet requests for advance payments and that the Commission was therefore justified in charging the United Kingdom an interest penalty because of the delay in our payment.

The Government naturally accept the court's judgment, which clarifies the position. There are three consequences to which I should draw the House's attention.

First, the court's conclusion that member states are legally obliged to meet justified requests for advances means that such advances come within the scope of section 2(3) of the European Communities Act, 1972 and will therefore fall to be paid in future direct from the Consolidated Fund, in accordance with the direct charging provisions of that Act, rather than from Supply Estimates. The Government will, however, continue to ensure that the House is informed whenever such advances are made.

Secondly, it follows that no further drawings will be made on the current year's Estimate of £930 million for advance payment of levies and duties, approved by the House in July, beyond the £431 million which has been drawn already.

Thirdly, the interest rate penalty now confirmed by the court will be paid direct from the Consolidated Fund, again in accordance with section 2(3) of the European Communities Act, 1972, as soon as practicable.

I am arranging for copies of the court's judgment to be placed in the Library.

Cigarettes

Mr. Coombs asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was his forecast of the consumption of cigarettes following the 1986 Budget; what is his current forecast; and to what extent the difference in these forecasts is attributable to the importation of foreign cigarettes.

Mr. Brooke: I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Coombs asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the increase in tax on a packet of 20 cigarettes of the most popular brand since May 1979; and what has been the change in the retail price index in the same period.

Mr. Brooke: The total tax on a packet of 20 cigarettes of the most popular brand increased by 184·4 per cent. between May 1979 and November 1986. The retail price index increased by 81·4 per cent.

Departmental Expenditure

Dr. Bray asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Departments produce information on expenditure committed but not incurred; and for which of these the information is summarised for use by the Treasury.

Mr. MacGregor: Information is not held centrally of commitment records maintained by Departments and summarised for the Treasury, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Commitment records are maintained, in accordance with standard accounting practice, by various Departments and non-departmental public bodies with trading activities. Their accounts are in the Library.

Transferable Allowances

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost to the Exchequer if transferable allowances were introduced with no losers.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *426*]: The revenue consequences of a move to transferable allowances depend, amongst other things, on the length of the transitional period and the basic rate of income tax at the time of the change. These are discussed in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.9 of the Green Paper, "The Reform of Personal Taxation". (Cmnd. 9756).

Mr. Meacher asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many winners and losers there would be if transferable allowances were introduced at nil cost to the Exchequer; and how many would win or lose *(a)* less than £1 per week, *(b)* £1 to £2, *(c)* £2 to £3, *(d)* £3 to £4, *(e)* £4 to £5, *(f)* £5 to £7, *(g)* £7 to £10, *(h)* £10 to £15, *(i)* £15 to £20, and *(j)* more than £20 per week.

Mr. Norman Lamont [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *426*]: At 1986-87 levels of income a transferrable allowance of £2,395 would produce the same income tax yield as the current tax regime. The changes in tax liability are shown below.

Numbers of taxpayers (thousands)
Change in tax in 1986-87 (£ per week)

	Paying less tax	*Paying more tax*
Under £1	8,470	320
£1-£2	750	340
£2-£3	210	1,420
£3-£4	200	360
£4-£5	190	250
£5-£7	3,890	4,020
£7-£10	170	70
£10-£15	120	30
£15-£20	10	0
Over £20	40	0
Total	14,050	6,810

ENVIRONMENT

Housing Investment Programme

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce the housing investment programme allocations for 1987-88.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend announced on 6 November 1986 that gross provision for capital expenditure by local authorities on housing in 1987-88 is £2,922 million — an increase of £390 million over the corresponding figure for 1986-87. Some of this expenditure will be funded from the proceeds of the sale of council houses and other assets. Most of the remainder, £1,366 million, will need to be financed by borrowing. Each housing authority is being informed of its initial housing investment programme allocation which sets the amount of its borrowing approval for 1987-88. Copies of the letters to local authorities and the schedule of initial allocations have been placed in the Library and the Vote Office.

The local authority associations have been consulted about the distribution of HIP allocations. After considering their representations and the HIP submissions made by individual authorities, it has been decided to distribute them in the following way:

£1,275 million to give each housing authority an initial allocation equal to 80 per cent. of its initial allocation for 1985-86. (These initial allocations include allocations totalling £13 million for the homes insulation scheme. This reflects a proposed restructuring of the homes insulation scheme, details of which I shall announce tomorrow). In London the amount which would have been allocated to the GLC has been distributed to the boroughs. In making these initial allocations my right hon. Friend has therefore honoured the assurances by successive Secretaries of State that authorities would receive allocations for 1987-88 of at least 80 per cent. of their initial allocations for 1985-86, and that London would not lose housing resources as a result of abolition of the GLC.

£75 million for additional allocations for projects prepared in conjunction with the estate action team (Urban Housing Renewal Unit). This represents a 50 per cent. increase on the resources available in 1986-87, and builds on the team's success in developing imaginative solutions to the problems of rundown council estates.

£14 million for additional allocations for authorities with exceptional problems in meeting their statutory obligations to home owners under the housing defects legislation.

£2 million as a reserve from which additional allocations can be made for the homes insulation schemes.

Only the initial allocations are being made today. The letters being sent to local housing authorities describe the procedures under which they can apply for additional allocations.

Mr. John Fraser asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the separate housing investment programme allocations for each housing authority for 1987-88 and also in each case net of capital receipts, with an estimate of the receipts available to each authority in 1987-88, together with the allocations for the current year.

Mr. Tracey: A list of individual local authorities' housing investment programme allocations for 1987-88 was placed in the Library and Vote Office yesterday. I refer the hon. Member to my hon. Friend the Minister of Housing's answer yesterday to my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs). A list of the HIP allocations for 1986-87 is also available in the Library.

Local authorities are able to spend the prescribed proportion of their capital receipts each year, in addition to their HIP allocation. The Department has not collected any estimates from individual authorities of the level of their capital receipts in 1987-88.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Gould asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each local authority *(a)* the rate support grant as settlement spending assumption for 1987-88 plus, for those local authorities covered by joint boards following the abolition of the metropolitan counties and the Greater London council, the rate support grant for each joint board distributed in proportion to population, *(b)* in 1986 prices the actual rate support grant paid in 1978-79, plus for those district and borough councils in areas also covered by a metropolitan county or the former Greater London council the rate support grant paid to the upper tier authority distributed in proportion to their then population, *(c)* the absolute difference between the two figures and *(d)* the percentage difference between the two figures for each authority.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has not yet announced the final RSG settlement for 1987-88. It is not therefore possible to make the comparison requested.

Rates

Mr. Greenway asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies his Department has made of the effect of the level of rates upon jobs in particular areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Southwark (Tenants' Income)

Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the average income of public sector housing tenants in Southwark; and as to what proportion of that income is, on average, spent on rent payments.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Bolton

Mr. Thurnham asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total level of assistance given by his Department spent in the Bolton district council area in each year since 1978 broken down by category of assistance.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Water Flow (Teddington)

Mr. Jessel asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has yet received the report of the inspector on the inquiry into Thames water flow at Teddington.

Mr. John Patten: I have just received the report and am considering it.

Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980

Mr. Steen asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many section 98 and 99 notices have been issued by the Government under the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980; and if he will list them in the *Official Report* together with the number of acres covered in each notice.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Royal Docks

Mr. Spearing asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he received and when he expects to publish the report of his inspector into compulsory purchase orders laid by the London Docklands Development Corporation for land in and adjacent to the Royal docks.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend received the inspector's report on the London Docklands Development Corporation's east docklands compulsory purchase order in September. It is unlikely that the inspector's report, which will be published with the Secretary of State's decision, will be available before spring 1987.

Toucan Berbet Birds

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the dates during the last five years on which his Department has issued import licences for toucan berbet birds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: My Department has not issued any import licences for the toucan berbet (Semnovnis ramphastinus) during the last five years.

Imports of this species require a licence under section 1 of the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1976. All applications for licences are considered on their merits in the light of such advices may be received from the Department's scientific advisers, the Nature Conservancy Council, on the conservation status of the species in the wild.

Landlords

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what representations he has received

about the rent limits in respect of the implied terms as to fitness for human habitation from public sector landlords and private sector landlords;

(2) if he will bring forward legislation to amend the rent limits in section 8 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 so as to enable tenants to take action to force landlords to maintain fitness for human habitation;

(3) how many *(a)* local authority and *(b)* private landlord houses are unfit for human habitation; and how many of these have rent levels above the limit which enables tenants to take action under the implied terms as to fitness for human habitation provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act;

(4) when the rent limits in section 8 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 were last reviewed; and what is the current real value of the limits in comparison with their value when they were last reviewed.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the average increase in rents if disposals of the former Greater London Council's seaside and country homes took place at the price being asked of Anchor Housing Association by the London residuary body.

Mr. Tracey: None.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it a condition of the disposal of the former Greater London Council's seaside and country homes that standards of maintenance, management and rent levels do not vary from one estate to another.

Mr. Tracey: My right hon. Friend will consider this when a detailed proposal for disposal of these homes is submitted by the London residuary body.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to ensure that London boroughs are consulted over the terms of disposal of the former Greater London Council's seaside and country homes before disposal takes place.

Mr. Tracey: This is a matter for the London residuary body.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the extra monitoring and lettings staff which will be required within the London area mobility scheme if the former Greater London Council's seaside and country homes are transferred to several housing associations rather than one.

Mr. Tracey: None.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will use his powers under section 65 of the Local Government Act 1985 to direct the London residuary body to dispose of the former Greater London Council's seaside and country homes to Anchor Housing Association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: No.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many housing associations are being approached by the London residuary body in respect of the disposal of the former Greater London Council's seaside and country homes.

Mr. Tracey: This is a matter for the London residuary body.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department was consulted over the decision by the London residuary body to dispose of the former Greater London Council's 3,500 seaside and country homes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The Department has been kept informed of developments.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has concerning the possible date by which disposal of the Greater London Council's seaside and country homes will be effected.

Mr. Tracey: None.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to ensure that tenants of the former Greater London Council's seaside and country homes are consulted before any transfers take place; and on what conditions he will give consent to the disposals.

Mr. Tracey: The LRB was advised in a letter of 1 December that the Secretary of State would expect tenants to have been consulted prior to the transfer of seaside and country homes and would wish to be informed of their views in considering any application for consent to a disposal.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what factors have led him to change his policy in respect of the former Greater London Council's seaside and country homes as stated in the reply to the hon. Member for Havant (Sir I. Lloyd) on 20 February, *Official Report*, columns 334-5, regarding the issue of whether the homes should be owned and managed by a single housing association; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: There has never been any objection to more than one housing association being involved if that seemed appropriate.

Mr. Evennett asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a further statement on the date for transfer of assets from the London residuary body to Thamesmead Town Limited.

Mr. Chope: We hope that the London residuary body and Thamesmead Town will shortly be able to agree a new transfer date now that 1 January 1987 has not proved practicable.

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to *(a)* the number of vacant properties formerly owned by West Yorkshire metropolitan county council and *(b)* their annual rental value; and if he will direct the West Yorkshire residuary body to ensure that these properties are occupied.

Mr. Chope: I have no information on this matter as this is an issue for the residuary body. Accordingly I have no plans to issue a direction.

Mr. Harrison asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how, when giving guidance to residuary

bodies about the disposal of properties owned by former metropolitan county councils, he takes into consideration the needs of the successor authorities and joint bodies concerned; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The Department published guidance to residuary bodies in August 1986 on their property role. A copy was placed in the Library in August. This guidance had been produced after consultation with interested bodies, including metropolitan district councils and joint authorities.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the total level of arrears of rent payable to the Property Services Agency;

(2) what proportion of the total annual rent collectable by the Property Services Agency is represented by the total arrears outstanding at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Chope: The information is not readily available. I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of rent collectable by the Property Services Agency has been collected in each of the last five financial years.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Nitrate

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he intends to take in relation to nitrate in water supplies in light of the report of the nitrate co-ordination group published on 15 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Environment on 15 December at column *392* on the nitrate co-ordination group report.

Homeless Families

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy towards the provision of homes for the homeless in the light of the information supplied to him by the London research centre in relation to the numbers of families placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by London boroughs; if he intends to take any additional steps to assist boroughs in meeting the needs of homeless families; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tracey: The Government deplore the increase in the use by London boroughs of bed and breakfast hotels for the temporary accommodation of homeless households when there are still some 27,000 local authority-owned dwellings standing empty. The Department's own code of guidance to local authorities on this matter makes clear that bed and breakfast accommodation is to be used only in the last resort.

Resources are being made available through "Estate Action" (the urban housing renewal unit) to encourage local authorities to bring back into use empty dwellings on estates for the benefit of homeless families. Several schemes have already been approved in principle and further schemes are in the pipeline.

In 1987-88 London boroughs will receive a HIP allocation of £386 million to use for purposes of housing provision and renovation, supplemented by a proportion of their capital receipts. They also stand to benefit from a share of a further £75 million of capital resources in support of housing projects worked up in conjunction with "Estate Action".

In 1987-88 the Housing Corporation will receive a national allocation of £685 million and an additional £20 million to generate between £45 million and £50 million of additional private sector investment for priority work aimed at getting homeless families out of bed and breakfast hotels and at providing accommodation for young people moving to take up jobs in areas where there is a shortage of rented housing.

Recognising that there will also be a need for temporary accommodation for homeless families, local authorities have been invited to submit to the Department for consideration on their merits proposals to acquire properties suitable for use as hostels providing such temporary accommodation.

My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction has arranged a meeting with the local authority associations to discuss homelessness on 19 January.

National Parks

Mr. McLoughlin asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the national parks in the United Kingdom and indicate the number of people who serve on the boards of each of them, showing how many of them live within the area of each respective national park.

Mr. Waldegrave: The figures for the seven English national parks are as follows:

	Members	*Number living within Park*
Dartmoor	21	3
Exmoor	21	3
Lake District	30	12
Northumberland	27	0
North York Moors	27	7
Peak District	34	11
Yorkshire Dales	24	6

There are presently two vacancies on the Yorkshire Dales committee and one on the Dartmoor committee. The three Welsh national parks are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Housing

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice his Department issues to householders about homes experiencing condensation and about minimum internal temperatures for the maintenance of healthy conditions.

Mr. Tracey: The Department published a leaflet in October 1986, "Keep Your Home Free from Mould and Damp", containing guidance to householders on how to deal with condensation and mould. The leaflet does not contain any advice about minimum internal temperatures but does suggest, as one of the measures for combating condensation, the maintenance of low background heat all day.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to make it mandatory for new houses to require the installation of a heating system.

Mr. Tracey: No.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information his Department holds on (i) the proportion of all homes in England which have central heating and (ii) the proportion of homes in England which have central heating when all the occupants are over 65 years of age.

Mr. Tracey: The latest information is from the 1984 general household survey. Figures for elderly households that are readily available are for households with two adults, one or both aged 60 or over and for households of one person aged 60 or over. The survey shows that:

(i) 67 per cent. of all households in England have central heating.

(ii) 61 per cent. of elderly households in England have central heating.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will issue guidance to local planning authorities to ensure adequate sound insulation is incorporated in the party walls/floors of flat conversions.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how the present British building regulations 1982 compare with similar provisions on insulation in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, West Germany, France, Austria, Eire and the Netherlands.

Mr. Tracey: Information on the thermal insulation standards for the roof, walls and floors of new dwellings in various countries is included in the following table. In comparing standards, account should be taken of the internal temperatures and external weather conditions found in different countries. The requirements of the building regulations in this country are being reviewed and on 11 December the Department issued a consultative document including proposals to upgrade the standards for the conservation of fuel and power.

The measure of heat loss through the roof/wall/floor
Watts per metre squared degrees celcius

Country	*Roof*	*Wall*	*Floor*
United Kingdom[1]	0·35	0·6	[2]0·6
Austria	0·30	0·7-0·5	0·6-0·43
Denmark	0·20	0·35-0·3	0·30
Republic of Ireland	0·4	0·6	0·6
Finland	0·22	0·28	0·36
France	[3]0·32	[3]0·54	[3]1·0
West Germany	0·30	[4]1·2	0·55
Netherlands	[3]0·68	[3]0·68	[3]0·68
Norway	0·23	0·35-0·25	0·3-0·23
Sweden	0·2-0·12	0·3-0·17	0·3-0·17

[1] The requirements are similar in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
[2] For intermediate floors exposed on underside.
[3] Derived from requirement for total thermal loss of building as a whole in selected regions.
[4] Average for walls and windows.

Noise

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will issue a specified performance standard for sound insulation of party walls and floors in new dwellings.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department will fund a research project so as to establish comprehensive national statistics of actual noise levels which have caused nuisances.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Department's planned noise research programme includes development of more extensive and longer-term monitoring of noise, and we will bear the hon. Member's suggestion in mind.

Lead

Mr. Neil Hamilton asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the preliminary indications of changes to blood lead levels that have occurred as a consequence of the reduction in January 1986 of the lead content in petrol.

Mr. Waldegrave: Results from the 1986 sample surveys carried out to monitor changes in blood lead levels are currently being analysed. Provisional findings will be published early in 1987.

Sheltered Housing

Mr. Rooker asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he has any proposals to prevent unreasonable age limits being imposed in the leases of private sheltered housing developments;

(2) if he will bring forward legislation to protect leaseholders of sheltered houses, flats and bungalows;

(3) if he has an estimate of the numbers of dwellings in private sheltered housing developments; and what financial incentive his Department gives to such developments.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Insulation

Mr. Speller asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which English district councils have applied for supplementary grants under the 1986-87 homes insulation programme.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to my hon. Friend with a complete list of the authorities which have applied for additional resources from the homes insulation scheme reserve.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy's Energy Efficiency Year campaigns have been very successful in encouraging householders to pay attention to the energy efficiency of their houses. This has brought forward demand for homes insulation scheme grants, and I have therefore decided to make available now up to a further £1·5 million of resources, which is being distributed to councils in England who have exhausted their present allocations.

Nearly 90 per cent. of accessible roofs in England are now insulated, and I have decided that, next year, we should now concentrate the scheme's assistance on those people who find it most difficult to afford the costs of loft insulation. I shall therefore be laying before Parliament a new scheme, withdrawing the general grant at 66 per cent. but extending the availability of the more generous 90 per cent. grant to all householders who are in receipt of housing benefit or supplementary benefit.

This change will assist greatly those families with low incomes for whom it is most important to gain the maximum possible benefit from the money that they spend on heating their homes.

Gratuities

Mr. Robert Atkins asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he is considering the representations that he has received about his proposals to seek to amend the powers which local authorities possess to award gratuities.

Mr. Chope: As far as the local Act powers are concerned, my right hon. Friend has decided not to proceed with the proposed repeals. He is, however, concerned about the extent to which these powers continue to be used, and will discuss this with the local authorities concerned.

As far as the general regulations are concerned, there is no need for gratuities to be retained in the present form. Employees who are not members of their occupational pension scheme are entitled to benefit from SERPS, and the widows of local government employees who die in service receive half-rate pensions which are largely paid for by the employers.

Therefore the amendments to the general regulations on gratuities, announced in the consultative draft circulated in July, will still allow gratuities to be paid for service up to the operational date of the regulations and will be made as soon as possible.

Telford Development Corporation

Mr. Hawksley asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now set a target for the winding up of the Telford development corporation.

Mr. John Patten: The corporation has secured notable achievements both in reclaiming and developing substantial areas of the town and in attracting every welcome investment from overseas, including a number of major Japanese companies. Nevertheless there is a significant physical infrastructure programme which remains to be carried out (including environmental improvements to land in the area) and there is a continuing need to attract further private investment to secure the economic base of the town. My right hon. Friend has therefore decided after consultation with the development corporation, Shropshire county council and the district of the Wrekin council, to set 30 September 1991 as the target date for winding up Telford development corporation. The final decision and formal order will be made in the usual way after further consultations nearer that date.

Toxic Wastes

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply of 18 November, if he will list by date, location and substance the toxic waste spillages of which his Department is aware.

Mr. Waldegrave [*pursuant to his reply*, 21 November, c. *375*]: My Department may become aware through informal sources of occasional spillages of toxic wastes. Since there is no requirement for such incidents to be notified to the Department, this information is not comprehensive or detailed. The information requested is therefore not available.

Cultural Property

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when Her Majesty's Government will sign the European convention of offences relating to cultural property.

Mr. Eggar: I have been asked to reply.

We have not made any plans to sign the European convention on offences relating to cultural property.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Caledonian Airways

Mr. Lawler asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to seek to persuade the Nigerian Government to refrain from imposing unworkable trading arrangements on British Caledonian Airways.

Mr. Eggar: The FCO in London and the British high commission in Lagos have been active in making representations to the Nigerian authorities at a variety of levels on behalf of British Caledonian Airways, in order to ensure fair treatment for the airline in the Nigerian market.

Both in Lagos and in London, we have kept in close touch with the airline and remain ready to intervene further on its behalf as and when this is likely to help.

Bangladeshi Refugees

Mr. Wheeler asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of India with regard to the position of Bangladeshi refugees who do not wish to be returned to Bangladesh against their will and especially the refugees now in the state of Tripura; and if he will make representations to the Indian Government to allow the International Red Cross to visit these people.

Mr. Eggar: We have made no representations to India but understand that the Indian and Bangladesh Governments have already held bilateral talks on this matter. We are consulting both the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva to see if there is cause for concern.

Iraq

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all the official delegations of Government-sponsored individuals or parties from Iraq who have visited the United Kingdom since January 1985, stating in each case the purpose of the visit.

Mrs. Chalker: In May 1985, His Excellency Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Iraq, visited the United Kingdom as part of an Arab League delegation to discuss the Iran-Iraq conflict.

In September 1985, Dr. Alwash, Iraqi Minister of Health visited to discuss health matters and visit pharmaceutical firms.

In November 1985, Mr. Hassan Ali, Iraqi Minister of Trade, visited for a meeting of the Anglo/Iraqi Joint Economic Commission.

In December 1985, His Excellency Mr. Tariq Aziz paid an official visit for talks with Ministers.

In June 1986, Mrs. Manal Younis, the chairperson of the Iraqi Federation of Women, visited a wide range of women's associations.

In October 1986, Mr. Fouad Abdul Hadi, of the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, paid a visit to make contact with representatives of British chambers of commerce.

Mrs. Clwyd asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all the occasions since January 1985 when Her Majesty's Government or military officials have visited Iraq.

Mrs. Chalker: According to our records, officials visited Iraq in November 1986 accompanying Lord Jellicoe to the Baghdad trade fair, and in November 1986 accompanied my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade to meetings of the Anglo/Iraqi Joint Economic Commission.

An official from the FCO also paid a familiarisation visit to Iraq in March 1986, and officials from ECGD visited Iraq in May 1986 to review progress on the United Kingdom/Iraq financial protocol.

There have been no visits to Iraq by MOD officials within this period.

Contributions

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution has been made to the Council of Europe, the Western European Union and the North Atlantic Assembly, respectively, during the past financial year.

Mr. Eggar: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's contributions to the Council of Europe, Wester European Union and the North Atlantic Assembly for the financial years 1985-86 and 1986-87 were as follows:

	Council of Europe £	*Western European Union* £	*North Atlantic Assembly* £
1985-86	5,580,000	954,000	180,000
1986-87	6,712,000[1]	1,250,000	224,000

[1] Provisional Estimate.

Additional expenditure on the Council of Europe is a matter for my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Home Department and for Social Services. Their expenditure in 1985-86 was as follows:

Council of Europe Home Office £	*Council of Europe DHSS* £
27,628	224,000

Alexander Ogorodnikov

Mr. Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics about the case of Alexander Ogorodnikov; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Mr. Ogorodnikov's case has been raised by our delegation at the CSCE review meeting in Vienna. We will continue to take every suitable opportunity to raise human rights abuses with the Soviet authorities.

Mr. Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* as much information as is in his possession about Alexander Ogorodnikov of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Alexander Ogorodnikov founded the Christian seminar discussion group in 1974. He was arrested in 1978, sentenced to one year in a labour camp in 1979, and resentenced to further terms in 1980 and in April this year. He is reported to be in very poor health and has attempted suicide on three occasions. We deplore his continued imprisonment.

Dr. A. R. Banerjee

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the British Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta will interview Mrs. Mahuya Banerjee about her application to join her husband Dr. A. R. Banerjee of 68A Pirehill lane, Stone, Staffordshire.

Mr. Eggar: I will write to my hon. Friend once this information has been received from the deputy high commission in Calcutta.

Ambassadors (Vehicles)

Mr. David Atkinson asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his policy on the provision of vehicles for Her Majesty's ambassadors and consuls.

Mrs. Chalker: It is our policy to provide British vehicles for our missions overseas wherever possible.

Human Rights

Mr. Hind asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the extent to which eastern bloc countries have been fulfilling their human rights obligations under the Helsinki and Madrid agreements.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the hon. Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton) gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Murphy) on 3 July at columns *637-40*. We are currently examining the record of the Soviet Union and Eastern countries in the CSCE Vienna follow-up meeting: our policy towards this meeting was most recently set out in the reply by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) on 6 November at columns 1190-94.

Middle East

Mr. Lofthouse asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to hold talks with representatives of the Government of the United States of America about the middle east.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend hopes to discuss a wide range of issues with Mr. Shultz in Bermuda on 6-7 January.

EC Presidency

Mr. Michael Shaw asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on achievements made during Britain's presidency of the European Community.

Mrs. Chalker: The achievements of the Community under the British presidency include:

Agreement on cuts in milk production of 9·5 million tonnes over two years and a 13 per cent. reduction in the intervention price of beef, representing the single most important measure of CAP reform ever negotiated.

Agreement on 37 internal market measures, a significantly higher total than ever previously achieved.

Agreement on a joint action programme on employment and job creation.

Agreement on the further liberalisation of capital movements.

Agreement of a £1·1 billion loan scheme for small businesses.

The opening up of shipping trade in the EC and progress towards lower air fares.

The intensification of co-operation between the member states in tackling illegal immigration, crime, drug abuse, cancer prevention and AIDS.

The adoption of common measures against terrorism, including joint action vis-a-vis Syria.

Important agreements in external trade relations including the successful launch of the new GATT round to preserve and strengthen the open world trading system.

Negotiation of a new and more liberal multi-fibre arrangement for the next five years.

Concerted action to achieve a more balanced trading relationship with Japan.

Resolution of the long running steel and pasta/citrus disputes with the United States and development of relations with EFTA.

A fair deal for new Zealand allowing continued access for its butter.

An agreed response to approaches from COMECON which is now seeking the establishment of official relations with the Community and in the bilateral negotiations with Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania.

Normalisation of relations with Turkey.

Reform of the Community food aid regulation to make it a real instrument of development policy.

Agreement on fisheries catches and quotas for 1987 and on a new structures programme for Community fleets.

Agreed common measures on South Africa.

At the end of the year a detailed list of agreements reached during the British presidency will be placed in the Library of the House.

Afghan Refugees

Mr. Rhodes James asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about the Afghan refugee problem in Pakistan.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend and my Friend the Minister for Overseas Development have visited Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan this year. They have seen the extent of the problems caused by the largest refugee community in the world. We admire the generosity of the Pakistan Government. We have ourselves provided about £40 million in assistance to these refugees since 1980.

Further information is available on the question of Afghan refugees in Pakistan from a variety of international organisations, particularly the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ballyharry Primary School, Newtownards

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the drawings have been completed for Ballyharry primary school, Newtownards; if planning approval has been issued; if the tender documents are prepared; and if he will make a statement about the date when tenders will be invited.

Dr. Mawhinney: The drawings have been completed, planning approval was applied for in November 1985 but has not yet been granted and the tender documents have been completed.

Decisions will be taken in the next few weeks as to the schemes which will be allowed to start in 1987-88 and discussions will then be held as necessary with the relevant school authorities as to the dates for inviting tenders.

Victoria School, Ballyhalbert

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the drawings have been completed for the extension to Victoria primary school, Ballyhalbert,; if planning approval has been issued; if the tender documents are prepared; and if he will make a statement about the date when tenders will be invited.

Dr. Mawhinney: Neither the drawings nor the tender documents have been completed and planning permission has not yet been sought.

Decisions will be taken in the next few weeks as to the schemes which will be allowed to start in 1987-88 and discussions will then be held as necessary with the relevant school authorities as to the dates for inviting tenders.

Trainee Doctors

Mr. Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under what powers the Department of Health and Social Services for Northern Ireland has restricted the number of trainee general practitioner places to 50 per year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The Department of Health and Social Services determines the number of trainees required for general medical practice in Northern Ireland under the discretionary powers provided by article 44(1) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. I am satisfied that the number of general practitioners currently being trained each year is sufficient to meet the needs of Northern Ireland.

Harland and Wolff (Subsidy)

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the amount of subsidy paid to Harland and Wolff in the past two years.

Mr. Viggers: The amount of subsidy provided to Harland and Wolff under the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 was £37·5 million in 1984-85 and £36·5 million in 1985-86

Listed Buildings

Mr. John David Taylor asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether objects or structures as referred to in paragraph (7) of article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 are required to be registered in the statutory charges register by virtue of article 31(7) as forming part of the listed building.

Mr. Needham: No.

ENERGY

Potton Island, Essex

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for Energy what civil nuclear research has been carried out at Potton Island, Essex.

Mr. Goodlad: None.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Frank Cook asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the Government's policy towards the return to the countries of origin of the low level nuclear waste produced from the spent Magnox fuel imported from Italy and Japan.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) of 15 December at column 383 and the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 2 May 1986 at column 502-503.

Sellafield

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Energy what assessment he has made of the economic implications for the operating costs of the Central Electricity Generating Board Magnox reactors of the implementation of the recommendations of the nuclear installation inspectorate Sellafield safety audit.

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for the Energy if he has any plans to offer financial assistance to BNFL to assist with the implementation of the Health and Safety Executive recommendations published in the report on Sellafield; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad: I refer the hon. Members to my reply to the hon. Member for Merionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 18 December at column *621*.

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Mr. Ashdown asked the Secretary of State for the Energy (1) further to his reply to the hon. Member for Yeovil on 3 December, *Official Report*, column *676*, if he will name each issue unresolved in the nuclear installations inspectorate assessment of reviews of Calder hall and Chapelcross as at March 1983; which of these issues has since been satisfactorily cleared; what number of meetings there has been between the nuclear installations inspectorate and the Central Electricity Generating Board on unresolved issues in the last year; and whether the nuclear installations inspectorate has commissioned consultancy assistance on issues still unresolved; and if he will make a statement;

(2) further to his reply to the hon. Member for Yeovil on 3 December, *Official Report*, column *676*, what work the nuclear installations inspectorate has done since March 1983 on improvements or modifications identified by reviews of Calder hall and Chapelcross as being reasonably practicable; what improvements or modifications for each power station have been formally approved since March 1983; what improvements or modifications identified in the completed body of these reviews as being reasonably practicable remain unapproved at present; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Goodlad [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *244*]: Nuclear Installations Inspectorate is dealing with the few issues which remain unresolved in its work on the assessment of British Nuclear Fuels long-term reviews of Calder hall and Chapelcross. Following these reviews BNFL has undertaken major plant improvements to

(i) automatic shutdown systems;
(ii) back-up feedwater supplies to heat exchangers;
(iii) carbon dioxide coolant supply system;
(iv) fire protection systems; and
(v) essential standby electrical systems.

A number of other improvements in various areas have been implemented.

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Mordecai Vanunu

Mr. Marlow asked the Prime Minister what further action Her Majesty's Government propose to take to secure information with regard to the circumstances surrounding the departure of Mordecai Vanunu from the United Kindom; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: We have no plans at present to take any further action.

Ministers (Illegal Acts)

Mr. Soley asked the Prime Minister how many times since May 1979 *(a)* the Secretary of State for the Environment and *(b)* the Secretary of State for Transport have been found by the courts to be in breach of the law; and if she will give the date of the final judgment in each case.

The Prime Minister: Many proceedings are brought against the Secretaries of State, particularly in relation to town and country planning (Environment) and highway repairs and maintenance (Transport). Like most proceedings against Ministers of the Crown and Government Departments they are handled primarily by the Treasury Solicitor's Department. The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate expense.

Some information relating to actions by way of judicial review and on planning appeals was given in answer to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) on 28 April 1986, at column *322*. Further information on planning appeals may be found in annual reports of the chief planning inspector.

EC (United Kingdom Presidency)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* the 32 measures designed to complete the market which have been agreed in the course of the United Kingdom presidency of the Council; and

what is the general purpose of each of these measures and the dates on which they were agreed by the appropriate Council of Ministers.

The Prime Minister: A total of 41 internal market measures have now been agreed under the United Kingdom presidency. Details as follows in order of date of agreement:

AGRICULTURE COUNCIL (ADOPTED BY THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL 22 JULY 1986)

Amendment of three directives concerning animal feedingstuffs (Alfatoxin)

A directive providing for the introduction across the Community of controls on the maximum permitted levels of undesirable substances in raw materials used in animal feedingstuffs.

Prohibition of certain plant protection products/ethylene oxide

A directive adding (subject to certain derogations) the fumigant ethylene oxide to the list of chemicals prohibited in the Community.

INTERNAL MARKET COUNCIL 24 JULY 1986

Outward processing

A directive establishing a Community-wide customs regime for duty relief on the value of Community goods exported outside the EC for processing and subsequent reimport.

Controls and indicators of agricultural and forestry tractors

A directive harmonising the standards governing the location, operation and identification of drivers controls.

Co-operation between higher education and industry for advanced training relating to new technologies (COMETT)

A programme of intra-community projects designed to encourage industry-education contacts.

Pesticide residues in cereals and in foodstuffs of animal origin

Directives setting maximum residue levels for certain pesticides in cereals and products of animal origin.

Telecommunications terminal equipment

A directive providing for the mutual recognition by member states of type approval for such equipment.

General Practitioners

A directive examining minimum standards governing the training of general medical pratitioners.

AGRICULTURE COUNCIL 16 SEPTEMBER 1986

Antibiotic residues/control of residues

Two measures incorporated in a directive providing for a hamonised residue monitoring regime for meat, which lays down the detailed arrangements for testing animals and fresh meat for residues of potentially harmful substances.

INTERNAL MARKET COUNCIL 3 NOVEMBER 1986

Signboards at EC external frontiers and internal borders

A Council resolution providing for a common format for Community frontier signs.

Commercial Agents

A directive harmonising laws throughout the Community on the relationship between commercial agents and their principals.

Direct broadcasting by satellite

A directive designed to ensure that television transmission systems between member states are compatible and adhere to the same types of standard.

AGRICULTURE COUNCIL 17 NOVEMBER 1986

Meat Hygiene

A directive simplifying veterinary inspection procedures for fresh meat in slaughterhouses.

African swine fever in Spain and Portugal

Council decisions aimed at achieving the eradication of African swine fever on the Iberian peninsula and provide Community aid of up to 47 million ecu for this purpose.

ECOFIN 17 NOVEMBER 1986

Liberalisation of capital movements

A directive providing for the liberalisation of operations such as the issue, placing and acquisition of securities representing risk capital; transactions in securities issued by Community institutions; and long-term commercial credits.

13th VAT directive

A directive harmonising the rules allowing non-Community taxable persons to recover VAT paid on goods and services bought, in the course of their business, within the Community.

INDUSTRY COUNCIL 18 NOVEMBER 1986

Integrated service digital network (ISDN)

A recommendation providing for the introduction of ISDN standards into the telecommunications infrastructure of member states.

ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL 24 NOVEMBER 1986

Motor cycle exhaust noise

The directive tightens up the existing Community standard for motor cycle noise, conformity with which permits manufacturers entry to all Community markets.

INTERNAL MARKET COUNCIL 1 DECEMBER 1986

Simplification of customs formalities at land frontiers for goods traffic

A directive abolishing certain formalities on exit from one member state to another with the exception of the Northern Ireland land boundary. Checks will be carried out only in the member states of entry.

Counterfeit goods

A regulation enabling member states customs services to seize consignments of counterfeit goods (bearing false trade marks) and to destroy or dispose of them.

Roll-over protection structures on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors

A directive establishing common safety standards for such devices at the front of such vehicles.

Pharmaceuticals

A package of five separate measures (four directives and a recommendation) laying down procedures for the marketing and testing of human and veterinary medicines.

Good laboratory practice

A directive requiring that laboratory tests carried out by manufacturers or importers (to evaluate the possible risks to human health and the environment of chemical substances which they wish to place on the market) are performed in accordance with internationally agreed principles of good laboratory practice.

Household appliances: airborne noise

A directive harmonising the procedures for establishing and publishing the noise levels emitted by domestic appliances.

Forklift trucks

A directive establishing common safety and construction standards for forklift and other industrial trucks throughout the Community.

Hotel fire protection

A recommendation laying down principles to be observed by member states in providing or improving fire precautions for hotel guests.

Legal protection of microcircuits

A directive providing for protection against copying of the original designs of semiconductor integrated circuit chips.

Consumer credit

A directive conferring protection on consumers in relation to credit agreements.

AGRICULTURE COUNCIL 8 DECEMBER 1986

Plant Health

A directive extending the provisions of the plant health directive 77/93 to Spain and Portugal.

Preservatives (amendment)

A directive establishing specific criteria of purity for potassium bisulphite which may be used in wine production as an alternative to other permitted sulphites.

ECOFIN 8 DECEMBER 1986

Annual accounts of banks

A directive providing for the application of the provisions of the fourth and seventh company law directives (on company accounts and consolidated accounts respectively) to banks and credit institutions.

TRANSPORT COUNCIL 16 DECEMBER 1986

Unfair pricing practices in maritime transport

A regulation providing for the imposition of a Community levy in cases where third country carriers are engaged in unfair pricing practices and are thereby doing material damage to the Community carriers.

Free access to cargoes in oceanic trade

A regulation providing for co-ordinated Community action to deal with moves by third countries to restrict competitive access to oceanic trade.

Application of EEC article 85 to maritime transport

A regulation giving effect to the treaty of Rome's competition articles. It provides the basis (and defines the conditions) on which liner conferences will be exempted from the anti-cartel provisions of the treaty.

Freedom to provide services in the maritime transport sector

A regulation providing for the ending of bilateral cargo sharing agreements with third countries.

Frontier facilitation of goods traffic

A directive further harmonising arrangements for controlling goods crossing internal Community frontiers.

Police and Military Establishments

Mr. Tony Banks asked the Prime Minister how many police and military establishments she has visited since 1979.

The Prime Minister [*pursuant to her reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *614*]: I have made about 40 such visits.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Register of Title

Mr. Maclennan asked the Attorney-General what recent representations he has received to the effect that the register of title to freehold land and leasehold land kept at Her Majesty's Land Registry should become public.

The Attorney-General: The Government have received no representations on this matter since May last; when the conveyancing standing committee wrote in support of the opening of the register to public inspection.

Recorders

Mr. Alton: asked the Attorney-General whether any of the present bench of recorders have been reappointed following a period of retirement from the bench.

The Attorney-General: As far as can be ascertained from the records which are available one recorder has been reappointed following a period whilst he did not sit as a recorder.

Diplock Courts

Ms. Clare Short asked the Attorney-General how many county courts judges out of the total number available have sat in the Diplock courts in Northern Ireland over the last two years.

The Attorney-General: In 1984 all 11 available county court judges sat in the Diplock courts. In 1985 12 judges were available and 11 heard Diplock cases during the year.

Ms. Clare Short asked the Attorney-General what proportion of their total sitting days county court judges have sat in the Diplock courts in Northern Ireland in each of the last two years.

The Attorney-General: In 1984 7·4 per cent. of the total sitting days of county court judges was spent in trying scheduled offences. The corresponding proportion for 1985 was 8·3 per cent.

Legal Aid

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Attorney-General if he will list all organisations and persons who have made representations to the Lord Chancellor over proposals from the efficiency team of legal aid scrutiny for the hiving-off of legal advice and assistance work; if he will indicate how many of these representations have been in favour of the scrutiny proposals and how many against; and if he will indicate what steps Her Majesty's Government now intend to take in this respect.

The Attorney-General: Some 140 representations were received in response to the Lord Chancellor's request for comments on the recommendations in the report of the legal aid scrutiny. The Government intend to publish their response to the report in the new year, and that will contain a full list of those who made representations. Many of the recommendations have met with widespread support. There has also been support for the basic objectives underlying the report's recommendations on legal advice and assistance. A majority of those responding is, however, opposed to the detailed proposals in this area.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Attorney-General whether the Lord Chancellor intends to place any constraints upon legal aid expenditure; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Since 1979, legal aid expenditure has more than trebled in cash terms, and more than doubled in real terms, which is a clear indication of the Government's continuing commitment to a healthy legal aid scheme. Nevertheless, legal aid expenditure cannot be considered in isolation from other competing demands on public funds and must be seen in the context of the Government's policies on public expenditure as a whole. The Government are always looking for ways of improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the legal aid scheme. A number of proposals were put forward in the recent legal aid scrutiny report. The Government will be announcing their decision on these in the new year.

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Attorney-General whether Her Majesty's Government intend to implement interim proposals for reducing delays in *(a)* determining applications and *(b)* paying moneys due to lawyers for legal aid work.

The Attorney-General: I assume the hon. Member is referring to proposals put forward in the recent legal aid scrutiny. The Government will be announcing their response in the new year.

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Fatchett asked the Attorney-General what representations he has received about pay anomalies for those employed by the Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I understand that a number of representations about pay anomalies for those employed within the CPS have been received by the Director of Public Prosecutions and his officials. The point has also been raised by several staff in conversation with my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General who is presently undertaking a series of visits to CPS areas. Careful consideration has been given to the issues raised and a discussion paper proposing possible approaches to pay differences was circulated to chief crown prosecutors and trade unions for comment. The director is presently considering the responses received and expects to notify his proposals to chief crown prosecutors and trade unions within the next few days.

Mr. Fatchett asked the Attorney-General on how many occasions since 1 April agents have been instructed to act on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service; and at what cost.

The Attorney-General: The total number of occasions on which agents have been instructed to act on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service during the period 1 April to 30 November is about 31,000.

The cost of these instructions using average national costs is about £2·8 million.

Mr. Fatchett asked the Attorney-General what has been the cost of seconding qualifed lawyers to the London area of the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Attorney-General: The cost of seconding qualified lawyers from other areas of the CPS to the London area for the period 1 April to 30 November is about £430,000.

As well as the travel and subsistence costs of the seconded lawyers, this figure includes the additional costs of employing agents to undertake the work of the seconded staff. But agents would have been employed in London in the absence of seconded lawyers and this element of the total cost does not represent net additional expenditure.

Mr. Fatchett asked the Attorney-General how many prosecutions have had to be dropped because of the failure of the crown prosecution service to be in a position to proceed.

The Attorney-General: The ability of the prosecution to proceed with any particular case on a particular occasion is likely to depend on a number of variable factors—many of which relate to other agencies within the criminal justice system (for example, police, forensic science service and sometimes the defence) and are beyond the control of the director. They include (by way of example only) the availability of witnesses at the time and date specified by the court and the ability of the police to make contact with and notify those witnesses; it frequently occurs that the crown prosecution service is notified only shortly before a hearing that a particular witness is required. In such circumstances it may be necessary to seek an adjournment.

There have been instances when the prosecution has not been in a position to proceed and the court has refused an adjournment thus obliging the prosecution to discontinue. No record is kept of such instances separate from cases discontinued for other reasons. But where it is suggested that the crown prosecution service has been at fault, the case is thoroughly examined by a senior official. Experience has shown that whilst the crown prosecution service has on occasion been at fault in the majority of such cases (some of which have attracted damaging publicity for the crown prosecution service) the inability to proceed has been attributable either to a failing other than within the crown prosecution service or combination of events beyond the control of any one agency.

Mr. Fatchett asked the Attorney-General how many qualified lawyers are employed by the crown prosecution service on the latest available figures.

The Attorney-General: The number of lawyers employed by the crown prosecution service as prosecutors at 1 December 1986 was 1,229. In addition, a small proportion of administrative staff employed by the service have a legal qualification.

SCOTLAND

Child Abuse

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were convicted for offences related to the sexual abuse of children in the years 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Lang: The age of the victims of crimes and offences is not included in the statistics on court proceedings collected by the Scottish Home and Health Department. However, two of the categories in the classification of crimes and offences used in the statistics relate specifically to some form of sexual abuse of children. Figures for these categories are given in the table.

Persons with charge proved Scotland

Crime	1983	1984	[1]1985	[1]1986
Defilement of girl under 13 years	2	2	16	6
Defilement of girl aged 13, 14 and 15	73	69	84	56

[1] These figures are provisional
[2] January-September

Her Majesty's Inspectorate

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide details, in respect of Her Majesty's inspectorate in Scotland, of the average age of inspectors, the number of men and women, the average age of actual retirement, how many have received some form of award for redundancy, or premature retirement or sickness, the average amount of these awards, the size of the inspectorate by years since the Rayner report and the current pay scales.

Mr. Rifkind: The information sought on Her Majesty's schools inspectorate is as follows:

1. the average age is 49;
2. there are 101 men and 12 women;
3. over a period of 10 years, a period for which information is readily available, the average age of retirement for all reasons has been 59; the average age of retirement on age grounds has been 61;
4. over the same period 12 inspectors received premature or medical retirement awards;
5. the average amount of these 12 awards at the date of retirement was:
   retirement pension, £7,830
   retirement lump sum, £17,517
   compensation lump sum (when applicable) £6,576

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if a teacher or lecturer is entitled to have a colleague, or professional or trade union representative present when interviewed by one of Her Majesty's inspectors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: There is no entitlement for a teacher or lecturer to have a colleague, or professional or trade union representative present when being interviewed by one of Her Majesty's inspectors.

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if a teacher or lecturer, who receives an apparently unfair or potentially damaging comment from one of Her Majesty's inspectors, can require that this comment be either given in writing or withdrawn in writing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: There is no entitlement for a teacher or lecturer to be given in writing comments of one of Her Majesty's inspectors. It is open to anyone who believes they have been unfairly treated in the course of Her Majesty's inspectors' discharge of their duties to make representations to my right hon. and learned Friend or, in the last resort, to pursue complaints through the courts.

Road Safety

Mr. Steel asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many employees in each region of Scotland are funded by the Manpower Services Commission community programme for the Scottish traffic education programme; and whether this road safety project is confined to 14 to 18-year-olds throughout.

Mr. Rifkind: The information is not available in the precise form requested. The current number of approved and filled places, by employment and enterprise group area, which are funded by the Manpower Services Commission community programme for the Scottish traffic education programme are as shown in the table. This road safety project is indeed directed at 14 to 18-year-olds.

Area	*Approved places*	*Filled places*
Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway	12	9
Central and Fife	11	10
Glasgow	6	3
Highlands and Islands	12	12
Lanarkshire	120	105
Lothian and Borders	16	12
Renfrewshire, Dunbartonshire, Argyll and Bute	9	6
Tayside and Grampian	33	31
Total	219	188

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the in-patient waiting list at 31 December for each year since 1970, for each area health board.

Mr. John MacKay: Health boards were established in April 1974, and information on waiting lists in board areas for 1970-73 could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

The figures for subsequent years at 30 September are set out in the table:

	Scotland	*Argyll and Clyde*	*Ayrshire and Arran*	*Borders*	*Dumfries and Galloway*	*Fife*	*Forth Valley*	*Grampian*	*Greater Glasgow*	*Highland*	*Lanarkshire*	*Lothian*	*Orkney*	*Shetland*	*Tayside*	*Western Isles*
1974	56,182	4,703	5,404	692	2,130	3,952	3,320	5,124	12,564	1,589	3,942	8,669		68	3,890	135
1975	54,614	3,147	4,055	618	2,255	4,668	2,844	4,424	14,640	1,207	4,153	8,318	28	152	3,979	126
1976	53,381	2,900	4,108	514	2,155	4,381	3,284	4,538	13,018	1,184	3,578	8,942	34	115	4,513	117
1977	55,387	2,896	4,608	512	2,087	4,644	3,521	4,581	13,752	1,059	4,162	8,561	35	174	4,690	105
1978	62,464	4,870	4,245	691	1,917	5,160	3,823	5,769	15,928	1,350	4,058	9,827	42	[1]225	4,414	145
1979	71,247	5,813	4,438	486	2,236	4,617	4,742	7,848	15,947	1,188	5,303	13,007	38	[1]277	5,142	165
1980	67,387	6,458	4,564	637	1,897	4,245	4,233	7,036	15,320	1,354	5,222	10,834	48	[1]207	5,333	199
1981	65,228	6,351	4,005	411	1,883	3,974	3,466	7,012	15,776	1,224	5,247	9,715	46	[1]204	5,599	315
1982	66,365	4,715	4,731	382	2,894	6,857	3,893	10,651	18,612	1,703	9,110	16,953	42	186	5,473	163

	Scotland	Argyll and Clyde	Ayrshire and Arran	Borders	Dumfries and Galloway	Fife	Forth Valley	Grampian	Greater Glasgow	Highland	Lanarkshire	Lothian	Orkney	Shetland	Tayside	Western Isles
1983	88,338	7,137	5,031	402	2,871	6,477	3,547	10,247	19,266	1,941	8,282	14,717	56	125	8,112	107
1984	83,077	7,627	5,045	255	2,529	6,127	2,766	9,172	18,749	1,806	7,520	13,845	54	140	7,369	73
1985	77,677	7,209	5,120	318	2,687	5,816	2,593	8,641	16,006	2,543	6,605	13,381	58	145	6,494	61

[1] Estimated

Radioactive Discharges

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a list showing for each licensed nuclear site the calculated critical group exposures associated with *(a)* actual radioactive discharges in the last year and *(b)* 100 per cent. of authorised discharges calculated either on the basis of numerical limits given in the authorisation or on the basis of the maximum possible discharges where numerical limits do not apply.

Mr. Ancram: Assessments of critical group exposure for each site are published by the Scottish Development Department in statistical bulletins which are placed in the Library. Bulletin No. 4/1984 contains results up to the end of 1983. The results for 1984 and 1985 will be published shortly.

All nuclear site authorisations are being reviewed over a three-year period and the new certificates being issued will impose numerical limits on the quantities of radioactivity discharged. As part of the public consultations in connection with this review, estimates will be provided of the level of exposure which would arise from discharging radionuclides up to the limits proposed.

Homes Insulation Grants

Mr. Bruce asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether any local authorities in Scotland have expended their allocations of the 1986-87 homes insulation grants scheme.

Mr. Ancram: Yes; 18 local authorities have now expended the allocations made to them in April 1986. Further allocations will very shortly be made to those authorities which have requested them.

Tree Planting (Consultations)

Mr. Wilson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will alter the practice under which the Nature Conservancy Council is consulted only if planting of trees is proposed on a national nature reserve or a site of special interest;

(2) if he will alter the practice under which the Countryside Commission is consulted only if the planting of trees is proposed on a national scenic area.

Mr. John MacKay: The Forestry Commission's procedures for consulting the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission for Scotland on forestry proposals are based on mutually agreed arrangements. These are kept under review and adjustments made from time to time.

Fishing Industry

Mr. McQuarrie asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the total allowable catches and quotas for 1987 discussed at the meetings of the European Council of Fisheries Ministers on 17 and 18 December.

Mr. John MacKay: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given today by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, to my hon. Friend the Member for Scarborough (Sir M. Shaw). Overall, I am confident that we have secured a good balance between the requirements of the industry and the need to conserve stocks for the future.

Detained Persons (Deaths)

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cell deaths involving persons held in police custody have occurred in each of the past five years.

Mr. Lang: The figures for the last five complete years are as follows:

	Number
1981	4
1982	1
1983	2
1984	4
1985	3

Information about each of these deaths is given in the annual reports of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland.

Cumbernauld (Ministerial Visit)

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when next he expects to visit Cumbernauld new town.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend visited Cumbernauld on 20 October this year when he opened Seaboard Lloyd's new factory in the town. He has no immediate plans for a further visit. However, I plan to visit Cumbernauld on 27 March next year.

Crash Barriers

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans exist to provide dual carriageway trunk roads in Scotland with central reservation crash barriers.

Mr. Ancram: Central reserve barriers will continue to be provided on dual carriageway trunk roads where they can be justified. The whole length of the A74 from Millbank to the border is being provided with barriers, and the need for their installation on other roads is being reviewed, taking account of traffic volumes and the incidence of cross-over accidents.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of dual carriageway trunk roads in Scotland have central reservation crash barriers.

Mr. Ancram: Forty-eight miles (18 per cent.) of the 265 miles of dual carriageway trunk road in Scotland have central reserve barriers.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans exist to provide central reservation crash barriers on all of Scotland's motorways; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ancram: All new trunk motorways with a central reserve of up to 10 m. width will be constructed with central reserve barriers. Such barriers will be installed on existing trunk motorways where they can be justified.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of the Scottish motorway network includes central reservation crash barriers.

Mr. Ancram: Thirty-six miles (25 per cent.) of the 144 miles of motorway for which my right hon. and learned Friend is responsible have central reserve barriers. I do not hold information on the Glasgow urban section of the M8 which is the responsibility of Strathclyde regional council.

Health Service Managers

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to introduce performance bonuses for senior health service managers; how such bonuses will be determined; what is the range of payments intended; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John MacKay: The Scottish Home and Health Department is consulting Scottish health boards and the Common Services Agency on proposals for personal performance review and a performance-related pay scheme for general managers in the National Health Service in Scotland. The proposed scheme contains the main features of the scheme for performance pay which has been in operation in England since September. These include annual performance review measured against objectives previously agreed with the health authority.

I shall inform the House when the scheme is introduced and details will be placed in the Library.

Unisys (Plant Closure)

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with Unisys, Burroughs Machines Ltd., concerning the proposed closure of its plant in Cumbernauld new town; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Officials of the Industry Department for Scotland have been in contact with company representatives in the United Kingdom and Detroit throughout the last 10 months. Regrettably, Unisys found itself unable to accept our latest offer of regional assistance. I have made if clear that the Department remains ready to provide whatever help it properly can for any proposals aimed at securing jobs at the plant.

Earnings

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average male rate of pay, expressed as an annual figure, for each travel-to-work area in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available for the areas requested. Estimates of average gross weekly earnings are available only for the larger Scottish regions, and for Scotland as a whole. These are published each year in the tables of the "New Earnings Survey", parts A and E, available in the Library of the House.

Strathclyde Police (Women Officers)

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Strathclyde as to the number of women police officers, the ranks they hold, and the proportion of each rank above sergeant representing women officers in the Strathclyde police force.

Mr. Lang: No. Information about the numbers of *(a)* police officers and *(b)* female police officers on the strength of Strathclyde police as at 31 December 1985, detailed in each case by rank, was given in the chief constable's report for 1985.

Private Nursing Homes

Dr. Godman asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the current provision of private nursing homes for the elderly in Greenock and Port Glasgow.

Mr. John MacKay: Arrangements for the registration and inspection of private nursing homes are the responsibility of the local health board, to which detailed questions on the type of provision offered should be directed.

Schools (Corporal Punishment)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many pupils fall under section 48(5)*(b)* of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 concerning corporal punishment in schools.

Mr. John MacKay: In Scotland, some 400 pupils are likely to be affected.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to make an order under section 48(8) of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, concerning corporal punishment in schools.

Mr. John MacKay: My right hon. and learned Friend hopes to make regulations under section 48(8) simultaneously with the making of the commencement order for that section.

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many pupils fall under sections 48(6)*(a)*, 48(6)*(b)* and 48(6)*(c)* of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 concerning corporal punishment; and how many schools have one or more pupils who are covered by these categories.

Mr. John MacKay: It is likely that some 2,600 pupils and some 30 pupils will come within the terms of section 48(6)*(a)* and 48(6)*(b)*, respectively. No information is centrally available as to the numbers of pupils who will fall within the scope of Section 48(6)*(c)*.

Torness Power Station

Mr. Home Robertson asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for East Lothian on 26 November, *Official Report*, column *274*, if he will publish the exercise scenario used at Torness power station on 18 September; if he will describe each accident or fault said to have occurred for exercise purposes; whether any fire or explosion was said to have occurred for exercise purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 December 1986, c. *304*]: It is not the practice to publish the detailed scenarios prepared by the SSEB for the annual exercising of emergency plans at each nuclear power station. These scenarios are submitted to Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate for acceptance and incorporate a wide variety of accident conditions relevant to the type of reactor and those aspects of the emergency arrangements which are to be demonstrated. Typically the scenarios can incorporate pressure circuit failure, fires, release of radioactive material and injury to personnel. Copies of the scenarios are provided in advance to representatives of the emergency services which are involved and a report on the emergency exercise is made to the local liaison committee. The scenario for the exercise at Torness on 18 September 1986 provided for a simulated depressurisation accident from a reactor.

DEFENCE

Cyprus

Mr. Conway asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many prosecutions in the sovereign base areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia have been made against motorists without motor insurance or insurance by a company not recognised by the administrator in the most convenient period for which figures are available.

Mr. Freeman: During the past five years the number of prosecutions in the court of the sovereign base areas for driving without insurance has been as follows:

	Number
1982	77
1983	70
1984	76
1985	84
1986	56

These figures include prosecutions of motorists insured by companies not recognised by the SBA administrator.

Mr. Conway asked the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance is issued by the authorities of the sovereign base areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia in Cyprus to individuals or companies resident in or visiting the base concerning the legal jurisdiction of the sovereign base areas.

Mr. Freeman: I shall reply shortly.

Defence Procurement

Mr. Patrick Thompson asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has to improve the value for money from defence procurement contracts by changing payment arrangements.

Mr. Younger: During this year, we have introduced a new approach to payment terms for defence contractors which aims to increase the incentive on firms to deliver goods on time and to the required specification with penalties for those who fall down on the job. Increasingly we will be moving away from terms which allowed contractors to be funded for all their costs, within the limits of the contract, with payments related to date rather than specific progress made.

One result, at least in the short term, will be greater uncertainty over the timing of our payments to contractors. With the consent of the Treasury, arrangements are being introduced for a three-year period so that if, as a result of the new approach to payment terms, provision for procurement expenditure is underspent by more than the 5 per cent. limit of the existing end year flexibility scheme, up to an additional £400 million can be carried forward into the following year. This will be met, in the normal way, from the reserve within the public expenditure planning total for the year and will not increase overall defence expenditure taking one year with another. The new payment arrangements, coupled with the greater margin of flexibility, should help us to get better value for the money we spend, to the benefit of our defence effort.

Devonport Dockyard

Mr. Robert Atkins asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make an announement on the future of Devonport dockyard.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Negotiations are still continuing with the three bidders for the contract to manage Devonport dockyard. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State does not, therefore, expect to be able to announce the preferred contractor for Devonport until early in the new year. My right hon. Friend will consult the trades unions on this before taking a final decision about the future management of Devonport dockyard.

Tucano Aircraft

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many flying hours the Tucano has now completed with the new Garrett engine.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: About 100.

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the first Tucano to be handed over to the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 8 December 1986 at column *88*.

Goalkeeper and Sea Wolf Missiles

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects each of the United Kingdom's three aircraft carriers to be fitted with Goalkeeper and Sea Wolf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We plan to fit Goalkeeper on the vessels described from 1987 as part of scheduled refit work. No decision has yet been made on the possibility of fitting Sea Wolf on the aircraft carriers.

PC9 Trainer Aircraft

Sir Patrick Wall asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his officials attended the rolling out of the PC9 trainer aircraft at Brough on 15 December.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Six.

Sellafield (Processing)

Mr. Chris Smith asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the safety modifications for the Sellafield nuclear plant recommended by the nuclear installations

inspectorate will have any effect on the capability of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. at Sellafield to ensure the processing of nuclear material for the United Kingdom nuclear weapons programme.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: This is difficult to judge at present as the report by the nuclear installations inspectorate has only just been published. However, I should expect BNFL, after studying the report, to notify the Ministry of Defence if any of the activities, which it carries out for us, were likely to be affected.

Royal Marine Corps

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether serving members of the Royal Marine Corps are permitted to undertake paid work for companies or persons outside the corps; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Service personnel are permitted to undertake paid work for companies or other private employment subject to certain restrictions.

Each application is given individual attention and approval is dependent on a number of criteria being met. It is important, for instance, that the applicant's additional employment should not interfere with his service duties and that there is no conflict of interest between the needs of the service and the commercial interests of the employer. Particular care is taken to ensure that the company or employer concerned has no contractual or other special relationship with the Ministry of Defence.

Airborne Early Warning System

Mr. Murphy asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has received any representations from employees of interested contractors or subcontractors living in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency regarding the choice of airborne early warning system for the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have received a number of such representations including some from my hon. Friend's constituents.

Privatisation

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Defence what were the original estimates for savings to be made for putting out to contract all those services on his Department's list for privatisation; and what have been the actual savings.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Savings in respect of defence services which have been contracted out since 1979 are estimated at some £30 million per annum.

DROPS

Sir Ian Gilmour asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if those responsible for the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system selection in 1983 included any officers with previous experience of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system trials and development work carried out by his Department; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how the mechanical efficiency of the Boughton demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system equipment criticised by his Department for its higher hydraulic pressures compared with that of other systems selected in preference to it; and if he will make a statement;

(3) to what factors he attributes the failure of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system procurement to meet its in-service date; what effect the non-involvement of his Department's demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system experts in the assessment of proposals had in this regard; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if his Department's team of demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system experts making the 1983 selection were aware of the conclusions of project 226 regarding the use of trailers to provide the low mobility demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system function; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what changes have been made to the equipment specifications proposed in 1982 by the successful demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system competitors; to what extent those changes introduce any features proposed and costed in Boughton's production cost estimates but not costed in the selected competitors' original estimates; and if he will make a statement;

(6) if the prices and production cost estimates put forward by Foden and by Scammell in respect of their 1982 demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system equipment proposals were the subject of disclaimers and caveats; if Boughton's prices or production cost estimates were accompanied by any such disclaimers; and if he will make a statement;

(7) what specifications formed the basis of the production cost estimates of the successful demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system contenders in 1983 in comparison with those which were the subject of Boughton's production cost estimates; and if he will make a statement;

(8) how the specification for the MMLC demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system equipments proposed by *(a)* Foden and *(b)* Scammell in the 1982 demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system feasibility study response compared with those for the MMLC demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system equipments proposed by Boughtons in respect of the engine power, transmission and all features including the number of wheels and axles; and if he will make a statement;

(9) how the price put forward in 1982 by Scammell in respect of Boughtons' demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system load handling systems compared with the price put forward by Scammell for Multilift's flat flatrack load handling system, for Multilift's A-frame flatrack load handling system and for Powell Duffryn's A-frame flatrack load handling system; and if he will make a statement;

(10) when the requirement that the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system requirement that the vehicle be able to transmit power to the wheels at the same time as operating the hydraulic load handling system a live hydraulic facility was first formally recognised by his Department; and if he will make a statement;

(11) if, at the time in 1984 when he gave as a reason for the non-selection of the Boughtons' demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system equipment that it lacked power to lift the load of 14 tonnes required by the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system statement of requirement, he was aware of the United States Army trial reports stating that the Boughton

equipment had regularly picked up 16½ tonnes without difficulty in the worst of conditions; and if he will make a statement;

(12) what was his Department's assessment after Boughtons proposed the inclusion of live hydraulics in its 1982 demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system submission, of the role of live hydraulics as a deciding factor in the ability of the demountable rack off-loading system to pick up loads sunk in mud; and if he will make a statement;

(13) what his Department has told Boughtons about the implications of live hydraulics for the cost of demountable rack off-loading and pick-up systems; whether the prices and production cost estimates of any competitive equipments proposed in 1982 without live hydraulics were adjusted for this and other increases in the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system specification before the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system selection team compared these prices and production cost estimates without Boughtons' submissions; and if he will make a statement;

(14) what criticisms his Department made of Boughtons' proposed demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system regarding the hydraulic pressure at which it worked; and if he will make a statement;

(15) if, in the 1982 statement of requirements for the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system any requirement was stated indicating either a maximum acceptable hydraulic pressure or a preference for low hydraulic pressures; and if he will make a statement;

(16) if he is satisfied that his Department's demountable rack off-loading pick-up system team of experts in 1983 understood the nature of all the offers submitted to them; that they were able to reconcile their drawings, their performance calculations and their written statements; and if he will make a statement;

(17) what engine power was called for in the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system 1982 statement of requirement; whether Boughtons met that requirement in respect of both its IMMLC and MMLC proposals; and if he will make a statement;

(18) if the equipment *(a)* as proposed in 1982 and *(b)* as built in 1984 by Fodens and Scammels met the stated minimum power requirements for demountable rack off-loading pick-up system IMMLC and MMLC vehicles contained in the 1982 stated req uirements; and if he will make a statement;

(19) what figure has been determined as the minimum power-to-weight requirement for the low mobility trailer combination of demountable rack off-loading pick-up system to comply with the United Kingdom or Federal German legislation or army mobility requirements; and if he will make a statement;

(20) when Boughtons first proposed that the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system vehicle should have live hydraulics; what proposals were made regarding this facility by Fodens, Scammell and Multilift in their 1982 demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system submissions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I shall answer shortly.

Mr. Conway asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what evidence he has that British military technology related to the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system project is being passed to the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what evidence he has that the parent company of Multilift, recently awarded the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system contract, Partek of Finland has engaged in work for the military forces of the Soviet Union or any of its Warsaw pact allies; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what evidence he has that the parent company of Multilift, recently awarded the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system contract, Partek of Finland has any connection with the Russian civilian truck industry; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what was the value of the production order for the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system programme;

(5) how many firms were shortlisted for competitive trialling of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system;

(6) what representations he has received from the company, Hearncrest Boughton in connection with allegations concerning intellectual property of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system project;

(7) what steps he plans to take to ensure that the technology of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system contract is safeguarded for use by the United Kingdom and her allies;

(8) when invitations were first issued for proposals to supply a combined vehicle and load handling system (DROPS);

(9) if his Department retains any copyright to the Multilift mark IV demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system; and if he will make a statement;

(10) if he will describe the export licensing controls to which the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system contract awarded to Multilift, Shrewsbury will be subject; and if he will make a statement;

(11) if the Comptroller and Auditor General has informed him when he expects to complete his investigation into the awarding of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system project; and if he will make a statement;

(12) how his Department defines a defence product for the purposes of export control and security classification; and if the Multilift mark IV demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system falls within that definition.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I shall answer shortly.

SOCIAL SERVICES

AIDS

Mr. Cohen asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice his Department is currently issuing about the implications for the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome of the practice known as French kissing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The AIDS virus (HIV) has been found in low density in saliva so there is a remote theoretical risk that transfer of saliva in French kissing, especially where the uninfected partner has a cut or sore in the mouth, could lead to transmission of the virus. But there is no evidence that the infection has ever been spread in this way. Our current advice is therefore that people need not worry about catching the infection from kissing.

Sir Dudley Smith asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why official advertising on the dangers of acquired immune deficiency syndrom has not been extended to the regional press.

Mr. Newton: The first stage of the Department's advertising campaign has, of necessity, used the national media. As the campaign develops in the new year, an important role for both regional and local newspapers is envisaged.

Convalescent Hospitals

Mr. Waller asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total number of beds currently available for short-stay National Health Service patients in convalescent hospitals.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry I cannot give my hon. Friend the information he seeks in precisely the form requested. The available information is given in the table.

Convalescent beds, 1985
England

	Average daily number of available beds	*Average daily number of occupied beds*
National Health Service hospitals	205·5	139·7
Institutions providing treatment under contractual arrangements	[1]—	255·4

[1] Contractual arrangements are made as and when required.

Orthopaedic Surgery

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people, by region, are waiting for elective orthopaedic surgery; and what percentage have been waiting more than a year.

Mr. Newton: The latest information available centrally relates to the numbers of cases awaiting admission to National Health Service traumatic and orthopaedic departments and is included in a bound volume of the hospital in-patient waiting lists for health authorities in England at 31 March 1986, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

Generic Prescribing

Mr. Jackson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is his policy on compulsory generic prescribing or substitution for general practitioners;

(2) if he will estimate the effect of compulsory generic substitution on research-based pharmaceutical companies and the estimated public expenditure saving.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to introduce compulsory generic substitution nor to extend the present arrangements for generic prescribing by general practitioners. Under the selected list scheme some drugs must be prescribed generically. For drugs not covered by the selected list scheme we encourage doctors voluntarily to prescribe by generic name and we shall continue to do so.

The effect of compulsory generic substitution on research-based pharmaceutical companies and on public expenditure would depend on the details of whatever scheme was considered.

Selected List Prescribing

Mr. Jackson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy on the addition of new categories of drugs to the selected list.

Mr. Newton: The Government's policy remans unchanged. We have no present plans to extend the selected list scheme into other categories of drugs.

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the annual saving from the introduction of a limited list of certain ranges of drugs; and how this saving is broken down by therapeutic component.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Solihull (Mr. Taylor) on 18 December. Full year data are not yet availale on which to calculate a breakdown of savings by therapeutic category.

Nursing Services, London

Mr Cartwright asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects the National Health Service management board's study of the nursing services in London to be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The team studying the nursing services in London is aiming to complete its study and report to the National Health Service management board by late spring 1987. The board will then consider what local or national action may be required to remedy any problems revealed.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number of hospital beds in the Wandsworth health authority area on 30 November 1976 and the number on 30 November 1986.

Mr. Newton: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks in precisely the form requested. During 1985, the latest year for which information is available centrally, the average daily number of available beds in NHS hospitals in Wandsworth health authority was 2,337·5. The corresponding figure for 1976 was 3,126·6. Between 1976 and 1985 the number of in-patient cases treated per available bed increased from 15·4 to 18·7.

Family Planning Clinics

Ms. Richardson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what were the number of patients, and as proportions of women, under 20 years of age attending National Health Service family planning clinics in England in each of the years 1983, 1984 and 1985, in each of the following age-groups *(a)* under 16 years, *(b)* 16-17 years, *(c)* 18 years, *(d)* 19 years and *(e)* under 20 years;

(2) what were the numbers of patients, and as proportions of women, attending National Health Service family planning clinics in England in each quarter year since January 1983, in each of the following age-groups *(a)* under 16 years, *(b)* 16 years, *(c)* 17 years, *(d)* 18 years, *(e)* 19 years, *(f)* under 20 years and *(g)* 20 to 24 years.

Mr. Newton: The available information is given in the following table. Quarterly information is not collected centrally.

Family Planning Clinics
Number of patients seen and percentage of female population seen by age in England

Age of patient	Females						Males		
	1983		1984		1985		1983	1984	1985
	Number	per cent.	Number	per cent.	Number	per cent.	Number	Number	Number
Under 16 years	16,343	[1]4·5	17,369	[1]4·9	11,570	[1]3·3	579	518	252
16-17 years	94,873	12·6	93,124	12·7	88,933	12·3	1,539	1,741	1,739
18 years	67,222	17·2	68,203	17·9	62,618	16·8	401	552	593
19 years	73,734	18·8	77,319	19·8	71,901	18·8	397	494	550
Under 20 years	252,172	[2]13·3	256,015	[2]13·8	235,022	[2]12·9	2,916	3,305	3,134
20-34 years	932,167	18·5	955,685	18·7	925,229	17·8	9,058	10,600	12,456

[1] Per cent. based on female population age 15 years.
[2] Per cent. based on female population age 15-19 years.

Nurses (Pay)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will improve the structure of nurses' pay sufficiently to attract an adequate number of young nurses into the profession.

Mr. Newton: The pay of all grades of nursing and midwifery staff is decided in the light of the recommendations of the independent review body for nursing staff, midwives, health visitors and professions allied to medicine. Since 1984 nurses have received an increase of over 11 per cent. in real terms. I understand that the review body has begun taking evidence for the 1987-88 pay round.

Meanwhile the management and staff sides of the nursing and mid-wifery staffs negotiating council are engaged in a review of the grading structure for clinical nurses and midwives, the results of which will in due course be reported to the review body for pricing.

"Breaking the Sound Barrier" (Exhibition)

Mr. Ashley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's campaign, "Breaking the Sound Barrier," to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Major: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 30 March 1987 to 3 April 1987.

Adult Dental Health

Mr. Galley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans for a national survey of adult dental health in 1988 as a follow-up to the surveys carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys in 1968 and 1978.

Mrs. Currie: The 1988 survey of adult dental health is one of a number of proposals under consideration by the research committee of the Department.

Wandsworth Health Authority

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of beds occupied by private patients in National Health Service hospitals in the Wandsworth health authority area on 1 December.

Mrs. Currie: For the latest information available centrally, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) today. The hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of the Wandsworth district health authority for the more recent information he seeks.

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what was the total value of contracts provided by private contractors in the Wandsworth health authority area on 1 December:

(2) if he will list, as of 1 December, the type of work being provided by private contractors in the Wandsworth health authority area.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not held centrally. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of Wandsworth district health authority for this information.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Asbestos

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what records are kept as to the number of people working in power stations in the United Kingdom who have come into contact with asbestos and are now suffering from *(a)* asbestosis or *(b)* bilateral diffuse pleural thickening; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: Records are not kept in this form. The Department records awards of disablement benefit to people suffering from pneumoconiosis (which includes asbestosis) and bilateral diffuse pleural thickening as a result of occupational exposure to asbestos. However, the number of such awards to people working in power stations is not separately identified.

Since December 1985 the number of people seen by special medical boards in connection with claims for asbestosis and bilateral diffuse pleural thickening who have worked in power stations or have been otherwise employed by the Central Electricity Generating Board has been recorded.

Heating Costs (Single Payments)

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many single payments in respect of additional heating expenditure incurred during last winter were made in the Tooting constituency; and what was the total cost and average value of each payment.

Mr. Lyell: Information is not available in the precise form requested. The parliamentary constituency of Tooting is dealt with by three local offices which also cover parts of other constituencies. The information requested is as follows:

Local office	*Total number of payments*	*Total amount paid* £	*Average payment* £
Balham	773	11,075	14·33
Streatham	498	8,878	17·83
Wandsworth	541	12,507	23·12

Computerised Hospital Waiting Lists (West Midlands)

Mr. Heddle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the present position regarding the pilot scheme by the west midlands regional health authority on computerised hospital waiting lists.

Mr. Newton: The project is under way. Since July the selected group of general practitioners has received monthly bulletins containing detailed information on in-patient and out-patient waiting times for general surgery in the region. Referrals from those general practitioners are being monitored.

In-Patients (No Smoking Areas)

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what provision is currently available for patients in long-stay hospitals who wish to reside in a smoke-free environment.

Mrs. Currie: The Department issued guidance (in circular HC(85)22) to health authorities on promoting non-smoking on National Health Service premises. The general principle should be to discourage smoking as far as possible. In long- stay accommodation, however, which in many cases is the patients' home, greater flexibility may be necessary. Nevertheless, where smoking is permitted, it should be restricted to separate areas where it will not distress patients who are non-smokers.

Dentures

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the average cost *(a)* to the National Health Service, and *(b)* to the patient for repairs to dentures, in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie: The average cost of repairs to dentures in the general dental service in England in 1985 was £7. Repairs to dentures are free of charge to all patients.

National Assistance Act 1948

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he plans to seek to remove the word "dumb" from section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948.

Mr. Major: The term "dumb" is no longer acceptable and is not used by the professions dealing with people with communcation handicaps. If a suitable legislative opportunity arose, we would consider amending section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 accordingly, although we can give no undertaking as to when that might be.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which hospitals in London are currently being considered for closure.

Mr. Newton: In London (the former GLC area) there are three hospitals whose total permanent closure and where relevant relocation of services, is either under formal public consultation or where the consultation procedure has been completed but no final decision has yet been taken.

The hospitals are the west London hospital and the Westminster children's hospital in Riverside health authority and St. James' hospital in Wandsworth. My right hon. Friend has today agreed the closure of New Cross hospital in Lewisham and north Southwark, in association with approval in principal for a £35 million new development at Guy's hospital.

Hospital Building Maintenance

Mr. Kirkwood asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether, pursuant to his answer of Friday 5 December, *Official Report*, column *819*, expenditure on hospital building maintenance is sub-divided in any way in the health authority's accounts.

Mrs. Currie: No. The annual accounts of health authorities show only the total expenditure on building maintenance under each main service heading (hospital services, community health services, ambulance services, etc.). However, in addition to this functional analysis the accounts include a subjective analysis by type of

expenditure. This provides an alternative breakdown of health authorities' total revenue expenditure of which some categories relate directly to building maintenance — for example 'salaries and wages — building trade operatives' — building maintenance — equipment and materials' and building maintenance — external contracts'. The Department's annual booklets "Health Authorities' Annual Accounts — National Summary (England)" show all the figures for both analyses. Copies of the booklets for the years up to 1984-85 are held in the Library and that for 1985-86 will be placed there as soon as it is available.

Hospital Accommodation

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidance he has given to health authorities as to the security of housing tenure for staff who have worked and lived in hospital accommodation but have not been employed by the company now contracted to do certain hospital services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The National Health Service management board is currently reviewing the condition under which staff and others occupy health authority accommodation. In the meantime, health authorities have been advised that no one is to be given notice to quit without the prior approval of the Department.

Health Education Council

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what redundancy payments are being made to staff at the Health Education Council.

Mr. Newton: Most members of staff will be offered the opportunity of transferring to the new authority with full continuity of employment. The Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 provides that redundancy payments are not payable in such cases. The statutory entitlements of any members of staff who do not take up appointment with the new body will be met.

Mr. Allan Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when appointments will be made to the special health authority which is to replace the Health Education Council.

Mr. Newton: My right hon. Friend hopes to be able to make an announcement shortly.

Benefits (Girocheques)

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on how many occasions in the past three years girocheques issued by the Livingston computer centre to Scottish claimants have been delivered late; what information he has as to the cause of late delivery in each case; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lyell: In the last three years there have been six incidents of delay to Scottish claimants attributable to the computer centre. On 28 February 1984 industrial action meant that giros for that day were dispatched a day late. In November 1984 a batch of 6,000 giros were delayed by a day; 800 giros were similarly delayed on 16 January 1986. On both occasions delay was caused by dispatch errors.

In January 1986 an unprecendented fault occurred in the system. In this instance local unemployment benefit offices were forewarned and those offices took steps to minimise the impact on claimants. Similar faults occurred on 15 July 1986 and 2 October 1986. Other instances of non-delivery were outside the control of the computer centre.

Detailed figures for Scotland are available only for the past year up to October 1986, as follows:

	Number of Giros delivered late in Scotland	*Causes* *Adverse Weather*	*Rail Delay*	*Industrial Action en Route*	*Problems of delivery by Post Office*	*Other*
November 1985	743	3	—	—	10	—
December 1985	60	—	—	—	17	—
January 1986	438	—	—	—	17	—
February 1986	900	—	—	—	9	—
March 1986	1,345	—	1	—	3	—
April 1986	201	—	2	—	8	—
May 1986	208	—	—	—	20	—
June 1986	951	—	—	—	14	1
July 1986	772	—	—	—	11	—
August 1986	407	—	—	7	11	1
September 1986	1,216	—	—	—	14	—
October 1986	705	—	—	—	14	—
Total	7,946	3	3	7	156	2

Figures for the previous two years covering the whole of the distribution area from Livingston show a similar pattern.

Additionally a bag of mail for Edinburgh which left Livingston at 2.30 pm on Friday 12 December and arrived in Edinburgh by Saturday morning was not delivered until Monday. Local office and social services staff made emergency payments and I am most grateful to them for their patience and co-operation.

Problems are inevitable in an undertaking of this magnitude. When any fault does occur all effort is then directed towards minimising the impact on claimants.

Mr. Joe Dixon

Mr. Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether Mr. Joe Dixon of Oldbury, Carrigaline, County Cork, Eire, has been awarded a war disablement

pension; what progress has been made regarding his claim first made on 21 November 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: Mr. Dixon was advised on 2 December that he had been awarded a war disablement pension.

Medicine (Vocational Training)

Mr. Hargreaves asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations have been received from the European Community regarding powers exercised by his Department to restrict entry to vocational training in medical general practice; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: None. The arrangements for entry to vocational training for general practice meet the requirements of the European Community directive on training in general practice.

Fluoridation

Mr. Terry Davis asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to issue the draft guidelines on the fluoridation of water supplies.

Mrs. Currie: A draft circular giving guidance to health authorities on the implementation of fluoridation schemes and also containing a model agreement between health authorities and water undertakers and an indemnity from the Secretary of State to water undertakers will be issued to regional health authorities for consultation in January.

Hypothermia

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of deaths of babies in the first year of life as a result of hypothermia, whether as a primary or contributory factor, in each month since January 1979.

Mrs. Currie: The table shows the numbers of deaths with mention of hypothermia on the death certificate, irrespective of whether it did or did not appear as the underlying cause of death, for persons aged under one year by month of registration for England and Wales from January 1979 to the latest available month.

Number of deaths with any mention of hypothermia, persons aged under one year by month of registration. 1979-1986 England and Wales

Month of registration	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	[1] *1986*
January	1	1	—	1	1	—	—	1
February	2	3	1	4	—	—	—	—
March	3	1	1	—	1	1	—	1
April	—	—	1	—	—	1	3	1
May	2	2	1	1	1	—	1	4
June	3	1	1	2	—	—	—	—
July	1	—	1	2	3	—	1	1
August	2	—	—	1	—	—	1	1
September	1	—	—	—	2	1	—	—
October	3	—	2	2	—	—	1	2
November	—	2	1	2	—	—	1	1
December	2	3	—	3	1	—	1	[2]

[1] Figures for 1986 are provisional
[2] Not available

WHO (Nutrition)

Mr. Shersby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has contributed to the preparation by the European regional office of the World Health Organisation of a paper entitled "Healthy Nutrition: Preventing Nutrition-Related Diseases in Europe"; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Department was not involved in preparing this paper. I understand that the World Health Organisation is considering publishing it in 1987.

"Personal Social Services"

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish his Green Paper on "Personal Social Services".

Mr. Fowler: The timing of the publication of the document has been reviewed in the light of its interaction with the overview of community care which Sir Roy Griffiths has been asked to undertake and which I announced earlier this week. The consultative document will now be published early in the new year.

Birth Statistics

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, for the most recent years for which figures are available, the numbers of (i) singleton, (ii) two and (iii) other multiple births which took place following *(a)* in vitro fertilisation and *(b)* treatment for infertility, and in each case how many of the babies *(x)* were still-born, *(y)* died under the age of one year and *(z)* died at ages one to four years.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Pregnancy (Research)

Mr. Wigley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has on research into the outcome of pregnancy following infertility treatment and in vitro fertilisation, including problems associated with neo-natal care for such babies born in a multiple birth.

Mrs. Currie: We are aware of two research projects currently in progress. The Medical Research Council is organising a follow-up study of children born as a result

of in vitro fertilisation (IVF). The national perinatal epidemiology unit and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys are jointly carrying out a study of triplet and higher order births in 1979-80 and 1982-84. This study will investigate both the extent to which multiple births in these years arose from in vitro fetilisation and drugs used to treat infertility, and neo-natal care for babies born in multiple births.

Adjudication and Overpayments Regulations

Mr. Nicholls asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to make new adjudication and overpayments regulations.

Mr. Lyell: I have on 17 December laid the Social Security (Adjudication) Regulations 1986 and the Social Security (Payments on Account, Overpayments and Recovery) Regulations 1986, which are consequent on the Social Security Act 1986. The regulations will come into effect on 6 April 1987, and continue the process of applying common provisions to the administration of social security benefits. The changes will make it easier for claims for social security benefits to be dealt with more quickly and more accurately.

Occupational Pensions

Mr. Ashby asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the revaluation provisions relating to the deferred pensions of early leavers from occupational pension schemes will take effect.

Mr. Major: The revaluation provisions contained in the Social Security Act, 1985 apply to early leavers after 1 January 1986 with at least a year to go before the normal scheme pension age.

An order laid on 9 December (S.I. 1986, No. 2070) specified that for pensions which are subject to revaluation and which come into payment in the year beginning 1 January 1987, the revaluation percentage shall be 3 per cent. This is in line with the rise in prices in Great Britain in the year ended 30 September 1986.

Guy's Hospital (Development)

Mr. Galley asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he is yet in a position to make a statement about the proposed new development at Guy's hospital, London.

Mr. Fowler: I have today given approval in principle to a £35 million new development at Guy's hospital, London. The scheme is due to start in 1990 and should be completed by 1994. This is an imaginative and exciting development and I welcome the joint efforts of both Government and voluntary sources which have combined to make it possible.

One of the Government's priorities for the National Health Service is the continuing development and modernisation of hospitals enabling us to replace older facilities and re-shape services to meet health-care needs in an up-to-date way. The present plan to develop Guy's hospital is part of this process and will complete the rebuilding of this major teaching hospital. I am at the same time agreeing to the closure of New Cross hospital, and endorsing the South East Thames regional health authority's plans to provide an additional £300,000 capital and £500,000 a year of additional revenue from facilities to meet needs currently met at New Cross.

Major contributions have been made to the cost of the Guy's development from the Guy's hospital trustees and from the splendid generosity of Sir Philip and Lady Harris, as well as the University Grants Committee and the central funds of the DHSS.

With 275 beds and 90 day places the new development will provide the latest in medical and psychiatric care, bringing together vital out-patient and rehabilitation facilities, together with an accident and emergency department. A range of supporting departments, teaching and research facilities will enhance the hospital's existing services, ensuring the hospital's key role well into the next century.

The scheme advances the strategy of Lewisham and North Southwark health district to concentrate its acute beds on two district hospital sites; at Lewisham in the south of the district and at Guy's in the north. These hospitals, some five miles apart, are well placed geographically to serve the population of the whole district. When the new building is opened, patients will have improved access to a full range of diagnostic equipment and high technology services at Guy's. At present many acute services, particularly those for the elderly, are based where such facilities are not available.

The district's strategy also incorporates new developments at Lewisham hospital and in the community. With the Guy's building it will entail the closure of New Cross hospital in 1987. New Cross has become uneconomic to run and is not well fitted to provide the modern facilities now required.

I have considered with the regional health authority special measures to ensure that patients currently treated at New Cross will continue to receive the treatment they require while the new services are being built up at Guy's and elsewhere. Some general medical and geriatric patients will move to Guy's and Hither Green; rheumatology patients will transfer to Lewisham hospital; psychogeriatric services will go to Guy's or new developments at New Cross.

On top of this the RHA will provide £300,000 capital and guarantee £500,000 revenue spending per year to enable Lewisham and Southwark to open two 24-hour observation wards, day surgery units where minor operations can be carried out and to maintain the use of medical ward at Hither Green hospital. The RHA will draw on the £30 million special fund set up by the Government to help regions receiving less than average national growth to cope with the transitional problems of change.

The South East Thames RHA will keep the position under review.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what will the the total spending of his Department on press and public relations in the current year; and what it was in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *222*]: Total spending by my Department's information division, including expenditure on advertising and promotional literature and full staff costs for the years requested are:

	£'000
1979-80	2,757
1980-81	2,445
1981-82	3,257
1982-83	4,012
1983-84	6,005
1984-85	6,832
1985-86	8,496
1986-87	[1]18,000

[1] Estimated.
The increase in 1986-87 is largely attributable to spending on AIDS publicity.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what will be the estimated spending by his Department on television, radio and newspaper advertising, respectively, and other promotional literature in the current year; and what was the total in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *222*]: For figures on expenditure on newspapers and television advertising for 1979-80 to 1983-84, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten) on 14 May 1984 at columns *83-84*. Figures for the 1984-85 financial year were given by my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney) on 6 December 1985 at columns *402-403*.

Figures for radio advertising and other promotional literature are as follows:

Year	*Radio* £	*Other promotional literature* £
1979-80	45,349	425,000
1980-81	37,757	290,883
1981-82	60,223	328,893
1982-83	54,260	366,032
1983-84	61,754	1,960,761
1984-85	—	3,248,605

Figures for newspapers, television, radio advertising and other promotional literature for 1985-86 are as follows:

	£
Newspapers	3,187,795
Television	831,780
Radio	487,278
Other promotional literature	2,631,626

Estimated expenditure for 1986-87 is as follows:

	£
Newspapers	5,936,000
Television	2,797,000
Radio	684,000
Other promotional literature	7,629,000

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many press and public relations staff are employed in his Department; and how many were employed in 1979-80 and each intervening year.

Mr. Fowler [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 November 1986, c. *222*]: My Department has no section which can be separately identified as public relations. Functions commonly associated with public relations are carried out by information officers as part of their duties in the Department's information division.

The following table contains information relating to professional staff employed in the Department's press and publicity branch for the years requested.

Year	*Information officers in post*
1979-80	21
1980-81	20
1981-82	20
1982-83	19
1983-84	18
1984-85	20
1985-86	24
1986-87	29

Private Patients

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each region and for each year since 1979 *(a)* the total number of pay beds, *(b)* the average number occupied by private patients, *(c)* the total number of private in-patients and *(d)* the total number of private out-patients.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 24 November 1986, c. *129-130*]: The information requested is given in the tables.

Private patients receiving treatment in NHS hospitals—1979 to 1985
Number of pay beds at 31 December

Regional health authority, special health authorities boards of governors[1]	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*[1]1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Northern	56	56	78	103	103	105	95
Yorkshire	140	140	154	182	199	199	193
Trent	130	130	150	143	143	143	138
East Anglian	90	90	94	106	106	108	108
North West Thames[1]	339	339	352	292	292	292	287
North East Thames[1]	278	278	286	398	404	410	413
South East Thames[1]	263	263	302	332	337	337	333
South West Thames[1]	156	156	168	180	182	194	182
Wessex	99	99	106	117	120	120	116
Oxford	164	164	180	180	180	180	183
South Western	78	78	82	102	104	104	102

Regional health authority, special health authorities/boards of governors[1]	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*[1]1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
West Midlands	181	181	217	258	267	276	273
Mersey	67	67	92	112	123	123	123
North Western	170	170	214	231	244	245	243
Special health authorities-boards of governors[1]	194	194	202	183	183	183	178
England	2,405	2,405	2,677	2,919	2,987	3,019	2,967

Average daily number of beds occupied

Regional health authority, special health authorities/boards of governors[1]	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*[1]1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Northern	26	31	35	19	28	26	22
Yorkshire	85	87	89	68	76	77	66
Trent	69	68	62	54	52	37	38
East Anglian	57	58	64	47	55	40	42
North West Thames[1]	230	225	210	155	138	131	115
North East Thames[1]	165	158	154	198	186	172	153
South East Thames[1]	190	197	184	155	144	132	125
South West Thames[1]	88	90	87	75	81	64	65
Wessex	60	69	69	58	57	52	31
Oxford	103	103	85	84	81	85	72
South Western	46	46	49	43	42	42	36
West Midlands	109	109	108	80	82	80	69
Mersey	38	40	47	42	44	38	51
North Western	105	106	111	74	84	75	64
Special health authorities-boards of governors[1]	136	126	117	107	103	104	114
England[2]	1,508	1,514	1,469	1,259	1,253	1,156	1,062

Number of discharges and deaths

Regional Health Authority, Special Health Authorities/boards of governors[1]	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*[1]1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Northern	2,812	2,901	3,704	1,555	2,382	2,261	1,996
Yorkshire	5,606	6,229	6,049	4,008	4,462	4,877	4,255
Trent	4,795	5,065	4,584	3,834	3,976	2,979	2,837
East Anglian	3,401	3,923	4,425	3,136	3,617	2,715	2,960
North West Thames[1]	11,699	12,395	12,357	9,331	8,891	8,008	7,200
North East Thames[1]	9,229	9,787	9,441	11,412	11,170	10,531	10,054
South East Thames[1]	10,087	11,107	10,925	9,309	9,090	8,751	8,116
South West Thames[1]	5,545	5,819	6,156	5,103	5,638	5,144	3,591
Wessex	4,462	4,947	5,306	4,425	4,395	4,129	2,257
Oxford	6,110	6,587	5,412	5,607	5,927	5,927	5,835
South Western	2,962	3,352	3,492	3,333	3,038	2,914	2,625
West Midlands	7,356	8,011	7,876	5,597	6,015	5,716	5,293
Mersey	2,333	2,770	3,156	2,370	2,651	2,599	2,675
North Western	8,313	9,293	9,203	5,878	5,946	5,499	5,194
Special Health authorities/boards of governors[1]	6,418	6,379	5,653	5,788	5,740	5,439	5,894
England	91,128	98,565	97,739	80,686	82,938	77,489	70,782

Number of out-patient attendances

Regional Health Authority, Special Health Authorities/boards of governors[1]	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*[2]	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Northern	1,961	3,432	4,806	5,222	5,581	6,808	9,771
Yorkshire	5,302	15,930	13,009	9,986	10,832	11,093	12,510
Trent	10,505	12,789	16,767	10,361	8,062	9,575	13,507
East Anglian	2,380	3,031	4,250	4,710	5,179	7,915	11,939
North West Thames[1,3]	26,669	27,914	33,570	27,626	26,324	27,556	[3]27,557
North East Thames[1]	23,489	22,691	30,392	34,913	37,879	40,189	41,785
South East Thames[1]	8,594	8,730	11,319	14,101	16,109	19,445	20,608
South West Thames[1]	7,501	5,866	13,300	14,237	14,880	14,753	10,751
Wessex	2,807	3,135	3,798	4,465	5,123	6,046	6,552
Oxford[3]	6,193	5,904	4,282	5,072	5,637	6,556	[3]9,907
South Western	1,208	1,937	3,644	3,320	3,559	3,879	3,950
West Midlands	4,245	4,907	5,761	6,629	7,795	8,828	14,271
Mersey	2,635	3,236	3,141	5,141	6,762	8,561	10,208
North Western	7,382	9,074	12,845	14,845	16,535	19,188	24,602
Special Health authorities/boards of governors[1]	21,052	19,949	19,917	21,795	20,511	21,073	22,647

Regional Health Authority, Special Health Authorities boards of governors[1]	1979	1980	1981	1982[2]	1983	1984	1985
England[3]	131,923	148,525	180,801	182,423	190,768	211,465	[3]240,565

[1] Because of NHS restructuring in 1982 the regional figures are not strictly comparable over the whole period.
[2] Regional figures may not sum exactly to the England total because of rounding.
[3] Data for 1 hospital in North West Thames region and 12 hospitals in Oxford region not available.

Mr. Dobson asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give for 1985 the number of private out-patient attendances and the number of private day-patient attendances for each district health authority, regional health authority, special health authority/board of governors and for England as a whole;

(2) if he will give for 1985 for each district health authority, regional health authority, special health authority, board of governors and for England as a whole: *(a)* the number of pay beds, *(b)* their average occupancy by private patients, *(c)* the average private patient occupancy as a percentage and *(d)* the number of deaths and discharges of private in-patients.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 24 November 1986, c. *129-30*]: The information requested is given in the tables.

Private patients in NHS hospitals, England—1985

District health authority	Number of pay beds at 31 December	Average daily number of beds occupied	Percentage bed occupation	Discharges and deaths	Outpatient attendances	Day case attendances	Regular day patient attendances
Northern Regional Health Authority							
Hartlepool	6	0·7	11·7	60	248	128	0
North Tees	7	0·6	8·6	60	442	32	0
South Tees	15	2·1	14·0	325	2,512	283	0
East Cumbria	10	2·1	21·0	190	625	137	0
South Cumbria	9	2·1	23·3	150	451	146	0
West Cumbria	4	0·2	5·0	14	70	3	0
Darlington	5	1·5	30·0	157	265	112	0
Durham	4	0·4	10·0	33	677	118	0
North West Durham	5	0·7	14·0	66	479	116	0
South West Durham	3	0·2	6·7	16	325	37	0
Northumberland	4	1·2	30·0	55	627	60	0
Gateshead	3	0·1	3·3	15	87	140	0
Newcastle	9	6·4	71·1	469	2,383	258	0
North Tyneside	2	0·6	30·0	39	0	26	0
South Tyneside	2	0·8	40·0	63	62	113	0
Sunderland	7	2·3	32·9	284	518	243	0
Total	95	22·0	23·2	1,996	9,771	1,952	0
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority							
Hull	12	1·9	15·8	117	545	185	0
East Yorkshire	10	3·0	30·0	275	37	176	0
Grimsby	7	3·5	50·0	267	434	240	0
Scunthorpe	7	2·9	41·4	196	1,465	57	0
Northallerton	7	0·1	1·4	75	249	39	0
York	3	2·3	76·7	169	144	105	0
Scarborough	6	0·2	3·3	20	37	0	0
Harrogate	6	4·0	66·7	224	34	33	0
Bradford	34	2·7	7·9	290	3,044	327	0
Airedale	12	8·4	70·0	423	400	303	0
Calderdale	24	7·8	32·5	456	670	230	0
Huddersfield	10	2·3	23·0	107	296	24	0
Dewsbury	6	0·8	13·3	54	38	134	0
Leeds Western	29	20·4	70·3	1,160	3,895	260	0
Leeds Eastern	6	4·0	66·7	242	531	47	0
Wakefield	10	1·3	13·0	150	625	95	0
Pontefract	4	0·4	10·0	30	66	62	0
Total	193	66·0	34·2	4,255	12,510	2,317	0
Trent Regional Health Authority							
North Derbyshire	7	1·8	25·7	179	692	296	0
Southern Derbyshire	15	4·4	29·3	396	1,450	371	0
Leicestershire	23	7·4	32·2	768	1,165	997	0
North Lincolnshire	18	1·4	7·8	61	4,561	114	0
South Lincolnshire	9	10·9	121·1	465	1,339	321	0
Bassetlaw	6	0·8	13·3	76	207	421	0

District health authority	Number of pay beds at 31 December	Average daily number of beds occupied	Percentage bed occupation	Discharges and deaths	Outpatient attendances	Day case attendances	Regular day patient attendances
Central Nottinghamshire	22	0·3	1·4	53	102	33	0
Nottingham	20	3·7	18·5	285	95	106	0
Barnsley	5	1·0	20·0	127	362	122	0
Doncaster	3	0·8	26·7	57	873	7	0
Rotherham	0	0·0	—	0	0	0	0
Sheffield	10	5·2	52·0	370	2,661	119	0
Total	138	37·7	27·3	2,837	13,507	2,907	0
East Anglian Regional Health Authority							
Cambridge	11	6·5	59·1	344	3,932	20	0
Peterborough	18	0·5	2·8	61	925	101	0
West Suffolk	10	5·6	56·0	345	457	121	0
East Suffolk	24	6·6	27·5	484	2,905	22	0
Norwich	28	12·3	43·9	888	1,425	152	0
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	5	1·4	28·0	184	542	90	0
West Norfolk and Wisbech	8	5·5	68·8	434	1,481	357	0
Huntingdon	4	3·2	80·0	220	272	64	0
Total	108	41·6	38·5	2,960	11,939	927	0
North West Thames Regional Health Authority							
North Bedfordshire	12	3·4	28·3	253	968	59	0
South Bedfordshire	9	0·7	7·8	116	374	165	0
North Hertfordshire	10	1·1	11·0	78	243	61	0
East Hertfordshire	10	2·8	28·0	172	2,490	199	0
North West Hertfordshire[1]	13	4·0	30·8	328	[1]43	226	0
South West Hertfordshire	6	2·5	41·7	158	26	60	0
Barnet	12	2·1	17·5	188	5,898	92	0
Harrow	13	3·3	25·4	99	611	24	0
Hillingdon	32	13·3	41·6	914	1,236	131	0
Hounslow and Spelthorne	7	2·7	38·6	259	2,695	326	0
Ealing	3	0·0	0·0	0	90	50	0
Brent	10	0·3	3·0	25	426	11	0
Paddington and North Kensington	65	35·5	54·6	2,182	2,219	122	0
Riverside	85	43·1	50·7	2,428	10,238	483	1
Total[1]	287	114·8	40·0	7,200	[1]27,557	1,783	1
North East Thames Regional Health Authority							
Basildon and Thurrock	11	3·3	30·0	311	574	281	0
Mid Essex	20	9·8	49·0	1,230	2,521	581	0
North East Essex	9	1·9	21·1	169	5,489	96	0
West Essex	21	7·8	37·1	802	5,933	227	0
Southend	19	3·4	17·9	340	987	203	0
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	13	5·7	43·8	303	4,680	225	2
Hampstead	29	24·0	82·8	985	5,195	186	0
Bloomsbury	178	64·3	36·1	3,905	3,883	172	0
Islington	31	1·3	4·2	189	503	97	0
City and Hackney	15	6·1	40·7	182	54	5	0
Newham	2	0·2	10·0	31	187	16	0
Tower Hamlets	34	17·5	51·5	1,065	6,708	0	0
Enfield	6	2·4	40·0	164	192	0	0
Haringey	10	1·0	10·0	94	438	106	0
Redbridge	8	2·0	25·0	144	4,006	66	0
Waltham Forest	7	2·0	28·6	140	435	34	0
Total	413	152·7	37·0	10,054	41,785	2,295	2
South East Thames Regional Health Authority							
Brighton	24	10·3	42·9	719	597	61	0
Eastbourne	10	2·0	20·0	164	960	113	0
Hastings	6	2·6	43·3	263	1,002	66	0
South East Kent	12	2·0	16·7	138	386	103	0
Canterbury and Thanet	29	2·6	9·0	458	2,874	263	0
Dartford and Gravesham	8	0·6	7·5	68	1,054	129	0
Maidstone	7	0·4	5·7	62	2,006	61	0
Medway	8	0·3	3·8	60	3,588	171	0
Tunbridge Wells	39	13·7	35·1	1,031	1,931	646	0

District health authority	Number of pay beds at 31 December	Average daily number of beds occupied	Percentage bed occupation	Discharges and deaths	Outpatient attendances	Day case attendances	Regular day patient attendances
Bexley	2	2·8	140·0	227	3,324	227	0
Greenwich	14	2·2	15·7	147	1,513	92	0
Bromley	22	3·3	15·0	185	1,010	198	0
West Lambeth	38	32·5	85·5	1,419	363	238	0
Camberwell	45	22·8	50·7	1,248	0	295	0
Lewisham and North Southwark	69	26·4	38·3	1,927	0	38	0
Total	333	124·5	37·4	8,116	20,608	2,701	0
South West Thames Regional Health Authority							
North West Surrey	11	5·9	53·6	389	487	386	0
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	9	1·8	20·0	668	579	238	0
South West Surrey	15	6·1	40·7	307	4,410	247	0
Mid Surrey	20	5·0	25·0	141	88	81	41
East Surrey	23	3·7	16·1	159	296	18	0
Chichester	6	2·9	48·3	166	879	154	0
Mid Downs	21	8·2	39·0	443	1,063	124	0
Worthing	6	1·3	21·7	89	59	52	0
Croydon	12	3·7	30·8	227	110	90	0
Kingston and Esher	6	4·5	75·0	256	403	164	0
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	12	9·0	75·0	41	604	15	0
Wandsworth	20	7·2	36·0	289	989	58	0
Merton and Sutton	21	5·7	27·1	416	784	220	0
Total	182	65·0	35·7	3,591	10,751	1,847	41
Wessex Regional Health Authority							
East Dorest	14	2·9	20·7	164	73	32	0
West Dorset	13	0·9	6·9	79	327	23	0
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire	14	8·2	58·6	709	1,555	340	0
Southampton and South West Hampshire	14	3·8	27·1	220	1,774	530	0
Winchester	11	2·8	25·5	182	1	89	0
Basingstoke and North Hampshire	11	6·6	60·0	402	0	127	0
Salisbury	10	0·5	5·0	23	566	16	0
Swindon	12	3·4	28·3	337	1,577	60	0
Bath	11	0·8	7·3	50	590	9	0
Isle of Wight	6	1·5	25·0	91	89	9	0
Total	116	31·4	27·1	2,257	6,552	1,235	0
Oxford Regional Health Authority							
East Berkshire	17	3·5	20·6	196	661	69	239
West Berkshire	26	13·6	52·3	1,871	504	218	0
Aylesbury Vale	31	15·1	48·7	710	1,732	174	0
Wycombe	24	7·1	29·6	686	1,348	7	0
Milton Keynes	5	0·1	2·0	5	170	0	0
Kettering	10	6·9	69·0	730	4,153	394	0
Northampton	13	5·5	42·3	535	1,339	179	0
Oxfordshire [2 3]	57	20·5	36·0	1,102	[2]0	46	[3]0
Total [2 3]	183	72·3	39·5	5,835	[2]9,907	1,087	[3]239
South Western Regional Health Authority							
Bristol and Weston	6	4·5	75·0	374	115	74	0
Frenchay	4	2·9	72·5	142	448	18	0
Southmead	2	0·1	5·0	13	18	1	0
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	13	2·4	18·5	170	737	34	81
Exeter	10	1·4	14·0	58	327	117	0
North Devon	5	1·6	32·0	161	604	61	0
Plymouth	8	1·9	23·8	250	0	0	0
Torbay	9	0·9	10·0	71	296	88	0
Cheltenham	14	7·9	56·4	529	246	214	0
Gloucester	18	5·2	28·9	371	639	135	0
Somerset	13	7·5	57·7	486	520	207	0
Total	102	36·3	35·6	2,625	3,950	949	81
West Midlands Regional Health Authority							
Bromsgrove and Redditch	6	1·0	16·7	104	808	41	0

District health authority	Number of pay beds at 31 December	Average daily number of beds occupied	Percentage bed occupation	Discharges and deaths	Outpatient attendances	Day case attendances	Regular day patient attendances
Herefordshire	5	1·2	24·0	79	0	28	0
Kidderminster and District	6	1·4	23·3	90	166	135	0
Worcester and District	20	6·3	31·5	598	231	179	0
Shropshire	14	5·4	38·6	307	560	116	0
Mid Staffordshire	10	4·3	43·0	355	732	131	0
North Staffordshire	16	5·1	31·9	488	3,341	390	0
South East Staffordshire	10	3·8	38·0	373	2,111	259	0
Rugby	5	3·2	64·0	264	582	158	0
North Warwickshire	3	1·3	43·3	183	273	56	51
South Warwickshire	13	4·4	33·8	234	15	167	0
Central Birmingham	67	9·8	14·6	498	1,294	109	0
East Birmingham	10	0·8	8·0	50	0	20	0
North Birmingham	9	2·0	22·2	188	32	117	6
South Birmingham	21	2·5	11·9	120	258	94	0
West Birmingham	10	1·3	13·0	172	265	88	0
Coventry	10	4·6	46·0	348	43	266	57
Dudley	10	1·9	19·0	131	8	330	0
Sandwell	6	1·9	31·7	176	1,269	144	0
Solihull	4	1·4	35·0	90	228	0	0
Walsall	11	3·9	35·5	355	1,031	279	0
Wolverhampton	7	1·0	14·3	90	1,024	35	0
Total	273	68·5	25·1	5,293	14,271	3,142	114
Mersey Regional Health Authority							
Chester	8	0·3	3·8	27	231	22	0
Crewe	16	7·6	47·5	638	3,641	691	0
Halton	0	0·0	—	0	156	0	0
Macclesfield	15	2·6	17·3	165	183	269	0
Warrington	15	8·8	58·7	544	367	397	0
Liverpool	20	7·7	38·5	480	768	231	0
St. Helens and Knowsley	15	5·4	36·0	193	2,640	263	0
Southport and Formby	7	4·0	57·1	225	412	168	0
South Sefton	10	11·8	118·0	136	490	61	0
Wirral	17	3·1	18·2	267	1,320	82	1,699
Total	123	51·3	41·7	2,675	10,208	2,184	1,699
North Western Regional Health Authority							
Lancaster	13	1·8	13·8	134	455	71	0
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	15	2·6	17·3	187	309	54	0
Preston	12	5·2	43·3	423	1,130	524	0
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	9	1·0	11·1	58	71	64	0
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	8	2·6	32·5	229	153	266	0
West Lancashire	15	5·8	38·7	291	1,765	87	0
Chorley and South Ribble	4	0·1	2·5	28	118	7	0
Bolton	20	0·3	1·5	19	112	3	0
Bury	13	6·3	48·5	497	1,225	411	0
North Manchester	9	0·3	3·3	34	538	17	0
Central Manchester	43	18·3	42·6	1,628	56	340	0
South Manchester	33	12·4	37·6	889	13,625	200	0
Oldham	5	2·1	42·0	224	932	105	0
Rochdale	2	0·2	10·0	11	336	19	0
Salford	11	1·5	13·6	88	1,782	42	0
Stockport	6	0·6	10·0	122	568	57	0
Tameside and Glossop	2	0·1	5·0	43	152	90	0
Trafford	7	0·7	10·0	73	182	63	0
Wigan	16	2·1	13·1	216	1,093	280	0
Total	243	64·0	26·3	5,194	24,602	2,700	0
Special Health Authorities							
Hospitals for Sick Children	31	23·9	77·1	796	2,008	191	0
National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	16	8·6	53·8	304	1,978	6	0
Moorfields Eye Hospital	22	10·9	49·5	1,193	1,564	39	0
Bethlem Royal Hospital and Maudsley Hospital	6	1·6	26·7	54	196	5	0
National Heart and Chest Hospitals	38	23·6	62·1	1,069	3,328	116	0
Royal Marsden Hospital	27	25·3	93·7	1,234	9,510	42	7
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's	38	19·7	51·8	1,244	3,690	424	0
Eastman Dental Hospital	0	0·0	—	0	373	0	0

District health authority	Number of pay beds at 31 December	Average daily number of beds occupied	Percentage bed occupation	Discharges and deaths	Outpatient attendances	Day case attendances	Regular day patient attendances
Total	178	113·6	63·8	5,894	22,647	823	7
England Total [4, 5]	2,967	1,061·7	35·8	70,782	[4]240,565	29,075	[5]2,184

[1] Data for one hospital not available.
[2] Data for 12 hospitals not available.
[3] Data for 11 hospitals not available.
[4] Data for 13 hospitals not available.
[5] Data for 11 hospitals not available.

Waiting Lists

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what response he has had from health authorities to his request for plans to reduce patient waiting lists and patient waiting time; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he proposes to issue a list of measures all health authorities can take to reduce waiting lists and waiting time; if further resources will be made available to enable the measures to be implemented; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if health authorities will be left to implement individual strategies to reduce patient waiting lists and waiting time; if extra resources will be made available to enable the strategies to be implemented; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if he has received a report from the North East Thames regional health authority concerning methods of reducing waiting lists and waiting times for patients; what plans he has to put their recommendations into effect; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *531-32*]: A checklist of possible ways to reduce waiting lists and times was issued to all health authorities earlier this year. North East Thames regional health authority, and all other regional health authorities, have submitted reports on their districts' plans to bring about such a reduction. Each region will now develop and implement these strategies in the light of comments which the Department has made on their reports. In addition to the increased resources for hospital and community health services generally which are being made available, my right hon. Friend has established a fund totalling £50 million over the two years 1987-89 from which health authorities who can show that they are using their general resources effectively will be able to bid for extra money for specific initiatives.

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to receive the findings of the inquiry into the application of the resource allocation working party in the Thames health authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *532*]: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Stevenage

Benefits

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many families with children were dependent on supplementary benefit in 1984 broken down by *(a)* economic status, *(b)* according to whether they were one-parent or two-parent families and *(c)* by duration of time on supplementary benefit.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 December c. *615*]: The information requested is in the table.

Numbers of families on benefit (thousands)

Economic status	Up to 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	Over 5 years	Total
One-parent families							
Over pension age	1	1	—	—	—	1	3
Under pension age							
Sick/disabled	3	1	—	—	—	1	6
Unemployed	8	1	—	1	—	2	12
Others	133	92	69	51	36	120	501
Total	144	95	70	53	37	124	522
Two-parent families							
Over pension age	—	1	—	1	—	1	4
Under pension age							
Sick/disabled	16	5	2	1	1	3	27
Unemployed	208	93	63	54	35	37	491
Others	3	2	2	1	1	3	13
Total	227	101	68	57	37	45	535

Source: Annual Statistical Enquiry 1984.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish a breakdown of the number of supplementary benefit claimants and dependents in 1984 broken down by social security region;

(2) if he will publish his latest figure for each regional area, and for the country as a whole, of the numbers claiming supplementary benefit and supplementary pension and his estimate of the numbers dependent on these claims.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his replies*, 2 December 1986, c. 615 and 5 December 1986, c. *819*]: The information requested is in the table.

000s

	Number of claimants	*Number of partners*	*Number of dependents*	*Total*
Supplementary allowances				
North Eastern	490	155	350	995
London North	425	106	291	823
London South	368	83	235	686
South Western	172	49	108	330
Midlands	504	160	383	1,048
North Western	466	133	327	927
Scotland	318	81	202	600
Wales	182	57	127	366
TOTAL	2,926	825	2,024	5,774
Supplementary pensions				
North Eastern	266	45	2	313
London North	285	51	1	337
London South	257	34	1	293
South Western	135	22	1	157
Midlands	265	47	3	315
North Western	231	29	1	261
Scotland	150	21	—	172
Wales	93	13	—	107
TOTAL	1,683	262	9	1,954
Supplementary benefit				
North Eastern	756	200	352	1,308
London North	710	157	292	1,160
London South	626	117	236	979
South Western	307	71	109	487
Midlands	769	207	386	1,363
North Western	698	162	328	1,188
Scotland	468	102	202	772
Wales	275	70	127	473
TOTAL	4,609	1,086	2,033	7,729

Source: Annual Statistical Enquiry 1984

Mr. Corbyn asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current level of outstanding payment of housing benefit by the Department of Health and Social Security due to each housing authority in England and Wales.

Mr. Lyell [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 December 1986, c. *731*]: None. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) on 21 November at column *392*.

Hip Replacement

Mr. Meacher asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average waiting time for a hip replacement operation for the elderly in each National Health Service region; and what were the corresponding figures in 1979.

Mr. Newton [*pursuant to his reply*, 9 December 1986, c. *126*]: The information requested for 1984, the latest year for which data are available centrally, and 1979, is given in the table.

Patients aged 65 and over undergoing total hip replacement and other arthroplasty of hip operations. NHS Non-psychiatric Hospitals, England, 1979 and 1984
Estimated median interval in weeks between the date a patient was placed on the waiting list and the date of admission

Regional Health Authority	*1979*	*1984*
Northern	26	18
Yorkshire	32	21
Trent	29	32
East Anglian	21	30
North West Thames	22	15
North East Thames	26	24
South East Thames	30	22
South West Thames	15	21
Wessex	24	28

Regional Health Authority	1979	1984
Oxford	16	18
South Western	32	27
West Midlands	26	21
Mersey	12	12
North Western	28	19
England (including Special Health Authorities)	25	23

Mental Handicap Hospitals

Mr. Carter-Jones asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of mental handicap hospitals in England which have closed down in each year since 1981; and if he will give a breakdown by region of these closures during the same period.

Mrs. Currie [*pursuant to her reply*, 16 December 1986 *c. 466-67*]: Information held centrally records hospitals for which closure has been approved. The actual date on which closure occurs is not recorded. Our information on mental handicap hospitals approved for complete closure since 1981 is as follows:

Mental handicap hospitals approved for complete closure since 1981

	Region/District	Hospital	Date Closure Approved
1981			
Trent			
	Lincolnshire	Tuxford Hostel	August 1981
	Sheffield	St. Josephs	September 1981
Mersey			
	Cheshire	Wrenbury Hostel	December 1981
		Tadley Hostel	December 1981
1982			
Trent			
	Doncaster	St. Catherines	October 1982
1983			
Trent			
	Southern Derbyshire	Retreat Hostel	March 1983
North East Thames			
	North East Essex	Essex Hall	July 1983
Wessex			
	Portsmouth and South East Hants	Sandy Point	November 1983
	West Dorset	Elsadene Holiday Home	October 1983
South Western			
	Frenchay	Leigh Court	June 1983
1984			
Trent			
	Sheffield	Scott Road and Commonside Hostels	October 1984
	Rotherham	Aughton Court	September 1984
East Anglian			
	Norwich	Blofield House	September 1984
North West Thames			
	North West Herts	Hounswood Annex at Harperbury Hospital	March 1984
South West Thames			
	North West Surrey	Murray House, Ottershaw	April 1984
Wessex			
	Winchester	Tichbourne Down House	April 1984
	Bath	Winsley Centre	November 1984
1985			
Wessex			
	Isle of Wight	Longford	April 1985
West Midlands			
	Kidderminster and District	Lea	November 1985
	North Warwickshire	Colchester Holiday Home	September 1985
1986 (to August)			
	North Derbyshire	Ridgeway	April 1986
		Moorfield	April 1986

Notes

(1) Partial closures are not included.
(2) Tempory closures are not included.
(3) Dates on which closures are implemented are not recorded.

EMPLOYMENT

Jobclubs

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Paymaster General how many jobclubs have been established at jobcentres in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement on what they have achieved in securing employment for the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Lee: On 3 December 1986, 303 jobclubs were open for business. In the period from 7 April 1986 to 7 November 1986, 9,372 people passed through jobclubs. Of these, 61 per cent. obtained jobs. A further 14 per cent. found temporary work on the community programme or took up a training place or the enterprise allowance scheme.

The success record of jobclubs is impressive and we have asked the Manpower Services Commission to expand the jobclub network to 1,000 by March 1987 and, if the need continues, to 2,000 by September 1987.

Departmental Achievement

Mr. Pawsey asked the Paymaster General if he will list the principal achievements of his Department since 1983.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I will publish the information in the *Official Report* as soon as possible.

Departmental Initiatives (Women)

Ms. Richardson asked the Paymaster General if he will list those initiatives of his Department which have been of benefit to women, since 1979, the cost or estimated cost of those initiatives, and the proportion of the total budget of his Department this represents.

Mr. Lee: The main employment, training and enterprise measures offered by my Department and the Manpower Services Commission since 1979 are:

Special Temporary Employment Programme[1]
Community Enterprise Programme[1]
Youth Opportunities Programme[1]
Training Opportunities Scheme[1]
Short-time Working Compensation Scheme[1]
Temporary Employment Subsidy[1]
Small Firms Employment Subsidy[1]
Adult Employment Subsidy[1]
Young Workers Scheme[1]
Temporary Short-time Working Compensation Scheme[1]
Part-time Job Release Scheme[1]
The Employment Transfer Scheme[1]
The Job Search Scheme[1]
Free Forward Fares Schemes[1]
Community Programme
Enterprise Allowance Scheme
Voluntary Projects Programme
Community Industry
YTS
Technical, Vocational and Educational Initiative
Job Release Scheme
Job Splitting Scheme
Restart Programme
Jobstart Allowance
New Workers Scheme
Training for Enterprise
Training Grants for Employers
Wider Opportunities Training Programme
Access to Information Technology
Job Training Scheme
Jobclubs
Travel to Interview Scheme
Open Tech Programme
Career Development Loans[2]
Loan Guarantee Scheme
Job Introduction Scheme
Adaptation to Premises and Equipment Scheme
Personal Reader Service
Special aids to employment
Assistance to fares for work for the disabled
Skills—linked and Preparatory English as a second language (ESL) Courses
Industrial Language Training

All of the measures are open to both women and men who satisfy the individual eligibility criteria for each scheme. Since 1979 the Government have spent in the region of £10 billion on these measures and are spending a further £3 billion this year. It is not possible to assess what proportion of the Department's expenditure on these initiatives is taken up by women.

In addition to training courses open to both men and women the MSC runs a number of single-sex courses, including JTS courses, for women and girls, in occupations where women are under-represented and single-sex courses for women wanting to return to work after time at home looking after families[3].

We have designated 172 training bodies to run training courses for women in non-traditional occupations or for women returning to work after a period of domestic responsibility. The Sex Discrimination Act 1986 freed training bodies from the need to obtain ministerial designation[3].

Since 1979 the following legislation of particular benefit to women has been passed[3]:

Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983.
Sex Discrimination Act 1986.

In London on 8 and 9 December 1986 the Government, in conjunction with the European Commission, sponsored a conference on women and training. This drew together practical experience from across Europe on training women for occupations where women are under-represented; training for the new technologies and for setting up small businesses (approximate cost to Department of Employment £12,500).

[1]This scheme is now closed.
[2]This is a pilot scheme which is running for a three-year period from April 1986 in Aberdeen, Bristol/Bath, Greater Manchester and Reading/Slough.
[3]The cost of these items is not readily available and cannot be provided without disproportionate expenses.

Mr. Michael Brown asked the Paymaster General how many people *(a)* are, and *(b)* have been in jobclubs in the constituency of Brigg and Cleethorpes since 1983.

Mr. Lee: There are no jobclubs in the Brigg and Cleethorpes constituency. However, there are jobclubs in Grimsby and Scunthorpe. No separate records are kept of people attending these jobclubs from Brigg and Cleethorpes. The Grimsby jobclub opened on 7 July 1986; 87 people have joined since then, and 70 per cent. of leavers have gone into employment. At 5 December there were 24 people in the jobclub. The Scunthorpe jobclub opened on 13 January 1986; 185 people have joined since then, and 73 per cent. have gone into employment. At 5 December there were 37 people in the jobclub.

Restart Scheme

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Paymaster General how many people who live in the London borough of Wandsworth have had their benefit terminated or suspended for failure to attend restart interviews.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: No one can lose their benefit entitlement solely as a result of the restart programme. Under long-standing legal rules people can lose their entitlement to benefit if they fail to attend an interview, are not available for work or refuse an offer of suitable employment.

The information asked for is not available in the exact form requested as it is not possible to match precisely unemployment benefit office areas with the borough of Wandsworth boundary. Up to 13 November 1986, 126 people claiming unemployment benefit in the offices covering the London borough of Wandsworth had failed to attend a restart interview after two invitations and as a result had their benefit disallowed by independent adjudication officers. Subsequently 56 of them attended a restart interview and had their benefit reinstated.

Mr. Wainwright asked the Paymaster General what percentage of the people carrying out restart interviews have been through the full training programme for restart interviewers and counsellors.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: In all but exceptional cases of unforeseen absence of trained staff, restart interviews are always carried out by fully trained counsellors.

Work Tests

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Paymaster General how many people who live in the London borough of Wandsworth have had their benefit terminated or suspended as a result of interviews on the availability test.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Information is not available in the form asked. Not all the unemployment benefit offices serving the Wandsworth area are yet operating the improved procedures to establish that new claimants are available for work and, therefore, entitled to unemployment benefits in accordance with long standing legal rules. They have so far been introduced at the Tooting B, Wimbledon and Fulham offices.

At 12 December, the latest date for which information is available, 107 claimants had their claims suspended and referred to the independent adjudicating authorities because of doubts about their availability for work. Of the 12 cases upon which the adjudicating officer has taken a decision, 10 have resulted in disallowance of benefit and two in the restoration of benefit.

Tooting B benefit office also took part in the experimental test of improved procedures to establish the availability for work of those existing claimants over the age of 50 years who attend the office quarterly, and I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 26 November at c. *255-56*.

Mr. Ernie Ross asked the Paymaster General how many people in Dundee have been interviewed under the availability for work test; and how many have had their benefits stopped as a result.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The improved procedures for testing the availability for work of new claimants using a revised questionnaire were introduced in the Dundee unemployment benefit offices during November. They have been applied to all new claimants at those offices but records are not kept of the numbers who have also been interviewed separately about their availability.

At 12 December, the latest date for which information is available, 23 claimants had had their claims suspended and referred to the independent adjudicating authorities because of doubts about their availability for work. To date, one of these claims has been disallowed, 13 allowed and nine are still under consideration by the adjudicating authorities.

YTS

Mr. Lawler asked the Paymaster General what ethnic breakdown he has of current YTS participants or of those who have recently left the scheme.

Mr. Trippier: The most recently available information on the ethnic group of YTS participants who entered under two-year YTS rules relates to trainees in training at 10 November 1986. The data are as follows:

	Number
Ethnic Group 1 (White)	319,797
Ethnic Group 2 (Black/African/Caribbean descent)	5,937
Ethnic Group 3 (Indian Sub-continent descent)	5,042
Ethnic Group 4 (None of these)	2,102
Ethnic Group 5 (Prefers not to say)	3,280
Total	336,158

The latest group of leavers from YTS for whom information is available are those who left one-year YTS training programmes between April and June 1986. Of the 82,820 leavers in this period, 79,140 were recorded as "white", 1,510 as of "black/African/Caribbean descent", 1,010 as of "Indian sub-continent descent" and 1,160 as "all others".

The number of ethnic group categories changed from four to five with the introduction of two-year YTS.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Thurnham asked the Paymaster General how many of those out of work at the latest date for which figures are available *(a)* for more than one year, *(b)* for more than three years and *(c)* for more than five years (i) were married, (ii) have more than one child, (iii) have two children and (iv) are single parents of a child or children under the age of 16 years.

Mr. Lee: The available information which is from the labour force survey is set out in the table:

Number of people without a job and looking for work Great Britain, spring 1985

	Unemployed and seeking work for over 1 year Thousands	*Unemployed and seeking work for over 3 years Thousands*
(i) Married People	633	288

	Unemployed and seeking work for over 1 year Thousands	*Unemployed and seeking work for over 3 years Thousands*
(ii) People[1] with more than one child under 16	283	131
(iii) People[1] with two children under 16[2]	164	67
(iv) Single parents with children under 16[3]	47	21

[1] Heads of family units and wives of heads of family units.
[2] Included in (ii).
[3] Included in (ii) and (iii).

Note:
No separate analysis is available of those unemployed more than five years.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Paymaster General if he will publish a table showing the number of additional *(a)* jobs in service industries, *(b)* jobs in banking, insurance and finance, *(c)* self-employed and *(d)* small business starts over stops, created in (i) Northern Ireland and (ii) the United Kingdom between June 1983 and June 1986.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1986, c. *539*]: Information about job gains and losses is not available from the Department's statistics, but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates.

Table 1 gives the net changes between June 1983 and June 1986 in the numbers of employees in employment in the industries specified, and in the numbers of self-employed, in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.

TABLE 1
Net Changes in Employment between June 1983 and June 1986

	Northern Ireland	*United Kingdom*
Employees in Employment		
Service industries (6-9)[1]	1,000	948,000
Banking, Insurance and finance (8)[1]	No change	333,000
Self Employed		
Total	−1,000	505,000

[1] Figures in brackets denote the divisions of the 1980 Standard Industrial classification.

The available information on numbers of businesses relates to the number registered for VAT and is given in table 2.

TABLE 2
Net Increase in the Number of Businesses Registered for VAT

	Northern Ireland	*United Kingdom*
Start of 1983 to end of 1984[1]	2,200	63,000
Start of 1983 to end of 1985	—	83,000

[1] Later estimates are not available for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Gordon Brown asked the Paymaster General if he will publish a table showing for Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole the number of persons at work who are *(a)* employees and *(b)* self-employed in June 1979, June 1983 and June 1986 or the latest month for which figures are available; and if he will estimate the number of second jobs included in these figures.

Mr. Lee [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1986, c. *539*]: The following tables give the numbers of employees in employment and self-employed at the dates and for the areas specified.

The second jobs included in the employees in employment estimates are not separately identified, but estimates from the labour force surveys suggest that the numbers of people with a second job as an employee in the United Kingdom in spring 1979 and spring 1983 were 247,000 and 382,000, respectively.

Estimates are not available for spring 1986. The survey sample is not large enough to give reliable estimates separately for Northern Ireland. The employment estimates do not include second jobs when they are held as self-employed.

Table 1
Employees in employment

Thousand.

	June 1979	*June 1983*	*June 1986*
Northern Ireland	519	466	455
United Kingdom	23,157	21,037	21,525

Table 2
Self employed

Thousand.

	June 1979	*June 1983*	*June 1986*
Northern Ireland	83	80	79
United Kingdom	1,925	2,240	2,745

Employment and Training Act 1973

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Paymaster General if he will list the bodies established under section 10(2) of the Emploment and Training Act 1973; if he will name the person appointed to each body in accordance with the requirements of section 13 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 as amended by the 1973 Act; and which of those persons is a person with a disability.

Mr. Lee: I shall write to the right hon. Member and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Mr. Peter Bruinvels asked the Paymaster General how many jobs have been created within *(a)* the city of Leicester and *(b)* Leicester, East constituency since the introduction of the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Trippier: The enterprise allowance scheme is designed to help unemployed people who wish to set up in business but are deterred from doing so because they would lose their income from unemployment or supplementary benefit. The figures are not available in the form requested. Since the scheme was introduced nationally in August 1983 up to the 10 December 1986, 2,587 people have joined in the Leicester area which includes the city of Leicester. Recent survey information shows that 61 per cent. of those who take advantage of a full year's support under the scheme are still trading in their enterprise allowance scheme business three years after start-up. For every 100 self-employed people continuing in business at this stage, survey evidence indicates that 99 additional people have been taken on as employees.

Tobacco Industry

Mr. Allan Roberts asked the Paymaster General if he will list the loss of jobs in the tabacco industry in the United Kingdom, by years, since 1979; and what is his estimate of the extent to which such losses are attributable to cheap imported cigarettes.

Mr. Lee: The estimated number of employees in employment in the tobacco industry in Great Britain are as follows:

Year June	*Employees in Employment* '000	*Change on year* '000
1979	31·0	—
1980	31·1	+0·1
1981	29·7	−1·4
1982	28·6	−1·1
1983	27·8	−0·8
1984	23·5	−4·3
1985	20·7	−2·8
1986	17·3	−3·4

These estimates are subject to considerable potential estimation error due to the relatively small number of employees in the industry. Estimates are not available for Northern Ireland.

There have been many factors influencing production methods and demand for tobacco goods over the period and it is not possible to say what proportion of job losses have been due to increased competition from abroad.

Job Training Scheme

Ms. Clare Short asked the Paymaster General whether early leavers from the new job training scheme will be liable to the 13 week benefit penalty.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Member to my reply given on 28 November at column *391* to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies).

Ms. Clare Short asked the Paymaster General what instructions have been issued on the fees that job training scheme placement agencies may charge employers for use of the labour of trainees.

Mr. Trippier: The new pilot job training schemes provide individually tailored programmes of integrated training and practical experience for people who have been unemployed for more than six months. Managing agents arranging new job training scheme programmes are encouraged to charge the providers of practical experience and use the income generated to help meet the costs of training. There is no set charge, which is a matter for agreement between the managing agent and the practical experience provider.

Equal Treatment Directive

Mr. Hayward asked the Paymaster General what was the outcome of the consideration of the directive on equal treatment between men and women in self-employed occupations at the Council of Labour and Social Affairs Ministers on 11 December.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: At our meeting on 11 December the Council of Labour and Social Affairs Ministers adopted the directive on equal treatment between men and women in self-employed occupations. The main effect of the directive, in the form in which it was adopted, is to remove restrictions in some member states of the European Community, which may hinder women from taking up self-employed occupations. I do not expect the directive to have any significant effect in the United Kingdom where women do not face the legal obstacles to self-employment or employment by their husbands which they face in some other member states.

Compliance Cost Assessments

Mr. Alan Howarth asked the Paymaster General how many compliance cost assessments have been submitted by other Government Departments to his Department.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to the reply*, 2 December 1986, c. *576*]: As of 20 November the total number of compliance cost assessments received for scrutiny by the enterprise and deregulation unit is 142; this includes assessments prepared by the Department of Employment.

Mr. Alan Howarth asked the Paymaster General if it is his intention to publish the compliance cost assessments submitted by other Government Departments to his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to the reply*, 2 December 1986, c. *576*]: The decision to publish a compliance cost assessment on a proposed regulation rests with the Minister responsible for that particular regulation. I have therefore consulted my colleagues about the principle.

In accordance with the Government's policy on the publication of information, future assessments will be made available subject to the need in particular cases to preserve the confidentiality necessary to the effective working of Government. They will be obtainable from individual Departments and will be included in public consultation documents, wherever possible. The enterprise and deregulation unit in my Department will monitor the overall position and be responsible for general inquiries for information.

Mr. Alan Howarth asked the Paymaster General if he will state the terms of reference and composition of the enterprise and deregulation unit of his Department.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke [*pursuant to the reply*, 2 December 1986, c. *576*]: The enterprise and deregulation unit has a total of 23 staff (including secretarial and clerical support) made up of civil servants seconded from seven Government Departments anbd two accountants seconded from the private sector. The terms of reference of the unit were set out in annex 3 to the White Paper "Building Businesses . . . Not Barriers" (Cmnd. 9794) and are as follows:

The Enterprise and Deregulation Unit

The EDU comprises officials seconded from a variety of Departments. It will include a few staff from the private sector, whose experience of industrial and commercial management practices will provide help in assessing the level of burdens placed on business. The EDU will also be assisted by an advisory panel of individual business men. The director of the EDU reports to the Secretary of State for Employment and the Paymaster General.

The functions of the EDU will be:

(i) to provide Ministers with an overall picture of Government regulatory activity and its impact on business. The EDU will report on the progress of

deregulation annually, to the Secretary of State for Employment and through him to the Prime Minister;

(ii) to "audit" Departments' systems of compliance cost assessment;

(iii) to provide Departments with expert help and guidance on the preparation of compliance cost assessments and on the establishment of systems to monitor the effect of regulation; to act as a central point for disseminating information on techniques involved in assessing the effect of regulations on business;

(iv) to examine the compliance cost assessment prepared by Departments. Initially, the EDU will examine all assessments. Once the system of periodic reports is established, then the EDU will use the reports to monitor progress and to pick out proposals in the pipeline for special attention. In practice, the EDU will work "by exception", looking at all the brief assessments but requiring full CCA's to be sent only in a minority of cases (eg those which it judges may raise particular difficulties for business). Assessments will, however, still need to be prepared, and should — unless otherwise agreed — continue to be submitted to DTI, where appropriate, and the relevant sponsor Departments. Where proposals in the pipeline are singled out for special attention, then the EDU will itself by involved in preparation of the compliance cost assessment from the start. In cases where there is disagreement at official level about the impact on business and desirability of a proposed regulation, then the issue will be referred to the Secretary of State for Employment and the other Ministers concerned, for resolution;

(v) to agree targets or objectives for each Department, subject to ministerial agreement;

(vi) to provide the main United Kingdom input into the European deregulation initiative (in consultation with FCO, DTI and the European secretariat in the Cabinet Office) and to act as a source of information on deregulatory work in other countries;

(vii) to undertake in conjunction with Departments, occasional reviews of particular areas of regulation which cut across Departmental responsibilities (eg licensing requirements).

Working Relationships

DTI will retain prime responsibility for representing the interests of business overall within Government. The EDU will liaise with DTI and will look to it for information and advice. It will also work closely with other sponsor Departments.

The EDU will work with the management and efficiency division in MPO on such aspects of deregulation as improved forms and the use of plain English; and with the central unit on purchasing on such aspects of deregulation which impact on the ability of firms to obtain Government business. It should also work with the training division in the Management and Personnel Office and the Civil Service College (to ensure that the appropriate messages about deregulation are taken on board by officials with responsibility for regulations). Close links with the efficiency unit and the Prime Minister's policy unit will be maintained.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Intervention Stores

Mr. Robert Banks asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will set out the number of new intervention stores built during the last 12 months, together with their cost, size and location in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* other member countries of the EEC.

Mr. Gummer: No new Crown intervention stores have been built. Information about the building of new commercial stores which may or may not be used for intervention is not available. The United Kingdom Government do not have the information requested in respect of other member states of the European Community.

Mr. Tom Cox asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the foods, or wines, and the amounts, that are in intervention storage in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Gummer: A note setting out the volume of intervention stocks in the European Community as a whole and in the United Kingdom separately is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly.

Farm and Countryside Initiative

Mr. Colin Shepherd asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list in the *Official Report* the 85 projects approved by the Manpower Services Commission's area manpower boards under the farm and countryside initiative, showing the nature of the project, its location and the number of people involved.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is as follows:

Farm and countryside initiative projects approved as at 4 December 1986

Description	*Location*	*Number of people employed*
Produce literature, improve woodlands and conversion of a barn	Warren Farm, Horton-cum-Studley, Oxfordshire	13
Provide car park facilities, amenity planting. Clear and mark public rights of way	Lockinge Estate, Ardington, Wantage, Oxfordshire	11
Creation of farm conservation centre at University Farm	Wytham, Oxfordshire	5

Description	*Location*	*Number of people employed*
Bring land into productive use—to provide vegetables for mentally handicapped residents	Milton, near Didcot, Oxfordshire	5
Restoration and conservation of woodlands, gardens and historic sites	Hughenden Estate; Bradenham Estate, Cliveden Estate Buckinghamshire; 8 areas of woodlands in Buckinghamshire	68
To restore the Ashdown and White Horse Hill Estates, and Buscote Park Estate	Ashdown and White Horse Hill Estates, Swindon, Buscote Park Estate, Faringdon, Buckinghamshire	11
Developing organic vegetable area; creating a conservation oriented garden area	Springhill Farm, Dinton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire	14
Conversion of a double-decker bus for use as a mobile community service resource	Basingstoke District, Hampshire	3
Provision of a farm trail, renovate a water wheel; interpretation centre	Goscott Farm Camelford, Cornwall	10
Woodland improvement on 8 sites	Restormell District Liskeard, Cornwall	28
Small woodland improvement	Quarry House, Gunnislake, Cornwall	12
Nature Reserve	North Cornwall	10
Guidance and advise on woodland conservation and management to landowners, Trusts etc	Sites all over North Cornwall	12
Woodland management; conservation and history	Caradon District Cornwall	41
Development of environmental features on school sites	Caradon District Cornwall	12
Repair stone wall, pond clearance	Trewey Farm, Zennor Cornwall	10
Tree planting, shrub clearance, hedge clearance, hedge laying	Folly Farm, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire	7
Restoration of stone walls at small holdings estate	Leighterton, Gloucestershire	28
Managment of SSSI woodland, hedge planting, hedge laying etc.	Frampton Court Estate, Frampton-on-Severn Gloucestershire	9
Countryside improvements along farm trail and public footpaths	Woodlands, Chedworth, Gloucestershire	7
Country improvements along public footpaths including scrub clearance, pond work, hedge laying	Nethercote Farm, Bourron-on-the-Water, Gloucester	9
Re-instatement of derelic drystone walls and dew ponds. Improvements to public access	Quilter Estate, Wells, Somerset	9
Dry stone walling	Devon	36
Woodland management	Devon	29
Stonewalls, footpaths	Snilesworth, Osmotherly, North Yorkshire	9
Improve nature reserve	Yorkshire Dales, North Yorkshire	8
Dry stone wall	Middleham High Moor, North Yorkshire	12
Forestry and Estate improvements	Rievaulx Terrace and Temples, Helmsley, North Yorkshire	2
Park and garden improvement	Nunnington Hall, York	3
Restoration of building, dry stone walling, fencing and footpaths	Malham Estate, North Yorkshire	8
Farm building conservation to base camp and training centre	Druids Cave Farm, Brinham, Summerbridge, North Yorkshire	6
Restoration—canals, lawns, woodland, water gardens, walls etc	Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Estate, North Yorkshire	19
Fencing, pond reclamation, water tower restoration, woodland survey	Beningborough Hall, York	19
Environmental improvements and archaelological work	Ravenscar, Scarborough, North Yorkshire	11

Description	*Location*	*Number of people employed*
Reclaiming existing forest walk	Littlebeck, Whitby, North Yorkshire	22
Repair dry stone walls, footpaths, gates and ponds	Northern area of North Yorkshire Moors	60
Production of interpretive material pictorial and oral history. Botanical survey	Coastal areas of Scarborough, North Yorkshire	18
Environmental improvement work, including nursery scheme	Rural areas of Scarborough, North Yorkshire	57
Environmental improvements—including nursery scheme, trees, plants, shrubs and fencing on A169	Whitby, North Yorkshire	79
Clear Arkle Beck of fallen trees etc. as a result of Hurricane Charley to prevent further flooding	Arkengarthdale, North Yorkshire	21
Environmental improvements—fencing, walling, path laying, picnic areas etc.	Whitby and Esk Valley, North Yorkshire	11
Bracken spraying, removal of birch, heather burning, footpaths and landscaping	Brinham Rocks, Summerbridge, North Yorkshire	4
Essex Saltings regeneration	Essex Coastline	56
A study project for schools and other parties on the effects of man upon the ecological balance of the rivers in South Essex	Rivers in South Essex	7
Rebuilding dry stone walls	Manor Farm, Lincolnshire	16
Woodland improvement	Uffington, Lincolnshire	13
To extend and enhance the conservation features at the College	Otley Agricultural College, Suffolk	4
To establish a demonstration area containing separate soil types/habitats supporting native plant species	Terrington St. Clements, Kings Lynn, Norfolk	6
To remove scrub in preparation for mud pumping the dykes and reedbed restoration	Ward Marsh, Ranworth, Norfolk	12
Tree works; construction of nature trails bridlepath, pond recovery	Silsoe College Farm and Wrest Park, Bedfordshire	15
Improvements to the Reserve and to enhance the publicity aims of the Mill Museum	Ashton, Wild Nature Reserve, Northamptonshire	12
Improve and renovate church wood	Birstall, W. Yorkshire	34
Renovate cricket pavilion, repoint walls, improve woodland and remove undergrowth	Bramham Park Estate Bramham, W. Yorkshire	30
Dry stone walling	Marsden Moor, West Yorkshire	14
Church renovation; footpath improvements	Otley, West Yorkshire	27
Environmental and Allied Building projects	Areas of South Yorkshire	88
To imrove drainage, footpath etc.	Norland Moor, Yorkshire	12
Habitat/Estate Management	On nature reserves within 20 miles of York	7
Improvement of recreational footpaths	Rural areas of Humberside	21
Woodland improvements	Humberside	13
Environmental works on farms	Areas of Hexham and Durham city	53
Repair stone walls, ditches and bridlepaths	Wearhead area, County Durham	19
Clearing and waymarking of footpaths and bridleways	Braken Hill, County Durham	12
Work on woodlands and ponds to enhance rural landscape	Easington area of Durham	23

Description	*Location*	*Number of people employed*
Dry stone walling, hedge laying, tree planting, fencing and footpath work	Teesdale area of Durham	23
Stone wall repairs and river bank strengthening	West Woodburn	18
Tourism and recreation	Earle Hill Farm, Northumberland, National Park	30
Creation of campsites—repairing footpaths and roadways to link up sites. Dry stone walling	Hawkhirst Scout Camp Kielder, Northumberland	18
Environmental Education Programme—convert barn to farm display area for visits by the public	Rawtenstall, Lancashire	4(a)
Woodland management, pond clearing, hedge laying, wetland areas and natural pastures	Longdendale, Derbyshire	33
Ecological surveys on ponds and road verges for their conservation value	Peak Park, Derbyshire	2
Environmental action project—footpaths fencing, scrub clearance, restoration of dry stone walls, tree planting, restoration of derelict railway line for walkers	Peak Park, Derbyshire—(Eastern Moors/North Lees Estates and Monsal Trail)	12
Farm Community Link to establish links between schools in Peak National Park and local farms	Peak Park, Derbyshire	4
Managing of nature reserves to ensure they fulfil their wildlife potential	Nottingham, Nottinghamshire	15
Design and production of interpretive material on nature reserves	Nottingham, Nottinghamshire	8
Estate work on nature reserves owned or managed by Derbyshire Naturalist Trust	Nature reserves, Derbyshire	12
Woodland and wildlife habitat surveys resulting in the production of literature and links with educational establishments	Peak Park, Derbyshire	24
Rebuild dry stone walling at Ivyspring Wood	Chesterfield, Derbyshire	6
Creation of woodland walk, improvements to ponds, fencing, gates and stiles	Hankin Farm, Derbyshire	12
Improvements to footpaths and stone walling	Morley, Derbyshire	15
Rural workshop and resource centre	Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire	11
Community help for disadvantaged groups	Kineton, Warwickshire	21
Renovation of windmill for local community use	Kineton, Warwickshire	4
Build linear park on disused railway line	Stratford Greenway, Warwickshire	35
Keep North Warwickshire Tidy Project	North Warwickshire	33

(a) 6 places were originally intended for this project; 4 places actually approved.

Purchase Prices (Indices)

Mr. Maclennan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in what form, in the annual review of agriculture 1987, he intends to revise the indices of purchase prices of the means of agricultural production.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We have no plans to revise the form in which the indices of purchase prices of the means of agricultural production will be shown in the 1987 annual review White Paper.

Council of Fisheries Ministers

Sir Michael Shaw asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Council of Fisheries Ministers' meeting in Brussels on 17-18 December.

Mr. Gummer: Together with my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Scottish Office, I represented the United Kingdom at the meeting of the Council of Fisheries Ministers in Brussels on 17 and 18 December.

I am delighted to be able to report that at this, the fourth and last meeting of the Fisheries Council under the presidency of my right hon. Friend the Minister of

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, decisions were reached by qualified majority on the level of total allowable catches, quotas, guide prices and third country fishing arrangements for 1987. Once again, therefore, these arrangements were all settled before the year to which they apply. I am also glad to report that the final settlement on TACs and quotas secured virtually all of the United Kingdom's negotiating objectives as I outlined them in the debate in the House on 16 December.

In particular, agreement was reached on an important seasonal conservation measure requiring the use of a minimum mesh size of 100mm in an area adjoining the German and Dutch coasts. This area is larger than the closed area originally proposed by the Commission. This arrangement will apply in the first and last quarters of 1987 and will make an important contribution to protecting the juvenile cod. In the light of this measure the Commission will re-examine with Norway the level of TACs agreed for the white fish joint stocks. But, subject to any adjustments to which this may lead and to the review of the haddock TAC next year, which had already been provided for, the Council approved the reduced level of TACs agreed with Norway on the basis of the firm scientific advice.

The Council adopted increases in the TACs proposed by the Commission for a number of stocks of cod, haddock, sole, plaice, anglerfish, megrim, nephrops and pollack in areas VI and VII. These go a long way to making good the reductions in opportunities originally proposed and will be very welcome to our fishermen who would have been unduly restricted by the Commission's original proposals. For the very important sole and plaice stocks in areas VI and VII, the quotas for our fishermen for 1987 have been set at a level about 7 per cent. above that initially set for 1986.

On the pelagic fisheries, the Council increased the TAC for Western mackerel and restored part of the reductions originally proposed by the Commission on the TACs for west of Scotland and Irish Sea herring, while taking full account of the scientific advice. As a result the combined opportunities of herring and mackerel for United Kingdom fishermen for 1987 will be some 7 per cent. higher than those initially set for 1986. The Council approved the outcome of the Commission's negotiations with Norway, Sweden, Greenland and Canada on the fishing and other arrangements for 1987 as well as endorsing the Commission's proposed approach to concluding negotiations with the Faroe Islands.

The Council adopted by qualified majority a compromise package put forward by the presidency on fish guide prices for 1987. This included a reduction of 7 per cent. in the guide price for herring, which will bring the support arrangements more into line with the realities of the market. The Council also formally adopted by qualified majority the regulations on the control measures discussed at the Council on 5 November and the structural measures for the fisherie's sector discussed at the Council on 3 December.

This meeting of the Fisheries Council was the final one under the United Kingdom presidency. In the course of the last six months, agreement has been reached on five major subjects — on revised technical measures for conservation, on very much improved arrangements for control, on a comprehensive programme on structures, on the long-term basis for sharing the North Sea herring stock with Norway, and now on guide prices, total allowable catches and quotas for 1987. The Council has therefore made outstanding progress. In combination with the common fisheries policy settled in 1983, these measures now provide a comprehensive and fully effective basis for the Community's fishermen not just for next year but in most respects for years to come.

Uneviscerated Fish

Mr. Onslow asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will introduce controls over the import of uneviscerated fish of the salmon family; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: My right hon. Friend, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has today laid before Parliament the Importation of Salmonid Viscera Order 1986, made under the Animal Health Act 1981. This order comes into effect on 1 February 1987 and prohibits imports into Great Britain of uneviscerated dead salmonids and salmonid viscera, except under licence.

The order strengthens our existing controls on imports under the Diseases of Fish Acts 1937 and 1983 to prevent the intoduction of certain serious fish diseases, notably viral haemorrhagic septicaemia and infectious haematopoietic necrosis to our farmed and wild fish stocks.

General licences to permit individual countries to continue exports to Great Britain of salmon and trout "in the round" will be considered only where a country can satisfactorily demonstrate the absence of VHS and IHN from its waters and also operate its own controls on imports of uneviscerated salmonids so as to prevent fish from an unacceptable source entering Great Britain through the "back door".

EEC (Subsidised Foods)

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will raise at the next meeting of the management committee the question of seeking an assurance from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that the subsidised food provided from European Economic Community stockpiles is not used for military purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 December 1986, c. *529*]: No. Management Committees consider Commission proposals for sales of CAP commodities to be made on terms which are competitive with those being offered by other sellers on the world market. It is already the United Kingdom's policy to oppose any proposed sales which are targeted on one particular country in such a way as to give that country preferential treatment of any kind.

Trent Grain Company

Mr. Ashley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what comments, and when, were made by the business reporting agency used by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce to report on the financial position of the Trent Grain company.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1986, c. *599*]: Information provided by the business reporting agency is subject to a contractual condition of confidentiality.

Mr. Ashley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on which dates a stock loss at Trent Grain was

(*a*) suspected and (*b*) confirmed; and what action was taken after the earlier date to (i) minimise the possibility of further stock losses, (ii) recover the suspected loss and (iii) investigate the financial position of the company.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1986, c. *600*]: The possibility of a shortfall of intervention grain stocks at the Uttoxeter store was first suggested by volumetric analysis in August 1985. Thereafter every opportunity was taken to dispose of the grain from this store in order to minimise the risk of further losses and to reduce the stock to a level at which weighing was practicable. In the meantime the company's financial position was monitored, principally through a business reporting agency. The weighing operation began in July 1986 and when completed in October confirmed the existence of a shortfall. Action could not be taken before the loss was confirmed, but the board is now pursuing the recovery of the deficiency.

Mr. Ashley asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether his Department has obtained a copy of the 1985 annual report of the Trent Grain company.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 17 December 1986, c. *600*]: I understand that the company's 1985 annual report has not yet been submitted to the Registrar of Companies.

Mr. Maclennan asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has regarding the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce's investigations into the grain holding of Trent Grain Ltd.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *625*]: Investigations have revealed a shortfall in the stock of intervention grain held at the Uttoxeter store and recovery of the deficiency is being pursued.

Potatoes

Mr. Gale asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will place copies of submissions made by the Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives (UK) Ltd. and the Processed Vegetable Growers Association to the potato review group in the Library.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *625*]: Submissions were made, in confidence, by both organisations during the course of our review of potato support arrangements in 1983-84. I think it right that the organisations themselves should decide whether their views should be made public and I suggest my hon. Friend contacts them direct.

Sheep (Radioactivity)

Dr. Cunningham asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, further to his reply of 5 December, *Official Report*, column *848*, to the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Dr. Thomas) about radioactivity in sheep, he will state the precise location of the readings of readioactive caesium listed in Cumbria.

Mr. Donald Thompson [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *626*]: Details of the 15 readings above 3,000 bq/kg (which represent less than 0·05 per cent. of measurements taken) have been given to the farmers whose sheep were tested but it is not our policy to disclose this information to others. The sheep came from upland areas of extensive grazing and their exact location would in any case be difficult to pinpoint accurately.

Milk Production

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if the provisional European Economic Community agreement on milk production reached on 16 December places any additional financial responsibility directly on member states; and who will be responsible for the payment of subsidies (i) to buy out milk quotas and (ii) to dispose of existing butter surpluses.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. *626*]: The Council agreed two measures involving compensation to producers for milk quota cuts. First, it agreed to increase the maximum EC-funded rate of compensation under the existing Community outgoers scheme (which aims to buy up 3 per cent. of quota for cancellation) from 4 to 6 ecu per 100 kg per year for seven years. To the extent that this compensation is not fully spent by a member state, it may be used as direct compensation for compulsory across-the-board quota cuts or to buy up quota for redistribution.

Secondly it was agreed that compensation should be paid for the temporary suspension of quota (4 per cent. from April 1987 and a further 1·5 per cent. from April 1988) at the rate of 10 ecu per 100 kg per year for the next two years. Both of these measures will be fully funded by the Community and member states will pay for them to the extent of their normal budgetary contributions. It should however, be noted that the package of measures on milk agreed by the Council will result in an overall net saving to the Community budget over a number of years and therefore a reduction in member states' contributions.

Both the Community outgoers scheme and the new arrangements for temporary suspension of quota allow member states to top up the level of compensation from national funds. The Government have no plans to make use of these provisions.

The Council took note, with approval, of a Commission paper outlining plans for a two-year stock disposal programme covering 1 million tonnes of butter. The Commission proposes to finance this by deferring the reimbursement to member states of any losses on these sales for two years and then making four equal annual payments borne by the Community budget in the normal way. For the period of deferral interest will be paid to member states on the amounts outstanding. No decision has yet been taken on the detailed arrangements which will be discussed at the future Council.

Mr. Teddy Taylor asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what surplus production of milk and milk products has been estimated for the European Economic Community in the current year, 1987 1988 and 1989, respectively, in the event of implementation of provisional agreement on the milk sector reached on 16 December; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer [*pursuant to his reply*, 18 December 1986, c. 626]: In its interim report on the quota system (document COM (86) 645) the Commission estimated the Community milk surplus for the current year to be about 9·5 million tonnes. The package now agreed by the Council would reduce milk production by that amount

over two years. On this basis there would by 1989 be no surplus production of milk. The Commission report does, however, point out that its estimate of the surplus assumes that current levels of subsidised disposals—both on the home market and for export — remains unchanged. Nevertheless, the agreement reached by Ministers does represent a very substantial step forward in removing the surplus in the milk sector.

TRANSPORT

Crash Barriers

Mr. Coombs asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the study of safety barrier criteria for all-purpose dual carriageway roads referred to in his answer to a question by the hon. Member for Suffolk, Central, (Mr. Lord) *Official Report*, column 503, 2 December.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A copy of the consultants' report "Safety Fence Criteria for All-purpose Dual Carriageway Roads" prepared for the Transport and Road Research Laboratory was placed in the House of Commons Library today. It will be more widely published in due course by the laboratory.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans exist to provide all dual carriageway trunk roads with central reservation crash barriers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: On Wednesday 17 December at column 537 I announced that safety fencing will be provided on all new and existing dual carriageway trunk roads where it can be shown that this is justified by the traffic using the particular road.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of dual carriageway trunk roads have central reservation crash barriers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Approximately 10 per cent.

Mr. Norman Hogg asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what plans exist to provide central reservation crash barriers on all motorways; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what percentage of the motorway network in England and Wales includes central reservation crash barriers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Since 1971 all new motorways in England have been provided with central reserve safety fencing. Approximately 98 per cent. of existing motorways in England already have these fences.

In view of my decision given in *Official Report* 17 December 1986 at column 537 to provide central reserve safety fencing on dual carriageways, I am reviewing the traffic flows on motorways without fencing to assess if it can be justified on these roads.

Responsibility for central reserve safety fencing on motorways in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Warminster Bypass

Mr. Walters asked the Secretary of State for Transport when an announcement will be made as to the successful contract tender for the Warminster bypass.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The tenders received for this scheme are above the Department's estimate. They are therefore being subjected to a detailed scrutiny. I nevertheless hope it will prove possible to award the contract by the end of the year.

MOT Test Centres

Mr. Hancock asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many garages operating Ministry of Transport test centres have lost their licence to operate in the last five years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: 360 testing stations lost MOT authorisation in this period. The figures are:

	Number
1985	80
1984	107
1983	90
1982	37
1981	46

Authorisation may be withdrawn for substandard testing of vehicles, for a major breach of an examiner's conditions of appointment or because an examiner has received a criminal conviction. Examiners have a right to make representations against withdrawal of authorisation.

M40 Oxford-Birmingham

Mr. Pawsey asked the Secretary of State for Transport when construction work will start on the section of the M40 between Oxford and Birmingham; and when he anticipates that the M40 will be completed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Subject to the satisfactory outcome of the remaining statutory procedures, work will start in the summer of 1987. The whole road could be open to traffic in 1990.

Runways (Safety Zones)

Mr. Robin Cook asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will review the safety aspects of public safety zones adjacent to runways in the light of current developments in aircraft safety; and what is the restriction on employees per acre in new buildings constructed within a public safety zone.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Government policy is that there should be no significant increase in the number of people living, working or congregating within public safety zones. Although the risk of aircraft crash is small, experience has shown it to be greatest in the area covered by these zones. This was confirmed by the most recent review of worldwide accident data prepared by the Civil Aviation Authority in January 1985.

In giving advice to local authorities required to determine planning applications relating to proposed developments within public safety zones, the Civil Aviation Authority (which acts on behalf of the Department in the matter) has regard to all the circumstances of the case which might affect safety, including the increase in the number of people on the ground likely to be put at risk.

Airports (Cargo Throughput)

Mr. Bright asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the throughput of cargo at *(a)* Heathrow, *(b)*

other British Airports Authority airports, and (c) Luton international airport in each month from January 1984 to the latest month for which figures are available.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The information is provided in the table. Cargo throughput figures for BAA plc airports are available to October 1986; and for Luton international airport to September 1986.

Cargo (000 metric tonnes)

	Luton	*Heathrow*	*Gatwick*	*Stansted*	*Aberdeen*	*Edinburgh*	*Glasgow*	*Prestwick*
1984								
January	0·8	38·1	8·1	1·1	0·6	0·1	1·1	0·6
February	1·0	42·7	10·0	0·8	0·6	0·1	1·3	0·5
March	1·1	48·1	10·0	1·0	0·8	0·1	1·0	1·0
April	0·9	44·2	11·5	0·6	0·6	0·6	1·2	0·6
May	1·0	45·1	10·9	0·9	0·7	0·1	1·3	0·6
June	1·2	43·9	10·7	1·0	0·7	0·1	1·3	1·1
July	1·9	52·3	14·3	3·0	0·9	0·1	1·4	1·1
August	1·2	43·3	11·1	1·3	0·8	0·1	1·2	0·7
September	1·1	45·6	13·0	1·1	0·8	0·1	1·4	1·2
October	1·1	46·8	12·8	1·2	0·7	0·1	1·3	1·0
November	1·1	47·0	12·6	1·3	0·7	0·1	1·5	0·8
December	0·9	44·4	12·8	1·3	0·6	0·1	1·2	1·0
Total	13·3	541·5	137·8	14·6	8·5	1·7	15·2	10·2
1985								
January	1·1	40·2	10·8	0·5	0·6	0·05	1·2	0·4
February	1·0	43·5	12·2	0·8	0·5	0·06	1·3	0·5
March	1·1	47·7	13·7	1·4	0·7	0·06	1·3	0·8
April	1·1	43·1	11·7	0·9	0·6	0·1	0·9	0·9
May	1·1	44·2	12·9	0·8	0·7	0·3	0·6	1·2
June	1·1	44·9	13·4	0·8	0·7	0·2	0·6	1·3
July	1·1	44·4	13·9	1·0	0·7	0·2	0·6	1·1
August	1·0	41·6	12·8	0·8	0·7	0·2	0·5	1·4
September	1·0	42·5	13·6	0·8	0·6	0·2	0·5	1·5
October	1·2	47·6	14·9	0·9	0·6	0·2	0·7	1·1
November	1·1	45·9	13·4	0·8	0·6	0·2	1·1	0·7
December	0·8	43·8	14·0	0·8	0·6	0·3	0·9	0·7
Total	12·7	529·4	157·3	10·3	7·6	2·07	10·2	11·6
1986								
January	0·6	39·9	11·3	0·7	0·6	0·3	0·9	0·5
February	0·4	42·2	11·9	1·0	0·6	0·1	1·1	0·6
March	0·5	48·8	14·5	1·3	0·6	0·08	1·3	1·1
April	0·4	47·1	13·6	1·1	0·5	0·07	1·2	1·0
May	0·5	46·2	13·1	0·9	0·5	0·01	1·2	0·8
June	0·7	46·9	13·2	0·9	0·5	0·07	1·3	1·1
July	0·6	45·2	13·9	1·4	0·5	0·07	1·2	0·7
August	0·4	42·3	13·6	0·8	0·4	0·09	1·0	1·0
September	0·5	42·3	13·5	0·7	0·4	0·06	1·1	0·9
October	N/A	48·4	15·3	1·2	0·5	0·07	1·2	0·8

Highway Works (Tendering)

Mr. Dickens asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has yet considered the responses to his Department's consultation document on extending the requirements for competitive tendering for local authority highway works; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: We have now considered the results of the consultation. We have concluded that it is right from 1 April next year to proceed with the proposal to reduce from £50,000 to £25,000 the threshold above which all general highway works in England and Wales must be put out to tender. Regulations to make this change will be laid early in the new year. We are satisfied that it is practicable to make the change by the due date and that the additional competition generated will be beneficial in securing better value for money.

In the consultation document it was also proposed to increase from 30 per cent. to 60 per cent. the proportion by value of works below the new threshold which should have to be put out to tender. We have concluded that it would not be practicable to implement this change as well from April next year. We intend therefore to consider this further in the context of the Government's wider proposals for increasing competition in the provision of local authority services. I shall make a further announcement in due course.

Manchester (Holiday Bus Services)

Mr. Alfred Morris asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations the Minister of State, Department of Transport, has received from the chairman of the Greater Manchester passenger transport authority concerning the provision of bus services in the conurbation over the Christmas and new year holiday period; what action he is taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have received a letter from the chairman of Greater Manchester passenger transport

authority telling me of difficulties which have been experienced in arranging Christmas and new year services. This is a matter for the passenger transport authority; I notice that other transport authorities seem to have been more successful in arranging some basic services over the holiday period.

Public Service Vehicles (Test)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the number of vehicles that failed the annual public service vehicle test in 1985-86, in Wales, by operator group.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *508*]: The information for Wales is as follows:

1985-86 Wales

Operator group	*Total number of tests*	*Number of initial failures*	*Initial failure rate per cent.*
NBC	1,349	339	25·1
Local Authority	560	203	36·2
Private	2,922	1,387	47·5
Total	4,831	1,929	39·9

If vehicles which passed after minor repairs were carried out at the testing stations are excluded, the number which failed the test is as follows:

	Number of final failures	*Final failure rate per cent.*
NBC	66	4·9
Local Authority	60	10·7
Private	861	29·5
Total	987	20·4

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the number of vehicles that failed the annual public service vehicle test in 1985-86, in Great Britain, by operator group.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *508*]: The information for Great Britain is as follows:

1985-86 Great Britain

Operator Group	*Total Number of Tests*	*Number of Initial Failures*	*Initial Failure Rate per cent.*
NBC	14,973	5,543	37·0
PTE	9,773	3,928	40·2
Local Authority	5,253	1,577	30·0
SBG	3,439	1,174	34·1
Private	30,638	13,142	42·9
LTE	5,258	1,122	21·3
Total	69,334	26,486	38·2

If vehicles which passed after minor repairs were carried out at the testing stations are excluded the number which failed the test is as follows:

	Number of Final Failures	*Final Failure Rate per cent.*
NBC	1,477	9·9
PTE	1,222	12·5
Local Authority	497	9·5
SGB	882	25·6
Private	8,976	29·3
LTE	197	3·7
	13,251	19·1

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report*, by operator group for 1985-86, separately distinguishing between Great Britain and Wales, the number and percentage of tests which resulted in immediate prohibition of annual public service vehicles tests.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *508*]: The figures for each operator group and Wales as a whole are not readily available, but the overall figures for Great Britain and for vehicle inspectorate districts covering approximately the south Wales traffic area are:

	Number of Tests	*Number of Prohibitions Issued*
Great Britain	69,334	287 (0·41 per cent.)
South Wales	3,655	17 (0·46 per cent.)

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* for 1985-86, separately distinguishing between Great Britain and Wales, the results of spot checking of public service vehicles and the immediate prohibition rates.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986 c. *508*]: Separate information on spot checks is not readily available for Wales as a whole. The information for Great Britain and for vehicle inspectorate districts covering approximately the south Wales traffic area is:

PSV Spot Checks Great Britain South Wales—1985-86

Number of spot checks	*Number of spot checks as a percentage of the total PSV annual tests Per cent.*	*Number of prohibitions issued at spot checks*	*Number of prohibitions issued as a per cent of vehicles spot checked Per cent.*
12,575	18	652	5·28
961	27	33	3·4

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* for the south Wales traffic area for 1985-86 the number of vehicle examiners employed by his Department, together with the number of public service vehicles and goods vehicles for which they are responsible.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *508*]: The information is as follows:

Vehicle Inspectorate districts covering approximately the South Wales Traffice Area—1985-86

	Number
Vehicle Examiners in post	23
Public Service Vehicles	3,655
Heavy Goods Vehicles	27,568

The vehicle number data have been extracted from the annual testing statistics and do not therefore include vehicles under one year old.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report*, by

operator group, the numbers of public service vehicles which *(a)* failed the annual test for each traffic area in Great Britain for 1985-86, and *(b)* failed the annual test for each traffic area in Great Britain after rectification of minor faults for 1985-86.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *508*]: The information is shown in the table.

It should be noted that the reorganisation of the vehicle inspectorate together with the reduction in the number of traffic areas means that the 1985-86 statistics have been produced on a different basis from previous years. Therefore comparisons with figures produced for previous years may be misleading.

The figures suggest that overall there has been little change in 1985-86 in the percentage of vehicles that failed the annual test after rectification of minor faults, compared with 1984-85.

Operator and vehicle inspectorate districts 1985-86

	Total tests	*Initial failures*	*Pass after rectification of minor defects*	*Final failures*
		Per cent.	*Per cent.*	*Per cent.*
West Midlands Traffic Area				
National Bus Company	1,101	359	259	100
		(33)	(23)	(10)
Passenger Transport Executive	2,325	686	485	201
		(30)	(21)	(9)
Local Authority	29	18	13	5
		(62)	(45)	(17)
Scottish Bus Company	—	—	—	—
Private	2,836	1,053	396	657
		(37)	(14)	(23)
London Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
Eastern Traffic Area				
National Bus Company	2,685	975	729	246
		(36)	(27)	(9)
Passenger Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
Local Authority	1,174	452	391	61
		(39)	(33)	(6)
Scottish Bus Group	—	—	—	—
Private	5,465	2,197	831	1,366
		(40)	(15)	(25)
London Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
South Wales Traffic Area				
		258	216	42
National Bus Company	801	(32)	(27)	(5)
Passenger Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
		189	140	49
Local Authority	529	(36)	(26)	(10)
Scottish Bus Group	—	—	—	—
		1,113	470	643
Private	2,325	(48)	(20)	(28)
London Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
Western Traffic Area				
		645	489	156
National Bus Company	1,678	(38)	(29)	(9)
Passenger Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
		130	88	42
Local Authority	278	(47)	(32)	(15)
Scottish Bus Group	—	—	—	—
		1,489	589	900
Private	3,600	(41)	(16)	(25)
London Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
North Eastern Traffic Area				
		1,224	996	229
National Bus Company	2,661	(46)	(37)	(9)
		1,046	885	161
Passenger Transport Executive	2,592	(40)	(34)	(6)
		160	116	44
Local Authority	523	(31)	(22)	(9)
Scottish Bus Group	—	—	—	—
		1,723	432	1,291
Private	3,230	(53)	(13)	(40)
London Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
North Western Traffic Area				

	Total tests	Initial failures Per cent.	Pass after rectification of minor defects Per cent.	Final failures Per cent.
		763	648	115
National Bus Company	2,472	(31)	(26)	(5)
		2,077	1,276	801
Passenger Transport Executive	4,033	(52)	(32)	(20)
		202	146	56
Local Authority	956	(21)	(15)	(6)
Scottish Bus Group	—	—	—	—
		1,725	521	1,204
Private	4,077	(42)	(13)	(29)
London Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
South Eastern Traffic Area				
		728	345	383
National Bus Company	2,263	(32)	(15)	(17)
		1		1
Passenger Transport Executive	1	(100)	—	(100)
		229	140	89
Local Authority	662	(35)	(21)	(14)
Scottish Bus Group	—	—	—	—
		881	246	635
Private	1,939	(45)	(13)	(32)
London Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
Metropolitan Traffic Area				
		579	385	194
National Bus Company	1,278	(45)	(30)	(15)
Passenger Transport Executive	—	—	—	—
		5	5	
Local Authority	8	(63)	(63)	—
Scottish Bus Group	—	—	—	—
		1,423	495	928
Private	3,775	(38)	(13)	(25)
		1,122	925	197
London Transport Executive	5,258	(21)	(18)	(3)
Scottish Traffic Area				
		12		12
National Bus Company	32	(38)	—	(38)
		118	60	58
Passenger Transport Executive	822	(14)	(7)	(7)
		192	41	151
Local Authority	1,094	(18)	(4)	(14)
		1,174	292	882
Scottish Bus Group	3,439	(34)	(8)	(26)
		1,538	186	1,352
Private	3,391	(45)	(5)	(40)
London Transport Executive	—	—	—	—

The figures in brackets express the number of initial failures, passes after rectification and final failures as a percentage of the total tests.

Mr. Gareth Wardell asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report*, by operator group, the numbers of public service vehicles which failed the annual test for the South Wales traffic area in 1985-86.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 1 December 1986, c. *508*]: The information for the South Wales traffic area is shown below.

The figures show that when compared to the previous year, the initial failure rates for each operator have decreased slightly; there have been no sigificant changes in the final failure rates.

Vehicle Inspectorate Districts roughly equivalent to the South Wales Traffic Area 1985-86

Operator Group	Total Tests	Initial Failures	Pass After Rectification of minor defects	Final Failures
National Bus Company	801	258	216	42
		(32)	(27)	(5)
Local Authority	529	189	140	49
		(36)	(26)	(10)
Private	2,325	1,113	470	643
		(48)	(20)	(28)

The figures in brackets represent the number of initial failures, passes after rectification and final failures expressed on a percentage of the total tests.

Drink-Driving

Mr. McCrindle asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation stipulating a legal alcoholic limit of 20mg/100ml for all drivers under 20-years-old, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 December 1986]: No. With more than half of all drinking and driving offenders convicted at around twice the current legal limit, we must concentrate on achieving satisfactory compliance with the law as it stands.

INDEX TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 107**

SESSION 1986-87

8th December—19th December 1986

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc., between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc., under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speakers rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc.* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Com = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

"A Matter of Trusts" 2w

A19 42w
Road safety barriers 42w

A55 616w
Dual carriageway 616w

A174 277w
Road safety barriers 277w

A180 275w
Telephones 275w

A420 (19.12.86) 1526-33
Roads (19.12.86) 1526-33

A487 364w
Road works 364w

A330 Airbus 183w, 346w

A340 Airbus 183w, 346w

Aberdeen College of Education 136w, 300-1w, 305w, 504-5w
Adams D 136w
HM Inspectorate of Schools 300-1w, 504-5w
Public appointments 305w

Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
2R (09.12.86) 200-78
Money res* (09.12.86) 278

Abortion 290w, 318w, 413w
Private health services 568w
Regional health authorities 412-3w
Young people 568-9w

Access to Parliament (10.12.86) 617, 643-4

Access to Personal Files Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 354

Accidents
Bicycles 130w
Hazardous wastes 755w

Accounting
Central Electricity Generating Board 474w
Home Office 349w
Metropolitan police 78w
Road tolls 273w

Acid rain
EC Environment Council 586w, 1199
Smoke & chimney gases 1199-200
Wales 1194

Acute beds 17-9w, 37w, 46w, 66-7w, 365w, 419w

Adams, Mr Allen
Questions
Babcock Power, Redundancies 1051-2

Adams, D 136w
Aberdeen College of Education 136w
Dundee College of Education 136w

Addresses to the Crown (15.12.86) 757

Adjournment debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (16.12.86) 1181

Adjudication officers 123w, 257-8w, 631w
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme 123w

Adley, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Motor Cycle Noise Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 356
Questions
Buses, Pollution control 152w
Buses, Road traffic offences 74w
Buses, Wheel clamps 167w
Early warning systems 1048
Employment opportunities, Simplified planning zones 256w
Labour Party, NATO 176-7
Ministers' domestic visits, National Railway Museum 768-9
Ministers' visits abroad, Chernobyl 768
Nationalised industries, Costs 666w
Regional planning & development 180w
Syrian Arab Republic, Diplomatic relations 610w

Administration of Justice Act 1985
Questions
1w

Administrative costs
Community charge 283w

Administrative delays
Civil service dispersal 66w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 483w
Driving tests 275w, 602w
Exceptional needs payments 568w, 697-8w
Immigration appeals 732w
Invalid care allowances 564w
Land registration 677w
Legal aid 767w
Members' correspondence 48w, 351w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 177-8w
Motor vehicle registration 400w
Planning appeals 194w
Prescriptions 411-2w
Readaptation benefits 346w
School closures 42w, 458-60w
Social security appeals 469-70w
Social security payments 788w
Trials 472w
Tucano aircraft 88w
Visas 122w

Adult education 512-3w
Industrial training 1046

Adult training strategy 512-3w

Advance factory programme
Welsh Development Agency 317w

Advance Petroleum Revenue Tax Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
Royal assent (18.12.86) 1333

Advanced gas-cooled reactors
Nuclear power stations 240w
Radioactive wastes 383w

Advertising
Central Office of Information 428w
Dept of Health & Social Security 793-4w
Ministry of Defence 208w

Advisory Board for the Research Councils 724w
Public appointments 724w

Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks 110w
Public appointments 110w

Advisory Committee on School Teachers Pay & Conditions (10.12.86) 358-442, 445-658

Advisory services
AIDS 660-1w
Small businesses 1044

Afghanistan
Human rights 444w
Pakistan 759-60w
Refugees 759-60w

Africa
Debts 424w
Development aid 424w

Age
Higher education 389-90w
Homosexuality 350w
Mobility allowance 564w
Recorders 604w

Agency nurses
Greater London 48-9w, 572-6w
Manpower 217w, 572w
NHS finance 48-9w, 572-6w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority 707w
North West Thames Regional Health Authority 707w
Royal College of Nursing 707w

Agricultural land
Town & country planning 585w

Agricultural production
Beef & veal 35w
Prices 825w

Agricultural support systems
Potatoes 829w

Agricultural Training Board Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 353

Agriculture
Census of production 367w
Research finance 367w
Training (10.12.86) 353
Welsh Development Agency 6

AIDS 44w, 70w, 81w, 218-9w, 294w, (10.12.86) 354, 409w, 421w, 477w, 484w, 660-1w, 664-5w, 701w, 780-1w
Advisory services 660-1w
Blood transfusions 218-9w
Contraceptives 294w
Disease control 701w, 780w
Drug abuse 701w
Ethnic groups 294w
French kissing 780w
Health Education Council 701w
Health services 409w
Hospices 409w
Hospital beds 409w
Local press 781w
Manpower 701w
Medical Research Council 44w
NHS finance 421w
Press advertising 781w
Prison medical services 477w, 484w
Prisoners 81w
Publicity 294w
Research finance 44w, 70w, 664-5w
Scotland 660-1w
Screening 122-3w
Vaccination 70w

AIDS (Control) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 354

Ailsa shipyard 262w
Property transfer 304w

Air conditioning
Public Record Office 89w, 91-2w

Air force
Armed forces discharges 594-5w
Tucano aircraft 776w

Air force bases
Military aircraft 206w

Air freight transport
Explosives 129w
Weapons 129w

Air pollution
Nitrogen oxides 582-3w
Pollution control 685w
Sulphur dioxide 582-3w

Air pollution control
Gas flaring 508-9w

Air safety
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 1023-5

Air traffic
Nuclear power stations 198-9w, 206w

Air transport
EC action (09.12.86) 295-312

Airbus Industrie 346w
Airbuses 346w

Airbuses
Airbus Industrie 346w
British Aerospace 346w
Government assistance to industry 183w

Aircraft
Personal injury compensation (15.12.86) 1023-5

Aircraft carriers
Armed forces' training 310-1w
Guided weapons 776w

Marines 310-1w

Aircraft noise
Noise control 277w

Airguns
Retail trade 635w

Airports
Freight transport 832-4w
Safety 832w

Aitken, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 814-6

Alcoholic drinks
Football grounds 81w
Greece 261-2w
VAT 261-2w

Alexander, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 344
Unparliamentary expressions (09.12.86) 183
Questions
Building for the future, Exhibitions 432w
Cultural relations, European Economic Community 406w
Trade unions 523w

Allason, Rupert 2w

Alternative energy
EC Energy Council 378w
Power industry 761
Refuse 393-4w
Research finance 199w

Alton, Mr David
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 661
MV Kowloon Bridge & MV Derbyshire (12.12.86) 700
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1056
Questions
AIDS, Hospices 409w
Arms exports, Iran 172-3, 691w
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd, Government grants 761w
Chamberlain, Neville, Disclosure of information 315w, 429-30w
Church schools, Educational finance 721w
City technology colleges, Civil service manpower 661w
City technology colleges, Construction costs 720w
City technology colleges, Educational administration 385w
City technology colleges, Educational finance 455w
City technology colleges, Local education authorities 454-5w
City technology colleges, Pupil-teacher ratios 453w
City technology colleges, School admissions 455w
City technology colleges, School catchment areas 453w
City technology colleges, Sponsorship 453-4w
Empty housing, Homelessness 576w
Infrastructure, Investment 336
International Garden Festival 1984, Anton, John 315w
Land acquisition, Sprucefield 377w
Loan guarantee scheme, Small businesses 519w
Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry 278w
Marines, Dual jobholding 777w
Mersey barrage 379w
MV Kowloon Bridge, Inquiries 603-4w
North Liverpool Music Resource Centre, Manpower Services Commission 632w
Nuclear power stations, Public meetings 475w
Police, Manpower 250-2w
Political advisers, Local authorities 588w
Primary education, Building repairs 661-2w
Primary education, School teachers 661w
Radar, Iran 373w
Recorders, Age 604w
Recorders, Public appointments 604w
Recorders, Re-employment 766w
Recorders, Retirement age 604w
Skuse, Frank, Forensic science 1338-9
Smoke & chimney gases, Coal fired power stations 1194
Speech impaired 210w
Speech therapists, Manpower 209-10w
Speech therapy, Information 210w
Supplementary benefits, Bed & breakfast accommodation 693w
Supplementary benefits, Homelessness 564w
Unemployed workers centres, Local government expenditure 588w

Amazon Indians (15.12.86) 853-7

Amber Valley
Owner occupied housing 589-90w

Ambulance services
Gwynedd 364w
Manpower 468-70w
NHS 468-70w
Training 363w
Wales 363w

Amer Indians (15.12.86) 853-7

Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1426-7

Amess, Mr David
Questions
Abortion 413w
Abortion, Regional health authorities 412-3w
Arms control 175
Employment opportunities, Basildon 219-20w
Unemployment, Basildon 219w

Amphibious vehicles
Helicopters 182

Amyl nitrate 649w, 735w
Drug abuse 464w, 649w, 735w

Anchor Housing Association 749w

Ancient monuments
Ministers' domestic visits 394w
Wales 718-9w

Ancram, Mr Michael, Parliamentary Under-Secretary Scottish Office
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 214, 221, 225, 269-75
Housing policy (15.12.86) 925, 930-3
Island Councils of Scotland Committee of Inquiry (15.12.86) 967-70
Questions
Bus services, Scotland 135w
Chapelcross power station, Health physics 134w
Chapelcross power station, Radioactive waste disposal 134w
Dual carriageways, Scotland 772-3w
Dunbeath bridge, Road construction 305w
Dunblane bypass, Road construction 16w
Forth Road Bridge, Safety 17w
Gas flaring, Scotland 508-9w
Government grants to voluntary organisations, Environment protection 305w
Households, Scotland 19w
Housing starts, Strathclyde 504w
Insulation grants, Scotland 771w
Local government expenditure, Capital investment 174-5w
Local government staff, Pay 361w
Motorways, Scotland 506w, 773w
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 171w
Planning permission, Bathgate 549-50w
Radioactive waste disposal, Scotland 659w, 771w
Rate support grants, Scotland 357-60w
Road accidents, Costs 172-3w
Road accidents, Midlothian 171-2w
Road accidents, Scotland 172w, 506-7w
Road finance, Scotland 506w
Roads, Scotland 507w
School transport, Privatisation 301w
Scottish Transport Group, Government grants 507w
Town & country planning, Farm buildings 550w
Urban programme, Glasgow 359-60w
Urban programme, Scotland 359-62w

Anderson, Mr Donald
Debates etc
Housing (Houses in Multiple Occupation) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 355
Questions
Council house waiting lists, Wales 5
Council housing, Housing construction 616-7w
Housing, Local authorities 588w
Invalid care allowances, Administrative delays 564w
Railway electrification, South Wales 14

Anglo-Irish Agreement 620w, (15.12.86) 829-31

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference
USA 175

Anglo-Irish talks (15.12.86) 829-31

Animal cruelty
Legislation 648w

Animal experiments
Licensing 560-1w

Animal welfare
Ealing 684w
Export of live animals 526w, 528w
Parks 625w

Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 560-1w
Questions
560-1w

Annual reports 829w
Trent Grain 829w

Anols (NEI) 347w

Antarctic treaty 265-6w
South Africa 265w
UN resolutions 265w

Antidumping
Cement 607w

Antitank missiles
Helicopters 170

Anton, John 315w
International Garden Festival 1984 315w

Apartheid
South Africa 182w

Appeals
Employers statutory sick pay scheme 123w
Racial discrimination 415w
School leaving certificates 659-60w

Apprentices
Youth training scheme 1042

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1086-94, 1102

Architectural conservation
Historic buildings 581-2w

Architecture
Community development 584w

Archway
Department of Health and Social Security local offices 567-8w
Exceptional needs payments 567-8w

Archway Road 403w

Areas of great landscape value 193w

Arfon Borough Council 449w
Urban programmes 449w

Argentina
Falkland Islands 168, 269w
Nuclear weapons 168

Arlington Securities 579w
Planning permission 579w

Armed conflict 163-4, 692-3w
Falkland Islands 692-3w

Armed forces
Belize 88w
Compensation 499w
Prime Minister domestic visits 612w, 765w
Protective clothing 87w
Sri Lanka 687w

Armed forces casualties
Armed forces discharges 594-5w
Negligence (10.12.86) 354, 499w

Armed forces civilians 687-8w
NATO 148w

Armed forces' deployment
Cumbria 140w
Cyprus 775w
Falkland Islands 140w, 167-8
Helicopters 170-1

Armed forces discharges
Air Force 594-5w
Armed forces casualties 594-5w
Army 594w
Navy 595w

Armed forces' married quarters 146w
Woolwich 146w

Armed forces' officers
Ethnic minorities 167

Armed forces' pensions 593-4w, 691w
Widows benefits 594w

Armed forces' storage depots 592-3w
Contracts for services 593w
Official secrets 593w
Security 593w

Armed forces' strength
Falkland Islands 167-8
Territorial Army 142w

Armed forces' training 307w, 310w
Aircraft carriers 310-1w
Companies 688w
El Salvador 269w
Military aircraft 776w
Military education 173
Mynydd Epynt 313-4w
Navy 688-9w
Nuclear submarines 688-9w

Arms control 175
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 266-7w

Arms control treaties
European Security Conference 120-1w
Poseidon missiles 121w

Arms exports 142w
Iran 172-3, 691w, (15.12.86) 834-7

Arms trade
Defence equipment 205w
End user certificates 96w
Human rights 8w
Iran 113w, 118w, 174, 443w
Iran-Iraq war 8w
Libyan Arab Republic 166-7
Trade competitiveness 118w

Armstrong, Robert
Evidence 772

Army
Armed forces discharges 594w
Ethnic minorities 166
Ethnic monitoring 166
Helicopters 170-1
Positive discrimination 166

Arnold, Mr Tom
Questions
Consumer protection 715w
Hospital waiting lists, Information 67w

Arrests
Drinking & driving 506w

Art education
Handicapped 464w, 480w

Art works
Museums & galleries 406w
Property Services Agency 684w

Arthritis
Exceptional circumstances additions 466w

Arthur Andersen 71-2w, 421w
Government contracts 289w
Wessex Regional Health Authority 71-2w, 421w

Arts
Consumer expenditure 407w
Handicapped 429-30w, 432-3w, 441w, 449-50w, 456w, 525w
Marketing 406-7w

"Arts & Disabled People" 429-30w, 432-3w, 441w, 449-50w, 456w, 464w, 480w, 507-8w, 525w
Dept of Education & Science 456w
Dept of Employment 525w
Dept of Health & Social Security 464w
Dept of the Environment 432-3w
Dept of Transport 441w
Home Office 480w
Office of Arts & Libraries 429-30w
Scotland 507-8
Welsh Office 449-50w

Arts centres 407w

Arts Council
Government grants 735-7w, 771

Arts Council grants 407w
Theatres 247-8w

Arts finance 735-6w
Inflation 736-7w
Literature 736w
Museums & galleries 248-9w
Public expenditure 770-2w
Royal Opera House 625-7w
Sadler Wells Theatre 774-5w
Visual arts 735w

Arts sponsorship 628w, 769-71
Chambers of commerce 770
Ealing 770
Foreign tourists 770
Regional arts associations 771

Asbestos
Demolition 1185-6
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 567w
Pollution control (08.12.86) 37
Power stations 629w

Asbestosis
Power industry 785w

Ashby, Mr David
Questions
Occupational pensions, Early leavers 791w

Ashdown, Mr Paddy
Debates etc
Defence industries (12.12.86) 683, 693-4, 709-13, 720-1, 725, 729-30
Iron & steel industry, Wolverhampton Group (09.12.86) 313-7, 320
Questions
Bradwell, Nuclear safety 243w
Chapelcross power station, Nuclear safety 761-2w, 764w
Early warning systems, Boeing 691w
Electricity consumption 242w
Export contols, USA 185w
Helicopters, Defence procurement 170
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Nuclear safety 112w
Nuclear power stations, Calder Hall 243-4w
Nuclear safety, Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 475w
Plutonium, Disclosure of information 245-6w
Privatisation, Public sector assets 332-3
Product liability, Drug industry 325
Small businesses, Information 630w
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Nuclear accidents 245w
USA, Computers 118-9w
VAT returns, Small businesses 187w
Warships, Defence procurement 140w

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Questions
Armed forces' casualties, Negligence 499w
Bayer UK, Research finance 565-6w
Child patients, Mentally handicapped 295w
Corporal punishment, Orders & regulations 774w
Corporal punishment, Scotland 774w
Crown immunity 646w
Crown Proceedings Act 1947 143w
Crown Proceedings Act 1947, Law reform 498-9w, 1346
Deaf, Exhibitions 783w
Ear nose & throat, Hospital waiting lists 470w
Handicapped workers, Unemployment 520w
Health service staff, London allowance 566-7w
Tiles, Dumping 20w
Tiles, Industrial production 21w, 100w
Trent Grain, Annual reports 829w
Trent Grain, Intervention stocks 828-9w
Voluntary organisations, Local government reform 1344

Ashton, Mr Joseph
Questions
British Coal Corporation, Housing 1200
Crime 641w

Asian Development Bank (Fourth Replenishment of the Asian Development Fund) Order 1987
Debates etc
(16.12.86) 1178

Aspinall, Mr Jack
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Avon 45w

Assault ships 178
Clydesdale 181
Defence procurement 178-82
Design 182
Helicopters 182
Marines 181
Tyneside 179

Assisted places scheme
Avon 45w
Wales 319-20w

Association of British Chambers of Commerce 21w

Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry 565-6w

Association of Chief Police Officers 603w

Association of Metropolitan Authorities 215w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986 215w

AST 1236 146w

Astronomy (19.12.86) 1549-56

Atkins, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Access to Parliament (10.12.86) 617
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1073-4
Business statement (18.12.86) 1363
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1410, 1412
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 828
Oral question time intervention (18.12.86) 1334
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 349
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem stages (10.12.86) 617
Questions
Copyright, Motor components industry 327
Devonport dockyard, Privatisation 776w

European fighter aircraft 141-2w
Government laboratories, Chorley 1338
Local government staff, Pay 755w
Sports sponsorship, Tobacco industry 1197
Theatres, Arts Council grants 247-8w

Atkinson, Mr David
Debates etc
Political prisoners, USSR (15.12.86) 840-1
Questions
Diplomatic service, Official cars 758w
Licensing laws, Young people 648w
Local government services, Cost effectiveness 583w
Police, Widows' benefits 730w
Self-employed, Taxation 1047-8

Atkinson, Mr Norman
Questions
Crime, Costs 1342
Industrial training schemes, Training allowances 509w

Attendance allowance
Severe disability premium 701-3w

Attorney-General 2w, 4-5w, 314-6w
National security 5w
Publishing 5w

Auctions
Visual arts 735w

Audio recordings 325-6

Ault & Wiborg 715w
Takeovers 715w

Austin Rover 182w, 323-4
Ford Motor Company 323-4
Future 182w

Australia
Civil proceedings (17.12.86) 1230
Civil servants' visits abroad 772

Automatic credit transfer 694w
Retirement pensions 694w

"Autumn statement, 1986" (17.12.86) 1233-306

Availability for work 1037-9
Bermondsey 1038
Bracknell 1038
Child care 539-40w
Community care 539-40w
Jarrow 520w
Liverpool 520w
Ogmore 520w
Social security benefits disqualification 520w, 813-4w
Stockton 520w
Unemployment benefits 1039

Average earnings 115w
Scotland 773w

Avon
Assisted places scheme 45w

Avonmouth
Electricity distribution 762

Babcock Power
Redundancies 1051-2

Babcock Thorn 164-5
Rosyth dockyard 165

Babies
Hypothermia 790w
Medical research 414w

Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth, Secretary of State for Education & Science
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 38-44, 101-3, 107
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 381-653, passim
Questions
Advisory Board for the Research Councils, Public appointments 724w
Centre for Information on Language Teaching & Research 232w
Clinical research 725w
Education (No 2) Act 1986, Orders & regulations 456-7w
Further education, Local government expenditure 457-8w
Higher education, Educational finance 722-3w
Initial teacher training, Student numbers 159w
Liverpool University, Industrial disputes 663w
Ministers' domestic visits, Liverpool University 663w
Polytechnics, Higher education admission 723w
Research finance, AIDS 664-5w
Schools, Capital investment 725-9w
Teacher training, In-service training 724w

Baker, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Cereals, Land use 11w
Company investigations, MPB Russell 181w
Compulsory detained mental patients 733w
EC budget, Judgments 744-5w
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 175
Town & country planning, Departmental circulars 583w
Youth training scheme, Development aid 513w

Balance of payments
Exchange rates 260w
General Motors 607w

Balance of trade
Coal 761-2
Exports 328-9
Japan 338-9, 608-9w
Manufactured goods 178w, 333-4
Manufacturing industries 177w
Oil industry 758-9
South Africa 182w

Baldry, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1127
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 63-7
Questions
Copyright, Legislation 183w
NATO, US bases 138w
Roads, Environment protection 402w

Ballyharry School, Newtownards 760w

Banerjee, Mahuya 758w
Immigration applications 758w

Bangladesh
Bridges 3w
Contracts 3w
India 756w
Refugees 756w

Bank notes 84w

Bank of England
Johnson Matthey 84w

Bankruptcy 180w

Banks
Insider trading 21w

Banks, Mr Robert
Questions
Agriculture, Census of production 367w
Companies, Intervention stocks 367w
Farmers, Loans 526w
Food inspection, Dairy farming 527w
Intervention stocks 820w
Plant diseases, Disease control 526w
Production quotas, France 246-7w

Banks, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 668-9
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1225-6
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1208
European Council (08.12.86) 30
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 800-1
London Residuary Body (19.12.86) 1515-22
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1060
Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 470-1, 575-6, 587, 591, 602, 615, 626-8, 630, 634
Questions
Arts Council, Government grants 735-7w
Arts Council grants 407w
Arts finance 735-6w
Arts finance, Public expenditure 771-2
Arts sponsorship 628w
Bank notes 84w
Bombings, Convictions 639w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 244w
Bus stations, London Regional Transport 41w
Buses, London Regional Transport 603w
Canary Islands, Tourists 272w
Chemical weapons 141w
Council house sales 1195
Cultural relations, EC Presidency 737w
Defence land 311w
Defence land, Land acquisition 690-1w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 690w
Emergency planning, Greater London 80w
Fire services, Greater London 76w
Flood control, Greater London 30w, 80w, 592w
Hazardous wastes, Accidents 755w
Homelessness, Greater London 576w
Literature, Arts finance 736w
Local government functions, Greater London 679w
Local government reform, Research 678-9w
London Regional Transport, Corporate plans 40w
London Residuary Body, Mortgages 280w, 591w
London Underground, Crime 40w
London Underground, Railway travel 40w
Metropolitan Police, Crime prevention 1334
Ministers' visits abroad 737w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Greater London 644-5w
Police relations with public, Greater London 654-5w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Armed forces 765w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Police 612w
Property Services Agency, Art works 684w
Property Services Agency, Rent arrears 751w
Property Services Agency, Rents 751w
Railway travel, Greater London 41w
Road assessment studies, Costs 603w
Road assessment studies, Greater London 40w, 603w
Seaside & country homes scheme, Property transfer 749-50w
Spain, Death 271-2w
Transport policy, Greater London 41w
Visual arts, Arts finance 735w
Wheel clamps, Contracts 654w

BAOR
Electrical technology 263w

Barking-Gospel Oak railway line
Public service obligation grant 401w

Barnett, Mr Guy
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 54-5, 67-70, 110, 113
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Availability of amendments (10.12.86) 359-60
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interests (10.12.86) 367-9
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem stages (10.12.86) 365-6, 369-75, 402, 417
Questions
Blackwall tunnel 403w
Copyright, Educational publications 22w
Road assessment studies, Greater London 40w

Barron, Mr Kevin

Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem stages (10.12.86) 559, 571-2
Questions
Coal gasification 380w
Common land, Land ownership & tenure 1189
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Operations research 619-20w
Nuclear power stations, Operations research 474-5w
Police, Domestic violence 641-2w
Rate support grants 578w

Basildon
Employment opportunities 219-20w
Redundancy 219-20w
Unemployment 219w

Basingstoke
Unemployment 511w

Bathgate
Planning permission 549-50w

Batiste, Mr Spencer
Debates etc
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1060
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Availability of amendments (10.12.86) 359
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem stages (10.12.86) 362, 385-8, 390, 564
Questions
General certificate of secondary education, Educational finance 43w
Industrial training 1042-3
Local education authorities, Leeds 42w
Regional planning & development, Dept of Employment 116w
Regional planning & development, Dept of Health & Social Security 124w
Regional planning & development, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 9-10w

Batley
Council house sales 282w
Employment schemes 257w
Enterprise allowance scheme 256-7w
New workers' scheme 256-7w

Bats
Lindane 258w, 398w

Batteries
Mercury pollution 433w, 1194

Bayer UK 565-6w
Research finance 565-6w

BBC 476w
Codes of practice 640-1w
Falkland Islands 163-4

BBC External Services
National Audit Office 9w

Beaufoy, Stephen 351w
Members' correspondence 351w

Beaumont-Dark, Mr Anthony
Debates etc
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 873, 886-7, 892
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1058
Questions
Balance of trade, Japan 339

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Debates etc
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1401-5, 1466-7, 1471-3
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1141, 1150-1

Bed & breakfast accommodation
Homelessness 670w, 751-2w
Supplementary benefits 693w

Bedi, Paul (19.12.86) 1504-15

Beef & veal
Agricultural production 35w

Beef premiums 35w, (17.12.86) 1213-28
Wales 35w

Beith, Mr A J
Debates etc
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1163
Food aid from EC (09.12.86) 287-9, 293-4
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 816-22
Questions
Family practitioner committees, Pay 68w
Nuclear fuels, Nuclear safeguards 201-2w
UK companies abroad, South Africa 182w

Belize
Armed forces 88w

Bell, Mr Stuart
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1234, 1237
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1426
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1114-7

Bellingham, Mr Henry
Debates etc
Local enterprise agencies (15.12.86) 971-7
Questions
Alternative energy, EC Energy Council 378w
Prisons, Criminal damage 480w
Small businesses 512w

Belvedere Hospital, Glasgow 548w
Land ownership & tenure 548w

Bendall, Mr Vivian
Questions
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 290w

Bennett, Mr Andrew F
Debates etc
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 348
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 43-4, 46, 51, 61, 65, 84, 102-10, 114
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem stages (10.12.86) 367-637, passim
Questions
Community programme, Young people 1043
Iron & steel industry, Readaptation benefits 346w
Mature students, Student grants 43w
Maxwell Fyfe Directive 641w
School closures, Administrative delays 42w, 458-60w
Simon Engineering, Buy ins 1345-6
Trident, Radar 139w

Benyon, Mr W
Questions
Oxford Regional Health Authority, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w

Bermingham, Mr Gerald
Debates etc
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 881-3
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem stages (10.12.86) 481-8, 507, 516-9
Questions
Dangerous mental patients 419-20w
Secure community home schools 705w
Young offenders, Remand centres 350-2w

Bermondsey
Availability for work 1038

Best, Mr Keith
Debates etc
Defence (15.12.86) 907-9, 911-2
Questions
A55, Dual carriageways 616w
Council housing, Housing finance 35w
Drinking & driving, Christmas 557-8w
Drinking & driving, Publicity 603w
Health services finance, Wales 321-2w
Iran, Arms trade 118w
Lloyds of London, Inquiries 608w
Perinatal mortality, Wales 451-3w
Small farms, Wales 4, 107w
Wales Tourist Board, Government grants 616w
Welsh Development Agency, Estate Action 7

"Better Schools White Paper" 159w

Bevan, Mr David Gilroy
Questions
Restart programme, Tourism 522w

Bibles
Pensioners' rights 481w

BICC
Redundancy 339-40

Bicycles
Accidents 130w
Children 130w

Bidwell, Mr Sydney
Questions
Visas, Indian subcontinent 732w

Biffen, Rt Hon John, Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 659-70, (18,12,86) 1360-5
Recess motions, Christmas (15.12.86) 829-70
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Availability of amendments (10.12.86) 358-9
Questions
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, USA 175
Arms control 175
Arms trade, Iran 113w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 173-4
Early warning systems, Defence procurement 176
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 175-6
Homelessness 177
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 175
Intelligence services, Prosecutions 177-8
Kinnock, Neil, USA 174
Labour Party, Defence 177
Labour Party, NATO 176-7
Members' facilities, Parking 18-9
Oral questions, Greater London 18
Oral questions, Northern region 18
Oral questions, Wales 17-8
Palace of Westminster, Educational visits 15-6
Palace of Westminster, Security 16-7
Parliamentary questions 435-6w
Police, Palace of Westminster 100-1w
Prime Minister official engagements 114w
Research assistants 435w
Research assistants, House of Commons 27w
Research assistants, Terrorism 19-20
Shipping, Defence 113w
Telephone calls, Palace of Westminster 16, 203w, 717-8w
Telephone tapping, Palace of Westminster 718w
Terrorism, EC action 174
Westland Helicopters, Disclosure of information 113w
Wilson, Harold, Intelligence services 175
Wilson, Harold, National security 113-4w

Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Debates etc
European Council (08.12.86) 28
Northern Ireland (15.12.86) 829-31
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1083-4
Questions
Bombings, Convictions 639w
Falkland Islands, Armed forces' deployment 140w
Falkland Islands, Defence expenditure 168
Flags, Northern Ireland 234w
International Fund for Ireland 234-5w
Legislation, Northern Ireland 234w

Metropolitan Police, Manpower 1335

Bilateral aid
Debts 109w

Bilateral treaties
Multifibre arrangement 184w, 716w

Billing
Defence procurement 775-6w
Small businesses 517w

Binary chemical weapons 121w, 140w, 148w
RAF Walford 140w, 148w
USA 121w, 148w

Binder Hamlyn Report 69w

Bird watching 432w
Leisure facilities 432w

Birds
Nature conservation 671w, 673w
Severn barrage 675-6w

Birmingham
Social security appeals 631w
Unemployment benefits 257-8w

Birmingham City Council 680w
Urban planning 680w

Black economy 187w

Black, John 142-3w
Homicide 142-3w

Blackwall tunnel 39w, 276w, 403w

Blair, Mr Tony
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 381w

Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1357

Blind
Departmental forms 293-4w
Mental hospitals 296w
Severe disability premium 701-3w
Special education 296-7w
Teacher training 296w
Training 296w

Block grant
Local authorities 587w

Blood lead levels 754w
Lead poisoning 754w

Blood plasma 125w
Blood Products Laboratory 125w

Blood Products Laboratory 125w
Blood plasma 125w

Blood tests 81w

Blood transfusions
AIDS 218-9w
Safety 124w

Board & lodging charges 126-8w, 287w, 571w
Gateshead 287w
Social security reform 571w

"Board & Lodging Payments Consultation Papers" 571w

Body, Sir Richard
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1218

Body searches 348w, 350w, 497-8w, 598w
Heathrow 497-8w
Leeds-Bradford Airport 497-8w

Boeing
Early warning systems 162, 691w, 1048-9

Bolivia
Debts (18.12.86) 1476-84

Bolton
Bypasses (15.12.86) 861-2
Employment schemes 633-4w
Government grants 748w
Industrial training schemes 633-4w
Road construction (15.12.86) 861-2

Bombings
Convictions 639-40w
Forensic science 1335-9
Prisoners' release 639w
Republic of Ireland 639-40w

Books
Ministers 237w

Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Questions
BAOR, Electrical technology 263w

Border security in Ireland
Firearms 46w

Bottomley, Mr Peter, Under-Secretary of State for Transport
Debates etc
A420, Oxfordshire (19.12.86) 1529-33
Questions
A19, Road safety barriers 42w
A174, Road safety barriers 277w
A180, Telephones 275w
Accidents, Bicycles 130w
"Arts & disabled people", Dept of Transport 441w
Blackwall tunnel 276w, 403w
Buses, Greater London 441w
Buses, Pollution control 152w
Buses, Vehicle speed limiters 533w
Cycling, Crash helmets 131w
Drinking and driving, Death 42w
Drinking and driving, Publicity 603w
Drinking and driving, Young people 404w, 840-1w
Driving tests, Cleethorpes 275w
Driving tests, Hampshire 602w
East London road assessment study 403w
European Road Safety Year 441-2w
Lorries, Injuries 400w
Lorries, Motor vehicle safety 400w
Lorries, Noise control 151-2w
Lorries, Speed limits 131w
M1, Road traffic 132-3w
M4, Road safety barriers 273w
M5, Road works 133w
M25, Dual carriageways 133-4w
M25, Lighting 151w
M25, Road construction 133w
M25, Road traffic 403-4w, 533w, 601w
M40, Road construction 832w
M40, Road works 401w
Medical examinations, Driving licences 130-1w
Mobility of disabled, Transport 130w
Motor vehicle testing, Licensing 831-2w
Motor vehicle testing, South Wales 836w
Motor vehicle theft, Security equipment 155w
Motorcycles, Motor vehicle safety 405w
Motorcycles, Noise control 534-6w
Motorcycles, Road accidents 404-5w
Motorways, Road accidents 132w
Motorways, Road construction 601w
Motorways, Road safety barriers 274w
Motorways, Road traffic 133w
Pedestrians, Casualties 405w
Public service vehicles, Motor vehicle testing 835-40w
Public service vehicles, South Wales 835-6w, 839-40w
Public service vehicles, Spot checks 836w
Public service vehicles, Wales 835w
Public transport, Mobility of disabled 131w
Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 Review 600w
Road accidents, Casualties 533-4w
Road accidents, Lorries 151w
Road assessment studies, Costs 603w
Road assessment studies, Greater London 40w, 154w, 273w, 277w, 603w
Road safety barriers 535w
Road safety barriers, Dual carriagways 831w
Road safety barriers, Motorways 831w
Road safety education, Pre-school education 404w
Road safety, European Road Safety Year 534w
Road safety, Psychology 276-7w
Road tolls, Accounting 273w
Road traffic control, Metropolitan counties 604w
Roads, Environment protection 402w
Roads, Expenditure 401w
Severn bridge, Road traffic 600w
Severn bridge, Toll bridges 600w
Traffic lights 532-3w
Transport policy, Greater London 41w
Transport supplementary grants 402w
Tyre tread depths 402-3w
Warminster bypass, Contracts 831w
Warminster bypass, Road construction 601-2w
Woolwich ferry 273-4w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Debates etc
Family & Domestic Jurisdiction Consultation Paper (15.12.86) 844-9
Prisons (15.12.86) 999-1004
Questions
Arts centres 407w
Clinical research 725w
Enterprise allowance scheme 1039-40
Nuclear weapons, Defence 1052
Rate support grants, Waverley Borough Council 582w
Research finance, AIDS 664-5w
Youth training scheme 513w

Boundary Commission for England
Parliamentary constituencies 559-60w
Public appointments 560w

Bowden, Mr Andrew
Questions
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, South East Thames Regional Health Authority 290w
Retirement pensions, Automatic credit transfer 694w
Supplementary benefits disregards of income 693w

Bowden, Mr Gerald
Questions
Employment schemes, Southwark 630w
Health service staff, Southwark 698-700w
Hospital waiting lists, NHS administration 414w
Industrial training, Training levies 178w
Land registration, Southwark 677w
Museums & galleries, Arts finance 248-9w
New businesses, Southwark 631w
Owner occupied housing, Southwark 395w
Tourism, Professional qualifications 519w

Bowe, Colette 236w
Immunity from prosecution 236w

Bows & arrows
Young people (10.12.86) 353

Boyes, Mr Roland
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 481-2, 486-9, 503, 506, 510
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1307-10, 1321
Questions
Binary chemical weapons, RAF Welford 140w
Crime prevention 1339
Electorate, Local authorities 668-9w
Improvement for sale schemes 31-4w
Job start scheme 370-1w
Job start scheme, Training allowances 1040
Local government constituencies 668w
Motor industry, Manpower 96-7w
Neighboourhood councils 432w
Parish councils 395w
Water authorities, Capital investment 1196
Water authorities, Investment returns 436w
Water charges, Water authorities 398-9w
Water pollution, Nitrates 683w, 705w

Boyson, Dr Rhodes, Minister of State for the Environment
Questions

Local authorities, Propaganda 433w
Local government finance, Rate support grants 1189-92
Local government finance, Rates & rating 1190
Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry 278w
Local government reform, Research 678-9w
Local government services, Cost effectiveness 583w
London Residuary Body, Land values 29w
Rate support grants, Bradford 1190-1
Rates & rating 577w
Rent arrears, Middlesbrough 1190

Bracknell
Availability for work 1038
Vacancies 1038

Bradford
Rate support grants 1190-1

Bradford Royal Infirmary 123w
Violence 123w

Bradley, Francis 158w
Death 158w

Bradwell
Nuclear safety 243w

Brain
Criminal injuries 413w

Bramley camp 142w

Brandon-Bravo, Mr Martin M
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 667
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 827
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 47
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 373-4, 391
Questions
Coal mining, Labour Party 765-6

Bray, Dr Jeremy
Debates etc
European Council (08.12.86) 26
Questions
Government departments, Expenditure 260w
Iron & steel industry, Productivity 335
Public expenditure, Government departments 427-8w, 745w

Brazil (15.12.86) 853-7
Milk & milk products 596w

Breast cancer
Death 462-3w
Expenditure 562w
Greater London 562w
Medical examinations 562w
Screening 217-8w, 562w

Breathalysers
Police powers 74w

Brent
Education 384-5w
Headteachers (15.12.86) 857-8
HM Inspectorate of Schools 384-5w

Brent Health Authority 66w
Cervical cancer 66w

Bridge Street Area
Police 100-1w

Bridges
Bangladesh 3w

Brigg
Jobclubs 812w

Bright, Mr Graham
Questions
Airports, Freight transport 832-4w
Breast cancer, Death 462-3w
Breast cancer, Screening 562w
Cancer, Death 463w
Cervical cancer, Screening 563w, 712-4w
Diabetes 289w
Diabetes, Medical treatments 562-3w
Objects in lieu of tax, Capital transfer tax 430w

Brinton, Mr Tim
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 456
Questions
Crown Proceedings Act 1947, Law reform 85-6w

Bristol channel 37-8w
Rescue services 37-8w

British Aerospace
Airbuses 346w

British Caledonian
Nigeria 756w

British Coal Corporation 377w, 382w, 757, 764-5
Housing 1200
Property transfer 579w, 1200

British Council
Caribbean 266w

British Dependent Territories
Work permits 371w

British Film Institute 406w

British Gas Corporation
Postal deliveries 1347
Privatisation 7-8w, 173-4, 244w, 381w, 766-8
Shareholders 766

British Geological Survey
Civil servants 773

British Insulated Calendar Cables 715w

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd
Government grants 761w
Safety measures 619w
Trade unions 619w

British Nuclear Test Veterans Association 482w
McGinley, Ken 482w

British Railways (No 2) Bill 1985/86
Debates etc
Lords amendts* (16.12.86) 1035
Royal assent (18.12.86) 1333

British Railways (Stansted) Bill 1985/86
Debates etc
Order for consideration read (09.12.86) 161
Rep* (15.12.86) 757

British residents abroad
Personal taxation 740w
South Korea 272w

British Shipbuilders
Nationalised industries borrowing (08.12.86) 145-53

British Shipbuilders Borrowing Powers (Increase of Limit) Order 1986
Debates etc
(08.12.86) 145-53

British Steel Corporation 334
External financing limits 609w
Privatisation 338, 440-1w
Trade competitiveness 335

Britoil
Privatisation 767

Brixton Prison 167w, 484w, 558w
Prison medical services 484w
Rogers, Martin Robert 558w

Broadcasting
Pornography (10.12.86) 355

Bromley
Planning appeals 579w

Brooke, Mr Peter, Minister of State at the Treasury
Questions
Body searches, 497w, 598w
Body searches, Heathrow 497-8w
Body searchers, Leeds-Bradford Airport 497-8w
Charitable donations, Tax allowances 259w
Duty free allowances, EC action 667-8w
Duty free allowances, EC countries 486w
EC budget 422-3w
EC budget, Judgments 744-5w
Pay incentives, National Audit Office 259w
"Poor Mans James Bond", Import controls 259w
Retirement pensions, Official secrets acts 259w
Tobacco, Consumption 745w
Tobacco duties 561w, 668w, 745w
VAT 83w
VAT, Company taxation 743w
VAT, Customs & Excise 426w, 743-4w
VAT, Employment 486w
VAT, Small businesses 186-7w
VAT, Tax evasion 260-1w
VAT, UK repayments from EC budget 666w
VAT returns, Small businesses 187w

Brown, Mr Gordon
Debates etc
British Shipbuilders, Nationalised industries borrowing (08.12.86) 149-51, 153
Rosyth Dockyard, Standing Order No 20 applications (08.12.86) 34
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 126-30, 144
Questions
Dockyards, Privatisation 165
Employment 815-6w
Employment, Northern Ireland 537-8w, 634-6w
Employment opportunities, Northern Ireland 538w, 815w
Families, Supplementary benefits 806w
Family income, Supplementary benefits 128w
Manufacturing industries, Redundancy 303-4w
Northern Ireland 546-7w
Redundancy, Northern Ireland 537-8w
Regional development grants 25w, 546w
Regional development grants, Government grants 26w
Shipbuilding, Government assistance to industry 99-100w
Shipbuilding intervention fund, Private sector 26w
Supplementary benefits, Social security recipients 807-8w
Unemployment, Dunfermline 14w

Brown, Mr Hugh
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 210

Brown, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1249
Questions
A180, Telephones 275w
AIDS, Health Education Council 701w
British Steel Corporation 334
Central Electricity Generating Board, Capital investment 6w
Driving tests, Cleethorpes 275w
Humberside airport, Privatisation 276w
Jobclubs, Brigg 812w
National No Smoking Day 1987, Expenditure 700w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 7w
Radioactive waste disposal, Compensation 6w, 28w
Radioactive waste disposal, Property transfer 6-7w
Trident 139w

Brown, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
British Shipbuilders, Nationalised industries borrowing (08.12.86) 146-9

Defence industries (12.12.86) 713-5, 717, 726
Royal Fleet Auxiliary (15.12.86) 780
Questions
Assault ships, Defence procurement 180
Attorney-General 316w
District heating, Newcastle upon Tyne 392-4w
Exports, Power industry 328
Frigates, Defence contracts 169
Frigates, Defence procurement 141w
Legal aid, Political parties 314w
Magistrates, Public appointments 315w
Newcastle upon Tyne 393-4w
Official secrets acts, Prosecutions 354-5w
Possession rights 315-6w
Power industry, Exports 763
Recycling, Newcastle upon Tyne 394w

Brown, Mr Robert C
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1357, 1423
Questions
Sports sponsorship, Tobacco industry 1197

Brown, Mr Ron
Questions
Arms trade, Libyan Arab Republic 166-7
Engineering industries, Skilled workers 1042
Exercise Monkfish 144w
Exports, NEI Peebles 328
Unemployment, Lothian 504w

Browne, Mr John
Questions
Private patients 209w

Bruce, Ian 701-3w

Bruce, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 205
Housing policy (15.12.86) 913-7
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 767
Energy conservation 242-3w
Industrial energy conservation 242w
Insulation grants, Scotland 771w
Oil industry, Research finance 380-1w
Oil revenues, North Sea oil 759
Rates & rating, Local government 581w

Bruinvels, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 663
Crossbows Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 353
Northern Ireland (15.12.86) 830
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1149-50
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 349-50
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 81-6, 112-3
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Availability of amendments (10.12.86) 358
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interests (10.12.86) 369
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 389, 392, 394, 408, 423-8, 636, 642-4
Questions
Advisory Board for the Research Councils, Public appointments 724w
Breathalysers, Police powers 74w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 381w
Civil & Public Services Association, Trade union elections 774
Clergy, Family income supplements 13
Detention centres, Custodial treatment 79-80w
Drinking & driving, Public houses 75w
Employment opportunities, Leicester 521w
Energy efficiency, Local authorities 764
Enterprise allowance scheme, Leicester 816w
Flight simulation, Defence contracts 595w
Football, Identity cards 678w
Housing, Leicester 280-1w
Identity cards 558w
Local authorities, Propaganda 433w
Ministers' visits abroad, Uganda 543-4w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Administrative delays 177-8w
Motor vehicles, Greater London 77w
Motor vehicles, Wheel clamps 77w, 482w
Palace of Westminster, Educational visits 15-6
Parking offences, Diplomatic service 76-7w
Police civilians, Leicestershire 74w
Prime Minister official engagements 114w, 238w, 443w, 615w
Prison population, Prison staff 104-8w
Prison sentences 80w, 253-4w
Prisons, Per capita costs 254w
Student unions, Costs 101w
Wheel clamps, Greater London 76w
Youth training scheme, Leicester 631-2w

Bryan, Sir Paul
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1237

Buchan, Mr Norman
Questions
Arts sponsorship 770-1

Buchanan bottling plant (08.12.86) 35-6
Standing Order No 20 applications (08.12.86) 35-6

Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick, Minister of State for Energy
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 244w
Gas disconnections 619w
Natural gas production, Pollution control 112-3w
North Sea oil, Offshore structures 380w
Offshore structures, Contracts 474w
Oil industry, Balance of trade 758-9
Oil industry, Research finance 380-1w
Oil revenues, North Sea oil 759
Petroleum exploration, Offshore drilling 380w
Petroleum exploration licences 201w

Buck, Sir Antony
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1411
Questions
Assault ships, Defence procurement 178-9
Defence Export Sales Organisation 144w
Gurkhas, Hong Kong 372w

Buckinghamshire
Councillors 167w

Budgen, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1247, 1252, 1254, 1277, 1290
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1227
Questions
Common agricultural policy 1348
Company taxation, Capital investment 137w
Firearms certificates, Sports 620w
Shipping, Investment 129w

"Building for the Future" 432w
Exhibitions 432w
Upper Waiting Hall 432w

Building industry
Tax evasion 261w

Building land
Housing construction 281-2w

Building regulations
Gas safety 27w
Housing insulation 753w

Building repairs
Council tenants 586w
Defective housing 584-5w
Hospitals 786-7w
Landlord & tenant 586w
Lightburn Hospital 549w
NHS finance 786-7w
Portsdown Park 95w
Primary education 661-2w

Building Research Establishment
Civil servants 773

Burglar alarms
Greater London 78w

Burglary
Habitual offenders 480-1w
Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons 653-4w
Wales 635w

Burnham Committee (08.12.86) 38-121, (10.12.86) 358-442, 445-658

Burt, Mr Alistair
Debates etc
Unborn Children (Protection) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 356

Bus lanes
Law enforcement 1334

Bus services
Children 131w
Competition 135w, 533w
Greater Manchester 834w
Hampshire 40w
Scotland 135w
West Sussex 602w

Bus stations 41w
London Regional Transport 41w

Buses
Greater London 441w
London Regional Transport 603w
Parking 441w
Police powers 74w
Pollution control 152w
Procurement 603w
Road traffic offences 74w
Vehicle speed limiters 533w
Wheel clamps 167w

Business education
Manpower Services Commission 509w

Business expansion scheme 739w
Film industry 739w
Venture capital 739w

Business statement (10.12.86) 659-70, (18.12.86) 1360-5
Speaker's rulings & statements (18.12.86) 1363

Butcher, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
Questions
Counterfeit manufacturing, Punishment 265w
Electrical control equipment, Industries 20w
Film industry, Foreign investment in UK 606w
Film industry, Income 606w
Government assistance to industry, Knowsley South industrial park 715w
Government assistance to industry, Quality control 716w
Illegal broadcasting, Greater London 97w
Industrial production, Strikes 545-6w
Lloyds of London, Inquiries 608w
Manufacturing industries, Spare parts 545w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of Trade & Industry 98w
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate, Lloyds of London 716w
Pirate radio stations, Greater London 97w
Science & technology research 608w
Statistics, Dept of Trade & Industry 186w, 264-5w
Tiles, Industrial production 21w, 100w
Women, Dept of Trade & Industry 544-5w

Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1429
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 893

Butter
Food surpluses 450w
Intervention stocks 528w, 597-8w

Butterfill, Mr John
Questions
Animals (Scientific Procedure) Act 1986 560-1w
Inner cities initiative 540w
Planning authorities, Property development 398w
Restart programme 1045-6
Tourism, EC grants & loans 515w

Buy ins
Simon Engineering 1345-6

Bye laws
Dogs 552-6

Bypasses
Bolton (15.12.86) 861-2

Cabinet committees 531w

Caborn, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 397, 407, 409-10, 412-5, 420, 575

CADW: Welsh Historic Mooiuments 718-9w

Calder Hall 764w
Nuclear power stations 243-4w
Nuclear safety 761-2w, 764w

Callaghan, Mr Jim
Questions
Airbuses, Government assistance to industry 183w
Civil service manpower, Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 369w

Calling of Members (10.12.86) 439, 446
Speaker's rulings & statements (08.12.86) 53, (17.12.86) 1224, (18.12.86) 1359

Camberwell
Supplementary benefits 285w

Cambridgeshire
Rhizomania disease 624w

Camden
Homelessness 681w
Police relations with public 169-70w

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N
Debates etc
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1073-5
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 782-94, 799-800, 806, 808-10, 820
National security (09.12.86) 198-9
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1369, 1373, 1385, 1388-90
Questions
Agency nurses, Manpower 572w
Agency nurses, NHS finance 572w
Central Electricity Generating Board, SBK consortium 382w
D Notices, "Their Trade is Treachery" 89w, 310w, 373-4w
Defence contracts, Pricing 145w
European Year of the Environment 585w
Infrastructure, Investment 337
Intelligence services, Television programmes 2-3w
Land Rover, Export controls 262w
Maxwell Fyfe directive 349w
Miller, Joan, National security 2w
Moe, John, National security 2w
Official secrets, Nuclear power 656w
Pincher, Chapman, National security 1w
Plutonium 383w
Plutonium, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 617w
Solway Firth barrage 381w
"Their Trade is Treachery" 237w
Unemployment, Cumbria 523w
West, Nigel, National security 2w

Canary Islands
Tourists 272w

Canavan, Mr Dennis
Questions
British Coal Corporation 377w
London Marathon 591w
Offensive weapons, Retail trade 1345
Unemployment 511w

Cancer
Death 463w
Medical treatments (19.12.86) 1486-94

CAP Scientific 691w
Defence contracts 691w
Early warning systems 691w

Capital investment
Central Electricity Generating Board 6w, 245w, 473-4w, 530w
Coal mining 200w
Company taxation 85w, 137w
Electricity supply industry 5w
Local authorities 137w, 497w
Local government expenditure 174-5w, 192-3w
Manufacturing industries 177w
Northampton General Hospital 284w
Public sector housing 584w
Regional health authorities 63-5w
Schools 725-9w
Voluntary schools 725-9w
Water authorities 1196

Capital transfer tax
Objects in lieu of tax 430w

Capitation allowances 101w, 320w
Wales 320w

Caravan sites
Greater London 27-8w
Gypsies (18.12.86) 1367
Transient people 27-8w

Cardiac surgery units 616w
Cardiff 616w

Cardiff
Cardiac surgery units 616w

Cardiovascular diseases
Health education 694w

Caribbean
British Council 266w

Carlile, Mr Alex
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1067
Questions
Council housing, Wales 4
Metropolitan Police Instruction Book 481-2w
Prison medical services, AIDS 484w
Telephone calls, Palace of Westminster 16

Carlisle, Mr John
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Football grounds 81w
North West Thames Regional Health Authority, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
Sports sponsorship, Tobacco industry 1196-7

Carlisle, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 42
Questions
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 334
Manufactured industries, Capital investment 177w
Nature conservation, Estuaries 582w
Planning appeals, Administrative delays 194w
Restart programme 1036-7
Unemployment 511w

Carlisle, Rt Hon Mark
Debates etc
Criminal Justice Act 1982 (Amendment) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 357
Questions
Young offenders, Remission 653w

Carnegie United Kingdom Trust 429-30w, 432-3w, 449-50w, 456w, 507-8w

Carter-Jones, Mr Lewis
Debates etc
Defence industries (12.12.86) 682, 686-93
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1358, 1434-6
Questions
Airbuses, British Aerospace 346w
Blind, Departmental forms 293-4w
Blood Plasma, Blood Products Laboratory 125w
Blood transfusions, Safety 124w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 162-3
Hospital beds, Costs 66-7w
Hospital beds, Expenditure 419w
Hospital beds, Northern Ireland 46w
Hospital beds, Scottish health boards 17-9w
Hospital beds, Wales 37w, 365w
Hospital closures, Mental hospitals 464-5w, 810w
Mental health community care, Hostels 465w
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 465w

Cartwright, Mr John
Debates etc
Defence industries (12.12.86) 705-9, 727
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1358
Questions
Armed forces' married quarters 146w
Armed forces' married quarters, Woolwich 146w
Blackwell tunnel 276w
Caravan sites, Greater London 27-8w
Defence equipment, Arms trade 205w
Defence equipment, Export licensing 306w
International Year of Shelter for the Homeless 580-1w
Mortgage relief, Tax allowances 84-5w
Nurses, Greater London 782w
Road assessment studies, Greater London 273w
Skillcentres, Deptford 369w, 542-3w
Tunnels, River Thames 39w
Vandalism, Housing estates 1187
Woolwich ferry 273-4w
Woolwich ferry, East London river crossing 276w

Cash, Mr William
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 670
European Council (08.12.86) 32
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1114
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1389
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 50, 53, 74, 89-93, 105
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 374, 379, 381-2
Questions
Gas safety, Building regulations 27w
Labour Party, Defence 177
Manufacturing industries, Investment 340
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 610-1w

Castellais, Andrew (16.12.86) 1179-84

Casualties
Pedestrians 405w
Road accidents 533-4w

Cats eyes 507w

Cement
Antidumping 607w
Greece 175w, 607w
Unfair competition 175w
Unfair trading practices 21w

Census of population
Testing 709w

Census of production
Agriculture 367w

Central America
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 1009-22

Central Criminal Court 167w
Prisoners 167w

Central Electricity Generating Board 378w
Accounting 474w
Capital investment 6w, 245w, 473-4w, 530w
Coal fired power stations 245w
Fast reactors 198w
Radioactive waste disposal 6w, 530w
SBK consortium 382w

Central heating
Houses 753w
Housing & elderly 720w
Wales 720w

Central Office of Information
Advertising 428w

Central Ordnance Depots 592-3w
Contracts for services 592-3w

Central Regional Council 135w

Centre for Information on Language Teaching & Research 232w

Cereals
Land use 11w

Ceredigion
Farm owners 449w
Tenant farmers 449w

Cervical cancer
Brent Health Authority 66w
Death 563w, 712-4w
Screening 34-5w, 66w, 563-4w, 712-4w

Chairman of Committee of the Whole House
Debates etc
Access to Parliament (10.12.86) 617, 643-4
Amendments & new clauses (10.12.86) 358-648 passim
Calling of Members (10.12.86) 439, 446
House of Commons divisions (10.12.86) 446, 491
Members' interests (10.12.86) 369
Members' interventions (10.12.86) 408, 409, 427, 644
Members' speeches (10.12.86) 390, 414, 493, 517, 613
Official Report (10.12.86) 423
Points of order (10.12.86) 416, 427, 434, 445, 491, 565
Scope of debate (10.12.86) 402-645 passim
Unparliamentary expressions (10.12.86) 368-9, 425, 617

Chalker, Mrs Lynda, Minister of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Debates etc
Kaur, Kuldip (19.12.86) 1509-15
Questions
Afghanistan, Refugees 759-60w
Diplomatic service, Official cars 758w
European Communities, EC presidency 759w
European Security Conference, Eastern Europe 758w
Iraq, Official visits 756-7w
Ministers' visits abroad, Uganda 543-4w

Chamberlain, Neville 315w, 429-30w
Disclosure of information 315w, 429-30w

Chambers of commerce
Arts sponsorship 770

Channel Islands
Lawn mowers 347w

Channel tunnel
Private investment 337
Small businesses 98w
Transport of hazardous materials 39w
Wales 14
Waste disposal 278-9w

Channon, Rt Hon Paul, Secretary of State for Trade & Industry
Questions
Balance of trade, Japan 339
British Steel Corporation 334
British Steel Corporation, Trade competitiveness 335
Confederation of British Industry 179w
Dartford tunnel, Private investment 337
Departmental progress, Dept of Trade & Industry 436-9w
Exports 175w
Government assistance to nationalised industries 332-3
Infrastructure, Investment 336-8
Iron & steel industry, Japan 338
Iron & steel industry, Privatisation 335
Iron & steel industry, Productivity 335
Leyland Bus 348w
Leyland Trucks, Privatisation 332
Ministers' domestic visits, Liverpool 440w
Ministers' visits abroad, Japan 338
Privatisation 332
Privatisation, Public sector assets 332-3
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines, Privatisation 605-6w
Rover group, Corporate plans 439w
Rover group, Privatisation 178w

Chapelcross power station 19w, 134w, 243-4w, 761-2w, 764w
Emergency planning 19w
Health physics 134w
Nuclear safety 761-2w, 764w
Radioactive waste disposal 134w

Chapman, Mr Sydney
Questions
Airguns, Retail trade 635w
Arts sponsorship 769
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 768
Conservation areas 193w
Enterprise allowance scheme 509w
Greenbelt 193w
Housing improvement 586w
Listed buildings 194w
National parks, Conservation areas 193w
National Tree Week 194w
Property Services Agency, Consultants 684-5w
Sites of special scientific interest 194w
UK 2000 1186

Charitable donations 259w, 497w
Civil servants 259w
Pay 497w
Tax allowances 259w

Chemical weapons 141w, 498w
France 121-2w
RAF Welford 141w
USA 150w
Warsaw Pact 145w

Chemists shops
Compensation 410w
Contracts 410w
Pharmacies 410w
Prescriptions 410w

Chernobyl
Ministers' visits abroad 768

Cheshire County Council (10.12.86) 672-8

Child care
Availablility for work 539-40w

Child patients
Mentally handicapped 295w

Child resistant containers
Drugs 292-3w

Childbirth
Wales 108-9w, 126w

Children
Bicycles 130w
Bus services 131w
Crime victims 636-40w
Offensive weapons 649w, 1345
Pedestrians 405w
Poverty 123w, 806w, 1348-50
Smoking 1197
Supplementary benefits 287w
Tobacco 82w

Children's hospitals
Hospitals (12.12.86) 748-56

Chirk Gresford bypass 719w
Costs 719w

Chlorine
Hazardous materials 525w

Chope, Mr Christopher, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment
Debates etc
Great Lines, Gillingham (15.12.86) 953-7
London Residuary Body (19.12.86) 1522-5
Questions
BAOR, Electrical technology 263w
Community charge, Administrative costs 283w
Domestic rates 585w
Empty housing, West Yorkshire 750w
Flood control, Greater London 30w, 592w
Haringey Borough Council 587w
Laundries, Local authorities 587w
Local government buildings, West Yorkshire Residuary Body 677w
Local government constituencies 668w
Local government expenditure, Capital investment 192-3w
Local government functions, Greater London 679w
Local government property, Property transfer 750-1w
Local government property, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council 677w
Local government property, West Yorkshire Residuary Body 677w
Local government reform, Local government buildings 678w
Local government services, Contracts for services 577w
Local government staff, Pay 755w
London Marathon 591w
Mortgage defaulters, Local authorities 590w
Neighbourhood councils 432w
Parish councils 395w
Political advisers, Local authorities 588w
Property Services Agency, Art works 684w
Property Services Agency, Civil service dispersal 589w
Property Services Agency, Consultants 684-5w
Property Services Agency, Rent arrears 751w
Property Services Agency, Rents 751w
Public Record Office, Construction 91w
Public Record Office, Repairs & maintenance 91-2w
Rag Flock & Other Filling Materials Act 1951 278w
Rate support grants 283w, 399w, 578w, 747w
Rate support grants, Waverley Borough Council 582w
Rates & rating 283w, 577w
Rates & rating, Employment 747w
Rates & rating, Local government 581w
Residuary bodies, Public appointments 678w
Safety, Exhibitions 670w
Thamesmead Town, Property transfer 750w
Unemployed workers centres, Local government expenditure 588w
Urban areas, Social problems 582w
Vandalism 1187
Vandalism, Government grants 1187-8
Vandalism, Housing estates 1187
Vandalism, Local government expenditure 1186-7
Vandalism, Wandsworth 1187
Wind power, Rural areas 577w

Chorley
Government laboratories 1338

Christie Hospital, Manchester (19.12.86) 1486-94

Christmas
Drinking & driving 557-8w
Public transport 275w
Recess motions (15.12.86) 829-70

Speaker's rulings & statements (19.12.86) 1564

Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970
Questions
816w

Church of England
Inner city areas 12-3, 95w

Church schools
Educational finance 721w

Churches
Inner city areas 13

Churchill, Mr Winston
Debates etc
Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 354
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1418
Questions
Assault ships, Marines 181
Labour Party, Nuclear weapons 1347

City of London (Various Powers) Bill 1985/86
Debates etc
3R order read (10.12.86) 323, (15.12.86) 757, (18.12.86) 1333

City technology colleges 385w, 453-5w, 720w
Civil service manpower 661w
Construction costs 720w
Educational administration 385w
Educational finance 455w
Local education authorities 454-5w
Pupil-teacher ratios 453w
School admissions 455w
School catchment areas 453w
Sponsorship 453-4w

Civil & Public Services Association
Trade union elections 774

Civil defence 648w
Government grants to local authorities 255w
Greater Manchester 484w
Police 255w

Civil defence headquarters 255w
Construction 255w

Civil proceedings
Australia (17.12.86) 1230

Civil servants
British Geological Survey 773
Building Research Establishment 773
Charitable donations 259w
European court of Human Rights 772
House of Commons select committees 774
Ministerial responsibility 773
National security 605w
NATO 313w
Pay 611w
PC9 aircraft 776w
Private education 361w
Regional planning & development 9-10w
Retirement pensions 259w
Select committee evidence 774
Training 238w
West Germany 611w

Civil servants' background
Scottish Office 361w

Civil servants' business appointments 604w

Civil servants' visits abroad
Australia 772
Conditions of service 772

Civil service
Management 405-6w
Pay incentives 259w

Civil service dispersal
Administrative delays 66w
Property Services Agency 589w

Civil service manpower
City technology colleges 661w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 296w, 773
Government departments 137w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 369w
Publicity 794w
Radio Investigation Service 97w
Regional planning & development 116w
Wages Inspectorate 524w

Civil service pensions
War service 773-4

Civil service redundancies
Contracts for services 594w
Ministry of Defence 594w

Civil service unions 773

Clark, Mr Alan, Minister of State for Employment
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Greece 261-2w
Arms trade, End user certificates 96w
Balance of trade, Japan 608-9w
Balance of trade, South Africa 182w
Cement, Greece 607w
Cement, Unfair competition 175w
Cement, Unfair trading practices 21w
Export controls, Libyan Arab Republic 263w, 347w
Export controls, USA 185w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 348w
Export licensing, Libyan Arab Republic 262w, 347w
Export promotion 327
Exports, Balance of trade 328-9
Exports, Footwear industry 327-8
Exports, NEI Peebles 328
Exports, North East region 175w
Exports, Power industry 328
Exports, Rural areas 328
Exports, Weir Pumps 328
GATT, Developing countries 185w
Import duties, West Bank 263-4w
Invisible trade balance 179w
Land Rover, Export controls 262w
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 333-4
Manufactured goods, UK trade with EC 186w
Manufacturing industries, Balance of trade 177w
Multifibre arrangement, Bilateral treaties 184w, 716w
Protective clothing, Iran 346w
Statistics, Department of Trade & Industry 22-6w
Technology 87, Tel Aviv 20w
Trade delegations, Iraq 715w
UK companies abroad, South Africa 182w

Clark, Dr David
Questions
Acid rain, Smoke & chimney gases 1199-200
Bird watching 432w
Bird watching, Leisure facilities 432w
Common land 1189
Deprivation in rural England 396w
Radioactive waste disposal, Public inquiries 396w
Radioactive wastes, Magnox reactors 383w
Radioactive wastes, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 383w
Water authorities, Land acquisition 398w

Clark, Dr Michael
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 173-4
Electricity generation, France 380w
Immigrants 732w
Industrial health & safety, Divers 514w
Package holidays, Consumer protection 329
Pressurised water reactors 760

Clark, Sir William
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1248, 1253
Questions
Availability for work, Unemployment benefits 1039
Gas safety, Ministerial responsibility 159w
Kinnock, Neil, USA 174

Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth, Paymaster General
Questions
Availability for work 1037-9
Availability for work, Bermondsey 1038
Availability for work, Bracknell 1038
Availability for work, Child care 539-40w
Availability for work, Jarrow 520w
Availability for work, Liverpool 520w
Availability for work, Ogmore 520w
Availability for work, Social security benefits disqualification 813w
Availability for work, Stockton 520w
Availability for work, Unemployment benefits 1039
Departmental progress, Dept of Employment 811w
Employment, EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 368-9w
Employment opportunities, Simplified planning zones 256w
Enterprise & Deregulation Unit 818-20w
Equal opportunities, Women 817-8w
Industrial accidents, Leyton 116w
Industrial training, West Midlands 1047
Industrial training schemes, Take-up of employment 522w
Industrial training schemes, Training allowances 509w
Inner cities initiative 228w, 540w
Inner city partnerships, Disadvantaged 16w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of Employment 117w
Restart programme 521w, 1036-7, 1045-6
Restart programme, Employment opportunities 1036
Restart programme, Interviews 521w, 813w, 1045
Restart programme, Liverpool 258w, 538-9w
Restart programme, Take-up of employment 521-2w, 538w, 1035-7
Restart programme, Tourism 522w
Restart programme, Walthamstow 114w
Restart programme, Wandsworth 813w
Restart programme, West Midlands 1047
Small businesses, Enterprise & Deregulation Unit 818w
Small businesses, Inner city areas 518w
Social security benefits disqualification, Dundee 813-4w
Statistics, Dept of Employment 221-4w
Trade unions 523w
Unemployed, Ethnic monitoring 15-6w, 226-7w
Unemployment, Statistics 512w, 537w
Youth unemployment, Rotherham 537w

Clarke, Mr Tom
Debates etc
Buchanan bottling plant, Standing Order No 20 applications (08.12.86) 35-6
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986 (15.12.86) 849-51
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1208
European Council (08.12.86) 31
Recess motions, Christmas (15.12.86) 869
Questions
Personal income, Scotland 530w
Unemployment, Monklands 370w

Clay, Mr Bob
Debates etc
British Shipbuilders, Nationalised industries borrowing (08.12.86) 152
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 138-40
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 445-6, 467-73, 490-1
Questions
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme, Costs 290w
Greiss test, Forensic science 482w
Maternity benefits 284-5w
Prerogative of mercy 647-8w
Supplementary benefits, Single people 287w
Supplementary benefits, Unemployed 469w

Unemployment benefits, Costs 287w

Cheethorpes
Driving tests 275w
Jobclubs 812w

Clelland, Mr David
Questions
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 178w

Clergy
Family income supplements 13
Pay 12-4

Cleveland
Hypothermia 211-2w
Nuclear accidents 729-30w
Temperature 145w

Clinical research 725w

Clothing 98w

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1319
Questions
Adult education 513w
Bankruptcy 180w
Community programme 115-6w
Floods, Wales 9
Iraq, Official visits 756-7w
Police, Domestic violence 642w
Prime Minister official engagements 238w
Trade delegations, Iraq 715w
UK 2000 1185-6

Clydesdale
Assault ships 181

Coal
Balance of trade 761-2
Imports 761-2
South Africa 762

Coal fired power stations 765
Central Electricity Generating Board 245w
Combined heat & power 763
Electricity generation 762-3
English Channel 760, 763
Nottinghamshire 763
Radioactivity 239w
Smoke & chimney gases 1192, 1194

Coal firing scheme 378w

Coal gasification 378w, 380w

Coal mining
Capital investment 200w
Death 379w
Industrial safety 758
Investment 757-8
Labour Party 765-6
Management 758
Manpower 379w
Mine accidents 379w
North East region 757-8
Privatisation 380w
Productivity 763-5
Profitability 757-8
Recruitment 758
Safety 765

Coal reserves
North East region 757

Cockeram, Mr Eric
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1220

Cocks, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc
Early warning systems (15.12.86) 836
Hanson Trust (15.12.86) 831
Local enterprise agencies (15.12.86) 979
Office of Fair Trading (15.12.86) 987-91, 993, 997

Codes of practice
BBC 640-1w
Medical Research Council 44w
Television programmes 649w
Tobacco advertising 68w

Cohabitation
Mortgage relief 424w
Severe disability premium 703-4w

Cohen, Mr Harry
Debates etc
Low pay (15.12.86) 858-61
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 439, 461-7, 482
Questions
AIDS, French kissing 780w
Commonwealth immigrants, Mother tongue instruction 250w
Companies, Shareholders 345w
Condoms, NHS charges 412w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 596w
Elderly, Community care 211-3w
Ethnic minorities, English language 250w
Garner, Roy, Rewards 476-7w
Higher education admission, Waltham Forest 663w
Home Office, Accounting 349w
Industrial accidents, Leyton 116w
Kangaroo, Furs 185w
Marine nature reserves 90w
Metropolitan Police, Departmental coordination 236w
Mortgage relief, Cohabitation 424w
North Sea, Pollution monitoring 191w
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 643w
Personal social services, Waltham Forest 207-10w
Police, Freemansonry 476w
Police national computer, Computer privacy 316w, 477-9w
Police records, Disclosure of information 731w
Pollution control, Water pollution 191w
Sea pollution, Sellafield 580w
Severe weather payments, Leytonstone 65-6w
Shellfish, Pollution monitoring 365w
Special schools, Waltham Forest 231w
Telephone calls, Palace of Westminster 717-8w
Trident, Holy Loch 139-40w

Coleman, Mr Donald
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1068
Questions
Floods, South Wales 10
Railway electrification, South Wales 14

Colposcopy
Medical equipment 289w, 317w
Scotland 301w
Wales 317w

Colvin, Mr Michael
Questions
Airbuses, Government assistance to industry 183w
Charitable donations, Pay 497w
Common land, Trespass 1188-9
Council of Ministers, Research 440w
Early warning systems, Boeing 162
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 205w
EC budget 422-3w
Radio Spectrum Independent Review 607w
Small businesses, Tourism 515w
UK 2000, Local government expenditure 1185
Vosper Shiprepairers, Management buy-outs 607-8w

"COMA Reports" 387-8w

Combined heat & power
Coal fired power stations 763

Commercial television
Competition 646w

Committee on Energy Research & Technology 241w
European Assembly 241w

Committee on Enforcement Powers of the Revenue Departments see Inland Revenue Customs & Excise Review of Enforcement Powers Committee

Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy 463-4w, 694w
Heart diseases 463w
Sugar 464w

Common agricultural policy 246w, 1348
Deficiency payments scheme 246w
Expenditure 110-2w, 528w

Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1157-78

Common land 1189
Land ownership & tenure 1189
Land registration (16.12.86) 1179-84, 1188
Trespass 1188-9

Commonwealth immigrants
Mother tongue instruction 250w

Community care
Availability for work 539-40w
Elderly 211-3w
Paediatrics 33-4w

Community Care Review 459-60w

Community charge (09.12.86) 200-78, 392w, 577w
Administrative costs 283w

Community councils 395w

Community development
Architecture 584w

Community health councils
Disclosure of information (10.12.86) 355-6

Community Health Councils (Access to Information Bill) 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 355-6

Community health services
Health services finance 411w, 459-60w
NHS finance 69w

Community pharmacies 410w

Community programme 115-6w
Environment protection 402w
Insulation 763-4
Pay 522-3w
Road safety education 770w
Young people 1043-4

Community radio 655w

Community relations councils 226-7w

Companies
Armed forces' training 688w
Directors (16.12.86) 1077-8
Forestry grants 505w
Intelligence services 688w
Intervention stocks 367w
Shareholders 345w
Tax relief 740w

Companies Act 1985
Questions
345w

Companies Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (16.12.86) 1077-8

Company finance
Trent Grain 828-9w
Westland Helicopters 611-2w

Company investigations
MPB Russell 181w

Company law
EC action 183w

Company liquidations
Enterprise allowance scheme 510w
Iron & steel industry (09.12.86) 313-22
Transworld Leisure 185-6w

Company taxation
Capital investment 85w, 137w
Industrial training 1046
Tax allowances 743w

VAT 743w

Compensation
Armed forces 499w
Chemists shops 410w
Compulsory purchase 394w
Milk & milk products 10w
Radioactive waste disposal 6w, 28w, 591w, 767-8
Thalidomide 325
Vaccination 416w

Competition
Bus services 135w, 533w
Commercial television 646w
Defence procurement 86w

Complaints against police
Disclosure of information (10.12.86) 356

Comprehensive education
Educational standards 723w

Comprehensive schools
School leaving certificates 662-3w

Compulsorily detained mental patients 102w, 733w

Compulsory purchase
Compensation 394w
Defective housing 394w
Royal docks 748w

Computer applications
Wessex Regional Health Authority 71-2w, 290w, 421w
West Midlands Regional Health Authority 785w

Computer privacy
Police misconduct 316w, 477-8w
Police national computer 316w, 477-9w
Telephone calls 717-8w

Computers
Export controls 118-9w
USA 118-9w

Computers in National Health Service
Hospital waiting lists 785w

Conditions of employment
Teachers (08.12.86) 38-121

Conditions of service
Civil servants visits abroad 772

Condoms
NHS charges 412w

Confederation of British Industry 179w

Conferences
Energy efficiency 763-4
Neighbourhood watch schemes 644w

Conflict of interests 777w
Marines 777w

Conifers 505w
Tree planting 505w

Conlan, Mr Bernard
Questions
Board & lodging charges, Gateshead 287w

Conservation
Historic buildings 581-2w
National parks 581w

Conservation areas 193w
National parks 193w

Consolidated Fund Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
(10.12.86) 442
1R (10.12.86) 442
Rem stages (15.12.86) 871
Royal assent (18.12.86) 1333

Consolidated fund debates
Air safety (15.12.86) 1023-5
Central America (15.12.86) 1009-22
Crime prevention (15.12.86) 934-45
Defence (15.12.86) 894-912
Great Lines (15.12.86) 946-57
Housing policy (15.12.86) 913-33
Island Councils of Scotland Committee of Inquiry (15.12.86) 958-70
Local enterprise agencies (15.12.86) 971-86
Office of Fair Trading (15.12.86) 987-98
Pilkington Brothers (15.12.86) 871-93
Prisons (15.12.86) 999-1008

"Conspiracy of silence" 605w

Construction
Civil defence headquarters 255w
Derriford Hospital, Plymouth 66w
Guys Hospital 791-2w
NATO 147-8w
Power stations 759-60
Prison accommodation 475-6w
Public Record Office 91w
RAF Welford 149w

Construction costs
City technology colleges 720w
Nuclear power stations 473-4w

Construction methods
Skillcentres 543w

Consultants
Fees & charges 154w
Government departments 253w
Home Office 253w
Property Services Agency 684-5w
Road construction 154w

Consumer expenditure
Arts 407w

Consumer protection 715w
Package holidays 329

Consumption
Tobacco 745w

Contraceptives
AIDS 294w
Imports 295w
Prescription charges exemptions 412w

Contracts
Bangladesh 3w
Chemists shops 410w
M25 133w
Offshore structures 474w
Warminster bypass 831w
Wessex Regional Health Authority 421w
Wheel clamps 654w

Contracts for services
Armed forces' storage depots 593w
Central Ordnance Depots 592-3w
Civil service redundancies 594w
Local government services 577w
Wandsworth Health Authority 784w

Contra-flow systems 38w
M1 38w

Control of Industrial Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1984
Questions
525-6w

Convictions
Bombings 639-40w
Counterfeit manufacturing 550-1w
Drinking & driving 506w
Indictable offences 729w
Offences against children 768-70w
Trade union officials 1339-40

Conway, Mr Derek
Questions
Armed forces' deployment, Cyprus 775w
Army, Positive discrimination 166
Driving offences, Cyprus 775w
Drops, Defence contracts 779-80w
Exports, Rural areas 328
Trade Descriptions Act 1972 98-9w

Cook, Mr Frank
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1246
Business statement (10.12.86) 662
Early warning systems (16.12.86) 1071-2, (17.12.86) 1232, (18.12.86) 1417
Early warning systems, Standing Order No 20 applications (17.12.86) 1229
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1079
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1059
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1382, 1386-8
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interventions (10.12.86) 427
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 423, 451, 453, 512, 558
Questions
Availability for work, Stockton 520w
Dept of Employment, Select committee evidence 255-6w
Hypothermia, Cleveland 211-2w
McGinley, Ken, British Nuclear Test Veterans Association 482w
Nuclear fuels, USSR 112w
Plutonium, Cumbria 399w
Police, Nuclear accidents 557w
Police training, Nuclear accidents 557w, 653w, 729-30w
Potton Island, Nuclear power 761w
Radioactive wastes, Exports 761w
Temperature, Cleveland 145w

Cook, Mr Robin
Debates etc
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 888-90
Questions
Airports, Safety 832w
Exports, Balance of trade 328-9
Fraud, Lawyers 336
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate, Lloyds of London 716w
Standard Chartered Bank, Lloyds of London 98w

Coombs, Mr Simon
Questions
Arts, Consumer expenditure 407w
Austin Rover, Future 182w
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, Sugar 464w
Diet & disease, Heart diseases 463w
Foreign tourists 515w
Health education, Dept of Health & Social Security 694w
Health education, Heart diseases 387-8w
Housing investment programmes 746-7w
M4, Road safety barriers 273w
M25, Road traffic 601w
M40, Road works 401w
Motorways, Road construction 601w
Nutrition & health, Low incomes 210w
Road safety barriers, Dual carriageways 831w
School meals, Nutrition & health 232w
Tobacco, Consumption 745w
Tobacco duties 745w

Copyright 325-6
Counterfeit manufacturing 327
Educational publications 22w
Legislation 183w
Motor components industry 180w, 326-7
Small businesses 326-7

Corbett, Mr Robin
Questions
Crime, Costs 1342-3
Teacher training, Drug abuse 231-2w
Voluntary projects programme, Government grants 258w

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc
Brazil (15.12.86) 853-7
Central America (15.12.86) 1009-15, 1017, 1022
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1403, 1406, 1464-9, 1473-4
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 472-630 passim
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1312
Questions
Ambulance services, Manpower 468-70w
Belize, Armed forces 88w
Councillors, Declarations of Interest 167w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Archway 567w

East London road assessment study 403w
Exceptional needs payments, Administrative delays 568w
Exceptional needs payments, Archway 567-8w
Forensic science, Bombings 1336-7
Housing benefits 807w
Job creation schemes, Islington 524-5w
London Ambulance Service, Costs 466-7w
London Ambulance Service, Manpower 468w
London Ambulance Service, Patients transport 467w
London Ambulance Service, Pay 468w
London Ambulance Service, Training 467-8w
Urban areas, Social problems 582w

Cormack, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Business statement (18.12.86) 1363
Questions
Arts sponsorship, Chambers of commerce 770
Early warning systems, Defence procurement 1346

Cornish unit houses 29w
Defective housing 29w
Housing Defects Act 1984 29w
Mortgages 29w

Corporal punishment
European Court of Human Rights 610w
Orders & regulations 774w
Schools 561w
Scotland 774w

Corporate plans
London Regional Transport 40w
Rover Group 439w

Corrie, Mr John
Debates etc
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 190-1
Questions
Ferries, Western Isles 550w

Cost effectiveness 380w, 583w
Local government services 583w
Sizewell B 380w

Couchman, Mr James
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1248, 1251
Business statement (10.12.86) 662
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1356-7
Great Lines, Gillingham (15.12.86) 946-50, 954-5, 957

Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas
Devon 396w
Finance 396w

Council house sales 584w, 1187, 1195
Batley 282w
Council tenants 1200
Discounts 1195
Homesteading schemes 1195

Council house waiting lists
Leicester 588w
London boroughs 28w, 96w
Southwark 28w
Wales 5

Council housing
Hampshire 681-2w
Housing construction 616-7w
Housng finance 35w
Newham 1195
Wales 4-5, 363-4w

Council housing finance
Local government revenue 682w

Council housing management
Housing subsidies 682-3w

Council of Europe
Drug abuse 640w
Mass media 482-3w, 487-8w
UK contributions 757w

Council of Ministers
EC presidency 762-5w
Mass media 254w
Research 440w

Council tenants
Building repairs 586w
Council house sales 1200
Personal income 747-8w
Right to buy 584w
Southwark 747-8

Councillors
Buckinghamshire 167w
Declarations of interest 167w

Counterfeit manufacturing 186w, 345w
Convictions 550-1w
Copyright 327
Fines 169w
Prosecutions 345w, 550-1w
Punishment 265w

County Hall 684w
Disclosure of information 684w
Inner London Education Authority 684w
Property transfer 684w

County of Cleveland Bill (HL) 1985/86
Debates etc
2R* (18.12.86) 1333

"Court Escort Scrutiny Consultation Paper" 351w

Court of Appeal
Severn bridge 601w

Coventry Health Authority 126w
Foetal death 126w
Miscarriage 126w

Cox, Mr Tom
Debates etc
Prisons (19.12.86) 1558-61
Questions
Armed forces' storage depots, Contracts for services 593w
Asbestosis, Power industry 785w
Availability for work, Social security benefits disqualification 813w
Breast cancer, Greater London 562w
Central Ordnance Depots, Contracts for services 592-3w
Drug abuse, Greater London 697w
Homelessness, Greater London 670w
Hospital beds, Wandsworth 782w
Hospital waiting lists, Wandsworth Health Authority 411w
House renovation grants 395w
Housing insulation, Elderly 382w
Immigrant detainees, Tamils 733w
Industrial health & safety, Power stations 629w
Intervention stocks 820w
Life imprisonment, Men 652w
NHS finance, Wandsworth Health Authority 411w
NHS, Housing 787w
Pay beds, Wandsworth 784w
Pesticides, Publicity 366-7w
Policewomen, Metropolitan Police 551w
Prison medical services, AIDS 477w
Prison overcrowding 729w
Prisoners, Medical examinations 477w
Prisons, Fire prevention 166-7w
Registered homes, Greater London 697w
Remand in custody, Prison visits 102w
Restart programme, Wandsworth 813w
Severe weather payments, Tooting 785w
Slaughterhouses, Licensing 246w
Wandsworth Health Authority, Contracts for services 784w

Crabs
Pollution monitoring 365w

Craigen, Mr Jim
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 202, 266
Questions
Local enterprise grants for urban projects scheme, Scotland 657w
MacInnes, Catherine, Members' correspondence 615w
Medicines Commission, Homeopathy 705w
Physical education, Mergers 304w

Crash helmets
Cycling 131w

Crime 476w, 641w
Costs 1342-3
Detection rates 645w
Greater London 77-8w, 1335
London Underground 40w

Crime prevention 646-7w, 1339
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 934-45
Domestic violence 1333-4
East Anglia 1340-1
Lighting 249-50w, 1342
Metropolitan Police 1334

Crime victims
Children 636-40w
Medical treatments 413w
Statistics 635-6w

Crimes against the person
Crimes of violence 641w

Crimes of violence
Crimes against the person 641w
Sentencing 645w
Shops 649-50w, 1334

Criminal damage
Prisons 480w

Criminal injuries
Brain 413w

Criminal injuries compensation 483w
Fees & charges 1w
Northern Ireland 1w

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
Administrative delays 483w
Finance 479w
Manpower 479w, 483w

Criminal investigation
Homicide 300w
Johnson Matthey 3w

Criminal Justice Act 1982 (Amendment) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 357

Crofting
Government grants 508w
Housing 508w

Crossbows Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 353

Crouch, Mr David
Questions
Export of live animals, Livestock 526w

Crown immunity 85-6w, 143w, 498-9w, 646w

Crown Proceedings Act 1947 143w
Law reform 85-6w, 498-9w, 1346
Questions
85-6w, 143w, 498-9w, 1346

Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 354

Crown Prosecution Service 767-8w
Greater London 767-8w
Lawyers 768w
Pay 767w

Crowther, Mr Stan
Questions
Handicapped workers, Government departments 298w

Croxteth Hall 434-5w

Croydon Midweek Post 177-8

Cruelty to children 643-4w
Disclosure of information 417w
Headteachers 417w

Cruise missiles
Nuclear weapons deployment 147w

Cruz, Arturo 8w
Nicaragua 8w
Official engagements 8w

Cuckney, John 442-3w

Cultural property 756w
Treaties 756w

Cultural relations
EC Presidency 737w
European Economic Community 406w

Cumbernauld
Ministers' domestic visits 772w

Cumbria
Armed forces' deployment 140w
Government assistance to industry 337
Plutonium 399w
Sheep 829w
Unemployment 523w

Cunliffe, Mr Lawrence
Questions
British Coal Corporation 377w
Nature Conservancy Council, Town & country planning 583w

Cunningham, Dr John
Debates etc
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1054-5, 1061
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1310
Questions
County Hall, Inner London Education Authority 684w
County Hall, Property transfer 684w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Manpower 419w
Health & Safety Executive, Sellafield 631w
Inner London Education Authority, Offices 684w
Local government finance, Rate support grants 1191-2
Local government reform, Local government staff 679-80w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Sellafield 1193-4
"Paying for Local Government Consultation Paper" 93w
Sheep, Radioactivity 829w
Water, Legislation 683w

Currie, Mrs Edwina, *Under-Secretary of State for Health & Social Security*
Debates etc
Christie Hospital, Manchester (19.12.86) 1489-94
Queen Mary's Hospital for Children, Carshalton (12.12.86) 751-6
Transplant surgery (08.12.86) 156-60
Questions
Breast cancer, Death 462-3w
Breast cancer, Greater London 562w
Breast cancer, Screening 217-8w, 562w
Cancer, Death 463w
Census of population, Testing 709w
Cervical cancer, Brent Health Authority 66w
Cervical cancer, Screening 563-4w, 712-4w
Child patients, Mentally handicapped 295w
Childbirth, Wales 126w
Colposcopy, Medical equipment 289w
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, Sugar 464w
Criminal injuries, Brain 413w
Dangerous mental patients 419-20w
Dental health, Health surveys 784w
Dentures, Dental charges 786w
Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, Construction 66w
Diabetes 289w
Diabetes, Medical treatments 562-3w
Diet & disease, Heart diseases 463w
Drug abuse, Drug rehabilitation centres 297w
Drug abuse, Greater London 697w
Drug abuse, Voluntary organisations 708-9w
Drugs, Child resistant containers 292-3w
Elderly, Community care 211-3w
Electorate 287-8w
Fluoridation, Water treatment 789-90w
Guys Hospital, Laboratories 569-70w
Handicapped children, Health services 694-5w
Health education, Dept of Health & Social Security 694w
Health services, Per capita costs 420w
Health services, Racial discrimination 415w
Hospital beds 67w
Hospital beds, Drug abuse 217w
Hospital closures 49-64w
Hospital closures, Mental hospitals 464-5w, 810w
Hospital patients, NHS & private practice 711-2w
Hospitals, Building repairs 786-7w
Hospitals, Exhibitions 705-6w
Hypothermia, Babies 790w
Hypothermia, Cleveland 211-2w
Hypothermia, Leeds 471w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 290w
Infectious diseases, Hospital patients 417-8w
Long stay patients, Smoking 785-6w
Measles, Vaccination 288-9w
Medical education, Ethnic minorities 289w
Medical research, Babies 414w
Mental health community care, Hostels 465w
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 465w
Mentally handicapped, Upper Waiting Hall 420w
Ministerial advisory bodies 420w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of Health & Social security 125-6w
National Association of Family Support Groups 708w
National Association of Family Support Groups, Drug abuse 708w
National No Smoking Day 1987, Expenditure 700w
NHS, Equal opportunities 415w
NHS, Housing 787w
NHS, Procurement 414w
Northampton General Hospital, Capital investment 284w
Nuclear accidents, USSR 384w
Nurses, Manpower 290w
Nurses, Vaccination 68w
Nutrition & health, Low incomes 210w
Pay beds, NHS & private practice 794-8w
Pay beds, Private patients 797-806w
Pay beds, Wandsworth 784w
Pregnancy, Research 790-1w
Public Health Laboratory Service, Expenditure 413w
Public Health Laboratory Service, Vacancies 288w
Regional health authorities, Public appointments 407-8w
Registered homes 565w
Registered homes, Greater London 697w
Residential care, Elderly 46w
Residential care, Land acquisition 566w
Safety measures 570w
Secure community home schools 705w
Sickle cell disease, Ethnic groups 71-2w
St. Luke's Hospital, Bradford, Violence 123w
Test tube babies, Multiple births 790w
Tinnitus 297w
Tobacco advertising, Codes of practice 68w
Transplant surgery, Kidneys 569w
Wandsworth Health Authority, Contracts for services 784w
Water pollution, Nitrates 705w
World Health Organisation, Diet & disease 789w
X rays, Medical records 214w

Curtois, Ian 163-4
Falkland Islands 163-4

Custodial treatment
Detention centres 79-80w
Dispersal prisons 79-80w
Fine defaulters 642w

Customs & Excise
VAT 426w, 740-4w

Cycling
Crash helmets 131w

Cynon Valley 9

Cyprus
Armed forces' deployment 775w
Driving offences 775w
Immunity from prosecution 775w

D Notices
"Their Trade is Treachery" 89w, 310w, 373-4w

Dairy farming
Food inspection 366w, 527w

Dalyell, Mr Tam
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1285, 1335-6
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1419, 1421, 1437-9
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1210-2
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 822-5, 862-3
Low pay (15.12.86) 860
Members' telephones (09.12.86) 183, (17.12.86) 1232
M15, Standing Order No 20 applications (10.12.86) 352-3
National security (09.12.86) 198-9
Oral question time intervention (15.12.86) 772
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 195
Telephone calls, Members (16.12.86) 1077
Telephone tapping, Members (18.12.86) 1367
Questions
Architectural conservation, Historic buildings 581-2w
Attorney-General 314-5w
Bowe, Colette, Immunity from prosecution 236w
Civil servants visits abroad, Australia 772
Falkland Islands, Royal visits 168
Forth Road Bridge, Safety 17w
Granada Television, National security 314w
Intelligence services, Television programmes 442w
National security 253-4w, 353w
Nuclear submarines, USSR 87-8w
Planning permission, Bathgate 549-50w
Railway travel 276w
Rothschild, Lord, National security 611w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Railway closures 273w
Solicitor-General, Letters 237w
Telephone tapping, Palace of Westminster 718w
War casualties, Disclosure of information 692-3w
Westland Helicopters 442-3w
Westland Helicopters, Company finance 611-2w
Westland Helicopters, Disclosure of information 4w, 113w, 159w, 353w, 530w

Dampness 719w

Dangerous mental patients 419-20w
Rowlands, Hywel 11-2
Whitchurch Hospital, Cardiff 11-2

Dartford Tunnel
Private investment 337

Data Protection Act 1984
Questions
718w

Davies, Rt Hon Denzil
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1353-4, 1409-18
Early warning systems, Standing Order No 20 applications (16.12.86) 1071, (18.12.86) 1366
Questions

Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 163
Trident, USA 172

Davies, Mr Ron
Debates etc
Recess motions, Christmas (15.12.86) 870
Questions
Coal mining, Manpower 379w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Research finance 177w
Employment schemes, Fees & charges 223-4w
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 224w
Firearms, Legislation 642w
Higher education, Age 389-90w
Higher education, Mature students 389-90w
Higher education, Men 388-9w
Higher education, Polytechnics 389-90w
Higher education, Sandwich courses 389-90w
Higher education, Student numbers 389-90w
Higher education, Universities 389-90w
Higher education, Visual arts 389-90w
Leasehold housing, Wales 10-1
Prime Minister official engagements 238w
Redundant mineworkers' payments scheme, Tredegar 382w
Tax yields, Leasehold housing 260w, 428w, 666w, 740w

Davis, Mr Terry
Questions
Fluoridation, Water treatement 789-90w
Hazardous materials, Chlorine 525w
Indonesia, Official visits 268-9w
Industrial health & safety, Hazardous materials 525-6w
Industrial training, Adult education 1046
Social security appeals, Birmingham 631w
Unemployment benefits, Birmingham 257-8w

Deaf
Exhibitions 783w
Mental hospitals 296w
Special education 296-7w
Teacher training 296w
Training 296w
Upper Waiting Hall 783w

Deakins, Mr Eric
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1219
Questions
Bilateral aid, Debts 109w
Developing countries, Debts 109-10w
GATT, Developing countries 185w
Pay incentives, National Audit Office 259w
Restart programme, Walthamstow 114w

Death
Bradley, Francis 158w
Breast cancer 462-3w
Cancer 463w
Cervical cancer 563w, 712-4w
Coal mining 379w
Drinking and driving 42w
Hypothermia 211-2w, 471w, 790w
Industrial accidents 116w
McCrae, William 352w
Motorways 274w
Police custody 772w
Road accidents 172w
Seas and oceans 635w
Spain 271-2w
Transplant surgery 569w

Death grants
Social fund 564-5w

Debt collection
Small businesses 632-3w

Debts 84w
Africa 424w
Bilateral aid 109w
Bolivia (18.12.86) 1476-84
Developing countries 109-10w, (18.12.86) 1476-84
Interest charges (16.12.86) 1078

Declarations of interest 167w
Councillors 167w

Defective housing 29w, 394w, 584-5w, 673w
Building repairs 584-5w
Compulsory purchase 394w
Cornish unit houses 29w
Reema houses 673w

Defence
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 894-912
Food subsidies 828w
Labour Party 176-7
Nuclear weapons 1052
Nuclear weapons deployment 87w
Reykjavik summit 141w
Shipping 113w
Trident 172

Defence contracts
CAP Scientific 691w
DROPS 501-2w, 777-80w
Flight simulation 595w
Frigates 168-9
Harrier aircraft 691w
Iran 173, 373w
Iron & steel industry 330-1
Military aircraft (15.12.86) 777-9, 863-6, (18.12.86) 1351-9, 1366, 1409-54
Pricing 145w
Privatisation 777w
Strategic defence initiative 139w
Trident 171
Type 23 frigates 143w
Vosper Thornycroft 169

Defence equipment 500w, (15.12.86) 831-4
Arms trade 205w
Export licensing 306w, 347w, 372w
Exports 143-4w
Falkland Islands 140w
Iran 172-3, 691w
Testing 500w

Defence expenditure
Falkland Islands 168
Privatisation 777w
Trident 171-2

Defence Export Sales Organisation 144w

Defence industries
Manpower 143w
Private Members' motions (12.12.86) 680-98, 703-33

Defence land 311w
Gillingham (15.12.86) 946-57
Greater London 311-3w
Land acquisition 690-1w

Defence procurement 687-8w
Assault ships 178-82
Billing 775-6w
Competition 86w
DROPS 501-3w, 777-80w
Early warning systems 161-3, 176, 205w, 306-7w, 503w, 596w, 1050, 1346
Frigates 141w
Helicopters 170
Military aircraft (16.12.86) 1071
Rapier missiles 373w
Warships 140w, 145w

Defence research
Higher education 205w

Deficiency payments scheme
Common agricultural policy 246w

Demolition
Asbestos 1185-6
Housing estates 30w, 95w
Old Bells School 680w

Demountable rack offloading & pickup system (15.12.86) 831-4

Dental charges
Dentures 786w

Dental health
Health surveys 784w

Dentures
Dental charges 786w

Dept of Education & Science
"Arts & Disabled People" 456w
Ministerial advisory bodies 101w
Statistics 158-9w
Women 455-6w

Dept of Employment
"Arts & Disabled People" 525w
Departmental progress 811w
Ministerial advisory bodies 117w
Regional planning & development 116w
Select committee evidence 255-6w
Statistics 221-4w

Dept of Employment
Women 811-2w

Dept of Energy
Public relations 201w
Solar power 381-2w, 529-30w
Statistics 201-3w
Theatres 201w

Dept of Health & Social Security
Advertising 793-4w
"Arts & Disabled People" 464w
Health education 694w
London allowance 566-7w
Ministerial advisory bodies 125-6w
Public relations 792-4w
Regional planning & development 124w
Statistics 215w

Dept of Health & Social Security local offices
Archway 567-8w
Asbestos 567w
Civil service manpower 296w, 773
Highlands of Scotland 296w
Hornchurch 66w
Manpower 419w, 707w
Portsmouth 707w
Roebuck House 706w
Supplementary benefits 419w
Violence 412w

Dept of the Environment
"Arts & Disabled People" 432-3w
Departmental circulars 583w
Ministerial advisory bodies 92w
Planning appeals 1198-9
Prosecutions 762w
Women 431-2w

Dept of Trade & Industry
Departmental progress 436-9w
Industrial research 716-7w
Ministerial advisory bodies 98w
Research finance 177w
Statistics 22-6w, 186w, 264-6w
Women 544-5w

Dept of Transport
"Arts & Disabled People" 441w
Prosecutions 762w
Women 399-400w

Departmental circulars
Dept of the Environment 583w
Town & country planning 583w
Welsh Office 33w

Departmental coordination
Export licensing 353w
Metropolitan Police 236w

Departmental correspondence 37w
Welsh language 37w

Departmental forms
Blind 293-4w

Departmental initiatives 399-400w, 402w, 431-2w, 443w, 455-6w, 544-5w, 650-1w, 665w, 811-2w

Departmental leaflets
Housing improvement 752w

Departmental progress 385-7w, 436-9w
Dept of Employment 811w

Dept of Trade & Industry 436-9w
Further education 387w
Government departments 385-7w, 436-9w, 811w
Higher education 385-6w
Primary education 386w
Secondary education 386-7w

Dependents
Supplementary benefits 807-8w
Unemployed 814-5w

Deportation
Khan, Ammanullah 251-2w

"Deprivation in Rural England" 396w

Deptford
Industrial training 543w
Skillcentres 225-6w, 369w, 542-3w, 1046

Derbyshire
Owner occupied housing 589-90w

Derbyshire County Council 28w, 1051
Local government expenditure 1051

Derelict land
Government grants 587w

Derriford Hospital, Plymouth 66w
Construction 66w

Design
Assault ships 182
Higher education 389-90w
Power stations 760

Detection rates 1347-8
Crime 645w
Homicide 349w

Detention centres
Custodial treatment 79-80w

Developing aid
Developing countries 109-10w

Developing countries
Debts 109-10w, (18.12.86) 1476-84
Developing aid 109-10w
EC external trade 185w
GATT 185w

Development agencies 181-2w

Development aid
Africa 424w
Youth training scheme 513w

Development Commission
Finance 582w

Development of Tourism Act 1969
Questions
448w

Devon
Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas 396w
General Certificates of Secondary Education 353-4w

Devonport dockyard 164, 776w
Privatisation 164-5, 776w

Dewar, Mr Donald
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 201, 210, 212-22
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 185-8
Questions
Regional selective assistance, Wales 718w

Diabetes 289w
Costs 562-3w
Exceptional circumstances additions 466w
Medical treatments 562-3w

Dickens, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc
Oral question time intervention (09.12.86) 172
Questions
Homosexuality, Age 350w
Power industry, Alternative energy 761
Roads, Repairs & maintenance 833-4w

Dicks, Mr Terry
Debates etc
Kaur, Kuldip (19.12.86) 1504-9, 1512
Oral question time intervention (09.12.86) 172
Questions
London Regional Transport, Government grants 531w

Diet & disease
Heart diseases 463w
World Health Organisation 789w

Diplock courts 766w
Judges 766w

Diplomatic immunity
Parking offences 444-8w

Diplomatic relations
Syrian Arab Republic 610w

Diplomatic service
Nicaragua 444w
Official cars 758w
Parking offences 76-7w, 444-8w
Wheel clamps 76-7w

Directors
Companies (16.12.86) 1077-8

Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986 (15.12.86) 849-51
Debates etc
(15.12.86) 849-51
Questions
Association of Metropolitan Authorities 215w

Disadvantaged
Inner city partnerships 16w

Disciplinary proceedings 477-8w, 529w, (15.12.86) 857-8

Disclosure of information
Chamberlain, Neville 315w, 429-30w
Community health councils (10.12.86) 355-6
Complaints against police (10.12.86) 356
County Hall 684w
Cruelty to children 417w
Financial institutions 84w, 138w
Intelligence services 1-3w, 5w, 113-4w, 151w, 175, 177-8, 310w, 314-6w, 442w, 605w, 611w, 645w
Land registration 431w, 766w
MI5 (10.12.86) 352-3
Mortgage defaulters 590w
National security 654w
New towns development corporations 173w
Nuclear accidents 5-6w
Personal records (10.12.86) 354
Plutonium 245-6w
Police records 731w
School governors (10.12.86) 357
War casualties 692-3w
Westland Helicopters 4w, 113w, 159w, 236-7w, 353w, 530w

Discounts
Council house sales 1195

Disease control 526w, 701w, 780-1w
AIDS 701w, 780w
Plant diseases 526w

Dispersal prisons 79-80w
Custodial treatment 79-80w

District health authorities
Health services 216w
Hospital waiting lists 215-6w
Midwives 217w
NHS finance 707w
Public appointments 33w

District heating
Energy efficiency 392-3w
Newcastle upon Tyne 392-4w
Privatisation 394w

Divers
Industrial health & safety 514w
North sea 514w

Diving Medical Advisory Committee 514w
Crime prevention (15.12.86) 934-7, 940-1
Private Security Bill, 1R (17.12.86) 1231, 1232
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 140-1
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 416, 425, 505-7, 513
Questions
Air pollution, Sulphur dioxide 582-3w
Availability for work, Jarrow 520w
Oral questions, Northern region 18
Shipbuilding, EC action 175-6w

Dixon, Joe 788-9w
War pensions 788-9w

Dobson, Mr Frank
Debates etc
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1057
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 572-4
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Health & Social Security 793-4w
Advertising, Ministry of Defence 208w
Agency nurses, Greater London 48-9w, 572-6w
Breast cancer, Screening 217-8w
Burglar alarms, Greater London 78w
Cervical cancer, Brent Health Authority 66w
Cervical cancer, Screening 563-4w
Colposcopy, Medical equipment 289w, 317w
Colposcopy, Scotland 301w
Consultants, Home Office 253w
Dept of Energy, Theatres 201w
Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, Construction 66w
Drug abuse, Drug rehabilitation centres 297w
Drug abuse, Narcotics 170w
Drug crimes, Exchange control 78-9w
Emergency calls, Metropolitan Police 78w
Financial institutions, Disclosure of information 84w, 138w
Fire services, Greater London 251w
Firearms, Shops 79w
Football grounds, Metropolitan Police 79w
Government contracts, Arthur Andersen 289w
Handicap benefits 416-7w
Health Education Council 48w, 65w
Health Education Council, Press releases 65w
Health services, Racial discrimination 415w
Health services, Regional health authorities 216w
Hospital beds 67w
Hospital beds, Drug abuse 217w
Hospital closures 49-64w
Hospital patients, NHS & private practice 711-2w
Hospital waiting lists 216w
Hospital waiting lists, District health authorities 215-6w
Hospital waiting lists, Regional health authorities 216w
Hospital waiting lists, Scotland 173-4w
Hospital waiting lists, Wales 163-6w
Infectious diseases, Hospital patients 417-8w
Jobclubs, Take-up of employment 523w
Medical education, Ethnic minorities 289w
Metropolitan Police, Accounting 78w
News International, Public order policing 77-8w
NHS, Equal opportunities 415w
NHS finance, Expenditure 67w
Nuclear power, Publicity 384w
Pay beds, NHS & private practice 794-8w
Pay beds, Private patients 797-806w
Police, Emergency calls 251w
Public libraries, News International 82-3w
Public relations, Dept of Health & Social Security 792-4w
Public relations, Government departments 188w, 428w
Public relations, Ministry of Defence 207-8w

Regional health authorities, Capital investment 63-5w
Residential care, Supplementary benefits 126-8w
Sickness benefits 213w
Transplant surgery, Kidneys 569w
Vaccination, Compensation 416w
Vaccination, Handicapped 416w
Wessex Regional Health Authority, Arthur Andersen 421w
Wessex Regional Health Authority, Computer applications 71-2w, 290w, 421w

Dockyards
Privatisation 164-5
Redundancy (08.12.86) 34

Doctors
Families 211w
Manpower 707-8w
Wales 11

Dog fighting (19.12.86) 1485

Dogs (19.12.86) 1485
Bye laws 552-6w
Environmental health 552-6w

Domestic rates 585w

Domestic violence
Crime prevention 1333-4
Police 641-2w

Dormand, Mr Jack
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 63, 73-5
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 399, 450-4, 460
Questions
British Film Institute 406w
Coal fired power stations, English Channel 763
Coal mining, Investment 757
New towns development corporations, North East region 585w
Tax allowances, Film industry 666w, 739-40w

Dorrell, Mr Stephen
Debates etc
European Council (08.12.86) 28-9
Food aid from EC (09.12.86) 290-2
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 346
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 45
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 611-2
Questions
Industrial training, Company taxation 1046
Police, Palace of Westminster 100-1w

Dorrell, Stephen 353w

"Double Agent" 2w

Dover, Mr Den
Questions
Higher education, Educational finance 722-3w
Higher education, Per capita costs 229-30w
Polytechnics, Higher education admission 723w

Dover Harbour
Railway transport 401-2w

Down's syndrome
Special education 664w
Teacher training 663-4w

Drinking & driving
Arrests 506w
Christmas 557-8w
Convictions 506w
Death 42w
Judges 605w
Manpower 557-8w
Public houses 75w
Publicity 603w
Young people 404w, 840-1w

Driving licences
Elderly 130-1w
Medical examinations 130-1w

Driving offences
Cyprus 775w

Driving tests
Administrative delays 275w, 602w
Cleethorpes 275w
Hampshire 602w

DROPS 499-500w, (15.12.86) 831-4
Defence contracts 501-2w, 777-80w
Defence procurement 501-3w, 777-80w

Drug abuse
AIDS 701w
Amyl nitrite 464w, 649w, 735w
Council of Europe 640w
Drug rehabilitation centres 297w
EC action 640w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 708-9w
Greater London 697w
Hospital beds 217w, 697w
Narcotics 170w
National Association of Family Support Groups 708w
Prison sentences 552w
Teacher training 231-2w
Voluntary organisations 708-9w
Women 552w

Drug crimes
EC action 646w
Exchange control 78-9w

Drug industry
Generic prescribing 781w
Medical Research Council 44w
Product liability 325
Transfer pricing 69w

Drug liason officers 642-3w

Drug rehabilitation centres 297w
Drug abuse 297w

Drug squads 642w
Manpower 642w
Merseyside 642w

Drugs
Child resistant containers 292-3w
Limited list prescribing 782w

du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Questions
Company taxation, Capital investment 85w

Dual carriageways 133-4w, 616w, 772-3w, 831w
A55 616w
M25 133-4w
Road safety barriers 772-3w, 831w
Scotland 772-3w

Dual jobholding
Marines 777w

Duarte, Napoleon 269w

Dubs, Mr Alfred
Debates etc
Homelessness, Wandsworth (19.12.86) 1534-7
Questions
AIDS, Hospital beds 409w
Army, Ethnic monitoring 166
Crime, Greater London 1335
Entry clearances, Immigration applications 165-6w
Hospital closure, Greater London 786w
Insider trading 335
Regional health authorities, NHS finance 409w
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines, Hatfield 261w
Unemployment, Inner London boroughs 220w
Vandalism, Wandsworth 1187

Duffy, Mr A E P
Debates etc
Early warning systems, (18.12.86) 1356
Questions
Assault ships, Defence procurement 179
Frigates, Defence contracts 168
Manufacturing industries, Sheffield 515-6w

Dumping
Tiles 20w

Dunbeath bridge
Road construction 305w

Dunblane bypass 16w
Road construction 16w

Dundee
Intervention stocks 657w
Migrant workers 170w
Social security benefits disqualification 813-4w

Dundee College of Education 136w, 305w
Adams, D 136w
Public appointments 305w

Dunfermline
Unemployment 14w

Dunfermline College of Physical Education 304w

Dunn, Mr Bob, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 60, 90
Teachers Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 405-619 passim
Questions
Assisted places schemes, Avon 45w
Church schools, Educational finance 721w
City technology colleges, Construction costs 720w
City technology colleges, Educational finance 455w
City technology colleges, Local education authorities 454-5w
City technology colleges, Pupil-teacher ratios 453w
City technology colleges, School admissions 455w
City technology colleges, School catchment areas 453w
City technology colleges, Sponsorship 453-4w
Departmental progress, Primary education 386w
Departmental progress, Secondary education 386-7w
Free school meals, West Midlands 45w
Health education, Heart diseases 387-8w
McGoldrick, Maureen, Ministerial powers 529w
Primary education, Building repairs 661-2w
Primary education, School teachers 661w
School closures, Administrative delays 42w, 458-60w
School leaving certificates, Comprehensive schools 662-3w
School meals, Nutrition & health 232w
Secondary education 232-4w
Sixth form education 230w
Special education, Down's syndrome 664w
Special schools, Waltham Forest 231w
Teacher training, Down's syndrome 663-4w
Teacher training, Drug abuse 231-2w
Women, Dept of Education & Science 455-6w

Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1220

Durham
Nuclear accidents 730w

Durham Prison 481w
Exercise 481w

Duty free allowances
EC action 667-8w
EC countries 486w

Dyfed
Farm owners 449w
Tenant farmers 449w

Dykes, Mr Hugh
Debates etc

Defence industries (12.12.86) 688, 692
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1422
European Council (08.12.86) 26
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 130-1
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 766
Crimes of violence, Shops 649-50w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 161-2
Metropolitan Police, Crime prevention 1334

Eadie, Mr Alexander
Questions
Coal, Imports 761-2
Offshore structures, Contracts 474w
Privatisation, Shareholders 259w
Road accidents, Costs 172-3w
Road accidents, Midlothian 171-2w
Road accidents, Scotland 172w

Ealing
Animal welfare 684w
Arts sponsorship 770
Zoos 684w

Ealing College of Higher Education 661w
Polytechnics 661w

Ear nose & throat 470w
Hospital waiting lists 470w

Early leavers 791w
Occupational pensions 791w

Early retirement
HM Inspectorate of Schools 769w

Early warning systems 777w, (15.12.86) 834-7, 863-6, 1048
Boeing 162, 691w, 1048-9
CAP Scientific 691w
Defence procurement 161-3, 176, 205w, 306-7w, 503w, 596w, 1050, 1346
Emergency debates (18.12.86) 1409-54
Exports 306w
GEC 331
Military aircraft 306-7w
Ministerial statements (18.12.86) 1351-9
Nimrod aircraft 161-3, 175-6, 205w, 331, 596w, 690w, 1048-50
Standing Order No 20 applications (15.12.86) 777-8, (16.12.86) 1071, (17.12.86) 1229, (18.12.86) 1366
USA 503w

Earned income
National insurance contributions 204w

East Anglia
Crime prevention 1340-1

East London river crossing 276w
Woolwich ferry 276w

East London road assessment study 403w

Eastern Europe
European Security Conference 758w
Human rights 758w

Eastham, Mr Ken
Questions
Engineering industries 331
Foundry industry 184w
Power industry 759-60
Public transport, Christmas 275w
Skilled workers, Economic regions 518w

EC action
Air transport (09.12.86) 295-312
Company law 183w
Drug abuse 640w
Drug crimes 646w
Duty free allowances 667-8w
Employment 368-9w
Equal opportunities 817-8w
Firearms 4w, 46w, 640w
Iron & steel industry 181w
Lead pollution 394-5w
Mass media 254w
Milk 451w
Motorcycles 534-6w
Origin marking 333
Shipbuilding 175-6w
Terrorism 174
Transport infrastructure (09.12.86) 197, (19.12.86) 1556

EC Agricultural Council 247w, 596w
Ministerial statements (17.12.86) 1213-28

EC budget 236w, 422-3w
Judgements 744-5w
UK contributions 744-5w
UK repayments 237-8w

EC Budget Council 422-3w

EC countries
Duty free allowances 486w
Light dues 41-2w
Plutonium 609-10w
Shipbuilding 99-100w
Smoke & chimney gases 1199

EC Energy Council
Alternative energy 378w

EC Environment Council 578-9w
Acid rain 586w, 1199

EC external trade
Developing countries 185w

EC Finance Council 421-2w

EC Fisheries Council 825-7w

EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1203-12

EC grants & loans
Employment opportunities 516w
Shipbuilding (08.12.86) 123-44
Tourism 515w

EC internal trade
Insurance 262w

EC Labour & Social Affairs Council
Employment 368-9w

EC law
Environment protection 434w

EC nationals 114-5w, 221w
Greater London 221w
South East region 221w

EC presidency
Council of Ministers 762-5w
Cultural relations 737w
European Communities 759w

EC Transport Council 531-2w

Economic & Social Research Council
Urban areas 91w

Economic growth
Interest rates 331
Non domestic rates 331

Economic regions
Skilled workers 518w

Economic situation (17.12.86) 1233-306
North West region 20w

Education (15.12.86) 851-3
Brent 384-5w
Local government expenditure 33w

Education (No 2) Act 1986
Questions
Orders & regulations 456-7w

Education (Nutritional Requirements) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 355

Education administration
City technology colleges 385w

Educational finance
Church schools 721w
City technology colleges 455w
Further education 457-8w
General certificate of secondary education 43w, 353-4w
Higher education 44-5w, 721-3w
South Glamorgan County Council 33w

Educational publications
Copyright 22w

Educational standards
Comprehensive education 723w
Further education colleges 629w
Roman Catholic Church 723w

Educational visits 15-6
Palace of Westminster 15-6

Edwards, Rt Hon Nicholas, Secretary of State for Wales
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Ministerial statements (16.12.86) 1063-70
Questions
Advance factory programme, Welsh Development Agency 317w
Beef & veal, Agricultural production 35w
Beef premiums, Wales 35w
Butter, Food surpluses 450w
Employment opportunities, Wales 2-3
Farm incomes, Wales 15
Farm owners, Ceredigion 449w
Farm owners, Dyfed 449w
Farms, Wales 529w
Flood control, South Wales 10
Floods, South Wales 10
Floods, Wales 9
Health services finance, Wales 321-2w
Lime, Retail trade 450w
Local government finance, Wales 361-2w
Milk, Production quotas 451w
Perinatal mortality, Wales 451-3w
Population, Wales 450-1w
Radioactivity, Sheep 162w
Rate support grants, Wales 317-8w, 451w
Regional selective assistance, Wales 718w
Sheep, Wales 3-4
Sheep premiums, Wales 3
Small farms, Wales 4, 107w
Statistics, Welsh Office 162w
Unemployment, Newport 1-2
Unemployment, Wales 2, 35w, 321w
Urban programme, Arfon Borough Council 449w
Vacancies, Newport 2
Venture capital, Wales 7
Wales, Ministerial responsibility 4
Wales Tourist Board, Government grants 616w
Welsh Development Agency, Agriculture 6
Welsh Development Agency, Estate Action 7
Welsh Development Agency, Finance 6
Young people, Wales 320-1w

Eggar, Mr Tim, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Debates etc
Central America (15.12.86) 1019-22
Questions
Afghanistan, Human rights 444w
Antarctic Treaty 265-6w
Antarctic Treaty, UN resolutions 265w
Arms trade, Human rights 8w
Banerjee, Mahuya, Immigration applications 758w
Bangladesh, Refugees 756w
BBC External Services, National Audit Office 9w
British Council, Caribbean 266w
Canary Islands, Tourists 272w
Council of Europe, UK contributions 757w
Cruz, Arturo, Official engagements 8w
Cultural property, Treaties 756w
Diplomatic service, Parking offences 444-8w
EC countries, Plutonium 609-10w
El Salvador, Armed forces' training 269w
European Court of Human Rights, corporal punishment 610w
European Security Conference, Arms control treaties 120-1w
European Security Conference, Military exercises 119-20w
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection vessels 269-71w
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 269-71w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Arms control 266-7w

France, Chemical weapons 121-2w
Greece, Jehovah's Witnesses 272-3w
Indonesia, Official visits 268-9w
Iran, Arms trade 118w
Iran-Iraq war, Arms trade 8w
Middle East, USA 758w
Nicaragua, Diplomatic service 444w
Nigeria, British Caledonian 756w
Nuclear weapons, Zero option 117-8w
Ogorodnikov, Alexander, Political prisoners 757-8w
Persian Gulf, Shipping 118w
Republic of Ireland, Radioactive waste disposal 266w
Sheikh, Mohammed Farid, Members' correspondence 444w
Shipping, Territorial waters 121w
South Korea, British residents abroad 272w
Spain, Death 271-2w
Sri Lanka, Peace negotiations 119w
Syrian Arab Republic, Diplomatic relations 610w
USA, Binary chemical weapons 121w
USA, Computers 118-9w
USA, Poseidon missiles 121w
USSR, Nuclear test ban 267-8w
Vanunu, Mordechai, Israel 269w
Visas, Administrative delays 122w
Visas, Entry clearances 121-2w
Women, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 443w

El Salvador
Armed forces' training 269w
Equipment 305w
Technical assistance 269w, 305w

Elderly
Community care 211-3w
Driving licences 130-1w
Hip replacements 807-9w
Housing insulation 382w, 764
Nursing homes 46w
Residential care 46w

Electoral register
Scotland 507w

Electorate 287-8w
Local authorities 668-9w

Electrical control equipment
Industries 20w

Electrical technology
BAOR 263w

Electricity
Imports 381-2w

Electricity consumption 241-2w

Electricity disconnections 619w

Electricity distribution
Avonmouth 762
Severn barrage 762

Electricity generation
Coal fired power stations 762-3
France 380w
Nuclear power stations 380w

Electricity supply industry
Capital investment 5w
Privatisation 380w
Strategic plans 5w

Electricity tariffs
Nuclear power 760-1

Electromagnetic interference
Pirate radio stations 97w

Emergency calls 78w, 646w
Fire services 251w, 646w
Metropolitan Police 78w, 646w
Police 251w

Emergency debates
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1409-54
Speaker's rulings & statements (18.12.86) 1408

Emergency planning 19w, 80w, 136w, 155w, 170-1w, 195-7w, 255w, 378w, 592w, 610-1w, 619-20w, 643w, 774-5w
Chapelcross power station 19w
Greater London 80w
Merchant seamen 155w
Nuclear accidents 170-1w, 195-6w, 378w, 610-1w, 643w
Nuclear power stations 196-7w, 619-20w
Torness power station 136w, 774-5w

"Emergency Plans for Civil Nuclear Installations" 196-7w

Emergency powers
Northern Ireland (16.12.86) 1079-122

Employers' statutory sick pay scheme
Adjudication officers 123w
Appeals 123w
Costs 290w
Prosecutions 47w

Employment 815-6w
EC action 368-9w
EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 368-9w
Greenock 299-300w
Northern Ireland 537-8w, 634-6w
Rates & rating 747w
Scotland (15.12.86) 838-40
VAT 486w

Employment agencies
Fees & charges 817w
Industrial training schemes 817w

Employment & Training Act 1973
Questions
816w

Employment discrimination
Women 15w

Employment opportunities
Basildon 219-20w
EC grants & loans 516w
Enterprise allowance scheme 816w
Foreign investment in UK 181w
Infrastructure 338
Leicester 521w
Northern Ireland 537-8w, 815w
Personal social services 523w
Restart programme 1036
Rural areas 25-6w
Service industries 815w
Simplified planning zones 256w
Tourist industry 449w
Trident 139w, 171
Urban programme 587w
Wages Councils 1041
Wales 2-3, 317w

Employment Protection (Variation of Limits) Order 1986
Debates etc
(17.12.86) 1324

Employment schemes 12-3w, 115w, 257w
Batley 257w
Bolton 633-4w
Fees & charges 223-4w
Finance 257w
Private Members' motions (12.12.86) 734-46
Rotherham 537w
Social Security benefits disqualification 224w, 538w, 817w
Southwark 630w

Empty housing
Homelessness 576w
West Yorkshire 750w

End user certificates 96w
Arms trade 96w

Energy conservation 242-3w

Energy consumption
Severn barrage 618w

Energy efficiency 200-1w, 242w, 382w, 392-3w, 763-4
Conferences 763-4
District heating 392-3w
Expenditure 200-1w
Housing insulation 764
Local authorities 764

Energy research
Expenditure 199-200w
Nuclear power 199-200w
Tidal power 617-8w

Enforcement Powers of the Revenue Departments Committee see Inland Revenue & Customs & Excise Review of Enforcement Powers Committee

Engineering industries 331
Industrial production 330
Industrial training 1041-2
Innovation 331
Productivity 330
Redundancy 330
Skilled workers 518-9w, 1041-2

English Channel
Coal fired power stations 760, 763

English language
Ethnic minorities 250w

English National Opera 735-6w

English Tourist Board
Hotels 525w

Enterprise allowances scheme 509-10w, 1039-40
Batley 256-7w
Company liquidations 510w
Employment opportunities 816w
Expenditure 510w
Leicester 816w
Wales 631w

Enterprise & Deregulation Unit 818-20w
Small businesses 818w

Entertainers
Personal taxation 740w

Entry clearances
Immigration applications 165-6w
Visas 121-2w

Environment protection
Community programme 402w
EC law 434w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 305w
Roads 402w

"Environment Select Committee on Planning" 591-2w

Environmental health
Dogs 552-6w

Environmental impact assessment 191w, 278-9w, 384w, 617-8w, 675-6w
Radioactivity 384w
Severn barrage 617-8w, 675-6w

Environmentally sensitive areas 624-5w

Equal opportunities
EC action 817-8w
Government departments 399-400w
Health service staff 415w, 709w
NHS 415w
Women 431-2w, 443w, 455-6w, 544-5w, 650-1w, 665w, 709w, 811-2w, 817-8w

Equal pay
Speech therapists 15w, 68w

Equipment
El salvador 305w
London Fire Brigade 651-2w

Espionage
Gentleman, Brian 774

Estate Action
Welsh Development Agency 7

Estuaries
Nature conservation 582w
Wild animals 582w

Ethics
Television programmes 649w

Ethnic groups
AIDS 294w
Sickle cell disease 71-2w
Youth training scheme 632w, 814w

Ethnic minorities
Armed forces' officers 167
Army 166
English language 250w
Medical education 289w
Nurses' training 289w

Ethnic monitoring 166, 226-7w
Army 166
Unemployed 15-6w, 226-7w

Europe
Railway network 274-5w

European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund
Horticulture 366w

European Assembly
Committee on Energy Research & Technology 241w

European Assembly Elections (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(08.12.86) 153

European Communities
EC presidency 759w

European Convention on Human Rights (10.12.86) 354

European Council
Ministerial statements (08.12.86) 21-33

European Court of Human Rights
Civil servants 772
Corporal punishment 610w

European Economic Community
Cultural relations 406w
Industrial research 716-7w

European fighter aircraft 141-2w

European Road Safety Year 441-2w, 534w, 570w
Road safety 534w

European Security Conference
Arms control treaties 120-1w
Eastern Europe 758w
Military exercises 119-20w

European Year of the Environment 585w

Evans, Mr John
Debates etc
Oral question time intervention (10.12.86) 338, (16.12.86) 1039
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 871-7
Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 572-3, 576-7
Questions
Availability for work 1038-9
Ford Motor Company, Austin Rover 324
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 333
Unemployment, Statistics 512w

Evennett, Mr David
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 49-52
Questions
Arms trade, End user certificates 96w
Illegal broadcasting, Greater London 97w
National insurance, Members' correspondence 48w
Pirate radio stations, Great London 97w
Prison riots, Hostages 648w
River pollution 434w
Thamesmead Town, Property transfer 750w

Evergreen International Airways 130w
Stansted Airport 130w
Weapons 130w

Evidence
Armstrong, Robert 772
Metropolitan Police 481-2w
Skuse, Frank 482w

Exceptional circumstances additions
Arthritis 466w
Diabetes 466w
Severe disability premium 704w
Social security benefits rules 466w

Exceptional needs payments 460-2w
Administrative delays 568w, 697-8w
Archway 567-8w
Costs 462w
Families 461w
Greater London 568w
Heating allowances 466w
Social security benefits rules 461w
Social security reform 462w

Exchange control
Drug crimes 78-9w

Exchange rates
Balance of payments 260w

Executive boxes 81w

Exercise
Durham Prison 481w

Exercise Monkfish 144w

Exercise Swift Sword 371-2w

Exhaust emissions
Pollution control 152w

Exhibitions
"Building for the Future" 432w
Deaf 783w
Hospitals 705-6w
Mentally handicapped 420w
Safety 670w

Explanatory memoranda 234w

Explosives
Air freight transport 129w

Export controls
Computers 118-9w
Iran 346w
Land Rover 262w
Libyan Arab Republic 263w, 347w
USA 185w

Export Credits Guarantee Department 348w

Export licensing
Defence equipment 306w, 347w, 372w
Departmental coordination 353w
Libyan Arab Republic 262w, 347w, 353w, 372w

Export of Goods (Control) Order 1985
Questions
262w

Export of live animals
Animal welfare 526w, 528w
Livestock 526w
Sheep 528w

Export promotion 327

Exports 175w
Balance of trade 328-9
Defence equipment 143-4w
Early warning systems 306w
Footwear industry 327-8
Lawn mowers 439w
Libyan Arab Republic 238w
NEI Peebles 328
Nimrod aircraft 205w
North East region 175w
Plutonium 239-40w
Power industry 328, 763
Radioactive wastes 761w
Rover Group 333
Rural areas 328
Ruston Gas Turbines 334
Shipbuilding 263w, 347w
Uranium 473w
Vauxhall Motors 545w
Weir Pumps 328

External financing limits
British Steel Corporation 609w

Factories
Lawn mowers 439w

Factory closures
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines 261w
Unisys 773w

Fairbairn, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 211, 218-9
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 191

"Faith in the City" 30w, 95w

Falkland Islands
Argentina 168, 269w
Armed conflict 692-3w
Armed forces' deployment 140w, 167-8
Armed forces' strength 167-8
BBC 163-4
Curteis, Ian 163-4
Defence equipment 140w
Defence expenditure 168
Fishery protection 170
Fishery protection vessels 269-71w
Fishing limits 269-71w
Royal visits 168

Fallon, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1266-8, 1295
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1226
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 197
Questions
BBC 476w
Coal mining, North East region 757-8w
Coal mining, Privatisation 380w
EC nationals, South East region 221w
Exports, North East region 175w
Local government land, Land use 192w
Overseas workers, South East region 114-5w
Prime Minister official engagements 615w
Public expenditure 486-96w
Take-up of employment, Northern region 516w
Trident, Northern region 139w

Families
Doctors 211w
Exceptional needs payments 461w
Low pay 70w
Supplementary benefits 806w, 1348-50
Unemployment 123w

Family & Domestic Jurisdiction Consultation Paper (15.12.86) 844-9

Family courts (15.12.86) 844-9

Family doctors
Generic prescribing 781w
Northern Ireland 760w
Personal income 549w
Private health services 301w, 549w
Scotland 301w
Training 760w

Family income
Supplementary benefits 128w

Family income supplements
Clergy 13

Family Income Supplements (Computation) (No. 2) Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1475

Family planning clinics
Patients 782-4w
Young people 782-4w

Family practitioner committees
Pay 68w

Family practitioner services
Vocational training 789w

Farm & countryside initiative 820-6w

Farm buildings
Planning permission 590w
Scotland 550w
Town & country planning 550w

Farm incomes
Wales 15

Farm owners 597w
Ceredigion 449w
Dyfed 449w

Farmers
Loans 526w
Scotland 507w

Farms
Wales 529w

Farr, Sir John
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1080, 1109-11
Questions
Assault ships, Design 182
Falkland Islands, Armed forces' deployment 168
Youth training scheme, Trade unions 513w

Fast reactors
Central Electricity Generating Board 198w
Expenditure 171w
Research finance 198w

Fatchett, Mr Derek
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 79-82
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Availability of amendments (10.12.86) 358
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interests (10.12.86) 368
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 370-64 passim
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interventions (10.12.86) 427
Questions
Adult education 513w
Crown Prosecution Service 767-8w
Crown Prosecution Service, Greater London 767-8w
Crown Prosecution Service, Lawyers 768w
Crown Prosecution Service, Pay 767w
Higher education, Educational finance 721w
Hypothermia, Leeds 471w
Nuclear weapons, Transport of radioactive materials 138w
Prison accommodation, Construction 475-6w
Rates & rating 577w
Reema Houses, Defective housing 673w
Rover Group, Future 178w

Faulds, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1074
Business statement (18.12.86) 1363
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1209
Telephone calls, Members (16.12.86) 1076-8
Telephone tapping, Members (18.12.86) 1367
Questions
Industrial training, High technology 514w
National Portrait Gallery, Land acquisition 82w
Rates & rating 577w

Favell, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Common land, Land registration (16.12.86) 1181
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1420
Questions
Defence equipment, Exports 143w
Film industry, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 546w
Ford Motor Company, Austin Rover 323-4
Housing insulation, Voluntary organisations 379w
Local radio 655w
Offensive weapons, Children 649w
Voluntary organisations, Local government reform 1344

Fees & charges
Consultants 154w
Criminal injuries compensation 1w
Employment agencies 817w
Employment schemes 223-4w
Food inspection 527w
Heating 686w
Metropolitan Police 79w
Navigational aids 38-9w
Property Services Agency 684-5w

Fenner, Dame Peggy
Debates etc
Great Lines, Gillingham (15.12.86) 950-1

Ferries
Government grants 550w
Strangford Lough 233w
Western Isles 550w

Fertilisers
Nitrates 110w

Field, Mr Frank
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1359
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1397
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1127-8
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 345
Questions
Church of England, Inner city areas 13
Clergy, Pay 14
Families, Low pay 70w
Severe weather payments 294-5w
Social security appeals, Administrative delays 469-70w

Fields, Mr Terry
Debates etc
Housing policy (15.12.86) 917-21, 932
Questions
Drug abuse, Voluntary organisations 708-9w
National Association of Family Support Groups 708w
National Association of Family Support Groups, Drug abuse 708w
Restart Programme, Liverpool 258w, 538-9w

Film industry
Business expansion scheme 739w
Foreign investment in UK 606w
Income 606w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 546w
Tax allowances 666w, 739-40w

Filton (12.12.86) 680-98, 703-33

Financial institutions
Disclosure of information 84w, 138w

Financial management initiative
Quangos 352-3w

Financial Services Act 1986 609w
Questions
609w

Finch, Kevin 589w
Members' correspondence 589w

Fine defaulters
Custodial treatment 642w

Fines
Counterfeit manufacturing 169w

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Debates etc
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1057
Questions
Homelessness, Camden 681w
Police relations with public, Camden 169-70w

Fire prevention
Prisons 166-7w

Fire services 76w
Emergency calls 251w, 646w
Greater London 75-6w, 251w, 651-2w, 730-1w
Nuclear weapons deployment 557w
Recruitment 75w
Uniforms 76w
Working hours 651w

Fire Services Act 1947
Questions
76w

Fire Services Act 1959
Questions
76w

Firearms
Border security in Ireland 46w
EC action 4w, 46w, 640w
Frontiers 4w, 640w
Legislation 642w
Shops 79w

Firearms certificates
Northern Ireland 620w
Sports 620w

Fires
Hampton Court 390-1w

First reading
Private Members' Bills (10.12.86) 353-7

Fish (16.12.86) 1157-78

Fish diseases
Salmon 828w

Fish stocks 10-1w
River Thames 10-1w

Fisher, Mr Mark
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 473, 475-6, 519-23, 530-6, 538-9, 628, 634-6, 649
Questions
Crime 641w
Manufacturing industries, Investment 176w
Town & country planning, Agricultural land 585w

Fishery protection
Falkland Islands 170

Fishery protection vessels 269-71w
Falkland Islands 269-71w

Fishing limits
Falkland Islands 269-71w

Fixed rate export finance 348w

Flags
Northern Ireland 234w
Prosecutions 234w

Flags & Emblems (Displays) Act (Northern Ireland) 1954
Questions
234w

Flannery, Mr Martin
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1083
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 42, 72-3, 89, 91, 93-6
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Availability of amendments (10.12.86) 359
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 370-619 passim
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 620w
Armed forces' training 307w, 310w
Balance of trade, South Africa 182w
Bombings, Convictions 639w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 161-2
Unemployment, Sheffield 511w

Flats
Sound insulation 753w

Flats management Committee of Inquiry 10-1

Fletcher, Mr Alex
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 222-4, 264
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 190
Questions

Government grants to voluntary organisations, Environment protection 305w
Telephone tapping, Members 161w

Fletcher, Simon Peel (09.12.86) 313-22

Flight simulation
Defence contracts 595w

Flood control
Greater London 30w, 80w, 592w
Home Office 80w
South Wales 10

Floods
Government assistance 9
South Wales 10
Wales 9

Fluoridation
Water treatment 789-90w

Foetal death
Coventry health authority 126w

Food
Prison visits 102w

Food aid from EC (09.12.86) 279-94

Food exports
Food standards 547-8w

Food inspection
Dairy farming 366w, 527w
Fees & charges 527w
Meat 246w

Food standards
Food exports 547-8w

Food subsidies
Defence 828w
USSR 828w

Food surpluses
Butter 450w
USSR 527-8w

Fookes, Miss Janet
Questions
Assault ships, Defence procurement 180

Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 811-4

Football
Identity cards 678w

Football grounds 79w
Alcoholic drinks 81w
Metropolitan Police 79w

Football League 678w

Footwear industry
Exports 327-8

Ford Motor Company 323-4
Austin Rover 323-4

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Arms control 266-7w
Women 443w

Foreign exchange markets 665-6w

Foreign investment in UK
Employment opportunities 181w
Film industry 606w

Foreign tourists 515w
Arts sponsorship 770
Palace of Westminster 15-6
Strip searches 350w

Forensic science
Bombings 1335-9
Greiss test 482w, 1335-7
Skuse, Frank 81-2w, 1335-9

Forestry
Manpower 548w

Forestry Commission
Land ownership & tenure 505w

Forestry Commission Regional Advisory Committees 505w
Tree planting 505w

Forestry grant scheme 505w

Forestry grants 505w
Companies 505w
Tree planting 505w

Forman, Mr Nigel
Debates etc
Defence industries (12.12.86) 728
Queen Mary's Hospital for Children, Carshalton (12.12.86) 748-51, 753
Questions
Personal taxation, Entertainers 740w
Road assessment studies, Greater London 154w

Forsyth, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 204, 214, 226, 231, 238, 242-50
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1245-6
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 194
Questions
Bus services, Scotland 135w
Dunblane bypass, Road construction 16w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Expenditure 510w
Government assistance to nationalised industries 332-3
Local authorities, Capital investment 137w, 497w
Local government expenditure, Capital investment 174-5w

Forth, Mr Eric
Debates etc
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1073-4
Business statement (18.12.86) 1361-2
European Council (08.12.86) 27
Oral question time intervention (16.12.86) 1037
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 195
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1141-2
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 350
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 82, 104
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 381, 413, 472, 483, 574
Questions
Coal mining, Safety 765
EC Finance Council 421-2w
ISTEL, Management buy-outs 609w
Laundries, Local authorities 587w
Ministers' visits abroad, Japan 338
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Radioactive wastes 1192
Regional health authorities, NHS finance 409-10w

Forth Road Bridge 17w
Safety 17w

Fossil fuels
Oil pollution control 191w
Pollution control 191w

Foulkes, Mr George
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 665
Central America (15.12.86) 1015-20
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1212
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 196-7
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1058
Questions
Ailsa shipyard 262w
Ailsa shipyard, Property transfer 304w
Chapelcross power station, Emergency planning 19w
Chapelcross power station, Health physics 134w
Chapelcross power station, Radioactive waste disposal 134w
Cruz, Arturo, Official engagements 8w
EC countries, Plutonium 609-10w
El Salvador, Armed forces' training 269w
El Salvador, Equipment 305w
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 271w
Food exports, Food standards 547-8w
Milk & milk products, Brazil 596w
Nicaragua, Diplomatic service 444w
Nuclear weapons, Argentine 168
Plutonium, Imports 240w
Supplementary benefits, Take-up 213w
Tucano aircraft, Administrative delays 88w

Foundry industry 184w

Fowler, Rt Hon Norman, Secretary of State for Social Services
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Health & Social Security 793-4w
AIDS, Drug abuse 701w
Community health services, Health services finance 459-60w
Guys Hospital, Construction 791-2w
Pensions, Pay incentives 570w
Personal social services 789w
Public relations, Dept of Health & Social Security 792-4w
Resource Allocation Working Party 710-1w
Statistics, Dept of Health & Social Security 215w

France
Chemical weapons 121-2w
Electricity generation 380w
Milk 367w
Nuclear accidents 197w
Nuclear weapons tests 147w
Production quotas 246-7w

Franks, Arthur 605w
National security 605w

Franks, Mr Cecil
Debates etc
House of Commons division of time (10.12.86) 643
Questions
Initial teacher training, Student numbers 159w
Submarines, Navy 144w
Trident, Defence contracts 171

Fraser, Mr John
Debates etc
Homelessness (19.12.86) 1495-9, 1502
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 872
Police Complaints Authority (Information) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 356
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 347
Questions
Housing investment programmes 747w
Metropolitan Police (Compensation) Act 1886, Lambeth 732w
Metropolitan Police, Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 348w
Prisoners, Central Criminal Court 167w
Vandalism, Government grants 1187-8

Fraser, Mr Peter, Solicitor-General for Scotland
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 220
Questions
MacInnes, Catherine, Members' correspondence 615w
McCrae, William, Death 352w

Fraud
Lawyers 336
Transworld Leisure 315w

Free school meals
West Midlands 45w

Free Television Licences for Pensioners Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 353

Freeman, Mr Roger, Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces
Debates etc
Defence (15.12.86) 910-2
Questions

Advertising, Ministry of Defence 208w
Armed forces' casualties, Negligence 499w
Armed forces' deployment, Cumbria 140w
Armed forces' deployment, Cyprus 775w
Armed forces' discharges, Air force 594-5w
Armed forces' discharges, Army 594w
Armed forces' discharges, Navy 595w
Armed forces' married quarters 146w
Armed forces' married quarters, Woolwich 146w
Armed forces' officers, Ethnic minorities 167
Armed forces' pensions 593-4w, 691w
Armed forces' pensions, Widows benefits 594w
Armed forces' protective clothing 87w
Armed forces' training 307w
Armed forces' training, Mynydd Epynt 313-4w
Army, Ethnic monitoring 166
Army, Positive discrimination 166
Black, John, Homicide 142-3w
Bramley camp 142w
Crown Proceedings Act 1947 143w
Crown Proceedings Act 1947, Law reform 498-9w
Defence land 311w
Defence land, Greater London 311-3w
Defence land, Land acquisition 690-1w
Driving offences, Cyprus 775w
Gurkhas, Manpower 167
Marines, Dual jobholding 777w
Medals, World War II 205-6w
Military aircraft, USA 206w
NATO, Armed forces civilians 148w
NATO, Construction 147-8w
Nuclear submarines 689-90w
Nuclear submarines, Armed forces' training 688-9w
Public relations, Ministry of Defence 207-8w
RAF Welford, Construction 149w
Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Melton Mowbray 372w
Royal Military School of Music 173
Territorial Army, Armed forces' strength 142w

Freemasonry
Police 476w

Freeson, Rt Hon Reg
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1206
Questions
Bradley, Francis, Death 158w
Solar power, Dept of Energy 381-2w, 529-30w

Freight transport
Airports 832-4w

French kissing
AIDS 780w

Freud, Mr Clement
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 58-63, 108
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 414-655, passim
Questions
Arts sponsorship, Foreign tourists 770
Community development, Architecture 584w
Manpower Services Commission, Local authorities 542w
Medicines (Hormone Growth Promoters) (Prohibition of Use) Regulations 1986 10w
Sports sponsorship, Tobacco industry 1197

Friendly societies 84w, 138w

"Friendly Societies in the Welfare State" 138w

Frigates
Defence contracts 168-9
Defence procurement 141w
Harland & Wolff 169
Vosper Thornycroft 169
Yarrow 169-70

Frontiers
Firearms 4w, 640w

Fry, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1136-9

Furs
Kangaroo 185w
Labelling 185w

Further education
Departmental progress 387w
Educational finance 457-8w
Local government expenditure 457-8w

Further education colleges 629w
Educational standards 629w

Future
Austin Rover 182w
Rover group 178w

Gairloch Harbour Order Confirmation Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
Rep* (09.12.86) 161
3R (10.12.86) 323

Gale, Mr Roger
Debates etc
Defence (15.12.86) 897
Questions
Channel tunnel, Transport of hazardous materials 39w
Dover Harbour, Railway transport 401-2w
Potatoes, Agricultural support systems 829w
Tourist attractions, Government grants 514-5w
Urban programme, Employment opportunities 587w
Visual arts, Kent 723-4w

Galley, Mr Roy
Questions
AIDS, Drug abuse 701w
Dental health, Health surveys 784w
Foreign investment in UK, Employment opportunities 181w
Guys Hospital, Construction 791-2w
Human embryo experiments 218w
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 374-7w
Under-fives initiatives 284w

Gardiner, Mr George
Questions
Schools, Capital investment 725-9w

Gardner, Sir Edward
Debates etc
Criminal Justice Act 1982 (Amendment) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 357
Human Rights Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 354

Garel-Jones, Mr Tristan, Vice-Chamberlain of Her Majesty's Household
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 584-6, 588

Garner, Roy 476-7w
Rewards 476-7w

Garrett, Mr Ted
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 666
Questions
Assault ships, Tyneside 179

Garrett engines 776w
Tucano aircraft 776w

Gas disconnections 619w

Gas flaring
Air pollution control 508-9w
Scotland 508-9w

Gas safety
Building regulations 27w
Ministerial responsibility 159w

Gas supply industry
Research finance 380-1w

Gateshead
Board & lodging charges 287w
Supplementary benefits 287w

GATT
Developing countries 185w

Gaza strip 263-4w
Import duties 263-4w

GEC (15.12.86) 777-8, 834-7, (18.12.86) 1351-9, 1409-54
Early warning systems 331

General Certificate of Secondary Education
Devon 353-4w
Educational finance 43w, 353-4w

General Lighthouse Authorities (Beacons Hyperbolic Systems) Order 1986
Debates etc
(16.12.86) 1178

General Motors 607w
Balance of payments 607w

General practice patients
Hospital consultants 70w

Generic prescribing
Drug industry 781w
Family doctors 781w

Gentleman, Brian
Espionage 774

Geriatric patients
Greater Glasgow Health Board 547w
Hospital beds 547w

Gillingham
Defence land (15.12.86) 946-57

Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Debates etc
DROPS (15.12.86) 831-4
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1354-5
Questions
Defence equipment 500w
Defence equipment, Testing 500w
DROPS 499-500w
DROPS, Defence contracts 501-2w, 777-9w
DROPS, Defence procurement 501-3w

Glasgow
Health centres 302w
Residential care 659w
Unemployment 656w
Urban programme 359-60w

Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal 359-60w

Godman, Dr Norman A
Debates etc
British Shipbuilders, Nationalised industries borrowing (08.12.86) 148, 150
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 195
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 136-8, 142-3
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1456
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 492-548 passim
Questions
Assault ships, Clydesdale 181
Employment, Greenock 299-300w
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection 170
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection vessels 269-71w
Falkland Islands, Fishing limits 269-71w
Housing starts, Strathclyde 504w
In Vitro Fertilisation Departmental Committee 421w
Nursing homes, Greenock 774w
Offences against children, Convictions 768-70w
Petroleum exploration, Offshore drilling 380w
Policewomen, Strathclyde 774w
Radar, Standards specifications 441w
Regional aid, Greenock 302w
School leaving, Greenock 357w
Severe weather payments, Greenock 693-4w

Unemployment, Greenock 355-6w
Women, Police custody 298w
Women, Prison sentences 298-9w
Women, Prisoners 299w
Women, Remand in custody 299w

Golding, Mrs Llin
Questions
Defective housing, Cornish unit houses 29w
Lorries, Noise control 151-2w
Manufacturing industries, Manpower 516w
Multiple occupation 589w
Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 Review 600w

Goodhart, Sir Philip
Debates etc
Food aid from EC (09.12.86) 285-6
Questions
AIDS, Screening 122-3w

Goodlad, Mr Alastair, Under-Secretary of State for Energy
Questions
Bradwell, Nuclear safety 243w
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd, Government grants 761w
Central Electricity Generating Board 378w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Accounting 474w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Capital investment 6w, 245w, 530w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Coal fired power stations 245w
Central Electricity Generating Board, SBK consortium 382w
Chapelcross power station, Nuclear safety 761-2w, 764w
Coal fired power stations, English Channel 760
Coal fired power stations, Radioactivity 239w
Electricity, Imports 381-2w
Electricity consumption 241-2w
Electricity generation, France 380w
Electricity supply industry, Capital investment 5w
Fast reactors, Central Electricity Generating Board 198w
Heysham power station 244-5w
Magnox reactors, Nuclear safety 761w
Ministers' visits abroad, Chernobyl 768
Nuclear accidents 198w
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 195-6w, 378w
Nuclear accidents, France 197w
Nuclear accidents, Radiation hazards 196w
Nuclear accidents, Sellafield 5-6w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 239w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Nuclear safety 112w
Nuclear fuels, Nuclear safeguards 201-2w
Nuclear fuels, USSR 112w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 7w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Operations research 619-20w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Sellafield 618-9w
Nuclear power, Electricity tariffs 760-1
Nuclear power, Energy research 199-200w
Nuclear power, Publicity 241w
Nuclear power stations, Advanced gas-cooled reactors 240w
Nuclear power stations, Air traffic 198-9w
Nuclear power stations, Calder Hall 243-4w
Nuclear power stations, Construction costs 473-4w
Nuclear power stations, Emergency planning 196-7w
Nuclear power stations, Operations research 474-5w
Nuclear power stations, Public meetings 475w
Nuclear reactors, Nuclear safety 197-8w
Nuclear safeguards, Sellafield 619w
Nuclear safety, Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 475w
Official secrets, Nuclear power 656w
Plutonium 239w, 383w
Plutonium, Disclosure of information 245-6w
Plutonium, Exports 239-40w
Plutonium, Imports 240w
Plutonium, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 617w
Potton Island, Nuclear power 761w
Power industry 759-60
Power industry, Alternative energy 761
Power stations, Design 760
Pressurised water reactors 760
Radioactive waste disposal, Compensation 6w
Radioactive waste disposal, Costs 767-8
Radioactive waste disposal, Property transfer 6-7w
Radioactive wastes, Exports 761w
Radioactive wastes, Magnox reactors 383w
Radioactive wastes, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 383w
Radioactive wastes, Sellafield 241w
Sizewell B, Cost effectiveness 380w
Sizewell inquiry 760-1
Superphenix reactor 242w
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Nuclear accidents 245w
Uranium, Imports 473w

Gould, Mr Bryan
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1283, 1288-93, 1298-9
Questions
Rate support grants 747w
Rate support grants, Scotland 357-60w
Rate support grants, Wales 362-3w
Statistics, Dept of Energy 202-3w
Statistics, Dept of Trade & Industry 22-6w
Statistics, Home Office 168-9w

Government assistance
Floods 9
Local enterprise agencies 524w
Rural areas 579w

Government assistance to industry
Airbuses 183w
Cumbria 337
Harland & Wolff 760w
Knowsley South industrial park 715w
Optical fibres 715w
Quality control 716w
Rover group 178w
Shipbuilding 99-100w
Wales 718w
West Germany 601w

Government assistance to nationalised industries 332-3

Government contracts
Arthur Andersen 289w
Small businesses 517-8w
Wessex Regional Health Authority 290w, 421w

Government departments
Civil service manpower 137w
Consultants 253w
Departmental progress 385-7w, 436-9w, 811w
Equal opportunities 399-400w
Expenditure 260w, 745w
Handicapped workers 298w
Public expenditure 427-8w, 745w
Public relations 188w, 428w
Publicity 207-8w, 792-3w
Regional planning & development 124w
Statistics 22-6w, 155-9w, 162w, 165w, 167-9w, 186w, 195w, 201-3w, 206-7w, 215w, 221-4w, 264-6w

Government grants
Arts Council 735-7w, 771
Bolton 748w
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd 761w
Crofting 508w
Derelict land 587w
Ferries 550w
Housing amenities 1201-2
Housing insultation 377-8w
London Regional Transport 531w
Peak Park Joint Planning Board 28w
Portadown Park 95w
Public participation in planning 396w
Public Record Office 89w
Recruitment 1040-1
Regional development grants 26w
Road transport 507w
Scottish Amateur Music Association 660w
Scottish Transport Group 507w
Sheltered employment 524w
South West Water Authority 1196
Sports Council 580w
Tourism 448w
Tourist attractions 514-5w
Tourist industry 514-5w
Urban regeneration grants 668w
Vandalism 1187-8
Voluntary projects programme 258w
Wales Tourist Board 616w
Welsh language 322-44w
West Mercia Police 731w

Government grants to local authorities
Civil defence 255w
Housing finance 746-7w

Government grants to voluntary organisations
Drug abuse 708-9w
Environment protection 305w
Scotland 305w

Government laboratories
Chorley 1338

Gow, Mr Ian
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1252
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1207
European Council (08.12.86) 27
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1101-5
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1059
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1316
Questions
Iron & steel industry, Privatisation 335
Privatisation 332

Gower, Sir Raymond
Questions
Beef & veal, Agricultural production 35w
Beef premiums, Wales 35w
Planning appeals, Wales 8
Vacancies, Newport 2

Graduates
Self-employed 510w

Grammar schools
School leaving certificates 662-3w

Granada Television 2-3w
National security 314w

Grant, Sir Anthony
Questions
Franks, Arthur, National security 605w
Rhizomania, disease, Cambridgeshire 624w

Great Lines (15.12.86) 946-57
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 946-57

Greater Glasgow Health Board 301-2w, 548-9w
Geriatric patients 547w
Hospital beds 548-9w
Managers 549w
Ministers' domestic visits 549w

Greater London
Agency nurses 48-9w, 572-6w
Breast cancer 562w
Burglar alarms 78w
Buses 441w
Caravan sites 27-8w
Crime 77-8w, 1335
Crown Prosecution Service 767-8w
Defence land 311-3w
Drug abuse 697w
EC nationals 221w
Emergency planning 80w
Exceptional needs payments 568w

Fire services 75-6w, 251w, 651-2w, 730-1w
Flood control 30w, 80w, 592w
Homelessness 576w, 670w, 751-2w
Hospital closures 786w
Illegal broadcasting 97w
Local government (19.12.86) 1515-25
Local government functions 679w
Motor vehicles 77w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 644-5w
NHS finance 411w, 806w
Nurses 706w, 782w
Old peoples homes 697w
Oral questions 18
Overseas workers 114-5w
Pirate radio stations 97w
Police relations with public 654-5w
Printing industry 538w
Railway travel 41w
Registered homes 697w
Road assessment studies 40w, 154w, 273w, 277w, 603w
Skillcentres 225-6w
Supplementary benefits 712w
Transport policy 41w
Wheel clamps 76w

Greater Manchester
Bus services 834w
Civil defence 484w

Greater Springburn Enterprises 224w
Manpower Services Commission 224w

Greece
Alcoholic drinks 261-2w
Cement 175w, 607w
Jehovah's Witnesses 272-3w

Greenbelt 193w
Leisure facilities 685-6w
Planning permission 587w
Shopping centres 685-6w

Greenock
Employment 299-300w
Nursing homes 774w
Regional aid 302w
School leaving 357w
Severe weather payments 693-4w
Unemployment 355-6w
Youth unemployment 357w

Greenway, Mr Harry
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 670, (18.12.86) 1364
Dog Fighting (Penalties) Bill, 1R (19.12.86) 1485
McGoldrick, Maureen (15.12.86) 857-8
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 347
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 74
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interests (10.12.86) 368-9
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 366-71, 390-1, 433, 449-50, 454
Questions
Animal welfare, Ealing 684w
Animal welfare, Parks 625w
Armed forces, Protective clothing 87w
Arts sponsorship, Ealing 770
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 766
Church of England, Inner city areas 12-3
Defence industries, Manpower 143w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Brent 384-5w
McGoldrick, Maureen, Ministerial powers 529w
Medical research, Babies 414w
Oral questions, Greater London 18
Prime Minister official engagements 114w, 238w, 443w, 615w
Public libraries, News International 407w
Rape, Habitual offenders 479-80w
Rates & rating, Employment 747w
School leaving certificates, Comprehensive schools 662-3w
Student grants 721w
Takeovers, Ault & Wiborg 715w

Gregory, Mr Conal
Debates etc
Hotels (19.12.86) 1541-4, 1546
Questions
Coal gasification 378w
Horticulture, European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund 366w
Hotels, English Tourist Board 525w
Hotels, Scotland 508w
Hotels, Wales 451w
Roads, Scotland 507w
Tourism, Local authorities 537w
Tourism, Scotland 170w
Tourism, Wales 316w

Greiss test 482w, 1335-7
Forensic science 482w, 1335-7

Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Questions
Trade union officials, Convictions 1340

Griffiths, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1173

Grist, Mr Ian
Questions
Educational finance, South Glamorgan County Council 33w

Ground, Mr Patrick
Questions
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Finance 479w

Gruinard Island 311w

Grylls, Mr Michael
Questions
Insider trading 336
Regional health authorities, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
Small businesses, Merit awards 177w
Unitary taxation 667w

Guarantee prices 110-2w

Guided weapons
Aircraft carriers 776w

Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Debates etc
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1157-63
EC Agricultural Council, Ministerial statements (17.12.86) 1213-28
Questions
Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks, Public appointments 110w
Cereals, Land use 11w
Common agricultural policy 246w
Common agricultural policy, Expenditure 528w
Companies, Intervention stocks 367w
Dairy farming, Food inspection 366w
EC Agricultural Council 247w, 596w
EC Fisheries Council 825-7w
Food inspection, Dairy farming 527w
Food subsidies, USSR 828w
Food surpluses, USSR 527-8w
Intervention stocks 820w
Intervention stocks, Butter 597-8w
Milk, France 367w
Milk, Production quotas 10w, 367-8w, 829-30w
Pollution monitoring, North Sea 9w
Potatoes, Agricultural support systems, 829w
Production quotas, France 246-7w
River Thames, Sewage 10-1w
Salmon, Import controls 828w
Shellfish, Pollution monitoring 365w
Tarnt Grain, Annual reports 829w
Trent Grain, Intervention stocks 828-9w

Gurkhas
Hong Kong 144w, 372w
Manpower 167

Guy's Hospital 569-70w, 791-2w
Construction 791-2w
Laboratories 569-70w
Medical research 569-70w
NHS finance 791-2w

Gwynedd
Ambulance services 364w
Mental health services 451w

Gwynedd Health Authority 451w
NHS finance 451w

Gypsies
Caravan sites (18.12.86) 1367

Gypsies (Control of Unauthorised Encampments) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (18.12.86) 1367

Habitual offenders
Burglary 480-1w
Rape 479-80w

Hamilton, Mr Archie, Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement
Debates etc
Defence industries (12.12.86) 696, 723-32
Early warning system (18.12.86) 1448-50
Royal Fleet Auxiliary (15.12.86) 780
Questions
Aircraft carriers, Guided weapons 776w
Armed forces' storage depots, Contracts for services 593w
Arms exports 142w
Arms exports, Iran 172-3, 691w
AST 1236 146w
Central Ordnance Depots, Contracts for services 592-3w
Defence contracts, Pricing 145w
Defence contracts, Privatisation 777w
Defence equipment 500w
Defence equipment, Arms trade 205w
Defence equipment, Export licensing 306w
Defence equipment, Exports 143-4w
Defence equipment, Testing 500w
Defence Export Sales Organisation 144w
Defence industries, Manpower 143w
Defence procurement 687-8w
Defence procurement, Competition 86w
Defence research, Higher education 205w
Devonport dockyard, Privatisation 776w
DROPS 499-500w
DROPS, Defence contracts 501-2w, 777-80w
DROPS, Defence procurement 501-3w
Early warning systems 777w
Early warning systems, Boeing 162, 691w
Early warning systems, CAP Scientific 691w
Early warning systems, Exports 306w
Early warning systems, Military aircraft 306-7w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 161-3, 205w, 596w, 690w
Early warning systems, USA 503w
European fighter aircraft 141-2w
Export licensing, Libyan Arab Republic 372w
Falkland Islands, Defence equipment 140w
Flight simulation, Defence contracts 595w
Frigates, Defence procurement 141w
Gruinard Island 311w
Harrier, aircraft, Defence contracts 691w
Harrier, aircraft, Nuclear weapons 147w
Helicopters, Antitank missiles 170
Helicopters, Army 170-1
Helicopters, Defence procurement 170
HMS Vulcan, Nuclear reactors 690w
HOTOL aircraft, Nuclear weapons 372w
Ministry of Defence, Civil service redundancies 594w
Ministry of Defence, Quality Assurance Directorate 313w
Nimrod aircraft, Costs 595w
Nuclear submarines, USA 689w
Nuclear weapons, Sellafield 776-7w
Nuclear weapons tests, USA 147w
PC9 aircraft, Civil servants 776w
Radar 86w
Radar, Iran 373w
Rapier missiles, Defence procurement 373w
Royal ordnance factories, Redundancy 688w
SP-70 guns, Nuclear weapons 147w

Strategic defence initiative 139w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence contracts 139w
Submarines, Navy 144w
Temperature, Cleveland 145w
Trident 139w
Trident, Defence 172
Trident, Defence contracts 171
Trident, Defence expenditure 171
Trident, Employment opportunities 139w, 171
Trident, Labour Party 172
Trident, Northern region 139w
Trident, USA 172
Tucano aircraft, Administrative delays 88w
Tucano aircraft, Air force 776w
Tucano aircraft, Garrett engines 776w
Type 23 frigates, Defence contracts 143w
Warships, Defence procurement 140w

Hamilton, Mr James
Questions
Homelessness 177
Unemployment, Scotland 504w

Hamilton, Mr Neil
Questions
Lead poisoning, Blood lead levels 754w
Loan guarantee scheme, Take-up 519w
Pollution monitoring, Lead pollution 394-5w
Television programmes, Ethics 649w

Hamilton, Mr Willie W
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 201, 218
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1234
Business statement (10.12.86) 664
South West (England) Development Agency Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 356
Wright, Peter, Civil proceedings (17.12.86) 1231
Questions
Availability for work 1037-8
Crime 476w
Judges, Drinking & driving 605w
Prime Minister visits abroad, Costs 160w
Public sector housing, Capital investment 584w
Research assistants, Terrorism 19-20
Trident, Defence expenditure 171

Hampshire
Bus services 40w
Council housing 681-2w
Driving tests 602w

Hampson, Dr Keith
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1429, 1442, 1446
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 526-7
Questions
Civil servants, Training 238w
Defence procurement 687-8w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 176

Hampton Court 390-1w
Fires 390-1w

Hancock, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 134-7
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 584-6, 588
Questions
Armed forces' discharges, Air force 594-5w
Armed forces' discharges, Army 594w
Armed forces' discharges, Navy 595w
Armed forces' pensions 691w
Bus services, Competition 533w
Bus services, Hampshire 40w
Council housing, Hampshire 681-2w
Defence contracts, Privatisation 777w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Portsmouth 707w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Roebuck House 706w
Driving tests, Hampshire 602w
Falkland Islands, Defence equipment 140w
Gas disconnections 619w
Housing estates, Demolition 30w, 95w
Ministry of Defence, Civil service redundancies 594w
Motor vehicle testing, Licensing 831-2w
Old Bells School, Portsmouth 680w
Portsdown Park, Government grants 95w
Portsdown Park, Housing estates 30w
Portsdown Park, Planning permission 95w
Portsdown Park, Telephone calls 31w
Prisoners, AIDS 81w
Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth 699w
Regional health authorities, Manpower 218w

Handicap benefits 416-7w
Social security reform 124w

Handicapped 124w, 289w, (15.12.86) 849-51
Art education 464w, 480w
Arts 429-30w, 432-3w, 441w, 449-50w, 456w, 525w
Local government social services 215w
National Assistance Act 1948 786w
Vaccination 416w

Handicapped children
Health services 694-5w
Local government services 694-5w

Handicapped workers
Government departments 298w
Training 816w
Unemployment 520w

Hanley, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc
Air safety (15.12.86) 1023-5
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 501, 593
Questions
Buses, Greater London 441w
Copyright 325-6
Environment protection, EC law 434w
Insider trading 336
Motorcycles, Noise control 534-6w

Hannam, Mr John
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 7-8w
Coal fired power stations, Combined heat & power 763

Hanson, Lord (15.12.86) 831

Hanson Trust (15.12.86) 831

Hardy, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1056
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 445, 568-70
Questions
Birds, Nature conservation 671w
Domestic rates 585w
Iron & steel industry, Defence contracts 330-1
Iron & steel industry, EC action 181w
Lindane, Bats 258w, 398w
Navy, Warships 140w
Polyurethane, Mining 369-70w
Special protection areas 671-2w
Youth unemployment, Rotherham 537w

Hargreaves, Mr Ken
Questions
Dixon, Joe, War pensions 788-9w
Family doctors, Training 760w
Family practitioner services, Vocational training 789w
Loan guarantee scheme 519w
Ogorodnikov, Alexander, Political prisoners 757-8w

Haringey Borough Council 587w

Harland & Wolff 760w
Frigates 169
Government assistance to industry 760w

Harman, Ms Harriet
Questions
Council tenants, Southwark 747-8w
Durham Prison, Exercise 481w
Prisoners' rights, Bibles 481w
Rent arrears, Local authorities 432w
Supplementary benefits, Camberwell 285w

Harrier aircraft 147w, 691w
Defence contracts 691w
Nuclear weapons 147w

Harrier GR5 Mission Simulator (15.12.86) 779
Standing Order No 20 applications (15.12.86) 779

Harris, Mr David
Debates etc
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1175-6
Common land, Land registration (16.12.86) 1179-80, 1182
European Council (08.12.86) 31
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 485, 495
Questions
Marine nature reserves 1188

Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Questions
Empty housing, West Yorkshire 750w
Local government buildings, West Yorkshire Residuary Body 677w
Local government property, Property transfer 750-1w
Local government property, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council 677w
Local government property, West Yorkshire Residuary Body 677w
Local government reform, Local government buildings 678w
M1, Contra-flow systems 38w
M1, Road traffic control 38w
M1, Road works 37w
Residuary bodies, Public appointments 678w

Harvey, Mr Robert
Questions
Sheep, Wales 3

Haselhurst, Mr Alan
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 56-8

Hatfield
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines 261w

Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1233, 1235, 1237, 1246-53
European Council (08.12.86) 22-3, 32

Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael, *Attorney-General*
Debates etc
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1075
Questions
Administration of Justice Act 1985 1w
Attorney-General 2w, 314-6w
Chamberlain, Neville, Disclosure of information 315w
Civil servants, National security 605w
Criminal injuries compensation, Northern Ireland 1w
Crown Prosecution Service 767-8w
Crown Prosecution Service, Greater London 767-8w
Crown Prosecution Service, Lawyers 768w
Crown Prosecution Service, Pay 767w
D Notices, "Their Trade is Treachery" 89w
Diplock courts, Judges 766w
Franks, Arthur, National security 605w
Granada Television, National security 314w
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 314w
Intelligence services, Television programmes 2-3w
International Garden Festival 1984, Anton, John 315w

Johnson Matthey, Criminal investigation 3w
Judges, Drinking & driving 605w
Land registration, Disclosure of information 766w
Legal aid, Administrative delays 767w
Legal aid, Efficiency Scrutiny 766
Legal aid, Expenditure 767w
Legal aid, Political parties 314w
Magistrates, Public appointments 315w
Miller, Joan, National security 2w
Moe, John, National security 2w
Official secrets acts, Prosecutions 354-5w
Pincher, Chapman, National security 1w
Police national computer, Computer privacy 316w
"Poor Man's James Bond", Publishing 151w
Possession rights 315-6w
Public Record Office, Government grants 89w
Recorders, Age 604w
Recorders, Public appointments 429w, 604w
Recorders, Re-employment 766w
Recorders, Retirement age 604w
Wright, Peter, National security 316w

Hawkins, Sir Paul
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1220

Hawksley, Mr Warren
Questions
Telford Development Corporation 755w
West Mercia Police, Government grants 731w

Hayes, Mr Jerry
Questions
Enterprise allowance scheme, Company liquidations 510w
Industry, Training 181w
Restart programme 1036

Hayward, Mr Rob
Debates etc
Air transport, EC action (09.12.86) 301, 307-9
Defence industries (12.12.86) 680-6, 689, 732-3
Questions
Community health services, Health services finance 459-60w
Defence equipment, Exports 144w
Electorate 287-8w
Employment, EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 368-9w
Equal opportunities, Women 817-8w
Vacant land registers 586w

Hazardous materials
Chlorine 525w
Industrial health & safety 525-6w

Hazardous wastes
Accidents 755w

Head of household 123w

Headteachers
Brent (15.12.86) 857-8
Cruelty to children 417w

Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1205

Health
Housing standards 719w

Health & Safety Executive
Sellafield 631w

Health centres
Glasgow 302w

Health education
Cardiovascular diseases 694w
Dept of Health & Social Security 694w
Heart diseases 387-8w

Health Education Council 48w, 65w, 408w
AIDS 701w
Press releases 65w

Redundancy pay 787-8w
Special health authorities 788w

Health foods
Prices 9w

Health physics
Chapelcross power station 134w

Health service ancillary staff
Pay 211w

Health Service Commissioner (12.12.86) 679

Health service staff
Equal opportunities 415w, 709w
London allowance 566-7w
Manpower 698-700w
Screening 34-5w
Secretarial staff 568w
Southwark 698-700w
Violence 412w

Health services
AIDS 409w
District health authorities 216w
Handicapped children 694-5w
Per capita costs 420w
Racial discrimination 415w
Regional health authorities 216w
Southend (15.12.86) 851-3

Health services finance
Community health services 411w, 459-60w
Scotland 658w
Wales 321-2w

Health surveys
Dental health 784w

Hearing Aid Council Act 1968 (Amendment) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
IR (12.12.86) 679

Hearing aids (12.12.86) 679

Hearncrest Boughton (15.12.86) 831-4

Heart diseases
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy 463w
Diet & disease 463w
Health education 387-8w

Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1440-2, 1449

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1227
European Council (08.12.86) 30
Questions
Exports, Footwear industry 327-8
Lawn mowers, Noise control 179-80w
Members' facilities, Parking 18
Rates & rating 577w
Wages councils, Employment opportunities 1041

Heathrow
Body searches 497-8w
Temporary immigrants 733-5w

Heating
Fees & charges 686w
Houses 753w

Heating allowances
Exceptional needs payments 466w

Heddle, Mr John
Debates etc
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 342-3
Questions
Banerjees, Mahuya, Immigration applications 758w
Building land, Housing construction 281-2w
Dept of the Environment circular 22/80 282w
Hospital waiting lists, Computers in National Health Service 785w
Housing 669w

Local government finance 392w
London Residuary Body, Land values 29w
Marklew, A A, Pensions 412w
Planning permission, Housing construction 399w
Property development, Planning permission 278w
Rent arrears, Local authorities 188-9w, 585w
Secondary mortgage market 670w
Vandalism 1187

Hedgerow Protection Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 355

Hedges & ditches
Nature conservation (10.12.86) 355

Heffer, Mr Eric
Debates etc
Early warning systems (15.12.86) 781
European Council (08.12.86) 27
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 789, 791, 796, 798-9
Questions
Arts finance, Public expenditure 770
Civil & Public Services Association, Trade union elections 774
Package holidays, Consumer protection 329
Subversion 1344-5

Helicopters
Amphibious vehicles 182
Antitank missiles 170
Armed forces' deployment 170-1
Army 170-1
Assault ships 182
Defence procurement 170
Tanks 170

Hamborough, Mr & Mrs J 294w

Henderson, Mr Barry
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 215, 230, 233-6, 239, 243, 248
Business statement (10.12.86) 666
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 194
Retirement, Private Members' motions (15.12.86) 828
Questions
Road tolls, Accounting 273w
Small businesses, Channel tunnel 98w

Hepatitis
Nurses 68w

Heritage coast 193w

Herstmonceux Castle (19.12.86) 1549-56

Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1356, 1411
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 876-80
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1057
Questions
Early warning systems, Defence procurement 1050

Heysham power station 240w, 244-5w

Hickmet, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1237
Wright, Peter, Civil proceedings (17.12.86) 1231
Questions
British Steel Corporation, External financing limits 609w
British Steel Corporation, Privatisation 440-1w
Enterprise allowance scheme 510w
Nuclear power, Electricity tariffs 760-1

Hicks, Mr Robert
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1226-7
Questions
Development agencies 181-2w

Dockyards, Privatisation 164
Water authorities, Water charges 1196

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1253-8

High speed trains
Railway network 274-5w

High technology 514w
Industrial training 514w
Vacancies 514w

Higher education
Age 389-90w
Defence research 205w
Departmental progress 385-6w
Design 389-90w
Educational finance 44-5w, 721-3w
Mature students 389-90w
Men 388-9w
Part-time education 389-90w
Per capita costs 229-30w
Polytechnics 389-90w
Sandwich courses 389-90w
Student numbers 229-30w, 389-90w
Universities 389-90w
Visual arts 389-90w
Women 388-9w

Higher education admission
Polytechnics 723w
Waltham Forest 663w

Higher education colleges
Student numbers 389-90w

Higher education teachers
Pay 44-5w

Highlands of Scotland
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 296w
Social security claims 471w
Social security recipients 296w

Highway corridors 40w, 154w, 277w

Hill, Mr James
Questions
Frigates, Vosper Thornycroft 169

Hill farming 550w, 596-7w
Scotland 508w
Sheep 3-4

Hill livestock allowances
Marginal land 596-7w

Hillingdon Health Authority
NHS finance 706w

Hind, Mr Kenneth
Questions
European Security Conference, Eastern Europe 758w
Import duties, West Bank 263-4w
Research finance 442w
Trade union officials, Convictions 1339

Hip replacements 807-9w
Elderly 807-9w
Hospital waiting lists 126w, 807-9w

Hirst, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 247, 251, 254, 256-60
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 195-6
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 350
Questions
Company law, EC action 183w
Exports, Weir Pumps 328
Frigates, Yarrow 169-70
Self-employed 510-1w
Trident, Employment opportunities 139w

Historic buildings
Architectural conservation 581-2w
Conservation 581-2w

HM Inspectorate of Prisons 302-3w

HM Inspectorate of Schools 300-1w
Aberdeen College of Education 300-1w, 504-5w
Brent 384-5w
Costs 301w
Early retirement 769w
Press releases 300w
Professional qualifications 388w
Scotland 504-5w, 547w, 769-70w
Teachers 769-70w
Wales 365w

HMS Vulcan 690w
Nuclear reactors 690w

Hogg, Mr Douglas, Under-Secretary of State at the Home Department
Debates etc
Crime prevention (15.12.86) 939-45
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 520
Questions
Airguns, Retail trade 635w
Alcoholic drinks, Football grounds 81w
Animal cruelty, Legislation 648w
Animal welfare, Parks 625w
"Arts & Disabled People", Home Office 480w
Breathalysers, Police powers 74w
Burglar alarms, Greater London 78w
Buses, Road traffic offences 74w
Buses, Wheel clamps 167w
Civil defence 648w
Civil defence, Government grants to local authorities 255w
Civil defence, Greater Manchester 484w
Civil defence headquarters, Construction 255w
Councillors, Declaration of interest 167w
Crime prevention 646-7w
Crime prevention, Lighting 249-50w
Crimes of violence, Shops 649-50w
Death, Seas & oceans 635w
Dogs, Bye laws 552-6w
Drinking & driving, Christmas 557-8w
Drinking & driving, Public houses 75w
Drug squads, Merseyside 642w
Electorate, Local authorities 668-9w
Emergency calls, Metropolitan Police 78w, 646w
Emergency planning, Greater London 80w
Fire services 76w
Fire services, Greater London 75-6w, 251w, 651-2w, 730-1w
Fire services, Nuclear weapons deployment 557w
Fire services, Recruitment 75w
Firearms, EC action 640w
Firearms, Legislation 642w
Firearms, Shops 79w
Flood control, Greater London 80w
Football grounds, Metropolitan Police 79w
Garner, Roy, Rewards 476-7w
Home Office, Accounting 349w
Home Office, NATO 255w
Identity cards 558w, 645w
London Fire Brigade, Finance 76w
Metropolitan Police, Accounting 78w
Metropolitan Police, Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 348w
Metropolitan Police (Compensation) Act 1886, Lambeth 732w
Metropolitan Police Instruction Book 481-2w
Motor vehicles, Greater London 77w
Motor vehicles, Wheel clamps 77w, 482w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 644w, 1340-2
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Conferences 644w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Expenditure 1342
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Greater London 644-5w
News International, Public order policing 77-8w, 655-6w
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 643w
Offensive weapons, Children 649w
Offensive weapons, Retail trade 652-3w, 1345
Parking offences, Diplomatic service 76-7w
Police civilians, Leicestershire 74w
Police, Domestic violence 641-2w
Police, Emergency calls 251w
Police, Freemasonry 476w
Police, Manpower 166w, 250-2w
Police, Nuclear accidents 557w
Police, Official visits 652w
Police, Solihull 253w
Police, Widows benefits 730w
Police national computer, Computer privacy 477-9w
Police relations with public, Camden 169-70w
Police relations with public, Greater London 654-5w
Police relations with public, Motoring 558-9w
Police training, Nuclear accidents 557w, 653w, 729-30w
Police War Duties Committee 255w
Policewomen, Metropolitan Police 551w
Prisons, Criminal damage 480w
Racial attacks 350w
Salmon Act 1976, Law enforcement 102w
Security industry, Law enforcement 647w
West Mercia Police, Government grants 731w
Wheel clamps, Contracts 654w
Wheel clamps, Greater London 76w

Hogg, Mr Norman
Debates etc
Early warning systems (15.12.86) 837
Employment, Scotland (15.12.86) 838-40
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 191
Questions
Average earnings, Scotland 773w
Dual carriageways, Scotland 772-3w
Housing construction, New towns 173w
Ministers' domestic visits, Cumbernauld 772w
Motorways, Scotland 773w
New towns development corporations, Disclosure of information 173w
NHS, Scotland 773w
Police custody, Scotland 772w
Road safety barriers, Dual carriageways 831w
Road safety barriers, Motorways 831w
Social security payments, Scotland 788w
Unisys, Factory closures 773w
Whisky, Redundancy 355w

Holiday problems
Package holidays 185w

Holland, Sir Philip
Questions
Financial management initiative, Quangos 352-3w
Ministerial advisory bodies 420w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of Education & Science 101w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of Employment 117w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of Health & Social Security 125-6w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of the Environment 92w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of Trade & Industry 98w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Home Office 102-3w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Northern Ireland Office 107w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Scottish Office 135w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Welsh Office 108w
"Public Bodies 1986", 82w

Holland, Mr Stewart
Debates etc
Food aid from EC (09.12.86) 281-5, 291-3
Questions
AIDS, Contraceptives 294w
Contraceptives, Imports 295w

Political refugees, Immigrant detainees 103-4w
Visas, Administrative delays 122w
Visas, Entry clearances 121-2w

Holloway Prison 551w
Psychiatry 551w

Holloway Road 403w

Holt, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 611, 614
Questions
Falkland Islands, Curteis, Ian 163-4
Frigates, Harland & Wolff 169
ICI 183-4w
Medals, World War II 205-6w
National insurance 460w
Rent arrears, Middlesbrough 1190
Rural areas, Government assistance 579w
Security industry, Law enforcement 647w

Holy Loch 121w, 139-40w
Trident 139-40w

Home, Michael 600w

Home Office
Accounting 349w
"Arts & Disabled People" 480w
Consultants 253w
Flood control 80w
Ministerial advisory bodies 102-3w
NATO 255w
Statistics 167-9w
Women 650-1w

Home Robertson, Mr John
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 248
Island Councils of Scotland Committee of Inquiry (15.12.86) 964-6
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 196
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1062
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 492
Questions
Early warning systems, Defence procurement 1050
Torness power station, Emergency planning 136w, 774-5w
Torness power station, Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 173-4w
Torness power station, Nuclear safety 657w
Torness power station, Radiation hazards 657w
Torness power station, Training 305w

Homelessness 177, (15.12.86) 913-33, (19.12.86) 1495-503
Bed & breakfast accommodation 670w, 751-2w
Camden 681w
Empty housing 576w
Greater London 576w, 670w, 751-2w
Households 30-1w
Statistics 681w
Supplementary benefits 564w
Wales 37-8w
Wandsworth (19.12.86) 1534-40

Homeopathy
Medicines Commission 705w

Homesteading schemes
Council house sales 1195

Homicide
Black, John 142-3w
Criminal investigation 300w
Detection rates 349w
Scotland 300w

Homosexuality
Age 350w

Hong Kong
Gurkhas 144w, 372w

Hordern, Sir Peter
Questions
Dairy farming, Food inspection 366w
Friendly societies 84w, 138w
Higher education teachers, Pay 44-5w
Teachers, Pay 44w

Hornchurch
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 66w
Unemployment benefit offices 117w

Horne Committee see Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 Review

Horse racing 349w

Horses 10w

Horticulture
European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund 366w

Hospices
AIDS 409w

Hospital bed occupancy rates
Private patients 794-8w

Hospital beds 67w
AIDS 409w
Costs 66-7w
Drug abuse 217w, 697w
Expenditure 419w
Geriatric patients 547w
Greater Glasgow Health Board 548-9w
Hospital waiting lists 548-9w
Northern Ireland 46w
Nursing homes 781w
Scottish health boards 17-9w
Wales 37w, 319w, 365w
Wandsworth 782w

Hospital closures 49-64w, (15.12.86) 841-4
Greater London 786w
Mental hospitals 464-5w, 810w

Hospital consultants
General practice patients 70w
Junior hospital doctors 72-4w
Paediatric cardiology 36w

Hospital discharges 465w, 711-2w, 797-806w
Mental patients 465w

Hospital finance 69w

Hospital patients
Infectious diseases 417-8w
NHS & private practice 711-2w

Hospital staff
Housing tenure 787w

Hospital waiting lists 216w
Computers in National Health Service 785w
District health authorities 215-6w
Ear nose & throat 470w
Hip replacements 126w, 807-9w
Hospital beds 548-9w
Information 67w
NHS administration 414w
NHS finance 805-6w
Orthopaedics 699w, 781w
Out-patients 163-4w
Regional health authorities 216w
Scotland 173-4w, 657w, 770-2w
Wales 163-6w
Wandsworth Health Authority 411w

Hospitals
Building repairs 786-7w
Children's hospitals (12.12.86) 748-56
Exhibitions 705-6w
NHS finance 411w
Paediatric cardiology 36w
Upper Waiting Hall 705-6w

Hostages
Prison riots 648w

Hostels
Mental health community care 465w

Hotels 512w, (19.12.86) 1541-8
English Tourist Board 525w
Scotland 508w
Wales 451w

HOTOL Aircraft 372w
Nuclear weapons 372w

House condition survey 719w
Wales 719w

House of Commons
Research assistants 27w

House of Commons division of time
Speaker's rulings & statements (16.12.86) 1079

House of Commons divisions (10.12.86) 446, 491

House of Commons select committees
Civil servants 774

House of Commons (Services) Select Committee
Telephone tapping 718w

House purchase 177

House renovation grants 395w, 583w
Housing stock 1200-1

Households
Homelessness 30-1w
Personal income 530w
Scotland 19w
Single people 19w

Houses
Central heating 753w
Heating 753w

Housing 669w
British Coal Corporation 1200
Crofting 508w
Leicester 280-1w
Local authorities 588w
Multiple occupation (10.12.86) 355
NHS 787w
Security 280-1w
Solar power 381-2w, 529-30w
Sound insulation 753-4w

Housing Act 1985
Questions
686w

Housing amenities
Government grants 1201-2

Housing & elderly
Central heating 720w

Housing and Planning Act 1986
Questions
1195

Housing associations
Wales 5

Housing benefits 286w, 807w
Costs 127-9w
Local government expenditure 127-9w
Social security recipients 695-8w
Training allowances 115w, 516-7w

Housing Benefits Amendment (No 5) Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1395

Housing capital allocations 1-2, 35w
Wales 5-6, 35w

Housing completions
Wales 319-20w

Housing construction
Building land 281-2w
Council housing 696-7w
New towns 173w
Planning permission 399w

Housing Corporation
Housing finance 93-4w

Housing Defects Act 1984
Cornish unit houses 29w
Questions
29w

Housing estates
Demolition 30w, 95w
Portsdown Park 30w
Vandalism 1187

Housing finance 747w
Council housing 35w

Government grants to local authorities 746-7w
Housing Corporation 93-4w

Housing (Houses in Multiple Occupation) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 355

Housing improvement 586w
Departmental leaflets 752w
Portsdown Park 30-1w

Housing insulation
Building regulations 753w
Elderly 382w, 764
Energy efficiency 764
Government grants 377-8w
Insulation grants 754-5w
Low incomes 382w
Voluntary organisations 379w

Housing investment programmes 192-3w, 283w, 686w, 746-7w

Housing policy
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 913-33

Housing standards
Health 719w
Rents 748-9w
Wales 719w

Housing starts
Inverclyde 504w
Strathclyde 504w

Housing stock 30w
House renovation grants 1200-1

Housing subsidies
Council housing management 682-3w
Local government expenditure 682-3w

Housing tenure
Hospital staff 787w

***Howard, Mr Michael,** Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade & Industry*
Debates etc
Iron & steel industry, Wolverhampton Group (09.12.86) 317-22
Office of Fair Trading (15.12.86) 994-8
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 890-3
Questions
Bankruptcy 180w
Companies, Shareholders 345w
Company investigations, MPB Russell 181w
Company law, EC action 183w
Consumer protection 715w
Copyright, Legislation 183w
Counterfeit manufacturing, Prosecutions 345w
Film industry, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 546w
Financial Services Act 1986 609w
Fraud, Lawyers 336
Insider trading 335-6
Insider trading, Banks 21w
Insurance, EC internal trade 262w
Kangaroo, Furs 185w
Mergers, Legislation 178-9w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Administration delays 177-8w
Package holidays, Consumer protection 329
Package holidays, Holiday problems 185w
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers 184w
Product liability 324-5
Product liability, Drug industry 325
Safety 98w
Shares, Ownership 264w
Standard Chartered Bank, Lloyds of London 98w
Takeovers, Ault & Wiborg 715w
Trade Descriptions Act 1972 98-9w
Transworld Leisure, Company liquidations 185-6w

Howarth, Mr Alan
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1244, 1259, 1265, 1274-9
Questions
Charitable donations, Tax allowances 259w
Enterprise & Deregulation Unit 818-20w
Small businesses, Enterprise & Deregulation Unit 818w

Howarth, Mr George
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 457-61, 474, 560-1
Questions
Government assistance to industry, Knowsley South industrial park 715w
Rate support grants 578w

Howarth, Mr Gerald
Debates etc
Early warning systems (15.12.86) 780-1, (18.12.86) 1410
Obscene Publications Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 355
Prime Minister's Questions (10.12.86) 326
Questions
BBC, Codes of practice 640-1w
Engineering industries, Skilled workers 1041
Gentleman, Brian, Espionage 774
Manufacturing industries, Investment 339-40
Rover Group, Corporate plans 439w

***Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey,** Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1203-12

Howell, Rt Hon Denis
Questions
Sports sponsorship, Tobacco industry 1198

Howell, Mr Ralph
Questions
Small businesses, Government contracts 517-8w

Howells, Mr Geraint
Questions
Butter, Food surpluses 450w
Farm incomes, Wales 15
Farm owners 597w
Farm owners, Ceredigion 449w
Farm owners, Dyfed 449w
Farmers, Scotland 507w
Farms, Wales 529w
Invisible trade balance 179w
Lime, Retail trade 450w
Milk, Production quotas 451w
Population, Wales 450-1w
Private health services, Wales 36w
Radioactive waste disposal, Sellafield 1192
Sheep premiums, Wales 3
Supplementary benefits, Wales 418w

Hoyle, Mr Doug
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1412, 1427-30
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 877, 885-6
Questions
Early warning systems, Defence procurement 176
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 162
Leyland Trucks, Privatisation 332
Manpower Services Commission, Business education 509w
Smallpox, Industrial health & safety 541w
Smallpox, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine 541w
Viruses, Industrial health & safety 541-2w
Viruses, Prohibition notices 542w

Hughes, Mr Robert
Questions
Road construction, Consultants 154w
Road construction, Costs 153-4w
Road traffic 152w

Hughes, Mr Roy
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1319-21
Questions
Iron & steel industry, Japan 338
Motorways, Wales 616w
Planning appeals, Wales 9
Reykjavik summit, Defence 141w
Severn bridge, Road traffic 600w
Severn bridge, Toll bridges 600w
Unemployment, Newport 1-2
Unemployment, Statistics 512w

Hughes, Mr Sean
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 86-9
Questions
Burglary, Wales 635w
International Year of Shelter for the Homeless 90w
Nature Conservancy Council, Sites of special scientific interest 583w

Hughes, Mr Simon
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return of Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1311, 1317-8
Questions
Arms exports 142w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Capital investment 530w
Community charge, Administrative costs 283w
Council house waiting lists, London boroughs 28w, 96w
"Faith in the City" 30w
Guys Hospital, Laboratories 569-70w
Housing investment programmes 283w, 686w
Inner city areas, Church of England 95w
Local government finance, Rate support grants 1190
Mortgage defaulters, Local authorities 590w
Radioactive waste disposal, Compensation 591w
Rate support grants 283w, 399w, 578w
Rates & rating 283w
Sizewell B, Cost effectiveness 380w
UK companies abroad, South Africa 182w
Urban programme, Southwark 590w
Voluntary organisations, Local government reform 1343-4

Human embryo experiments 218w, (10.12.86) 356, 469w

"Human infertility services & embryo research consultation papers" 469w

Human organs 399w
Plutonium 399w

Human rights
Afghanistan 444w
Arms trade 8w
Eastern Europe 758w

Human Rights Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 354

Humberside airport 276w
Privatisation 276w

Humberside County Council 276w

Hume, Mr John
Questions
Criminal injuries compensation, Northern Ireland 1w
Social security recipients, Northern Ireland 623w
Supplementary benefits, Northern Ireland 621-2w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 620-1w
Unemployment benefits, Northern Ireland 622-3w

Hunt, Mr David, *Under-Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Alternative energy, EC Energy Council 378w
Alternative energy, Research finance 199w
British Coal Corporation 377w
Coal, Imports 761-2
Coal fired power stations 765
Coal gasification 378w, 380w
Coal mining, Capital investment 200w
Coal mining, Death 379w
Coal mining, Labour Party 765-6
Coal mining, Manpower 379w
Coal mining, Productivity 764-5
Coal mining, Safety 765
Energy conservation 242-3w
Energy efficiency, Expenditure 200-1w
Housing insulation, Elderly 382w
Housing insultation, Government grants 377-8w
Housing insultation, Voluntary organisations 379w
Industrial energy conservation 242w
Mersey barrage 379w
Redundant mineworkers payments scheme, Tredegar 382w
Severn barrage 195w
Severn barrage, Electricity distribution 762
Severn barrage, Energy consumption 618w
Solar power, Dept of Energy 381-2w, 529-30w
Solway Firth barrage 381w
Tidal power, Energy research 617-8w

Hunt, Mr John
Questions
Planning appeals, Bromley 579w

Hunter, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 383, 395, 400, 473, 478
Questions
Balance of trade, Japan 608-9w
Bramley camp 142w
Cement, Unfair competition 175w
Drug abuse, EC action 640w
Environmentally sensitive areas 624-5w
Greenbelt, Planning permission 587w
Greenbelt, Shopping centres 685-6w
Unemployment, Basingstoke 511w

Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas, *Secretary of State for the Home Department*
Questions
Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 560-1w
Boundary Commission for England, Parliamentary constituencies 559-60w
Boundary Commission for England, Public appointments 560w
Compulsorily detained mental patients 733w
Consultants, Home Office 253w
Counterfeit manufacturing, Fines 169w
Crime, Greater London 1335
Crime prevention 1339
Crown immunity 646w
Cruelty to children 643-4w
Drug abuse, EC action 640w
Drug abuse, Narcotics 170w
Horse racing 349w
Intelligence services 170w
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 645w
Knowlden, Alan Richard, Prison escapes 484-5w
Law enforcement 1339-40
Maxwell Fyfe directive 349w, 641w
McGinley, Ken, British Nuclear Test Veterans Association 482w
Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, Burglary 653-4w
Metropolitan Police 1333-4
Metropolitan Police, Crime prevention 1334
Metropolitan Police, Manpower 1335
Ministerial advisory bodies, Home Office 102-3w
Motor vehicle theft 169w
National security 253-4w
Police records, Disclosure of information 731w
Remand in custody 351w
Representation of the People Act 1985 560w
Statistics, Home Office 167-9w
Subversion 1344-5
Trade union officials, Convictions 1339-40

Hypothermia
Babies 790w
Cleveland 211-2w
Death 211-2w, 471w, 790w
Leeds 471w

ICI 183-4w

Identity cards 558w, 645w
Football 678w

Illegal broadcasting
Greater London 97w
Prosecutions 97w

Immigrant detainees 734w
Indian subcontinent 734w
Political refugees 103-4w
Tamils 733w

Immigrants 732w
Unemployment 733w

Immigration 653w

Immigration appeals
Administrative delays 732w

Immigration applications
Banerjee, Mahuya 758w
Entry clearances 165-6w

Immigration controls
Leeds-Bradford Airport 480w
Ports 480w

Immunity from prosecution
Bowe, Colette 236w
Cyprus 775w

Imperial Group (15.12.86) 831

Import controls
Plant diseases 526w
"Poor Mans James Bond" 259w
Salmon 828w

Import duties
Gaza strip 263-4w
West Bank 263-4w

Import licensing
Toucan beroet birds 748w

Imports
Coal 761-2
Contraceptives 295w
Electricity 381-2w
Lawn mowers 439w
Nuclear fuels 383w
Plutonium 240w
Tiles 21w, 100w
Tobacco duties 668w
Uranium 473w
Vauxhall Motors 545w

Improvement for sale schemes 31-4w

In Vitro Fertilisation Departmental Committee 218w, 421w

Income
Film industry 606w

Income support scheme 704w
Severe disability premium 704w

Income tax 738w
Personal income 495-8w
Tax rates & bands 737w
Tax yields 83w

India
Bangladesh 756w
Prisoners (19.12.86) 1504-15

Indian subcontinent
Immigrant detainees 734w
Temporary immigrants 252-3w, 733-4w
Visas 732w

Indictable offences
Convictions 729w
Prison sentences 729w

Indonesia
Official visits 268-9w

Industrial accidents
Death 116w
Leyton 116w

Industrial death benefits
Widows benefits 47w

Industrial development
Leicester 178w
Manufacturing industries 176w

Industrial disputes 541w
JE Hanger & Company 697w
Liverpool University 663w
Lost working days 220-2w, 541w
Picketing 520-1w
Prosthetics 697w

Industrial energy conservation 242w

Industrial health & safety
Divers 514w
Hazardous materials 525-6w
Polyurethane 369-70w
Power stations 629w
Small businesses 818w
Smallpox 541w
Viruses 541-2w

Industrial production
Engineering industries 330
Manufacturing industries 176w
Research 608w
Strikes 545-6w
Tiles 21w, 100w

Industrial research
Dept of Trade & Industry 716-7w
European Economic Community 716-7w

Industrial safety
Coal mining 758

Industrial training 184w, 513w, 1042-3
Adult education 1046
Company taxation 1046
Deptford 543w
Engineering industries 1041-2
High technology 514w
North West region 256w
Training levies 178w
West Midlands 1047
Young people 1043

Industrial training schemes
Bolton 633-4w
Employment agencies 817w
Printing industry 628-9w
Professional qualifications 628w
Southwark 630w
Take-up of employment 522w, 629w
Training allowances 509w
West London 522w

Industrial tribunals
Speech therapists 633w

Industries
Electrical control equipment 20w

Industry
Pollution control 90w, 191w
Research 160-1w
Trade competitiveness 414w
Training 181w, 184w

Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929
Questions
North East Thames Regional Health Authority 214w
North West Thames Regional Health Authority 214w
Northern Regional Health Authority 214w
Oxford Regional Health Authority 214w
Regional health authorities 214w
South East Thames Regional Health Authority 290w
Wales 318w

Infant mortality
Wales 720w

Infectious diseases
Hospital patients 417-8w

Inflation 260w
Arts finance 736-7w

Information
Hospital waiting lists 67w
Small businesses 630w
Speech therapy 210w

Infrastructure
Employment opportunities 338
Investment 336-8

Initial teacher training 159w
Student numbers 159w

Injuries
Lorries 400w
Road accidents 171w, 400w, 506-7w

Inland Revenue & Customs & Excise Review of Enforcement Powers Committee 260-1w

Inland waterways
Water pollution 578w

Inner area programmes 190w
Local authorities 190w

Inner cities initiative 228w, 540w

Inner city areas
Church of England 12-3, 95w
Churches 13
Expenditure 584w
NHS finance 48w
Planning 1186
Small businesses 518w

Inner city partnerships
Disadvantaged 16w

Inner London boroughs
Unemployment 220w

Inner London Education Authority
County Hall 684w
Offices 684w

Innovation
Engineering industries 331
Printing industry 628w

"Input of Contaminants to the North Sea from the United Kingdom 191w

Inquiries
Lloyds of London 608w
MV Kowloon Bridge 603-4w
Peterhead Prison 302-3w

In-service training
Teacher training 724w

Insider trading 335-6
Banks 21w
Prosecutions 336
Share ownership 766-7

Institute of Offshore Engineering 191w

Institute of Terrestrial Ecology 390w
Finance 390w

Insulation
Community programme 763-4

Insulation grants
Housing insulation 754-5w
Scotland 771w

Insurance
EC internal trade 262w
Lloyds of London 716w

"Intellectual Property & Innovation White Paper" 180w

Intelligence services 170w, (15.12.86) 862-3
Companies 688w
Disclosure of information 1-3w, 5w, 113-4w, 151w, 175, 177-8, 310w, 314-6w, 442w, 605w, 611w, 645w
Labour Party 175
Pensions 352w
Private Members' motions (15.12.86) 782-828
Prosecutions 177-8
Television programmes 2-3w, 442w
Wilson, Harold 175

Interest charges
Debts (16.12.86) 1078
Small businesses 258w

Interest rates
Economic growth 331

International Development Association
UK contributions 615w

International Fund for Ireland 234-5w

International Garden Festival 1984 192w, 315w
Anton, John 315w
Merseyside Development Corporation 192w
Transworld Leisure 192w

International Year of Shelter for the Homeless 90w, 580-1w

Intervention Board
Expenditure 111-2w

Intervention stocks 820w
Butter 528w, 597-8w
Companies 367w
Dundee 657w
Liverpool 528w, 598w
Trent Grain 828-9w

Interviews
Restart programme 521w, 813w, 1037, 1045

Invalid care allowances
Administrative delays 564w
Married women 68w
Severe disability premium 704w

Inverclyde
Housing starts 504w

Investment
Coal mining 757-8
Infrastructure 336-8
Manufacturing industries 176-7w, 339-40
North West region 338
Pension funds 340
Rural areas 25-6w
Shipping 129w, 599-600w

Investment in financial assets
West Midlands Free Port 137w

Investment income surcharge 424w

Investment returns
Water authorities 436w, (17.12.86) 1307-23

Invisible trade balance 179w

Iran
Arms exports 172-3, 691w, (15.12.86) 834-7
Arms trade 113w, 118w, 174, 443w
Defence contracts 173, 373w
Defence equipment 172-3, 691w
Export controls 346w
Political refugees 351w
Protective clothing 346w
Radar 373w
USA 113w

Iran-Iraq war 8w
Arms trade 8w

Iraq
Official visits 756-7w
Trade delegations 715w

Irish Sea 266w, 580w
Radioactive waste disposal 266w, 1192-4

Iron & steel
Production quotas 335

Iron & steel industry
Company liquidations (09.12.86) 313-22
Defence contracts 330-1
EC action 181w
Japan 338
Privatisation 334-5
Productivity 335
Readaptation benefits 346w
Subsidies 181w
Wolverhampton Group (09.12.86) 313-22

Island Councils of Scotland Committee of Inquiry (15.12.86) 958-70
Consolidation fund debates (15.12.86) 958-70

Isle of Man
Lawn mowers 347w

Islington
Job creation schemes 524-5w

Israel
Vanunu, Mordechai 269w, 762w

ISTEL
Management buy-outs 609w

Jackson, Mr Robert
Debates etc
A420, Oxfordshire (19.12.86) 1526-9
Questions
Cement, Greece 607w
Generic prescribing, Family doctors 781w
Limited list prescribing, Drugs 782w

Janner, Mr Greville
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 666
Harrier GR5 Mission Simulator, Standing Order No 20 applications (15.12.86) 779
Oral question time intervention (15.12.86) 758
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1062
Questions
Council house waiting lists, Leicester 588w
Identity cards 645w
Industrial development, Leicester 178w
Manufacturing industries, Leicester 340
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1341
Oil industry, Balance of trade 758-9
River pollution 578w
Unemployment, Statistics 537w

Japan
Balance of trade 338-9, 608-9w
Iron & steel industry 338
Ministers' visits abroad 338
Offshore suppliers 474w
Unfair trading practices 339

Jarrow
Availability for work 520w

JE Hanger & Company 697w
Industrial disputes 697w

Jehovah's Witnesses
Greece 272-3w
Religious discrimination 272-3w

Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Debates etc
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1055-6

Jessel, Mr Toby
Questions
Hampton Court, Fires 390-1w
Juries 549w
River Thames, Teddington 748w
Royal Military School of Music 173

Job creation schemes
Islington 524-5w

Job start scheme 370-1w, 1040-1
Low pay 1040
Training allowances 1040

Jobclubs 522-3w, 811-2w, 1036-7
Brigg 812w
Cleethorpes 812w
Take-up of employment 523w, 811w

John, Mr Brynmor
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1215-6
Questions
Planning appeals, Talbot Green 8

Johnson Matthey 3w, 84w
Bank of England 84w
Criminal investigation 3w

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1358

Questions
Assualt ships, Defence procurement 181
Warships, Defence procurement 145w

Johnston, Sir Russell
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 208
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1205-6
European Council (08.12.86) 26
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 189

Jones, Mr Barry
Debates etc
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 883
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1064-5, 1067
Recess motions, Christmas (15.12.86) 866
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Wales 319-20w
Capitation allowances, Wales 320w
Hospital beds, Wales 319w
Housing capital allocations, Wales 5-6
Housing completions, Wales 319-20w
Newbridge bypass, Costs 719w
School leaving, Youth unemployment 318-9w
Teachers' appraisal, Wales 15
Unemployment, Wales 321w
Venture capital, Wales 7
Young people, Wales 320-1w

Jones Mr Gwilym
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1068
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1145-7
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 349
Questions
Council housing, Wales 5
Oral questions, Wales 17
Whitchurch Hospital, Cardiff, Dangerous mental patients 11-2

Jones, Mr Robert B
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1443-5
Hedgerow Protection Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 355
Questions
Rapier missiles, Defence procurement 373w
Taxation 260-1w

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Questions
Common agricultural policy, Deficiency payments scheme 246w
Common agricultural policy, Expenditure 110-2w
Environmentally sensitive areas 624-5w
Hill livestock allowances, Marginal land 596-7w
Intervention Board, Expenditure 111-2w
Intervention stocks, Butter 528w
Intervention stocks, Liverpool 598w
Regional planning & development, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food 9-10w

Jordan
Overseas aid 536w

Jordanhill College of Education 301w, 304w

Judges
Diplock courts 766w
Drinking & driving 605w

Judgments
EC budget 744-5w
Speech therapy 708w

Junior hospital doctors
Hospital consultants 72-4w

Juries 549w

Justices' clerks
Professional qualifications 1343

Kangaroo
Furs 185w

Kaufman, Rt. Hon. Gerald
Questions
Law enforcement 1339-40
Political refugees, Iran 351w

Kaur, Kuldip (19.12.86) 1504-15
Prisoners (19.12.86) 1504-15

Keith Committee see Inland Revenue & Customs & Excise Review of Enforcement Powers Committee

Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1253, 1279
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1222
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 782
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 51, 98, 107
Teachers' pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interventions (10.12.86) 427
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 388, 426, 430, 566
Questions
Higher education, Student numbers 229-30w

Kennedy, Mr Charles
Debates etc
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86.) 194
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1142-5
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 344
Questions
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Highlands of Scotland 296w
Gruinard Island 311w
Social security claims, Highlands of Scotland 471w
Social security recipients, Highlands of Scotland 296w

Kent
Visual arts 723-4w

Kent Institute of Art & Design 723-4w

Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1205

Key, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1414, 1424
MV Kowloon Bridge & MV Derbyshire (12.12.86) 699-700
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 70
Questions
Civil service manpower, Government departments 137w
Copyright, Small businesses 326-7
Council housing management, Housing subsidies 682-3w
Development Commission, Finance 582w
NHS, Procurement 414w
Teacher training, In-service training 724w

Khan, Ammanullah 251-2w
Deportation 251-2w

Kidney donors (08.12.86) 154-60

Kidneys
Transplant surgery 569w

King, Mr Roger
Questions
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 333

King, Rt Hon Tom, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1079-86, 1108
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 620w
Firearms, EC action 46w
Legislation, Northern Ireland 234w
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 374-7w
Public expenditure, Northern Ireland 235-6w

King's College Hospital 558w

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 660, 670, (18.12.86) 1360-1
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1415, 1421-2
House of Commons division of time (10.12.86) 643
Wright, Peter, Civil proceedings (17.12.86) 1230
Questions
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 1048-9
Families, Supplementary benefits 1348-50
Terrorism, EC action 174

Kinnock, Neil 177
USA 174, 177
Wright, Peter 772

Kirkwood, Mr Archy
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 208-9, 246
Access to Personal Files Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 354
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 349
Questions
AIDS, Scotland 660-1w
Civil defence 648w
Dentures, Dental charges 786w
Employment opportunities, EC grants & loans 516w
Health Education Council 408w
Health foods, Prices 9w
Health services finance, Scotland 658w
Homicide, Criminal investigation 300w
Homicide, Detection rates 349w
Hospital waiting lists, Scotland 657w, 770-2w
Hospitals, Building repairs 786-7w
Hospitals, NHS finance 411w
Long stay patients, Smoking 785-6w
McCrae, William, Death 352w
Measles, Vaccination 288-9w
Mobility allowance, Age 564w
Mobility allowance, Social security benefits rules 124w
National Assistance Act 1948, Handicapped 786w
NHS, Scotland 658w
Orthopaedics, Hospital waiting lists 781w
Parliamentary questions 435-6w
Physiotherapists, Manpower 209w
Prisoners, Smoking 653w
Public Health Laboratory Service, Expenditure 413w
Public Health Laboratory Service, Vacancies 288w
Radioactive waste disposal, Scotland 659w, 771w
Regional health authorities, Public appointments 407-8w
Research assistants 435w
Special education, Down's Syndrome 664w
Supplementary benefits, Restaurants 285-6w
Teacher training, Down's Syndrome 663-4w
Womens employment, Pregnancy 629-30w

Kneller Hall 173

Knight, Mr Greg
Questions
Coal mining, Death 379w
Local government expenditure 1051
Public expenditure, Northern Ireland 235-6w

Knight, Dame Jill
Debates etc

Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 345
Questions
Amyl nitrite, Drug abuse 649w, 735w

Knowlden, Alan Richard 484-5w
Prison escapes 484-5w, (15.12.86) 757

Knowles, Mr Michael
Questions
Urban development corporations 580w

Knowsley South industrial park 715w
Government assistance to industry 715w

Knox, Mr David
Questions
Council house sales, Council tenants 1200
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 176w
Multifibre arrangement, Bilateral treaties 716w
Police relations with public, Motoring 558-9w
Prison population 643w
Road accidents, Casualties 533-4w
Road safety, European Road Safety Year 534w
Safety measures 570w
Unemployment, Staffordsnire 512w
Urban regeneration grants, Government grants 668w

Labelling
Furs 185w
Smallpox 541w

Laboratories
Guys Hospital 569-70w

Labour mobility
Mortgages 1038

Labour Party
Coal mining 765-6
Defence 176-7
Intelligence services 175
NATO 176-7
Nuclear weapons 1347
Trident 172

Lambeth
Metropolitan Police (Compensation) Act 1886 732w
Riot (Damages) Act 1886, 732w

Lambie, Mr David
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 232-4, 270

Lamond, Mr James
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 665
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1223
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1143
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 346
Questions
Availability for work 1038
Multifibre arrangement, Bilateral treaties 184w
Power stations, Design 760

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman, Financial Secretary to the Treasury
Debates etc
Consolidated Fund Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 442
Questions
Black economy 187w
Business expansion scheme, Film industry 739w
Company taxation, Capital investment 137w
Income tax 738w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 737w
Income tax, Tax yields 83w
Investment income surcharge 424w
Mortgage relief, Cohabitation 424w
Mortgage relief, Tax allowances 84-5w
Mortgage relief, Taxpayers 738-40w
Personal income, Income tax 495-8w
Personal taxation, Entertainers 740w
Personal taxation, Tax allowances 745-6w
Privatisation, Shareholders 259w
Tax allowances, Film industry 666w, 739-40w
Tax allowances, Married people 426w
Tax allowances, Research 666w
Tax rates & bands 426-7w
Tax relief, Companies 740w
Tax yields, Leasehold housing 260w, 428w, 666w, 740w
Tax yields, Tax rates & bands 426w
Taxpayers, Personal income 562w
Unitary taxation 667w
Venture capital, Business expansion scheme 739w

Land acquisition
Defence land 690-1w
National Portrait Gallery 82w
Northern Ireland 377w
Residential care 566w
Sprucefield 377w
Tilgate Forest 365-6w
Water authorities 398w

Land ownership & tenure
Belvedere Hospital, Glasgow 548w
Common land 1189
Forestry Commission 505w
Tree planting 505w

Land registration
Administrative delays 677w
Common land (16.12.86) 1179-84, 1188
Disclosure of information 431w, 766w
Scotland (10.12.86) 356
Southwark 677w

Land Rover
Export controls 262w

Land use
Cereals 11w
Local government land 192w
Merseyside Development Corporation 192w
Tree planting 505w

Land Use Consultants 278-9w

Land values
London Residuary Body 679w

Landlord & tenant
Building repairs 586w
Rents 749w

Landlord & Tenant Act 1985
Questions
749w

Lang, Mr Ian, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland
Questions
Ailsa shipyard, Property transfer 304w
Average earnings, Scotland 773w
Chapelcross power station, Emergency planning 19w
Drinking & driving, Arrests 506w
Electoral register, Scotland 507w
Employment, Greenock 299-300w
Fast reactors, Expenditure 171w
Homicide, Criminal investigation 300w
Hotels, Scotland 508w
Housing construction, New towns 173w
Local enterprise grants for urban projects schemes, Scotland 657w
Manufacturing industries, Redundancy 303-4w
Migrant workers, Dundee 170w
Ministers' domestic visits, Cumbernauld 772w
New towns development corporations, Disclosure of information 173w
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 170-1w
Offences against children, Convictions 768-70w
Peterhead Prison, Inquiries 302-3w
Peterhead Prison, Scottish Prison Officers Association 302w
Police custody, Scotland 772w
Policewomen, Strathclyde 774w
Regional aid, Greenock 302w
School leaving, Greenock 357w
Torness power station, Emergency planning 136w, 774-5w
Torness power station, Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 173-4w
Torness power station, Nuclear safety 657w
Torness power station, Radiation hazards 657w
Torness power station, Training 305w
Tourism, Scotland 170w
Unemployment, Glasgow 656w
Unemployment, Greenock 355-6w
Unemployment, Lothian 504w
Unemployment, Scotland 504w
Unisys, Factory closures 773w
Whisky, Redundancy 355w
Women, Police custody 298w
Women, Prison sentences 298-9w
Women, Prisoners 299w
Women, Remand in custody 299w

Latham, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 664, (18.12.86) 1362
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1059
Questions
Armed forces' pensions 593-4w
Armed forces' pensions, Widows benefits 594w
Arms exports, Iran 173
Black, John, Homicide 142-3w
Churches, Inner city areas 13
Civil servants, British Geological Survey 773
M1, Road traffic 132-3w
Palace of Westminster, Security 16
Public Record Office, Construction 91w
Public Record Office, Government grants 89w
Public Record Office, Repairs & maintenance 91-2w
Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Melton Mowbray 372w
Stocken Prison, Expenditure 647w
Technology 87, Tel-Aviv 20w
Unemployment 511w

Laundries
Local authorities 587w

Law enforcement (15.12.86) 934-45, 1339-40
Bus lanes 1334
Salmon Act 1976 102w
Security industry 647w

Law reform
Crown Proceedings Act 1947 85-6w, 498-9w, 1346
Licensing laws 647w

Lawler, Mr Geoff
Questions
Commercial television, Competition 646w
Derelict land, Government grants 587w
Engineering industries, Skilled workers 1042
International Development Association, UK contributions 615w
Lost working days, Industrial disputes 220-2w
Nigeria, British Caledonian 756w
Research, Industry 160-1w
St Lukes Hospital, Bradford, Violence 123w
Vocational guidance, Schools 721w
Youth training scheme, Ethnic groups 632w, 814w
Youth training scheme, Manpower Services Commission 513-4w

Lawn mowers 179-80w, 439w
Channel Islands 347w
Exports 439w
Factories 439w
Imports 439w
Isle of Man 347w
Noise control 179-80w, 439w

Lawnmowers (Harmonisation of Noise Emission Standards) Regulations 1986
Questions
179-80w, 347w

Lawrence, Mr Ivan
Questions
Civil servants' business appointments 604w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 348w

Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1233-45, 1252, 1254, 1256, 1286, 1291
Questions
Charitable donations, Pay 497w
Company taxation, Capital investment 85w
EC Finance Council 421-2w
Profit sharing 425w, 665w
VAT, Customs & Excise 740-3w
VAT, Tax yields 486w, 666-7w

Lawyers
Crown Prosecution Service 768w
Fraud 336

Lead
Petrol 754w

Lead poisoning
Blood lead levels 754w

Lead pollution
EC action 394-5w
Pollution monitoring 394-5w

Leader of the Opposition
National security 237w

Leasehold housing
Rents 260w, 428w, 740w
Tax yields 260w, 428w, 666w, 740w
Wales 10-1

Lee, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Employment
Questions
"Arts & Disabled People", Dept of Employment 525w
Average earnings 115w
Community programme 115-6w
Community programme, Pay 522-3w
Community programme, Young people 1043-4
EC nationals, South East region 221w
Employment 815-6w
Employment, Northern Ireland 537-8w, 634-6w
Employment opportunities, Basildon 219-20w
Employment opportunities, EC grants & loans 516w
Employment opportunities, Northern Ireland 538w, 815w
Employment schemes 115w
Employment schemes, Southwark 630w
Greater Springburn Enterprises, Manpower Services Commission 224w
Handicapped workers, Unemployment 520w
Industrial disputes 541w
Industrial disputes, Lost working days 541w
Industrial disputes, Picketing 520-1w
Job creation schemes, Islington 524-5w
Job start scheme 1040-1
Job start scheme, Training allowances 1040
Jobclubs, Brigg 812w
Jobclubs, Take-up of employment 523w, 811w
Lost working days, Industrial disputes 220-2w
Manpower Services Commission, Business education 509w
Manufacturing industries, Manpower 516w
Manufacturing industries, North West region 540w
Manufacturing industries, Sheffield 515-6w
North Liverpool Music Resource Centre, Manpower Services Commission 632w
Overseas workers, South East region 114-5w
Printing industry, Greater London 538w
Quota of handicapped workers 116w
Redundancy, Northern Ireland 537-8w
Regional planning & development, Dept of Employment 116w
Restart programme 14-5w
Restart programme, Unemployment 14w
Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Prosecutions 15w
Sheltered employment, Government grants 524w
Skillcentres, Deptford 225w
Skillcentres, Greater London 225-6w
Skillcentres, Women 225w
Speech therapists, Equal pay 15w
Speech therapists, Industrial tribunals 633w
Take-up of employment, Northern region 516w
Tobacco industry, Manpower 16w
Tobacco industry, Redundancy 817w
Training, Handicapped workers 816w
Training allowances, Housing benefits 115w
Unemployment 114w, 511w, 1040
Unemployment, Basildon 219w
Unemployment, Basingstoke 511w
Unemployment, Cumbria 523w
Unemployment, Dunfermline 14w
Unemployment, Inner London boroughs 220w
Unemployment, Liverpool 11-4w
Unemployment, Married people 814-5w
Unemployment, Merseyside 13w
Unemployment, Sheffield 511w
Unemployment, Staffordshire 512w
Unemployment, West London 522w
Unemployment benefit offices, Hornchurch 117w
Vacancies, High technology 514w
Women, Dept of Employment 811-2w
Work permits, British Dependent Territories 371w
Young people, Industrial training 1043
Youth unemployment, Liverpool 12-4w

Lee, John 177-8

Leeds
Hypothermia 471w
Local education authorities 42w

Leeds-Bradford Airport 480w, 497-8w
Body searches 497-8w
Immigration controls 480w

Legal aid
Administrative delays 767w
Expenditure 767w
Political parties 314w

Legal Aid Efficiency Scrutiny 766

Legislation
Animal cruelty 648w
Copyright 183w
Firearms 642w
Mergers 178-9w
Northern Ireland 234w
Water 683w

Leicester
Council house waiting lists 588w
Employment opportunities 521w
Enterprise allowance scheme 816w
Housing 280-1w
Industrial development 178w
Manufacturing industries 340
Young training scheme 631-2w

Leicestershire
Police civilians 74w
Police patrolling 1341

Leighton, Mr Ron
Debates etc
European Council (08.12.86) 28
Questions
Further education colleges, Educational standards 629w
Industrial training schemes, Professional qualifications 628w
Industrial training schemes, Take-up of employment 629w
Invisible trade balance 179w
Printing industry, Greater London 538w
Printing industry, Industrial training schemes 628-9w
Restart programme, Employment opportunities 1036
Wages Inspectorate, Civil service manpower 524w

Leisure
Settle-Carlisle railway 132w

Leisure facilities
Bird watching 432w
Greenbelt 685-6w

Letters
Solicitor-General 113w, 237w

Level crossings
Railway safety 39-40w

Lewis, Sir Kenneth
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1238
Business statement (10.12.86) 661
Early warning systems (15.12.86) 780-1

Lewis, Mr Ron
Debates etc
Business statement (18.12.86) 1365

Lewis, Mr Terry
Debates etc
Community Health Councils (Access to Information) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 355-6
Questions
Exceptional circumstances additions, Arthritis 466w
Exceptional circumstances additions, Social security benefits rules 466w
Maxwell Fyfe Directive 641w
Motorways, Road safety barriers 274w
Prime Minister domestic visits 614w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Manchester 613-4w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Scotland 614w
Prime Minister visits abroad 612-3w
Restart programme, Interviews 1045

Leyland Bus 348w

Leyland Trucks 348w
Privatisation 332

Leyland Vehicles 348w

Leyton
Industrial accidents 116w

Leytonstone
Severe weather payments 65-6w

Libyan Arab Republic
Arms trade 166-7
Export controls 263w, 347w
Export licensing 262w, 347w, 353w, 372w
Exports 238w
Special Air Service 166-7

Licensed premises
Licensing laws (10.12.86) 354

Licensing
Animal experiments 560-1w
Motor vehicle testing 831-2w
Slaughterhouses 246w

Licensing (Amendment) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 354

Licensing laws
Law reform 647w
Licensed premises (10.12.86) 354
Young people 648w

Life imprisonment
Men 652w
Women 652w

Light dues 41-2w
EC countries 41-2w
Republic of Ireland 41-2w

Lightburn Hospital 549w
Building repairs 549w

Lighting
Crime prevention 249-50w, 1342
M25 151w
Motorways 506w
Roads 507w

Lilley, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 252
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1290
Questions
Falkland Islands, Curteis, Ian 164
Representation of the People Act 1985 560w

Lime
Retail trade 450w

Limited list prescribing 700w, 781-2w
Drugs 782w
Expenditure 700w, 782w
Mucodyne 704w

Lindane
Bats 258w, 398w
Pest control 258w

Listed buildings 194w
Northern Ireland 761w
University Grants Committee 101w

Literature
Arts finance 736w

Liverpool
Availability for work 520w
Intervention stocks 528w, 598w
Ministers' domestic visits 440w
Restart Programme 258w, 538-9w
Unemployment 11-4w
Youth unemployment 12-4w

Liverpool University 663w
Industrial disputes 663w
Ministers' domestic visits 663w

Livestock
Export of live animals 526w

Livsey, Mr Richard
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1218
Food aid from EC (09.12.86) 288
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 527-8
Questions
Export promotion 327
Welsh Development Agency, Agriculture 6

Lloyd, Sir Ian
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1206

Lloyd, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Business statement (18.12.86) 1364
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1209
Education (Nutritional Requirements) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 355
Questions
Central Electricity Generating Board 378w
Crime victims, Children 636-40w
Economic situation, North West region 20w
Electrical control equipment, Industries 20w
Engineering industries, Productivity 330
House renovation grants 583w
Industrial training, North West region 256w
NHS finance, North West region 48w
NHS finance, South East region 48w
Public expenditure, North West region 83w, 137-8w
Temporary immigrants 732w
Urban programme, Religion 27w

Lloyd's of London
Inquiries 608w
Insurance 716w
Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate 716w
Standard Chartered Bank 98w

Loan guarantee scheme 519w
Small businesses 519w
Take-up 519w

Loans
Farmers 526w

Local authorities
Block grant 587w
Capital investment 137w, 497w
Electorate 668-9w
Energy efficiency 764
Housing 588w
Inner area programmes 190w
Laundries 587w
Manpower Services Commission 542w
Mobility of disabled 130w
Mortgage defaulters 590w
Planning permission 1198-9
Political advisers 588w
Propaganda 433w
Rent arrears 188-9w, 432w, 585w
Tenders 833-4w
Tourism 537w

Local authority powers
Planning authorities 398w

Local education authorities
City technology colleges 454-5w
Leeds 42w

Local enterprise agencies 524w, (12.12.86) 734-46, (15.12.86) 971-86, 1044
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 971-86
Government assistance 524w
Norwich 1044-5
Small firms service 1044

Local enterprise grants for urban projects scheme 657w
Scotland 657w

Local government
Greater London (19.12.86) 1515-25
Rates & rating 581w

Local Government Act 1985
Questions
76w, 679-80w

Local government buildings
Local government reform 678w
West Yorkshire Residuary Body 677w

Local government constituencies 668w

Local government expenditure 1051, (16.12.86) 1053-62
Capital investment 174-5w, 192-3w
Derbyshire County Council 1051
Education 33w
Further education 457-8w
Housing benefits 127-9w
Housing subsidies 682-3w
Personal social services 207-10w
UK 2000 1185
Unemployed workers centres 588w
Vandalism 1186-7

Local government finance 392w, (18.12.86) 1367
Rate support grants 1189-92
Rates & rating 1190
Refuse disposal 1186
Wales 361-2w

Local Government Finance Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (18.12.86) 1367

Local government functions
Greater London 679w

Local government land
Land use 192w

Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980
Questions
Structure plans 748w

Local Government Practices & Procedures Inquiry 278w

Local government property
Property transfer 750-1w
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council 677w
West Yorkshire Residuary Body 677w

Local government reform
Local government buildings 678w
Local government staff 679-80w
Research 678-9w
Voluntary organisations 1343-4

Local government revenue
Council housing finance 682w
Local government social services 566w

Local government services
Contracts for services 577w
Cost effectiveness 583w
Handicapped children 694-5w

Local government social services
Handicapped 215w
Local government revenue 566w

Local government staff
Local government reform 679-80w
Pay 361w, 755w
Scotland 361w

Local plans
Wales 8

Local press
AIDS 781w

Local valuation panels 36w
Welsh language 36w

Location of industry
Wales 2-3

Lofthouse, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 663
Questions
Crime prevention 646-7w
Middle East, USA 758w

London allowance
Dept of Health & Social Security 566-7w
Health service staff 566-7w

London Ambulance Service 466-8w
Costs 466-7w
Manpower 468w
Patients' transport 467w
Pay 468w
Training 467-8w

London area mobility scheme 749w
Manpower 749w

London boroughs
Council house waiting lists 28w, 96w
London Docklands Development Corporation 581w
London Regional Transport 40w

London Docklands Development Corporation
London boroughs 581w

London Docklands Railways (City Extension) Bill 1985/86
Debates etc
Lords amendts* (09.12.86) 161
Royal assent (18.12.86) 1333

London Fire & Civil Defence Authority 75-6w

London Fire Brigade 75-6w, 651-2w, 730-1w
Equipment 651-2w
Finance 76w

London Marathon 591w

London Regional Transport 40-1w, 531w, 603w
Bus stations 41w
Buses 603w
Corporate plans 40w
Government grants 531w
London boroughs 40w

London Residuary Body 29w, 280w, 591w, 684w, 749-50w, (19.12.86) 1515-25
Land values 29w
Mortgages 280w, 591w

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine 541w
Smallpox 541w

London Underground 40w
Crime 40w
Railway travel 40w

Long stay patients 295w, 785-6w
Smoking 785-6w

Lord, Mr Michael
Questions
Acid rain, EC Environment Council 1199
Small businesses, Rural areas 430-1w

Lorries
Injuries 400w
Motor vehicle safety 400w
Noise control 151-2w
Road accidents 151w
Road traffic control 151-2w
Road traffic offences 131w
Speed limits 131w

Lost working days
Costs 545-6w
Industrial disputes 220-2w, 541w

Lothian
Unemployment 504w

Low incomes
Housing insulation 382w
Nutrition & health 210w

Low pay (15.12.86) 858-61
Families 70w
Job start scheme 1040
West Yorkshire (15.12.86) 1027-34

Loyden, Mr Eddie
Questions
Death, Seas & oceans 635w
Private rented housing, Right to buy 1195-6

Luce, Rt Hon Richard, *Minister of State Privy Council Office (Minister for the Arts)*
Debates etc
Parliamentary & Health Service Commissioners Bill, 1R (12.12.86) 679
Questions
Armstrong, Robert, Evidence 772
Arts, Consumer expenditure 407w
Arts, Marketing 406-7w
Arts & Disabled People, Office of Arts & Libraries 429-30w
Arts centres 407w
Arts Council, Government grants 735-7w, 771
Arts Council grants 407w
Arts finance 735-6w
Arts finance, Public expenditure 770-2
Arts sponsorship 628w, 769-71
Arts sponsorship, Chambers of commerce 770
Arts sponsorship, Ealing 770
Arts sponsorship, Foreign tourists 770
Arts sponsorship, Regional arts associations 771
British Film Institute 406w
Civil & Public Services Association, Trade union elections 774
Civil servants, British Geological Survey 773
Civil servants, European Court of Human Rights 772
Civil servants' business appointments 604w
Civil servants' visits abroad, Australia 772
Civil service, Management 405-6w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 773
Civil service pensions, War service 773-4
Civil service unions 773
Cultural relations, EC Presidency 737w
Cultural relations, European Economic Community 406w
Gentleman, Brian, Espionage 774
Handicapped workers, Government departments 298w
Kinnock, Neil, Wright, Peter 772
Literature, Arts finance 736w
Ministers' domestic visits, National Railway Museum 768-9
Ministers' visits abroad 737w
Museums & galleries, Art works 406w
Museums & galleries, Arts finance 248-9w
Museums & galleries, Stockton 769
National Portrait Gallery, Land acquisition 82w
Objects in lieu of tax, Capital transfer tax 430w
"Public Bodies, 1986" 82w
Public libraries, News International 82-3w, 407w
Royal Opera House, Arts finance 625-7w
Sadlers Wells Theatre, Arts finance 774-5
Scottish Arts Council 407w
Select committee evidence, Civil servants 774
Statistics, Office of Arts & Libraries 165w
Theatres, Arts Council grants 247-8w
Visual arts, Arts finance 735w

Lung cancer 297w

"Lung Cancer Industrial Injuries Advisory Council Reports" 297w

Luton airport 832-4w

Lyell, Mr Nicholas, *Under-Secretary of State for Health & Social Security*
Debates etc
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1468-75
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc). . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1151-2
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1386, 1390-1
Questions
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Archway 567w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Highlands of Scotland 296w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Hornchurch 66w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Manpower 419w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Portsmouth 707w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Roebuck House 706w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Violence 412w
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme, Appeals 123w
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme, Prosecutions 47w
Exceptional circumstances additions, Arthritis 466w
Exceptional circumstances additions, Social security benefits rules 466w
Exceptional needs payments, Administrative delays 568w
Exceptional needs payments, Archway 567-8w
Families, Supplementary benefits 806w
Housing benefits 286w, 807w
Housing benefits, Costs 127-9w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 695-8w
Marklew, A A, Pensions 412w
National insurance, Members' correspondence 48w
Regional planning & development, Dept of Health & Social Security 124w
Retirement pensions, Automatic credit transfer 694w
Severe weather payments, Greenock 693-4w
Severe weather payments, Tooting 785w
Sickness benefits 213w
Social security appeals, Administrative delays 469-70w
Social security appeals, Scotland 697-8w
Social security benefits overpayments, Orders & regulations 791w
Social security claims, Highlands of Scotland 471w
Social security payments, Scotland 788w
Social security recipients, Highlands of Scotland 296w
Supplementary benefits, Bed & breakfast accommodation 693w
Supplementary benefits, Camberwell 285w
Supplementary benefits, Greater London 712w
Supplementary benefits, Homelessness 564w
Supplementary benefits, Social security recipients 807-8w
Supplementary benefits, Take-up 213w
Supplementary benefits, West Midlands 711-2w
Supplementary benefits disregards of income 693w

M1 37-8w, 132-3w
Contra-flow systems 38w
Road traffic 132-3w
Road traffic control 38w
Road works 37-8w

M4 273w
Road safety barriers 273w

M5 133w
Road works 133w

M25 132-4w, 151w, 403-4w, 533w, 579-80w, 601w
Contracts 133w
Dual carriageways 133-4w
Lighting 151w
Motorway service areas 579-80w
Planning permission 579-80w
Road accidents 133-4w
Road construction 133w
Road traffic 132-3w, 403-4w, 533w, 601w

M40 401w, 832w
Road construction 832w
Road works 401w

McCrae, William
Death 352w
Police 352w
Special Branch 352w

McCrindle, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 346
Questions
AIDS, Blood transfusions 218-9w
Chemists shops, Pharmacies 410w
Drinking & driving, Young people 404w, 840-1w
Duty free allowances, EC action 667-8w
Duty free allowances, EC countries 486w
Falkland Islands, Armed forces' deployment 167-8
Financial Services Act 1986 609w
Hospital waiting lists, NHS finance 805-6w
House renovation grants, Housing stock 1200-1
Housing benefits, Costs 127-9w
Insurance, EC internal trade 262w
Mercury pollution, Batteries 433w, 1194
Mercury pollution, Pollution control 433-4w
Midwives 292w
Motorcycles, Motor vehicle safety 405w
Motorcycles, Road accidents 404-5w
NHS finance, Greater London 806w
Nurses, Manpower 295w
Nurses, Recruitment 295w
Pharmacies, Manpower 410-1w
Product liability 324-5
Railway network, High speed trains 274-5w
Restart Programme 14-5w, 521w
Road safety education, Pre-school education 404w
Rural areas, Investment 25-6w
Transport supplementary grants 402w

McDonald, Dr Oonagh
Questions
Armstrong, Robert, Evidence 772
Insider trading, Banks 21w
Johnson Matthey, Bank of England 84w

Johnson Matthey, Criminal investigation 3w
Secondary mortgage market 29-30w
Subversion 1344
Tax rates & bands 426-7w
Taxpayers, Personal income 562w

McFarlane, Mr Neil
Questions
M5, Road works 133w
M25, Dual carriageways 133-4w
M25, Lighting 151w
M25, Road construction 133w
M25, Road traffic 403-4w
Motorways, Road accidents 132w
Motorways, Road traffic 133w

McGinley, Ken
British Nuclear Test Veterans Association 482w
Telephone calls 482w

McGoldrick, Maureen 529w, (15.12.86) 857-8

MacGregor, Rt Hon John, Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1293-300
Questions
Civil service manpower, Government departments 137w
Debts, Africa 424w
Exchange rates, Balance of payments 260w
Government departments, Expenditure 260w
Inflation 260w
Local authorities, Capital investment 137w, 497w
National income, Public expenditure 187-8w
Nationalised industries, Costs 666w
Public expenditure 486-96w
Public expenditure, Government departments 427-8w, 745w
Public expenditure, North West region 83w, 137-8w
Public relations, Government departments 188w, 428w
West Midlands Free Port, Investment in financial assets 137w
Women, Treasury 665w

McGuire, Mr Michael
Questions
British Coal Corporation 377w
Nuclear power stations, Construction costs 473-4w
Traffic lights 532-3w

MacInnes, Catherine 615w
Members' correspondence 615w

McKay, Mr Allen
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 207
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1059
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 494, 502, 508, 528, 549-51
Questions
Insulation, Community programme 764

MacKay, Mr Andrew
Questions
Availability for work, Bracknell 1038
Licensing laws, Law reform 647w
Pensions, Pay incentives 570w
Planning appeals, Dept of the Environment 1198-9
Social fund, Death grants 564-5w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 580w

MacKay, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland
Debates etc
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1176-8
Questions
Aberdeen College of Education, Public appointments 305w
Adams, D, Aberdeen College of Education 136w
AIDS, Scotland 660-1w
"Arts & Disabled People", Scotland 507-8w
Building repairs, Lightburn Hospital 549w
Colposcopy, Scotland 301w
Corporal punishment, Orders & regulations 774w
Corporal punishment, Scotland 774w
Crofting, Housing 508w
Family doctors, Private health services 301w, 549w
Farmers, Scotland 507w
Forestry, Manpower 548w
Forestry grants, Companies 505w
Forestry grants, Tree planting 505w
Geriatric patients, Greater Glasgow Health Board 547w
Health centres, Glasgow 302w
Health services finance, Scotland 658w
Hill farming 550w
Hill farming, Scotland 508w
HM Inspectorate of Schools 300-1w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Aberdeen College of Education 300-1w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Scotland 504-5w, 547w, 769-70w
Hospital beds, Greater Glasgow Health Board 548-9w
Hospital beds, Scottish health boards 17-9w
Hospital waiting lists, Scotland 173-4w, 657w, 770-2w
Intervention stocks, Dundee 657w
Jordanhill College of Education 301w
Land ownership & tenure, Belvedere Hospital, Glasgow 548w
Managers, Greater Glasgow Health Board 549w
Myalgic Encephalomyalitis Association, Ministers' correspondence 300w
NHS, Scotland 658w, 773w
NHS & private practice, Scotland 549w
Nursing homes, Greenock 774w
Physical education, Mergers 304w
Residential care, Glasgow 659w
School leaving certificates, Scotland 659-60w
Scottish Health Education Group, Special health authorities 661w
Sheep, Scotland 16-8w
Total allowable catches, Scotland 771-2w
Tree planting, Conifers 505w
Tree planting, Forestry Commission Regional Advisory Committees 505w
Tree planting, Land ownership & tenure 505w
Tree planting, Land use 505w
Tree planting, Nature reserves 771w

McKelvey, Mr William
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 229-33, 235-6
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 192-3

Maclean, Mr David
Questions
Armed forces' deployment, Cumbria 140w
Cruelty to children 643-4w

Maclennan, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 200-1, 249-56
Business statement (10.12.86) 668
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1221
Questions
Agricultural production, Prices 825w
Cement, Unfair trading practices 21w
Crofting, Housing 508w
Detection rates 1347-8
Dunbeath bridge, Road construction 305w
Farm buildings, Planning permission 590w
Gas flaring, Scotland 508-9w
Hill farming 550w
Hill farming, Scotland 508w
Justices' clerks, Professional qualifications 1343
Land registration, Disclosure of information 766w
Oil pollution control, Minches 602w
Radar 86w
Scottish Arts Council 407w
Town & country planning, Farms buildings 550w
Trent Grain, Intervention stocks 829w

McLoughlin, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 662
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1223
Questions
Air pollution, Pollution control 685w
Council house sales, Homesteading schemes 1195
Enterprise allowance scheme 510w
National parks, Public appointments 752w
Peak Park Joint Planning Board 28-9w, 397w, 586w
Peak Park Joint Planning Board, Government grants 28w
Peak Park Joint Planning Board, Public appointments 28w, 397-8w

McNair-Wilson, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1075
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1094-7, 1109
Transplant surgery (08.12.86) 154-6
Questions
Sheltered employment, Government grants 524w

McNair-Wilson, Mr Patrick
Questions
Coal fired power stations, English Channel 760

McNamara, Mr Kevin
Debates etc
Defence (15.12.86) 906-10
Defence industries (12.12.86) 685, 715-23, 725, 728, 731-2
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1445-8, 1450
Early warning systems, Standing Order No 20 applications (15.12.86) 777-8
Questions
Armed forces officers, Ethnic minorities 167
Arms exports, Iran 173
Early warning systems, CAP Scientific 691w
Harrier aircraft, Defence contracts 691w

McQuarrie, Mr Albert
Debates etc
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1157-8, 1164, 1167-70
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 193
Questions
Peterhead Prison, Inquiries 302-3w
Peterhead Prison, Scottish Prison Officers Association 302w
Total allowable catches, Scotland 771-2w

McTaggart, Mr Bob
Questions
Criminal injuries compensation 483w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Administrative delays 483w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Manpower 483w

McWilliam, Mr John
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1450

Madden, Mr Max
Debates etc
Access to Parliament (10.12.86) 616-7
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 791
Low pay, West Yorkshire (15.12.86) 1027-30
National security (09.12.86) 198-9

Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 343
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Availability of Official Report (10.12.86) 423
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interventions (10.12.86) 427
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 417, 434, 477-80, 493, 495
Questions
Body searches 497w, 598w
Body searches, Heathrow 497-8w
Body searches, Leeds-Bradford Airport 497-8w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 773
Community programme, Pay 522-3w
Foreign tourists, Strip searches 350w
Immigration controls, Ports 480w
Intelligence services, Prosecutions 177-8
Ministers, Books 237w
Rate support grants, Bradford 1190-1
Skuse, Frank, Forensic science 1335-8
Temporary immigrants 734-5w
Temporary immigrants, Indian subcontinent 252-3w, 733-4w
Textile industry, Trades Union Congress 180w
VAT, Company taxation 743w

Madel, Mr David
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 372-3, 382, 391-4, 404, 610-5

Maginnis, Mr Ken
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1080, 1105-9

Magistrates
Public appointments 315w

Magnox reactors
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 761w
Nuclear safety 761w
Radioactive wastes 383w

Major, Mr John, *Minister of State for Social Security*
Debates etc
Mortgages, Ministerial statements (10.12.86) 341-51
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1395-401, 1406-7, 1463-4
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . .Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1125-32, 1134
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1371-8
Questions
"Arts & Disabled People", Dept of Health & Social Security 464w
Asbestosis, Power industry 785w
Blind, Departmental forms 293-4w
Board & lodging charges, Gateshead 287w
Board & lodging charges, Social Security reform 571w
Deaf, Exhibitions 783w
Deaf, Mental hospitals 296w
Deaf, Special education 296-7w
Deaf, Teacher training 296w
Deaf, Training 296w
Dixon, Joe, War pensions 788-9w
Earned income, National insurance contributions 204w
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme, Costs 290w
Exceptional needs payments 460-2w
Exceptional needs payments, Costs 462w
Exceptional needs payments, Social security benefits rules 461w
Exceptional needs payments, Social security reform 462w
Families, Low pay 70w
Families, Unemployment 123w
Family income, Supplementary benefits 128w
Handicap benefits 416-7w
Handicapped 124w, 289w
Handicapped, Local government social services 215w
Hemborough, Mr & Mrs J 294w
Industrial death benefits, Widows' benefits 47w
Invalid care allowances, Administrative delays 564w
Invalid care allowances, Married women 68w
Lung cancer 297w
Maternity benefits 284-5w
Mobility allowance, Age 564w
Mobility allowance, Social security benefits rules 124w
National Assistance Act 1948, Handicapped 786w
National insurance 460w
Occupational pensions 698w
Occupational pensions, Early leavers 791w
Prosthetics, Industrial disputes 697w
Residential care, Supplementary benefits 126-8w
Severe disability premium, Blind 701-3w
Severe disability premium, Cohabitation 703-4w
Severe disability premium, Exceptional circumstances additions 704w
Severe disability premium, Income support scheme 704w
Severe disability premium, Invalid care allowances 704w
Severe disability premium, Single people 703w
Severe weather payments 294-5w, 466w
Severe weather payments, Leytonstone 65-6w
Social fund, Death grants 564-5w
Social security benefits, Expenditure 286w
Social security reform, Costs 215w
Supplementary benefits, Restaurants 285-6w
Supplementary benefits, Single people 287w
Supplementary benefits, Social security benefits uprating 418-20w
Supplementary benefits, Unemployed 469w
Supplementary benefits, Wales 418w
Unemployment benefits, Costs 287w
Vaccination, Compensation 416w
Vaccination, Handicapped 416w
Widows benefits, Retail price index 700w

Mallon, Mr Seamus
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1080, 1084, 1097-102, 1106-7
Prisoners' release, Northern Ireland (17.12.86) 1326-9, 1332
Questions
Bombings, Convictions 639w

Malone, Mr Gerald, *Assistant Whip*
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 266

Management buy-outs
ISTEL 609w
Vosper Shiprepairers 607-8w

Managers
Greater Glasgow Health Board 549w
Training 509w

Managing agents 223-4w

Manchester
Prime Minister domestic visits 613-4w

Manpower Services Commission
Business education 509w
Greater Springburn Enterprises 224w
Local authorities 542w
North Liverpool Music Resource Centre 632w
Official secrets 542w
Youth training scheme 513-4w

Manual workers
Pay 371w

Manufactured goods
Balance of trade 178w, 333-4
UK trade with EC 186w

Manufacturing industries
Balance of trade 177w
Capital investment 177w
Industrial development 176w
Industrial production 176w
Investment 176-7w, 339-40
Leicester 340
Manpower 515-6w, 540w, 545w
North West region 540w
Redundancy 303-4w
Scotland 303-4w
Sheffield 515-6w
Spare parts 545w

Maples, Mr John
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 373, 389
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 244w
Foreign exchange markets 665-6w

Marconi (15.12.86) 779

Marek, Dr John
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1070
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 383, 403-23, 433, 461, 464-6, 480-94, 565-7
Questions
Crime Detection rates 645w
Enterprise allowance scheme 1039
Planning appeals, Wales 8
Roads, Wales 35w
Settle-Carlisle railway 132w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Leisure 132w

Marginal land
Hill livestock allowances 596-7w

Marine nature reserves 90w, 1188

Marine surveys 599w
Shipping 599w

Marines
Aircraft carriers 310-1w
Assault ships 181
Conflict of interests 777w
Dual jobholding 777w

Marketing
Arts 406-7w

Marklew, A A
Pensions 412w

Marland, Mr Paul
Questions
Intervention Board, Expenditure 111-2w

Marlow, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 669
Defence industries (12.12.86) 687, 689-95
Early warning systems (16.12.86) 1072
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1228
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1207
European Council (08.12.86) 29
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 111-2, 114
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 380, 402, 616, 635
Wright, Peter, Standing Order No 20 applications (17.12.86) 1230
Questions
AIDS, Ethnic groups 294w
Availability for work, Bermondsey 1038
Coal mining, Investment 758
Dartford Tunnel, Private investment 337
Helicopters, Antitank missiles 170
Immigration 653w
Kinnock, Neil, Wright, Peter 772
National security, Leader of the Opposition 237w
Remand in custody 351w

Restart programme, Take-up of employment 521-2w
Sickle cell disease, Ethnic groups 71-2w
Vanunu, Mordechai, Israel 269w, 762w
Wright, Peter, National security 316w

Married people
Supplementary benefits 418-20w
Tax allowances 426w
Unemployment 814-5w

Married women
Invalid care allowances 68w

Marshall, Mr David
Questions
Building repairs, Lightburn Hospital 549w
Drinking & driving, Arrests 506w
Electoral register, Scotland 507w
Family doctors, Private health services 301w, 549w
Geriatric patients, Greater Glasgow Health Board 547w
Health centres, Glasgow 302w
Hospital beds, Greater Glasgow Health Board 548-9w
Land ownership & tenure, Belvedere Hospital, Glasgow 548w
Local government staff, Pay 361w
Managers, Greater Glasgow Health Board 549w
Motorways, Scotland 506w
NHS & private practice, Scotland 549w
Road accidents, Scotland 506-7w
Road finance, Scotland 506w
Roads, Expenditure 401w
School transport, Privatisation 301w
Scottish Transport Group, Government grants 507w
Unemployment, Glasgow 656w
Urban programme, Glasgow 359-60w
Urban programme, Scotland 359-62w

Marshall, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1160, 1174

Martial arts 652-3w
Offensive weapons 652-3w

Martin, Mr Michael J
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 206, 208, 260-2
Register of Sasines (Scotland) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 356
Questions
Greater Springburn Enterprises, Manpower Services Commission 224w
Residential care, Glasgow 659w

Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Questions
Coal, Imports 762
Coal mining, Investment 758

Mass media
Council of Europe 482-3w, 487-8w
Council of Ministers 254w
EC action 254w

Maternity benefits 284-5w
Social fund 564-5w

Mature students
Higher education 389-90w
Student grants 43w

Mawhinney, Dr Brian, *Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Ballyharry School, Newtownards 760w
Corporal punishment, Schools 561w
Victoria School, Ballyhalbert 760w

Maxton, Mr John
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 227-8, 233, 245, 247, 264-9, 272
Housing policy (15.12.86) 928-30
Questions
AIDS, Vaccination 70w
Households, Scotland 19w
Medical Research Council, AIDS 44w
Medical Research Council, Drug industry 44w
Medical Research Council, Resignations 43-4w

Maxwell Fyfe directive 349w, 641w

Maxwell-Hyslop, Mr Robin
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1221
Private Bill Procedure Joint Select Committee (17.12.86) 1324
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1311-2, 1314-5
Questions
Copyright, Motor components industry 326
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Devon 353-4w

Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick, *Solicitor-General*
Questions
Chamberlain, Neville, Disclosure of information 429-30w
West, Nigel, National security 2w

Maynard, Miss Joan
Questions
Forensic science, Bombings 1335-6

Meacher, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1127, 1129-30, 1132-6
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1368-71, 1373-4, 1377, 1383-4, 1390
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 342-3
Questions
Disclosure of information, National security 654w
Drug industry, Transfer pricing 69w
Drugs, Child resistant containers 292-3w
Health service staff, Secretarial staff 568w
Health services, Per capita costs 420w
Hip replacements, Hospital waiting lists 126w, 807-9w
Homelessness, Households 30-1w
Hospital consultants, General practice patients 70w
Hospital finance 69w
Hypothermia, Babies 790w
Limited list prescribing, Expenditure 782w
Manual workers, Pay 371w
Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, Burglary 653-4w
Midwives, District health authorities 217w
Nurses, Manpower 217w
Personal social services 789w
Personal taxation, Tax allowances 745-6w
Shares, Ownership 264w
Social security benefits, Expenditure 286w
Social security reform, Costs 215w
Statistics, Dept of Education & Science 158-9w
Statistics, Dept of Employment 221-4w
Statistics, Dept of Energy 201w
Statistics, Dept of Health & Social Security 215w
Statistics, Dept of Trade & Industry 186w, 264-6w
Statistics, Home Office 167-8w
Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 195w
Statistics, Ministry of Defence 206-7w
Statistics, Northern Ireland Office 155-8w
Statistics, Office of Arts & Libraries 165w
Statistics, Welsh Office 162w
Supplementary benefits, Social security benefits uprating 418-20w
Tax allowances, Married people 426w

Meadowcroft, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Housing policy (15.12.86) 921-4
Questions
Arts Council, Government grants 771
Association of British Chambers of Commerce 21w
Copyright, Small businesses 326
Debts 84w
International Year of Shelter for the Homeless 90w
Local authorities, Planning permission 1199
Prime Minister official engagements 615w
Racial attacks 350w
Radioactive waste disposal, Costs 767-8
Restart programme, Take-up of employment 538w
Road traffic control, Metropolitan counties 604w
Royal ordnance factories, Redundancy 688w
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, Expenditure 601w

Measles
Vaccination 288-9w

Meat
Food inspection 246w

Medals 205-6w
World War II 205-6w

Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons 653-4w
Burglary 653-4w

Medical education
Ethnic minorities 289w
Wales 11

Medical equipment
Colposcopy 289w, 317w

Medical examinations
Breast cancer 562w
Driving licences 130-1w
Prisoners 477w

Medical records
X rays 214w

Medical research 725w
Babies 414w
Guys Hospital 569-70w
Prescriptions 565-6w
Test tube babies 790-1w

Medical Research Council
AIDS 44w
Codes of practice 44w
Drug industry 44w
Resignations 43-4w

Medical treatment
Cancer (19.12.86) 1486-94
Crime victims 413w
Diabetes 562-3w
Rogers, Martin Robert 558w

Medicines Commission
Homeopathy 705w

Medicines (Hormone Growth Promoters) (Prohibition of Use)
Questions
Regulations 1986 10w

Mellor, Mr David, *Minister of State at the Home Department*
Debates etc
Prisons (15.12.86) 1005-8, (19.12.86) 1561-4
Questions
Amyl nitrite, Drug abuse 649w, 735w
BBC 476w
BBC, Codes of practice 640-1w
Bombings, Convictions 639-40w
Burglary, Habitual offenders 480-1w
Burglary, Wales 635w
Commercial television, Competition 646w
Compulsorily detained mental patients 102w
Council of Ministers, Mass media 254w
Crime 476w, 641w
Crime, Costs 1342-3
Crime, Detection rates 645w
Crime victims, Children 636-40w
Crime victims, Statistics 635-6w

Crimes of violence, Crimes against the person 641w
Crimes of violence, Sentencing 645w
Criminal injuries compensation 483w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Administrative delays 483w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Finance 479w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Manpower 483w
Detention centres, Custodial treatment 79-80w
Drug abuse, Woman 552w
Drug crimes, EC action 646w
Drug crimes, Exchange control 78-9w
Drug liaison officers 642-3w
Durham Prison, Exercise 481w
Fine defaulters, Custodial treatment 642w
Forensic science, Bombings 1335-7
Government laboratories, Chorley 1338
Greiss test, Forensic science 482w
Holloway Prison, Psychiatry 551w
Homicide, Detection rates 349w
Homosexuality, Age 350w
Juries 549w
Justices' clerks, Professional qualifications 1343
Life imprisonment, Men 652w
Local radio 655w
Mass media, Council of Europe 482-3w, 487-8w
Prerogative of mercy 647-8w
Prison accommodation, Construction 475-6w
Prison medical services, AIDS 477w, 484w
Prison overcrowding 729w
Prison population 643w
Prison population, Prison staff 104-8w
Prison riots, Hostages 648w
Prison sentences 80w, 253-4w
Prison sentences, Indictable offences 729w
Prisoners, AIDS 81w
Prisoners, Central Criminal Court 167w
Prisoners, Medical examinations 477w
Prisoners, Smoking 653w
Prisoners, Wales 732w
Prisoners' rights, Bibles 481w
Prisons, Fire prevention 166-7w
Prisons, Per capita costs 254w
Prosecutions, Counterfeit manufacturing 550-1w
Rape, Habitual offenders 479-80w
Remand in custody, Prison visits 102w
Road traffic offences, Traffic lights 80w
Rogers, Martin Robert, Medical treatments 558w
Segregation of prisoners 732-3w
Skuse, Frank, Forensic science 81-2w, 1335-9
Stocken Prison, Expenditure 647w
Television programmes, Ethics 649w
Tobacco, Children 82w
Voluntary organisations, Local government reform 1343-4
Young offenders, Remand centres 350-2w
Young offenders, Remission 653w

Melton Mowbray Barracks 372w
Royal Army Veterinary Corps 372w

Members
Telephone tapping 161w

Members' conduct
Speaker's rulings & statements (16.12.86) 1053, 1055, 1062, 1157, (17.12.86) 1234, (18.12.86) 1353, 1412, 1448, 1453

Members' correspondence 81-2w
Administrative delays 48w, 351w
Beaufoy, Stephen 351w
Finch, Kevin 589w
MacInnes, Catherine 615w
National insurance 48w
Raj, Hans 484w
Sheikh, Mohammed Farid 444w

Members' facilities
Parking 18-9

Members' interests (10.12.86) 369

Members' interventions (10.12.86) 408, 409, 427, 644
Speaker's rulings & statements (08.12.86) 53, 107, (09.12.86) 172, 176, (15.12.86) 908, 940, (16.12.86) 1181, (17.12.86) 1247-9, 1252, (18.12.86) 1389

Members' speeches (10.12.86) 390, 414, 493, 517, 613
Speaker's rulings & statements (08.12.86) 102, (09.12.86) 262, (15.12.86) 825, 885, (17.12.86) 1313, (18.12.86) 1423

Members' telephones 203w
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 183

Members' voting behaviour
Public finance 1346

Men
Higher education 388-9w
Life imprisonment 652w

Mental health community care 465w
Hostels 465w

Mental health services
Gwynedd 451w

Mental hospitals
Blind 296w
Deaf 296w
Hospital closures 464-5w, 810w

Mental patients
Hospital discharges 465w

Mentally handicapped
Child patients 295w
Exhibitions 420w
Upper Waiting Hall 420w

Merchant, Mr Piers
Questions
Educational standards, Roman Catholic Church 723w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w

Merchant seamen
Emergency planning 155w

Merchant ships
RMS St Helena 536w
Shipping accidents (12.12.86) 699-702

Mercury pollution
Batteries 433w, 1194
Pollution control 433-4w

Mergers
Legislation 178-9w

Merit awards 177w
Small businesses 177w

Merriman Committee see Radio Spectrum Independent Review

Mersey barrage 336, 379w
Private investment 336

Mersey Docks & Harbour Bill (HL) 1985/86
Debates etc
Rep* (09.12.86) 161
3R* (16.12.86) 1035
Royal assent (18.12.86) 1331, 1333

Merseyside
Drug squads 642w
Unemployment 11-3w

Merseyside Development Corporation
International Garden Festival 1984 192w
Land use 192w

Merseyside Residuary Body 434-5w

Metropolitan counties
Road traffic control 604w

Metropolitan Police 1333-4
Accounting 78w
Crime prevention 1334
Departmental coordination 236w
Emergency calls 78w, 646w
Evidence 481-2w
Fees & charges 79w
Football grounds 79w
Manpower 1335
Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 348w
Police corruption 476-7w
Policewomen 551w

Metropolitan Police (Compensation) Act 1886
Lambeth 732w

"Metropolitan Police Instruction Books" 481-2w

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Debates etc
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 883
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1066
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 619
Questions
Members' voting behaviour, Public finance 1346
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers 184w
Planning appeals, Wales 7-8
Welsh Development Agency, Finance 6

MI5 (15.12.86) 782-828
Disclosure of information (10.12.86) 352-3
Standing Order No 20 applications (10.12.86) 352-3

Michie, Mr Bill
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 502, 513

Middle East
USA 758w

Middlesbrough
Rent arrears 1190

Midlothian
Road accidents 171-2w

Midwives 291, 291-2w
District health authorities 217w
Manpower 217w, 292w
Pay 292w, 611w
Vacancies 291w

Migrant workers
Dundee 170w

Military aircraft
Air Force bases 206w
Armed forces' training 776w
Defence contracts (15.12.86) 777-9, 863-6, (18.12.86) 1351-9, 1366, 1409-54
Defence procurement (16.12.86) 1071
Early warning systems 306-7w
USA 206w

Military education
Armed forces' training 173

Military exercises
European Security Conference 119-20w
Oman 371-2w

Milk
EC action 451w
France 367w
Production quotas 10w, 367-8w, 451w, 829-30w
Surpluses 829-30w

Milk & milk products
Brazil 596w
Compensation 10w

Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 204, 211, 236-42
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 190
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 131-3
Questions
Shipbuilding, EC action 176w

Miller, Joan 2w
National security 2w

Miller, Dr M S
Debates etc
Defence industries (12.12.86) 703

MV Kowloon Bridge & MV Derbyshire (12.12.86) 700-1

Mills, Mr Iain
Questions
Counterfeit manufacturing 186w
Counterfeit manufacturing, Fines 169w
Counterfeit manufacturing, Punishment 265w
Motor vehicle theft 169w
Motor vehicle theft, Security equipment 155w

Mills, Sir Peter
Questions
EC Agricultural Council 247w, 596w

Milner-Brown, Ralph 415w

Minches
Oil pollution control 602w

Mine accidents
Coal mining 379w

Minimum wage
South Africa 182w

Mining
Polyurethane 369-70w

Ministerial advisory bodies 420w
Dept of Education & Science 101w
Dept of Employment 117w
Dept of Health & Social Security 125-6w
Dept of the Environment 92w
Dept of Trade & Industry 98w
Home Office 102-3w
Northern Ireland Office 107w
Public appointments 92w, 98w, 101-3w, 107-8w, 117w, 125-6w, 135w
Scottish Office 135w
Welsh Office 108w

Ministerial powers 529w, 561w
McGoldrick, Maureen 529w

Ministerial responsibility
Civil servants 773
Gas safety 159w
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 173-4, 177, (16.12.86) 1048
Wales 4

Ministerial speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 311

Ministerial statements (17.12.86) 1203-12
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1351-9
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1213-28
European Council (08.12.86) 21-33
Mortgages (10.12.86) 341-51
MV Kowloon Bridge (12.12.86) 699-702
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1053-70
Speaker's rulings & statements (08.12.86) 37, (09.12.86) 193, (10.12.86) 344, 349, (16.12.86) 1062, (17.12.86) 1226, (18.12.86) 1358, (16.12.86) 1057, 1059

Ministers
Books 237w
Speaker's rulings & statements (17.12.86) 1234-5, 1238

Ministers' correspondence 4w, 159w, 295w, 300w, 353w, 407w, 530w
Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association 300w
News International 407w
Solicitor-General 4w, 159w, 353w, 530w

Ministers' domestic visits
Ancient monuments 394w
Cumbernauld 772w
Greater Glasgow Health Board 549w
Liverpool 440w
Liverpool University 663w
National Railway Museum 768-9
Royal Army Veterinary Corps 372w

Ministers' visits abroad 737w
Chernobyl 768
Japan 338
Uganda 543-4w

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food
Regional planning & development 9-10w
Statistics 195w

Ministry of Defence
Advertising 208w
Civil service redundancies 594w
Public relations 207-8w
Quality Assurance Directorate 313w
Statistics 206-7w

Miscarriage
Coventry Health Authority 126w

Mitchell, Mr Austin
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1238-9, 1268-74
Questions
Cabinet committees 531w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Capital investment 245w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Coal fired power stations 245w
Earned income, National insurance contributions 204w
Electricity supply industry, Capital investment 5w
Heysham power station 244-5w
Nuclear accidents, Sellafield 5-6w
Telephone calls, Palace of Westminster 203w

Mitchell, Mr David, *Minister of State for Transport*
Questions
Barking-Gospel Oak railway line, Public service obligation grant 401w
Bus services, Children 131w
Bus services, Competition 533w
Bus services, Greater Manchester 834w
Bus services, Hampshire 40w
Bus services, West Sussex 602w
Bus stations, London Regional Transport 41w
Buses, London Regional Transport 603w
Channel tunnel, Transport of hazardous materials 39w
Dover Harbour, Railway transport 401-2w
Level crossings, Railway safety 39-40w
London Regional Transport, Corporate plans 40w
London Underground, Crime 40w
London Underground, Railway travel 40w
Ports, Nuclear fuels 276w
Public transport, Christmas 275w
Railway network, High speed trains 274-5w
Railway travel 276w
Railway travel, Greater London 41w
Settle-Carlisle railway 132w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Leisure 132w
Settle-Carlisle railway, Railway closures 273w
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, Expenditure 601w

Mobility allowance
Age 564w
Social security benefits rules 124w

Mobility of disabled
Local authorities 130w
Public transport 131w
Transport 130w

Moe, John 2w
National security 2w

Monklands
Unemployment 370w

Monopolies & Mergers Commission
Administrative delays 177-8w
Film industry 546w

Monro, Sir Hector
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 226-9
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1359
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1219
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 189
Questions
Marine nature reserves 1188

Montgomery Committee see Island Councils of Scotland Committee of Inquiry

Monuments 1347
Wales 718-9w

Moore, Rt Hon John, *Secretary of State for Transport*
Questions
EC Transport Council 531-2w
London Regional Transport, Government grants 531w
M1, Contra-flow systems 38w
M1, Road traffic control 38w
M1, Road works 37w
Merchant seamen, Emergency planning 155w
Motor vehicle registration, Police national computer 38w, 400w
Road construction, Consultants 154w
Road construction, Costs 153-4w
Road traffic 152w
Roads, Repairs & maintenance 833-4w
Roads, Transport supplementary grants 535w
Severn bridge, Court of Appeal 601w
Tunnels, River Thames 39w
Women, Dept of Transport 399-400w
Woolwich ferry, East London river crossing 276w

Moray House College of Education 304w

Morris, Rt Hon Alfred
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 233
Questions
"Arts & Disabled People", Dept of Education & Science 456w
"Arts & Disabled People", Dept of Employment 525w
"Arts & Disabled People", Dept of Health & Social Security 464w
"Arts & Disabled People", Dept of the Environment 432-3w
"Arts & Disabled People", Dept of Transport 441w
"Arts & Disabled People", Home Office 480w
"Arts & Disabled People", Office of Arts & Libraries 429-30w
"Arts & Disabled People", Scotland 507-8w
"Arts & Disabled People", Welsh Office 449-50w
Bus services, Greater Manchester 834w
Civil defence, Greater Manchester 484w
Finch, Kevin, Members' correspondence 589w
Handicapped, Local government social services 215w
Severe disability premium, Blind 701-3w
Severe disability premium, Cohabitation 703-4w
Severe disability premium, Exceptional circumstances additions 704w
Severe disability premium, Income support scheme 704w
Severe disability premium, Invalid care allowances 704w
Severe disability premium, Single people 703w
Training, Handicapped workers 816w

Morris, Rt Hon John
Questions
Attorney-General 2w, 4-5w
Attorney-General, Publishing 5w
Pincher, Chapman, National security 1w

Morris, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Oral question time point of order (16.12.86) 1052
Questions
Britoil, Privatisation 767
Chemists shops, compensation 410w
Chemists shops, Contracts 410w

Northampton General Hospital, Capital investment 284w

Mortgage defaulters 278w, 590w
Disclosure of information 590w
Local authorities 590w

Mortgage relief
Cohabitation 424w
Personal income 738-40w
Tax allowances 84-5w
Taxpayers 738-40w

Mortgages 29-30w, 670w
Cornish unit houses 29w
Labour mobility 1038
London Residuary Body 280w, 591w
Ministerial statements (10.12.86) 341-51
Supplementary benefits (10.12.86) 341-51, (16.12.86) 1125-56

Mother tongue instruction
Commonwealth immigrants 250w

Motor components industry
Copyright 180w, 326-7

Motor Cycle Noise Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 356

Motor industry
Manpower 96-7w

Motor vehicle parts
Vauxhall Motors 607w

Motor vehicle registration
Administrative delays 400w
Police national computer 38w, 400w

Motor vehicle safety
Lorries 400w
Motorcycles 404-5w

Motor vehicle testing
Licensing 831-2w
Manpower 836w
Public service vehicles 835-40w
South Wales 836w

Motor vehicle theft 169w
Security equipment 155w

Motor vehicles
Greater London 77w
Wheel clamps 77w, 482w

Motorcycles
EC action 534-6w
Motor vehicle safety 404-5w
Noise control (10.12.86) 356, 534-6w
Road accidents 404-5w

Motoring
Police relations with public 558-9w

Motorway service areas
M25 579-80w

Motorways
Death 274w
Lighting 506w
Road accidents 132w
Road construction 601w
Road mileage 601w, 616w
Road safety barriers 274w, 773w, 831w
Road traffic 133w
Scotland 506w, 773w
Wales 616w

Moynihan, Mr Colin
Debates etc
Debts, Developing countries (18.12.86) 1476-9
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1471
Questions
Coal fired power stations, Radioactivity 239w

MPB Russell
Company investigations 181w

Mucodyne
Limited list prescribing 704w

Multifibre arrangement
Bilateral treaties 184w, 716w

Multiple births 790-1w
Test tube babies 790w

Multiple occupation 589w
Housing (10.12.86) 355

Mumps
Vaccination 288-9w

Murphy, Mr Christopher
Debates etc
Gypsies (Control of Unauthorised Encampments) Bill, 1R (18.12.86) 1367
Noise (15.12.86) 838
Questions
Council of Ministers, Mass media 254w
Cultural property, Treaties 756w
Early warning systems 777w
Mass media, Council of Europe 483w
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines, Redundancy 715w

Museums & galleries
Art works 406w
Arts finance 248-9w
Stockton 769

MV Derbyshire (12.12.86) 699-702

MV Kowloon Bridge 603-4w, (12.12.86) 699-702
Inquiries 603-4w
Ministerial statements (12.12.86) 699-702
Shipping accidents 275w

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association 300w
Ministers' correspondence 300w

Mynydd Epynt
Armed forces' training 313-4w

Narcotics
Drug abuse 170w

National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education 722-3w

National Assistance Act 1948
Handicapped 786w
Questions
786w

National Association of Family Support groups 708w
Drug abuse 708w

National Audit Office
BBC External Services 9w
Pay incentives 259w

National Economic Development Council 22w

National Health Service Act 1977
Questions
410w

National Health Service (Amendment) Act 1986
Questions
410w

National income
NHS 658w
Public expenditure 187-8w

National insurance 460w
Members' correspondence 48w

National insurance cards 460w

National insurance contributions
Earned income 204w
Pensions 412w

National No Smoking Day 1987 700w
Expenditure 700w

National Nuclear Corporation 198w

National parks
Conservation 581w
Conservation areas 193w
Public appointments 752w

National Portrait Gallery
Land acquisition 82w

National Railway Museum 768-9
Finance 768-9
Ministers' domestic visits 768-9

National security 253-4w, 353w
Attorney-General 5w
Civil servants 605w
Disclosure of information 654w
Franks, Arthur 605w
Granada Television 314w
Leader of the Opposition 237w
Miller, Joan 2w
Moe, John 2w
Pincher, Chapman 1w
Rothschild, Lord 611w
West, Nigel 2w
Wilson, Harold 113-4w, 1346-7
Wright, Peter 316w

National Theatre 735-6w

National Tree week 194w

Nationalised industries
Costs 666w
Syrian Arab Republic 666w

Nationalised industries borrowing
British Shipbuilders (08.12.86) 145-53

NATO (15.12.86) 894-912
Armed forces civilians 148w
Civil servants 313w
Construction 147-8w
Home Office 255w
Labour Party 176-7
Manpower 692w
US bases 138w
USA 172

Natural gas production
Pollution control 112-3w

Nature Conservancy Council
Nature conservation 671-2w
Sites of special scientific interest 583w
Town & country planning 583w

Nature conservation
Birds 671w, 673w
Estuaries 582w
Hedges & ditches (10.12.86) 355
Nature Conservancy Council 671-2w
Severn barrage 675-6w
Wetlands 672-3w

Nature reserves
Tree planting 771w

Navigational aids
Fees & charges 38-9w

Navy
Armed forces' discharges 595w
Armed forces' training 688-9w
Nuclear reactors 689-90w
Submarines 144w
Warships 140w

Neale, Mr Gerrard
Debates etc
Agricultural Training Board Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 353
Business statement (10.12.86) 666
Defence (15.12.86) 899-901
Questions
Road traffic offences, Traffic lights 80w
Trident, Labour Party 172

Neasden Hospital (15.12.86) 841-4

Needham, Mr Richard, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Family doctors, Training 760w
Hospital beds, Northern Ireland 46w
Listed buildings, Northern Ireland 761w
Rates & rating, Northern Ireland 233w
Social security recipients, Northern Ireland 623w
Strangford Lough, Ferries 233w
Supplementary benefits, Northern Ireland 621-2w
Unemployment benefits, Northern Ireland 622-3w

Negligence
Armed forces' casualties (10.12.86) 354, 499w

NEI Peebles
Exports 328

Neighbourhood councils 432w

Neighbourhood watch schemes 644w, 1340-2
Conferences 644w
Expenditure 1342
Greater London 644-5w

Nellist, Mr Dave
Debates etc
Business statement (18.12.86) 1363-4
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 406-511 passim
Questions
Beaufoy, Stephen, Members' correspondence 351w
Foetal death, Coventry Health Authority 126w
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 645w
Raj, Hans, Members' correspondence 484w
Rates & rating 577w
Sheikh, Mohammed Farid, Members' correspondence 444w

New businesses 368-9w, 509-10w, 631w
Southwark 631w

New Cross Hospital 786w

New towns
Housing construction 173w
North East region 585w,

New towns development corporations
Disclosure of information 173w
North East region 585w

New workers' scheme 256-7w
Batley 256-7w

Newbridge bypass 719w
Costs 719w

Newcastle City Council 393w

Newcastle upon Tyne 392-4w
District heating 392-4w
Recycling 394w

Newham
Council housing 1195

Newport
Unemployment 1-2
Vacancies 2

News International 77-8w, 82-3w, 407w, 655-6w
Ministers' correspondence 407w
Public libraries 82-3w, 407w
Public order policing 77-8w, 655-6w

Newspaper press
Public libraries 82-3w

Newton, Mr Tony, Minister of State for Health
Questions
Abortion 413w
Abortion, Regional health authorities 412-3w
Abortion, Young people 568-9w
Agency nurses, Greater London 48-9w, 572-6w
Agency nurses, Manpower 572w
Agency nurses, NHS finance 572w
Agency nurses, North East Thames Regional Health Authority 707w
Agency nurses, Royal College of Nursing 707w
AIDS 294w
AIDS, Blood transfusions 218-9w
AIDS, Contraceptives 294w
AIDS, Ethnic groups 294w
AIDS, French kissing 780w
AIDS, Health Education Council 701w
AIDS, Hospices 409w
AIDS, Hospital beds 409w
AIDS, NHS finance 781w
AIDS, Press advertising 781w
AIDS, Screening 122-3w
AIDS, Vaccination 70w
Ambulance services, Manpower 468-70w
Amyl nitrate, Drug abuse 464w
Bayer UK, Research finance 565-6w
Blood plasma, Blood Products Laboratory 125w
Blood transfusions, Safety 124w
Chemists shops, Compensation 410w
Chemists shops, Contracts 410w
Chemists shops, Pharmacies 410w
Condoms, NHS charges 412w
Contraceptives, Imports 295w
Cruelty to children, Haedteachers 417w
District health authorities, NHS finance 707w
Doctors, Families 211w
Doctors, Manpower 707-8w
Drug industry, Transfer pricing 69w
Ear nose & throat, Hospital waiting lists 470w
Family planning clinics, Young people 782-4w
Family practitioner committees, Pay 68w
Family practitioner services, Vocational training 789w
Foetal death, Coventry Health Authority 126w
Generic prescribing, Family doctors 781w
Government contracts, Arthur Andersen 289w
Health Education Council 48w, 65w, 408w
Health Education Council, Press releases 65w
Health Education Council, Redundancy pay 787-8w
Health Education Council, Special health authorities 788w
Health service staff, Equal opportunities 709w
Health service staff, London allowance 566-7w
Health service staff, Secretarial staff 568w
Health service staff, Southwark 698-700w
Health services, Regional health authorities 216w
Hillingdon Health Authority, NHS finance 706w
Hip replacements, Hospital waiting lists 126w, 807-9w
Hospital beds, Costs 66-7w
Hospital beds, Expenditure 419w
Hospital beds, Wandsworth 782w
Hospital closures, Greater London 786w
Hospital consultants, General practice patients 70w
Hospital finance 69w
Hospital waiting lists 216w
Hospital waiting lists, Computers in National Health Service 785w
Hospital waiting lists, District health authorities 215-6w
Hospital waiting lists, Information 67w
Hospital waiting lists, NHS administration 414w
Hospital waiting lists, NHS finance 805-6w
Hospital waiting lists, Regional health authorities 216w
Hospital waiting lists, Wandsworth Health Authority 411w
Hospitals, NHS finance 411w
Human embryo experiments 218w
In Vitro Fertilisation Departmental Committee 421w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, South East Thames Regional Health Authority 290w
Junior hospital doctors, Hospital consultants 72-4w
Limited list prescribing, Drugs 782w
Limited list prescribing, Expenditure 700w, 782w
London Ambulance Service, Costs 466-7w
London Ambulance Service, Manpower 468w
London Ambulance Service, Patients transport 467w
London Ambulance Service, Pay 468w
London Ambulance Service, Training 467-8w
Medicines Commission, Homeopathy 705w
Midwives 291, 291-2w
Midwives, District health authorities 217w
Midwives, Manpower 292w
Midwives, Pay 292w
Midwives, Vacancies 291w
Mucodyne, Limited list prescribing 704w
NHS finance, Expenditure 67w
NHS finance, Greater London 806w
NHS finance, North West region 48w
NHS finance, South East region 48w
NHS finance, Wandsworth Health Authority 411w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
North West Thames Regional Health Authority, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
Nurses, Greater London 706w, 782w
Nurses, Manpower 217w, 295w
Nurses, Pay 783w
Nurses, Recruitment 295w
Nursing homes, Hospital beds 781w
Orthopaedics, Hospital waiting lists 781w
Oxford Regional Health Authority, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
Personal social services, Waltham Forest 207-10w
Pharmacies, Manpower 410-1w
Physiotherapists, Manpower 209w
Plutonium, Cumbria 399w
Prescriptions, Administrative delays 411-2w
Private patients 209w
Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth 699w
Regional health authorities, Capital investment 63-5w
Regional health authorities, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
Regional health authorities, Manpower 218w
Regional health authorities, NHS finance 409-10w
Speech impaired 210w
Speech therapists, Equal pay 68w
Speech therapists, Manpower 209-10w
Speech therapy, Information 210w
Speech therapy, Judgments 708w
Test tube babies 469w
Under-fives initiative 284w
Wessex Regional Health Authority, Arthur Andersen 421w
Wessex Regional Health Authority, Computer applications 71-2w, 290w, 421w

NHS
Ambulance services 468-70w
Equal opportunities 415w
Housing 787w
National income 658w
Pay incentives 773w
Privatisation 784w
Procurement 414w
Scotland 658w, 773w

NHS administration
Hospital waiting lists 414w
Private health services 549w

NHS & private practice
Hospital patients 711-2w
Out-patients 711-2w
Pay beds 794-8w
Private patients 797-806w
Scotland 549w

NHS charges
Condoms 412w

NHS finance 63-5w, 710-1w
Agency nurses 48-9w, 572-6w
AIDS 421w
Building repairs 786-7w
Community health services 69w
District health authorities 707w
Expenditure 67w
Greater London 411w, 806w
Guys Hospital 791-2w
Gwynedd Health Authority 451w
Hillingdon Health Authority 706w

Hospital waiting lists 805-6w
Hospitals 411w
Inner city areas 48w
North West region 48w
Regional health authorities 409-10w
South East region 48w
Wandsworth Health Authority 411w

NHS Management Board 706w, 710-1w, 782w

Nicaragua
Cruz, Arturo 8w
Diplomatic service 444w

Nicholls, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1246, 1248, 1251-2
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 782
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1370, 1380-6
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 350
Questions
Census of population, Testing 709w
Income tax, Tax yields 83w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Defence 87w
Road safety barriers 535w
Social security benefits overpayments, Orders & regulations 791w
Vandalism, Local government expenditure 1186-7
Youth training scheme, Teignbridge 540w

Nigeria
British Caledonian 756w

Nightwear (Safety) Regulations 1985
Questions
98w

Nimrod aircraft 161-2, 176, 205w, 306-7w, 595-6w, 690w, (15.12.86) 777-8, 834-7, 863-6, 1048, (18.12.86) 1351-9, 1409-54
Costs 595w
Early warning systems 161-3, 175-6, 205w, 331, 596w, 690w, 1048-50
Exports 205w

Nitrates
Fertilisers 110w
Water pollution 392w, 431w, 683w, 705w, 751w

Nitrogen oxides 582-3w
Air pollution 582-3w

Noise (15.12.86) 838
Research 754w

Noise control (15.12.86) 838
Aircraft noise 277w
Lawn mowers 179-80w, 439w
Lorries 151-2w
Motorcycles (10.12.86) 356, 534-6w

Non-departmental public bodies 679w

Non domestic rates
Economic growth 331

Noone, M 415w

Norman Shaw Building
Parking 18

Norris, Mr Steve
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 217, 225, 239, 246, 250, 253, 262-4, 268
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1276, 1280-5
Questions
Ford Motor Company, Austin Rover 324
Lung cancer 297w
Small businesses, Universities 517w
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 378-9

North East region 9-10w, 116w, 124w, 175w, 585w, 757
Coal mining 757-8
Coal reserves 757
Exports 175w
New towns 585w

North East region
New towns development corporations 585w

North East Thames Regional Health Authority 214w, 707w
Agency nurses 707w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w

North Liverpool Music Resource Centre 632w
Manpower Services Commission 632w

North sea
Divers 514w
Pollution monitoring 9w, 191w

North sea oil
Offshore structures 380w
Oil revenues 759

North West region
Economic situation 20w
Industrial training 256w
Investment 338
Manufacturing industries 540w
NHS finance 48w
Per capita costs 137-8w
Public expenditure 83w, 137-8w
Unemployment 523w

North West Thames Regional Health Authority 214w, 415w, 707w
Agency nurses 707w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w

Northampton General Hospital 284w
Capital investment 284w

Northern Constabulary 300w

Northern Engineering Industries 263w, 347w

Northern Ireland 546-7w, (15.12.86) 829-31
Criminal injuries compensation 1w
Emergency powers (16.12.86) 1079-122
Employment 537-8w, 634-6w
Employment opportunities 537-8w, 815w
Family doctors 760w
Firearms certificates 620w
Flags 234w
Hospital beds 46w
Land acquisition 377w
Legislation 234w
Listed buildings 761w
Planning permission 761w
Prisoners' release (17.12.86) 1326-32
Public expenditure 235-6w
Rates & rating 233w
Redundancy 537-8w
Self-employed 537-8w
Social security recipients 623w
Supplementary benefits 621-2w
Terrorism 374-7w
Trials 472w
Unemployment 620-1w
Unemployment benefits 622-3w

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 374-7w

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Continuance) (No 3) Order 1986
Debates etc
(16.12.86) 1121-2

Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
(16.12.86) 1079-122
Money res* (16.12.86) 1121-2

Northern Ireland Office
Ministerial advisory bodies 107w
Statistics 155-8w

Northern region
Oral questions 18
Take-up of employment 516w
Trident 139w

Northern Regional Health Authority 214w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w

Norwich
Local enterprise agencies 1044-5

Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substances Regulations 1982
Questions
525w

Nottinghamshire
Coal fired power stations 763

Nuclear accidents 198w
Cleveland 729-30w
Disclosure of information 5-6w
Durham 730w
Emergency planning 170-1w, 195-6w, 378w, 610-1w, 643w
France 197w
Police 557w
Police training 557w, 653w, 729-30w
Radiation hazards 196w
Sellafield 5-6w, 580w
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority 245w
USSR 384w
Water supply 171w

Nuclear fuel reprocessing 239w
Magnox reactors 761w
Nuclear safety 112w
Plutonium 617w
Radioactive wastes 383w, 1192
Sellafield 1193-4
USSR 112w

Nuclear fuels
Imports 383w
Nuclear safeguards 201-2w
Ports 276w
USSR 112w

Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 7w

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Civil Service Manpower 369w
Manpower 258-9w
Nuclear safety 475w
Operations research 474-5w, 619-20w
Sellafield 618-9w
Torness power station 173-4w

Nuclear power
Electricity tariffs 760-1
Energy research 199-200w
Official secrets 656w
Potton Island 761w
Publicity 241w, 384w
Safety 765

Nuclear power stations
Advanced gas-cooled reactors 240w
Air traffic 198-9w, 206w
Calder Hall 243-4w
Construction costs 473-4w
Electricity generation 380w
Emergency planning 196-7w, 619-20w
Operations research 474-5w
Public meetings 475w
Radiation hazards 659w
Radioactive waste disposal 318w
Wales 318w

Nuclear reactors
HMS Vulcan 690w
Navy 689-90w
Nuclear safety 197-8w

Nuclear reprocessing
Select committee evidence 255-6w

Nuclear safeguards
Nuclear fuels 201-2w
Plutonium 201-2w, 240w
Sellafield 618-9w

Nuclear safety 197w
Bradwell 243w
Calder Hall 761-2w, 764w
Chapelcross power station 761-2w, 764w
Magnox reactors 761w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 112w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 475w
Nuclear reactors 197-8w
Sellafield 776-7w
Testing 197w
Torness power station 657w

Nuclear submarines 87-8w, 139-40w, 688-90w
Armed forces' training 688-9w
Technical assistance 689w
USA 689w
USSR 87-8w

Nuclear test ban
USSR 267-8w

Nuclear weapons
Argentina 168
Defence 1052
Harrier aircraft 147w
HOTOL aircraft 372w
Labour Party 1347
Sellafield 776-7w
SP-70 guns 147w
Transport of radioactive materials 138w
Zero option 117-8w

Nuclear weapons deployment
Cruise missiles 147w
Defence 87w
Fire services 557w
South Yorkshire 595w
USA 150w
Warsaw Pact 147w

Nuclear weapons tests 1346
France 147w
USA 147w
USSR 236w

Nugee Committee see Flats Management Committee of Inquiry

Nurses
Greater London 706w, 782w
Hepatitis 68w
Manpower 217w, 290w, 295w
Pay 611w, 783w
Recruitment 295w, 706w, 783w
Vaccination 68w

Nurses' training
Ethnic minorities 289w

Nursing homes
Elderly 46w
Greenock 774w
Hospital beds 781w

Nutrition
School meals (10.12.86) 355

Nutrition & health
Low incomes 210w
School meals 232w

Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 53-6, 69

Objects in lieu of tax
Capital transfer tax 430w

O'Brien, Mr William
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1313-4
Questions
Manufacturing industries, Investment 176-7w

Obscene Publications Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 355

Occupational pensions 698w
Early leavers 791w

Occupied territories 263-4w, 536w

Offences against children
Convictions 768-70w
Prosecutions 643-4w

Offensive weapons
Children 649w, 1345
Martial arts 652-3w
Retail trade 652-3w, 1345

Office of Arts & Libraries
Arts & Disabled People 429-30w
Statistics 165w

Office of Fair Trading
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 987-98

Offices
Inner London Education Authority 684w

Official cars
Diplomatic service 758w

Official engagements
Cruz, Arturo 8w

Official Report (10.12.86) 423

Official secrets
Armed forces' storage depots 593w
Manpower Services Commission 542w
Nuclear power 656w

Official Secrets Act
Questions
1w

Official Secrets Act 1911
Questions
2-3w, 314w

Official Secrets Act 1920
Questions
1w

Official Secrets Acts
Prosecutions 354-5w
Retirement pensions 259w
Questions
177-8, 259w, 354-5w, 542w

Official visits
Indonesia 268-9w
Iraq 756-7w
Police 652w

Offshore drilling
Petroleum exploration 380w

Offshore structures
Contracts 474w
North sea oil 380w

Offshore suppliers
Japan 474w

Ogmore
Availability for work 520w

Ogorodnikov, Alexander 757-8w, (15.12.86) 840-1
Political prisoners 757-8w

Oil industry
Balance of trade 758-9
Oil prices 759
Research finance 380-1w

Oil pollution control
Fossil fuels 191w
Minches 602w
Sea pollution 129w

Oil prices
Oil industry 759

Oil reserves 758-9

Oil revenues
North Sea Oil 759

Oil tankers 602w

Old Bells school 680w
Demolition 680w
Portsmouth 680w

Old peoples homes
Greater London 697w

Oman
Military exercises 371-2w

Ombudsman (12.12.86) 679

"One Girl's War" 2w

£1 notes 424w

O'Neill, Mr Martin J
Questions
Assault ships, Defence procurement 182
Dockyards, Privatisation 165
Export controls, Libyan Arab Republic 347w
Export licensing, Libyan Arab Republic 347w, 353w, 373w
Frigates, Defence contracts 168-9

Onslow, Mr Cranley
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1421
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1056
Questions
Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks, Public appointments 110w
Burglary, Habitual offenders 480-1w
Listed buildings, University Grants Committee 101w
Nitrates, Fertilisers 110w
River Thames, Sewage 10-1w, 433w
Salmon, Import controls 828w
Salmon Act 1976, Law enforcement 102w
X rays, Medical records 214w

Operations research
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 474-5w, 619-20w
Nuclear power stations 474-5w

Oppenheim, Mr Phillip
Questions
Industrial disputes 541w
Industrial disputes, Lost working days 541w
Industrial production, Strikes 545-6w
Owner occupied housing, Derbyshire 589-90w
Package holidays, Holiday problems 185w
Tax yields, Tax rates & bands 426w
Toucan berbet birds, Import licensing 748w
Unemployment 1040

Optical fibres
Government assistance to industry 715w

Oral questions
Greater London 18
Northern region 18
Wales 17-8

Order paper
Speaker's rulings & statements (10.12.86) 323

Orders & regulations
Corporal punishment 774w
Education (No. 2) Act 1986 456-7w
Social security benefits overpayments 791w
Speaker's rulings & statements (16.12.86) 1079

Origin marking
EC action 333

Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 767
Coal fired power stations, Electricity generation 762-3
Coal mining, Investment 758
Sizewell inquiry 761

Orthopaedics
Hospital waiting lists 699w, 781w
Surgery 781w
X rays 214w

Osborn, Sir John
Debates etc
Air transport, EC action (09.12.86) 297
Food aid from EC (09.12.86.) 289-90

Ottaway, Mr Richard
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 662
Right to Interest Bill, 1R (16.12.86) 1078
Questions
London Docklands Development Corporation, London boroughs 581w
Small businesses, Debt collection 632-3w
Small businesses, Interest charges 258w

Out-patients
Hospital waiting lists 163-4w
NHS & private practice 711-2w

Overseas aid 305-6w
Jordan 536w

Overseas trade
Statistics (17.12.86) 1185

"Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom" (17.12.86) 1185

Overseas workers
Greater London 114-5w
South East region 114-5w

Over-the-horizon radar 86w

Owen, Rt Hon David
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 662
European Council (08.12.86) 25
Questions
Assault ships, Defence procurement 178
Dockyards, Privatisation 165

Own resources 744-5w

Owner occupied housing
Amber Valley 589-90w
Derbyshire 589-90w
Southwark 395w

Ownership
Shares 264w

Oxford Regional Health Authority 214w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w

Package holidays
Consumer protection 329
Holiday problems 185w

Paediatric cardiology 36w
Hospital consultants 36w
Hospitals 36w
Wales 12, 36w

Paediatrics
Community care 33-4w
Manpower 33-4w

Page, Sir John
Questions
Civil servants, European Court of Human Rights 772

Page, Mr Richard
Questions
Drug crimes, EC action 646w
Overseas aid, Jordan 536w
Police, Manpower 166w
Severn bridge, Court of Appeal 601w
Small firms service, Local enterprise agencies 1044

Paint industry
Takeovers 715w

Pakistan
Afghanistan 759-60w

Palace of Westminster
Educational visits 15-6
Foreign tourists 15-6
Police 100-1w
Security 16-7
Telephone calls 16, 203w, 717-8w
Telephone tapping 718w

Parish councils 395w

Park, Mr George
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1420
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 97
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 587, 612-3
Questions
Ford Motor Company, Austin Rover 324
Industrial training, High technology 514w

Parking
Buses 441w
Members' facilities 18-9
Norman Shaw Building 18
Urban programme 449w

Parking offences
Diplomatic immunity 444-8w
Diplomatic service 76-7w, 444-8w

Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1436-8

Parks
Animal welfare 625w

Parliamentary & Health Service Commissioners Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (12.12.86) 679

Parliamentary constituencies
Boundary Commission for England 559-60w

Parliamentary privilege
Speaker's rulings & statements (15.12.86) 783, (16.12.86) 1076

Parliamentary questions 435-6w

Parry, Mr Robert
Questions
Arms trade, Human rights 8w
Availability for work, Liverpool 520w
Gurkhas, Hong Kong 144w
Inflation 260w
Intervention stocks, Butter 528w, 597-8w
Intervention stocks: Liverpool 598w
Iran-Iraq war, Arms trade 8w
Liverpool University, Industrial disputes 663w
Ministers' domestic visits, Liverpool 440w
Ministers' domestic visits, Liverpool University 663w
NATO, Civil servants 313w
Prime Minister official engagements 614-5w
Rate support grants 578w
Registered homes 565w
Rover group, Privatisation 178w
South Korea, British residents abroad 272w
Tobacco industry, Manpower 16w
Unemployment, Liverpool 11-4w
Unemployment, Merseyside 13w
Youth unemployment, Liverpool 12-4w

Part-time education
Higher education 389-90w

Patchett, Mr Terry
Questions
Alternative energy, Research finance 199w
Coal mining, Capital investment 200w
Crime victims, Statistics 635-6w
Energy efficiency, Expenditure 200-1w
Nuclear power, Energy research 199-200w
Training allowances, Housing benefits 516-7w

Patients 209w
Family planning clinics 782-4w

Patients' transport
London Ambulance Service 467w

Patriotism 1347

Patten, Mr Chris, Minister of State for Overseas Development
Debates etc
Food aid from EC (09.12.86) 279-82, 284, 292-4
Questions
Bangladesh, Contracts 3w
Bilateral aid, Debts 109w
Developing countries, Debts 109-10w
El Salvador, Equipment 305w
International Development Association, UK contributions 615w
Overseas aid 305-6w
Overseas aid, Jordan 536w
RMS St Helens, Merchant ships 536w

Patten, Mr John, Minister of State for the Environment (Housing, Urban Affairs & Construction)
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1310-3, 1319-20
Questions
British Coal Corporation, Housing 1200
Building for the future, Exhibitions 432w
Compulsory purchase, Royal docks 748w
Council house sales 1195
Council house sales, Batley 282w
Council house sales, Council tenants 1200
Council house sales, Discounts 1195
Council house sales, Homesteading schemes 1195
Council housing, Hampshire 681-2w
Council housing finance, Local government revenue 682w
Council housing management, Housing subsidies 682-3w
Council tenants, Southwark 747-8w
Defective housing, Building repairs 584-5w
Defective housing, Cornish unit houses 29w
Derelict land, Government grants 587w
Empty housing, Homelessness 576w
Flats, Sound insulation 753w
Gas safety, Building regulations 27w
Government grants, Bolton 748w
Heating, Fees & charges 686w
Homelessness, Camden 681w
House renovation grants 583w
Housing 669w
Housing, Leicester 280-1w
Housing, Sound insulation 753-4w
Housing Corporation, Housing finance 93-4w
Housing estates, Demolition 30w, 95w
Housing investment programmes 283w, 686w, 746-7w
Inner city areas, Church of England 95w
Insulation grants, Housing insulation 754-5w
International Garden Festival 1984, Merseyside Development Corporation 192w
International Garden Festival 1984, Transworld Leisure 192w
Land registration, Disclosure of information 431w
Local government land, Land use 192w
London Docklands Development Corporation, London boroughs 581w
London Residuary Body, Mortgages 280w
New towns development corporations, North East region 585w
Portsdown Park, Government grants 95w
Portsdown Park, Housing estates 30w
Portsdown park, Planning permission 95w
Portsdown Park, Telephone calls 31w
Private rented housing, Right to buy 1195-6
Rent arrears, Local authorities 188-9w, 432w, 585w
Rents, Housing standards 748-9w
Rents, Landlord & tenant 749w
Repossession orders 278w
River Thames, Teddington 748w
Secondary mortgage market 29-30w, 670w
Sheltered housing 754w
Structure plans, Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980 748w
Telford Development Corporation 755w
Urban development corporations 283w, 580w
Urban programme, Employment opportunities 587w
Urban programme, Expenditure 584w
Urban regeneration grants, Government grants 668w
Vacant land registers 586w
Water authorities, Investment returns 436w
Water authorities, Land acquisition 398w
Water charges, Water authorities 398-9w
Water pollution, Nitrates 431w

Pattie, Mr Geoffrey, Minister of State for Information Technology
Questions
Airbuses, British Aerospace 346w
Airbuses, Government assistance to industry 183w
Association of British Chambers of Commerce 21w
Copyright 325-6
Copyright, Counterfeit manufacturing 327
Copyright, Educational publications 22w
Copyright, Motor components industry 326-7

Copyright, Small businesses 326-7
Council of Ministers, Research 440w
Counterfeit manufacturing 186w, 345w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Research finance 177w
Industrial research, European Economic Community 716-7w
Industrial training, Training levies 178w
Industry, Training 181w, 184w
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 178w
Manufacturing industries, Capital investment 177w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial development 176w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 176w
Manufacturing industries, Investment 176-7w
Motor components industry, Copyright 180w
Radio Laser 346-7w
Radio Spectrum Independent Review 607w
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines, Hatfield 261w
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines, Privatisation 179w
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines, Redundancy 715w
Small businesses, Merit awards 177w

Pavitt, Mr Laurie
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1235
Business statement (10.12.86) 666-7, (18.12.86) 1365
Hearing Aid Council Act 1968 (Amendment) Bill, 1R (12.12.86) 679
Neasden Hospital (15.12.86) 841-4
Questions
Mentally handicapped, Upper Waiting Hall 420w
Nurses, Pay 611w
Nurses, Vaccination 68w
Sadlers Wells Theatre, Arts finance 774-5

Pawsey, Mr J F
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 76-9, 110
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Members' interests (10.12.86) 368
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 364, 375, 401-5
Questions
Centre for Information on Language Teaching & Research 232w
Departmental progress, Dept of Employment 811w
Departmental progress, Dept of Trade & Industry 436-9w
Departmental progress, Further education 387w
Departmental progress, Higher education 385-6w
Departmental progress, Primary education 386w
Departmental progress, Secondary education 386-7w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Arms control 266-7w
M40, Road construction 832w
Overseas aid 305-6w
Primary education, School discipline 724-5w
Secondary education 232-4w

Pay
Charitable donations 497w
Civil servants 611w
Clergy 12-4
Community programme 522-3w
Crown Prosecution Service 767w
Family practitioner committees 68w
Health service ancillary staff 211w
Higher education teachers 44-5w
Local government staff 361w, 755w
London Ambulance Service 468w
Manual workers 371w
Midwives 292w, 611w
Nurses 611w, 783w
Secretarial staff 568w
Teachers (08.12.86) 38-44, 44w, 45-121, (10.12.86) 358-442, 445-658
White-collar workers 371w
Young people 320-1w

Pay beds
NHS & private practice 794-8w
Private patients 797-806w
Wandsworth 784w

Pay incentives
Civil service 259w
National Audit Office 259w
NHS 773w
Pensions 570w

Pay review bodies 611w

"Paying for Local Government Consultation Papers" 93w, 361-2w, 392w, 577w

PC9 aircraft 776w
Civil servants 776w

Peace negotiations
Sri Lanka 119w

Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Questions
BBC External Services, National Audit Office 9w
Council house sales, Batley 282w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Violence 412w
Employment schemes, Batley 257w
New workers scheme, Batley 256-7w
Student grants 158w
Work permits, British Dependent Territories 371w

Peak District National Park 397-8w
Population 397-8w

Peak Park Joint Planning Board 28-9w, 397-8w, 586w
Government grants 28w
Public appointments 28w, 397-8w

Pedestrians 405w
Casualties 405w
Children 405w

Pendry, Mr Tom
Questions
Sports Council, Government grants 580w

Penhaligon, Mr David
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1258-60, 1276
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1224-5
Housing policy (15.12.86) 914, 925-9, 931
Questions
Drinking & driving, Death 42w
Income tax 738w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 737w

Pension funds
Investment 340

Pensioners
Television licences (10.12.86) 353

Pensions
Intelligence services 352w
Marklew, A A 412w
National insurance contributions 412w
Pay incentives 570w

Per capita costs
Health services 420w
Higher education 229-30w
North West region 137-8w
Prisons 254w

Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Debates etc
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 807-11, 821

Perinatal mortality
Test tube babies 790w
Wales 451-3w

Perry Barr 680w
Shopping centres 680w

Persian Gulf
Shipping 118w

Personal income
Council tenants 747-8w
Family doctors 549w
Households 530w
Income tax 495-8w
Mortgage relief 738-40w
Personal tax allowances 495-8w
Scotland 530w
Taxpayers 562w

Personal injury compensation
Aircraft (15.12.86) 1023-5

Personal records
Disclosure of information (10.12.86) 354

Personal social services
Employment opportunities 523w
Local government expenditure 207-10w
Waltham Forest 207-10w

Personal tax allowances
Personal income 495-8w

Personal taxation
British residents abroad 740w
Entertainers 740w
Tax allowances 745-6w

Peru (15.12.86) 853-7

Pest control
Lindane 258w

Pesticides
Publicity 366-7w

Peter Cameron Webb Syndicate 716w
Lloyds of London 716w

Peterhead Prison 302-3w
Inquiries 302-3w
Scottish Prison Officers Association 302w

Petrol
Lead 754w

Petroleum exploration
Offshore drilling 380w

Petroleum exploration licences 201w

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee 410w

Pharmacies
Chemists shops 410w
Manpower 410-1w
Prescription drugs 107-8w

Pharmacists
Working hours 107-8w

Phillips, David 724w
Public appointments 724w

Physical education
Mergers 304w
Scotland 304w

Physiotherapists
Manpower 209w
Training 209w

Picketing
Industrial disputes 520-1w

Pickup 387w, 722-3w

Pike, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 667
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1211
Housing policy (15.12.86) 924-5
MV Kowloon Bridge & MV Derbyshire (12.12.86) 701
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 348
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 582-3, 615-6
Questions
Average earnings 115w
Crimes of violence, Crimes against the person 641w
Exchange rates, Balance of payments 260w
Inner area programmes, Local authorities 190w

Local government expediture, Capital investment 192-3w
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 333
Manufacturing industries, Industrial development 176w
Manufacturing industries, North West region 540w
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 378w
Prime Minister official engagements 114w, 238w, 615w
Rate support grants 578w

Pilkington Brothers 184w, (15.12.86) 871-93
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 871-93
Privatisation 324, 333
Takeovers 184w

Pincher, Chapman 1w, 177-8, 237w, (10.12.86) 352-3, (15.12.86) 782-828
National security 1w

Pirate radio stations
Electromagnetic interference 97w
Greater London 97w

Planning
Inner city areas 1186

Planning appeals 616w
Administrative delays 194w
Bromley 579w
Dept of the Environment 1198-9
Talbot Green 8
Wales 7-9

Planning authorities
Local authority powers 398w
Property development 398w

Planning permission
Arlington Securities 579w
Bathgate 549-50w
Farm buildings 590w
Greenbelt 587w
Housing construction 399w
Local authorities 1198-9
M25 579-80w
Northern Ireland 761w
Portsdown Park 95w
Property development 278w
Shopping centres 680w
Small businesses 517w

Plant diseases
Disease control 526w
Import controls 526w

Plutonium 239w, 383w
Cumbria 399w
Disclosure of information 245-6w
EC countries 609-10w
Exports 239-40w
Human organs 399w
Imports 240w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 617w
Nuclear safeguards 201-2w, 240w

Points of order (10.12.86) 416, 427, 434, 445, 491, 565
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 198-9, (10.12.86) 353, (15.12.86) 780, 870, (17.12.86) 1238, (18.12.86) 1426

Police
Bridge Street Area 100-1w
Civil defence 255w
Domestic violence 641-2w
Emergency calls 251w
Freemasonry 476w
McCrea, William 352w
Manpower 74w, 166w, 250-2w
Nuclear accidents 557w
Official visits 652w
Palace of Westminster 100-1w
Prime Minister domestic visits 612w, 765w
Solihull 253w
Widows benefits 730w

Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984
Metropolitan Police 348w
Police powers 348w
Questions
348w

Police civilians 74w
Leicestershire 74w

Police Complaints Authority (Information) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 356

Police corruption
Metropolitan Police 476-7w

Police custody
Death 772w
Scotland 298w, 772w
Women 298w

Police misconduct
Computer privacy 316w, 477-8w

Police national computer
Computer privacy 316w, 477-9w
Motor vehicle registration 38w, 400w

Police patrolling
Leicestershire 1341

Police powers
Breathalysers 74w
Buses 74w
Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 348w

Police records
Disclosure of information 731w

Police relations with public
Camden 169-70w
Greater London 654-5w
Motoring 558-9w

Police training
Nuclear accidents 557w, 653w, 729-30w

Police War Duties Committee 255w

Policewomen
Metropolitan Police 551w
Strathclyde 774w

Political advisers 588w
Local authorities 588w

Political parties
Legal aid 314w

Political prisoners
Ogorodnikov, Alexander 757-8w
USSR 757-8w, (15.12.86) 840-1

Political refugees
Immigrant detainees 103-4w
Iran 351w

Pollock, Mr Alexander
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1224
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 196
Questions
Royal Opera House, Arts finance 625-7w

Pollution control
Air pollution 685w
Asbestos (08.12.86) 37
Buses 152w
Exhaust emissions 152w
Fossil fuels 191w
Industry 90w, 191w
Mercury pollution 433-4w
Natural gas production 112-3w
Water pollution 191w

Pollution monitoring
Crabs 365w
Lead pollution 394-5w
North sea 9w, 191w
Radioactivity 87-8w
Shellfish 365w
USSR 88w

Polytechnics
Ealing College of Higher Education 661w
Higher education 389-90w
Higher education admission 723w

Polyurethane
Industrial health & safety 369-70w
Mining 369-70w

"Poor Man's James Bond" 151w, 259w
Import controls 259w
Publishing 151w

Population
Peak District National Park 397-8w
Wales 450-1w

Pornography
Broadcasting (10.12.86) 355

Port Glasgow 299-300w, 302w, 355-7w

Porter, Mr Barry
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 266-7
Questions
Government assistance to industry, Quality control 716w

Porton Down 311w

Ports
Immigration controls 480w
Nuclear fuels 276w
Transport of radioactive materials 276w

Portsdown Park 95w
Building repairs 95w
Government grants 95w
Housing estates 30w
Housing improvement 30-1w
Planning permission 95w
Telephone calls 31w, 95w

Portsmouth
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 707w
Old Bells School 680w
Queen Alexandra Hospital 699w

Portsmouth City Council 31w

Poseidon missiles
Arms control treaties 121w
USA 121w

Positive discrimination
Army 166

Possession rights 315-6w

Postal deliveries
British Gas Corporation 1347

Potatoes
Agricultural support systems 829w

Potton Island 761w
Nuclear power 761w

Poverty 3-4w, (15.12.86) 858-61
Children 123w, 806w, 1348-50
Wales 418w

Powell, Rt Hon J Enoch
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1079, 1103
Questions
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, USA 175
Corporal punishment, Schools 561w
Motor vehicle registration, Police national computer 38w, 400w

Powell, Mr Ray
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1238
Housing (Houses in Multiple Occupation) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 355
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1068-9
Questions
Availability for work, Ogmore 520w
Unemployment, Wales 2, 35w

Powell, Mr William
Debates etc
Pilkington Brothers, Takeovers (15.12.86) 887-8
Questions
Unemployment 114w

Power industry 759-60
Alternative energy 761
Asbestosis 785w
Exports 328, 763

Power stations
Asbestos 692w

Construction 759-60
Design 760
Industrial health & safety 629w
Respiratory diseases 785w
Smoke & chimney gases 1194

Powley, Mr John
Debates etc
Defence (15.12.86) 905-6
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 99
Questions
Coal mining, Productivity 764-5
Haringey Borough Council 587w
Petroleum exploration licences 201w

Pregnancy
Research 790-1w
Women's employment 629-30w

Prerogative of mercy 647-8w

Pre-school education
Road safety education 404w

Prescott, Mr John
Questions
Restart programme, Take-up of employment 1037

Prescription charges exemptions
Contraceptives 412w

Prescription drugs
Pharmacies 107-8w

Prescriptions
Administrative delays 411-2w
Chemists shops 410w
Medical research 565-6w

Press advertising
AIDS 781w

Press Association 159w

Press releases
Health Education Council 65w
HM Inspectorate of Schools 300w

Pressurised water reactors 760

Price, Sir David
Questions
AIDS 294w
AIDS, NHS finance 421w
Amyl nitrite, Drug abuse 464w, 649w, 735w
Arts sponsorship, Regional arts association 771
Chemical weapons 498w
Light dues, Republic of Ireland 41-2w
Navigational aids, Fees & charges 38-9w
Shipping, Defence 113w
Type 23 frigates, Defence contracts 143w

Prices
Agricultural production 825w
Health foods 9w

Pricing
Defence contracts 145w

Primary education
Building repairs 661-2w
Departmental progress 386w
School discipline 724-5w
School teachers 661w

Prime Minister (15.12.86) 862-3
Speaker's rulings & statements (08.12.86) 37

Prime Minister domestic visits 614w
Armed forces 612w, 765w
Manchester 613-4w
Police 612w, 765w
Salford 613-4w
Scotland 614w
Wales 614w

Prime Minister official engagements 114w, 238w, 443w, 614-5w

Prime Minister visits abroad 612-3w
Costs 160w

Prime Minister's questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 173-4, 177, (10.12.86) 323, (16.12.86) 1048

Printing industry
Greater London 538w
Industrial training schemes 628-9w
Innovation 628w
Take-up of employment 629w
Vacancies 538w

Prior, Rt Hon James
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1430-4, 1445
Questions
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 1049-50

Prison accommodation 729w
Construction 475-6w
Prisoners 167w

Prison escapes
Knowlden, Alan Richard 484-5w, (15.12.86) 757

Prison medical services
AIDS 477w, 484w
Brixton Prison 484w

Prison overcrowding 729w

Prison population 643w
Prison staff 104-8w

Prison riots
Hostages 648w

Prison sentences 80w, 253-4w
Drug abuse 552w
Indictable offences 729w
Scotland 298-9w
Women 298-9w

Prison staff
Prison population 104-8w

Prison visits
Food 102w
Remand in custody 102w

Prisoners
AIDS 81w
Central Criminal Court 167w
India (19.12.86) 1504-15
Kaur, Kuldip (19.12.86) 1504-15
Medical examinations 477w
Prison accommodation 167w
Scotland 299w
Smoking 653w
Wales 732w
Women 299w

Prisoners' release
Bombings 639w
Northern Ireland (17.12.86) 1326-32

Prisoners' rights
Bibles 481w

Prisons (19.12.86) 1558-64
Consolidated fund debates (15.12.86) 999-1008
Criminal damage 480w
Fire prevention 166-7w
Per capita costs 254w
Young offenders 350-2w

Private Bill Procedure Joint Select Committee (17.12.86) 1324

Private bills (17.12.86) 1324
Speaker's rulings & statements (17.12.86) 1324

Private education
Civil servants 361w

Private health services
Abortion 568w
Family doctors 301w, 549w
NHS administration 549w
Wales 36w

Private investment
Channel tunnel 337
Dartford tunnel 337
Mersey barrage 336

Private Members' bills
First reading (10.12.86) 353-7

Private Members' motions
Defence industries (12.12.86) 680-98, 703-33
Employment schemes (12.12.86) 734-46
Intelligence servies (15.12.86) 782-828
Retirement (15.12.86) 828
Speaker's rulings & statements (10.12.86) 671

Private Parking Protection 654w

Private patients 209w
Hospital bed occupancy rates 794-8w
NHS & private practice 797-806w
Pay beds 797-806w

Private rented housing
Right to buy 1195-6

Private sector
Shipbuilding intervention fund 26w

Private sector housing
Wales 5

Private Security Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (17.12.86) 1231, 1232

Privatisation 332
British Gas Corporation 7-8w, 173-4, 244w, 381w, 766-8
British Steel Corporation 338, 440-1w
Britoil 767
Coal mining 380w
Defence contracts 777w
Defence expenditure 777w
Devonport dockyard 164-5, 776w
District heating 394w
Dockyards 164-5
Electricity supply industry 380w
Humberside airport 276w
Iron & steel industry 334-5
Leyland Trucks 332
NHS 784w
Pilkington Brothers 324, 333
Public expenditure 332-3
Public sector assets 332-3
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines 179w, 605-6w
Rosyth dockyard 164-5
Rover group 178w
School transport 301w
Shareholders 259w
Slater Walker 768
Water authorities 683w

Procurement
Buses 603w
NHS 414w

Product liability 324-5
Drug industry 325

Production quotas
France 246-7w
Iron & steel 335
Milk 10w, 367-8w, 451w, 829-30w
Sheep 3

Productivity
Coal mining 763-5
Engineering industries 330
Iron & steel industry 335

Professional industrial & commercial updating 387w, 722-3w

Professional qualifications
HM Inspectorate of Schools 388w
Industrial training schemes 628w
Justices' clerks 1343
Tourism 519w

Profit sharing 425w, 665w

Profitability
Coal mining 757-8

Prohibition notices 542w
Viruses 542w

Propaganda
Local authorities 433w

Property development
Planning authorities 398w
Planning permission 278w

Property Services Agency
Art works 684w
Civil service dispersal 589w
Consultants 684-5w
Fees & charges 684-5w
Rent arrears 751w
Rents 751w

Property transfer
Ailsa shipyard 304w
British Coal Corporation 579w, 1200
County Hall 684w
Local government property 750-1w
Radioactive waste disposal 6-7w
Seaside & country homes scheme 749-50w
Thamesmead Town 750w

Prosecutions
Counterfeit manufacturing 345w, 550-1w
Dept of the Environment 762w
Dept of Transport 762w
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme 47w
Flags 234w
Illegal broadcasting 97w
Insider trading 336
Intelligence services 177-8
Offences against children 643-4w
Official Secrets Acts 354-5w
Road traffic offences 80w
Sex Discrimination Act 1975 15w
Tobacco 82w

Prosthetics
Industrial disputes 697w

Protection of Animals (Penalties) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (19.12.86) 1485

Protective clothing
Armed forces 87w
Iran 346w

Psychiatry 34w
Holloway Prison 551w

Psychology
Road safety 276-7w

Public appointments
Aberdeen College of Education 305w
Advisory Board for the Research Councils 724w
Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks 110w
Boundary Commission for England 560w
District health authorities 33w
Dundee College of Education 305w
Magistrates 315w
Ministerial advisory bodies 92w, 98w, 101-3w, 107-8w, 117w, 125-6w, 135w
National parks 752w
Peak Park Joint Planning Board 28w, 397-8w
Phillips, David 724w
Recorders 429w, 604w
Regional health authorities 407-8w
Residuary bodies 678w
Wales 364w
Women 364w

"**Public bodies**" 92w, 98w, 101-3w, 107-8w, 117w, 125-6w, 135w

"**Public bodies 1986**" 82w

Public expenditure 486-96w, (17.12.86) 1233-306
Arts finance 770-2
Government departments 427-8w, 745w
National income 187-8w
North West region 83w, 137-8w
Northern Ireland 235-6w
Privatisation 332-3

Public finance
Members' voting behaviour 1346

Public Health Laboratory Service 288w, 413w
Expenditure 413w
Vacancies 288w

Public houses
Drinking & driving 75w

Public inquiries
Radioactive waste disposal 396w

Public libraries
News International 82-3w, 407w
Newspaper press 82-3w

Public meetings
Nuclear power stations 475w

Public order policing 1341
News International 77-8w, 655-6w
Waltham Abbey 1335

Public participation in planning
Government grants 396w

Public places
Smoking (15.12.86) 781

Public Record Office
Air conditioning 89w, 91-2w
Construction 91w
Government grants 89w
Repairs & maintenance 91-2w

Public relations
Dept of Energy 201w
Dept of Health & Social Security 792-4w
Government departments 188w, 428w
Ministry of Defence 7-8w

Public sector assets
Privatisation 332-3

Public sector housing
Capital investment 584w

Public service obligation grant 401w
Barking-Gospel Oak railway line 401w

Public service vehicles 835-40w
Motor vehicle testing 835-40w
South Wales 835-6w, 839-40w
Spot checks 836w
Wales 835w

Public transport
Christmas 275w
Mobility of disabled 131w

Public utilities 600w

Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950
Questions
600w

Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 Review 600w

Publicity
AIDS 294w
Civil service manpower 794w
Drinking & driving 603w
Government departments 207-8w, 792-3w
Nuclear power 241w, 384w
Pesticides 366-7w
Smoking 700w

Publishing
Attorney-General 5w
"Poor Man's James Bond" 151w

Punishment
Counterfeit manufacturing 265w

Pupil-teacher ratios
City technology colleges 453w

Quality assurance directorate 313w
Ministry of Defence 313w

Quality control
Government assistance to industry 716w

Quangos
Financial management initiative 352-3w

Queen Alexandra Hospital
Portsmouth 699w

Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth 699w

Queen Mary's Hospital for Children, Carshalton (12.12.86) 748-56

Quota of handicapped workers 116w

Racial attacks 350w

"**Racial attacks & harassment government reply**" 350w

Racial discrimination
Appeals 415w
Health services 415w
Tribunals 415w

Radar 86w
Iran 373w
Standards specifications 441w
Trident 139w
USSR 139w

Radiation hazards
Nuclear accidents 196w
Nuclear power stations 659w
Scotland 771w
Torness power station 657w

Radice, Mr Giles
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 40-1, 44-9, 71-2, 90, 98
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Availability of amendments (10.12.86) 358
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 360-654 passim

Radio
Road accidents 132w
Road works 133w

Radio Investigation Service 97w, 607w
Civil service manpower 97w

Radio Laser 346-7w

Radio Spectrum Independent Review 607w

Radioactive waste disposal
Central Electricity Generating Board 6w, 530w
Chapelcross power station 134w
Compensation 6w, 28w, 591w, 767-8
Costs 767-8
Irish sea 266w, 1192-4
Nuclear power stations 318w
Property transfer 6-7w
Public inquiries 396w
Republic of Ireland 266w
Scotland 659w, 771w
Sellafield 1192

Radioactive wastes
Advanced gas-cooled reactors 383w
Exports 761w
Magnox reactors 383w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 383w, 1192
Sellafield 241w

Radioactivity
Coal fired power stations 239w
Environmental impact assessment 384w
Pollution monitoring 87-8w
Sheep 16-8w, 162w, 829w

RAF Bentwaters 206w

RAF Welford 140-1w, 148-9w
Binary chemical weapons 140w, 148w
Chemical weapons 141w
Construction 149w

RAF Woodbridge 206w

Raffan, Mr Keith
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1067
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 348
Questions
Local government finance, Wales 361-2w
Planning appeals, Wales 8
Private sector housing, Wales 5
Teachers' appraisal, Wales 14-5

Rag flock 278w

Rag Flock & Other Filling Materials Act 1951
Questions
278w

Railway closures
Settle-Carlisle railway 273w

Railway electrification
South Wales 14

Railway network
Europe 274-5w
High speed trains 274-5w

Railway safety
Level crossings 39-40w

Railway transport
Dover Harbour 401-2w

Railway travel 276w
Greater London 41w
London Underground 40w

Raj, Hans 484w
Members' correspondence 484w

Ramsar convention 671-3w

Ramsey, Robin 353w

Randall, Mr Stuart
Debates etc
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1163-7
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1209

Rape
Habitual offenders 479-80w

Rapier missiles
Defence procurement 373w

Rate support grants 283w, 399w, 577-8w, 747w, (18.12.86) 1367
Bradford 1190-1
Local government finance 1189-92
Ministerial statements (16.12.86) 1053-70
Scotland 357-60w
Urban areas 582w
Wales 317-8w, 362-3w, 450-1w, (16.12.86) 1063-70
Waverley Borough Council 582w

Rates & rating 283w, 577w
Employment 747w
Local government 581w
Local government finance 1190
Northern Ireland 233w
Scotland (09.12.86) 200-78
Wind power 577w

Raynsford, Mr Nick
Debates etc
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1461-4, 1466, 1470-2
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1129-30, 1139-41
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 345-6
Questions
Channel tunnel, Waste disposal 278-9w
Compulsorily detained mental patients 102w
Council tenants, Building repairs 586w
Housing insulation, Government grants 377-8w
Severe weather payments 466w
Unemployment, West London 522w

Readaptation benefits 346w
Administrative delays 346w
Iron & steel industry 346w

Recess motions
Christmas (15.12.86) 829-70

Recorders
Age 604w
Public appointments 429w, 604w
Re-employment 766w
Retirement age 604w

Recruitment
Coal mining 758
Fire services 75w
Government grants 1040-1
Nurses 295w, 706w, 783w

Recycling
Newcastle upon Tyne 394w

Redmond, Mr Martin
Questions
British Coal Corporation 377w
Fire services, Nuclear weapons deployment 557w
Nuclear weapons deployment, South Yorkshire 595w

Redundancies
Babcock Power 1051-2

Redundancy
Basildon 219-20w
BICC 339-40
Dockyards (08.12.86) 34
Engineering industries 330
Manufacturing industries 303-4w
Northern Ireland 537-8w
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines 715w
Royal ordnance factories 688w
Tobacco industry 817w
Whisky 355w

Redundancy pay
Health Education Council 787-8w

Redundant mineworkers payments scheme 382w
Tredegar 382w

Reema Houses 673w
Defective housing 673w

Re-employment
Recorders 766w

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 663
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 797-8, 801-2, 807
Questions
Copyright 326
Wilson, Harold, National security 1346-7

Refugees
Afghanistan 759-60w
Bangladesh 756w

Refuse
Alternative energy 393-4w

Refuse disposal
Local government finance 1186

Regional aid
Greenock 302w
South West England (10.12.86) 356
Tourism 515w

Regional arts associations 771
Arts sponsorship 771

Regional development grants 25w, 546w
Government grants 26w

Regional health authorities
Abortion 412-3w
Capital investment 63-5w
Health services 216w
Hospital waiting lists 216w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
Manpower 218w
NHS finance 409-10w
Public appointments 407-8w

Regional planning & development 180w
Civil servants 9-10w
Civil service manpower 116w
Dept of Employment 116w
Dept of Health & Social Security 124w
Government departments 124w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 9-10w

Regional selective assistance 25w, 546-7w, 718w
Wales 718w

Register of Sasines (Scotland) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 356

Registered homes 565w, 697w
Greater London 697w

Registered Homes Act 1984
Questions
565w

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment No 2) Order 1986
Debates etc
(16.12.86) 1178

Religion
Urban programme 27w

Religious discrimination
Jehovah's Witnesses 272-3w

Remand centres
Young offenders 350-2w

Remand in custody 351w
Prison visits 102w
Scotland 299w
Women 299w

Remission
Young offenders 653w

Rent arrears
Local authorities 188-9w, 432w, 585w
Middlesbrough 1190
Property Services Agency 751w

Renton, Mr Tim, Minister of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Questions
Arms trade, Iran 443w

Rents
Housing standards 748-9w
Landlord & tenant 749w
Leasehold housing 260w, 428w, 740w
Property Services Agency 751w

Repairs & maintenance
Public Record Office 91-2w
Roads 833-4w

Repossession orders 278w

Representation of the People Act 1985
Questions
560w

Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 1986
Questions
507w

Republic of Ireland
Bombings 639-40w
Light dues 41-2w
Radioactive waste disposal 266w

Rescue services
Bristol channel 37-8w

Research
Council of Ministers 440w
Industrial production 608w
Industry 160-1w
Local government reform 678-9w
Noise 754w
Pregnancy 790-1w
Severn barrage 674-5w
Tax allowances 666w

Research assistants 435w
House of Commons 27w
Terrorism 19-20

Research finance 161w, 238-9w, 442w
Agriculture 367w
AIDS 44w, 70w, 664-5w
Alternative energy 199w
Bayer UK 565-6w
Dept of Trade & Industry 177w
Fast reactors 198w
Gas supply industry 380-1w
Oil industry 380-1w

Residential care
Elderly 46w
Glasgow 659w
Land acquisition 566w
Supplementary benefits 126-8w

Residuary bodies 678w, 750-1w
Public appointments 678w

Resignations
Medical Research Council 43-4w

Resource Allocation Working Party 63-5w, 409-10w, 710-1w

Respiratory diseases
Power stations 785w

Restart Programme 14-5w, 114w, 521-2w, 538-9w, 813w, 1035-7, 1045-7
Employment opportunities 1036
Interviews 521w, 813w, 1037, 1045
Liverpool 258w, 538-9w
Social security benefits disqualification 813w
Take-up of employment 521-2w, 538w, 1035-7, 1045
Tourism 522w
Unemployment 14w
Walthamstow 114w
Wandsworth 813w
West Midlands 1047

Restaurants
Supplementary benefits 285-6w

Restrictive Trade Practices (Services) (Amendment) Order 1986
Debates etc
(08.12.86) 153

Retail price index
Widows benefits 700w

Retail trade
Airguns 635w
Lime 450w
Offensive weapons 652-3w, 1345

Retirement
Private Members' motions (15.12.86) 828

Retirement age
Recorders 604w

Retirement pensions
Automatic credit transfer 694w
Civil servants 259w
Official Secrets Acts 259w
Social security payments 694w

Rewards
Garner, Roy 476-7w

Reykjavik summit 141w
Defence 141w

Rhizomania disease
Cambridgeshire 624w

Rhodes James, Mr Robert
Debates etc
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 814
Questions
Afghanistan, Refugees 759-60w
Roads, Transport supplementary grants 535w

Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Debates etc
Companies Bill, 1R (16.12.86) 1078
European Council (08.12.86) 24
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1405-8, 1455-8, 1474-5

Richardson, Ms Jo
Questions
Availability for work, Child care 539-40w
Barking-Gospel Oak railway line, Public service obligation grant 401w
Doctors, Families 211w
Family planning clinics, Young people 782-4w
Maternity benefits 284w
Skillcentres, Deptford 225w, 1046
Skillcentres, Greater London 225-6w
Skillcentres, Women 225w
Women, Dept of Education & Science 455-6w
Women, Dept of Employment 811-2w
Women, Dept of the Environment 431-2w
Women, Dept of Trade & Industry 544-5w
Women, Dept of Transport 399-400w
Women, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 443w
Women, Home Office 650-1w
Women, Treasury 665w

Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas, *Secretary of State for the Environment*
Debates etc
Local Government Finance Bill, 1R (18.12.86) 1367
Rate support grants, Ministerial statements (16.12.86) 1053-62
Questions
Air pollution, Pollution control 685w
Arts & disabled people, Dept of the Environment 432-3w
Common land 1189
Common land, Land ownership & tenure 1189
Common land, Land registration 1188
Common land, Trespass 1188-9
County Hall, Inner London Education Authority 684w
County Hall, Property transfer 684w
"Faith in the City" 30w
Hampton Court, Fires 390-1w
Inner London Education Authority, Offices 684w
Local government finance 392w
Local government reform, Local government staff 679-80w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of the Environment 92w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Radioactive wastes 1192
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Sellafield 1193-4
"Paying for Local Government Consultation Paper" 93w
Radioactive waste disposal, Irish Sea 1192-3
Radioactive waste disposal, Sellafield 1192
Rate support grants 577-8w
Town & country planning 591-2w
Urban development corporations 283w
Urban planning, Birmingham City Council 680w
Water authorities, Capital investment 1196
Water authorities, Water charges 1196
Water, Legislation 683w
Water pollution, Nitrates 392w
Women, Dept of the Environment 431-2w

Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Questions
EC Transport Council 531-2w

Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm, *Secretary of State for Scotland*
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 200-12, 214-6, 218, 222, 268
Questions
Ferries, Western Isles 550w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Scotland 769w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Scottish Office 135w
Scottish Amateur Music Association, Government grants 660w
Scottish Office, Civil servants' background 361w
Traffic education programme, Scotland 770w

Right to buy
Council tenants 584w
Private rented housing 1195-6

Right to Interest Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R* (16.12.86) 1078

Riot (Damages) Act 1886
Lambeth 732w

River flow rates 748w
River Thames 748w

River Humber (Barcom Outfall) Bill (HL) 1985/86
Debates etc
Rep* (09.12.86) 161
3R* (16.12.86) 1035
Royal assent (18.12.86) 1333

River pollution 434w, 578w

River Thames 10-1w, 39w, 433w, 748w
Fish stocks 10-1w
River flow rates 748w
Sewage 10-1w, 433w
Teddington 748w
Tunnels 39w

RMS St Helena 536w
Merchant ships 536w

Road accidents
Casualties 533-4w
Costs 172-3w, 506w
Death 172w
Injuries 171w, 400w, 506-7w
Lorries 151w
M25 133-4w
Midlothian 171-2w
Motorcycles 404-5w
Motorways 132w
Radio 132w
Scotland 172w, 506-7w

Road assessment studies 40w, 154w, 277w, 603w
Costs 603w
Greater London 40w, 154w, 273w, 277w, 603w

Road construction 533-4w
Bolton (15.12.86) 861-2
Consultants 154w
Costs 153-4w
Dunbeath bridge 305w
Dunblane bypass 16w
M25 133w
M40 832w
Motorways 601w
Warminster bypass 601-2w

Road finance
Scotland 506w

Road mileage
Motorways 601w, 616w

Road safety
European Road Safety Year 534w
Psychology 276-7w
Unemployment benefit offices 117w

Road safety barriers 535w
A19 42w
A174 277w
Dual carriageways 772-3w, 831w
M4 273w
Motorways 274w, 773w, 831w
Welding 274w

Road safety education
Community programme 770w
Pre-school education 404w

Road tolls
Accounting 273w

Road traffic 152w
M1 132-3w
M25 132-3w, 403-4w, 533w, 601w
Motorways 133w
Severn bridge 600w

Road traffic control
Lorries 151-2w
M1 38w
Metropolitan counties 604w

Road traffic offences
Buses 74w
Lorries 131w
Prosecutions 80w
Traffic lights 80w

Road traffic police
Manpower 166w

Road transport
Government grants 507w

"Road Users & the Police" 558-9w

Road works
A487 364w
M1 37-8w
M5 133w
M40 401w
Radio 133w

Roads
A420 (19.12.86) 1526-33

Environment protection 402w
Expenditure 401w
Lighting 507w
Repairs & maintenance 833-4w
Scotland 507w
Transport supplementary grants 535w
Wales 35w

Robbery 1347-8

Roberts, Mr Allan
Debates etc
European Council (08.12.86) 30-1
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1057
School Governors (Access to Information) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 357
Questions
Drug squads, Merseyside 642w
International Garden Festival 1984, Merseyside Development Corporation 192w
International Garden Festival 1984, Transworld Leisure 192w
Local government finance, Rate support grants 1189-90
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 378w
Tobacco industry, Redundancy 817w
Transworld Leisure, Company liquidations 185-6w

Roberts, Mr Wyn, *Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
A55, Dual carriageways 616w
A487, Road works 364w
Assisted places scheme, Wales 319-20w
Capitation allowances, Wales 320w
Educational finance, South Glamorgan County Council 33w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Wales 365w
Hotels, Wales 451w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Welsh Office 108w
Monuments, Wales 718-9w
Motorways, Wales 616w
Newbridge bypass, Costs 719w
Public appointments, Women 364w
Radioactive waste disposal, Nuclear power stations 318w
Railway electrification, South Wales 14
Rate support grants, Wales 362-3w
Roads, Wales 35w
School leaving, Youth unemployment 318-9w
Teachers' appraisal, Wales 14-5
Tourism, Government grants 448w
Tourism, Wales 316w
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 449w
Welsh language, Departmental correspondence 37w
Welsh language, Government grants 322-44w
Welsh language, Local valuation panels 36w

Robertson, Mr George
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1203-4
Questions
Air freight transport, Weapons 129w
Arms trade, Iran 113w, 443w
Evergreen International Airways, Stansted Airport 130w
Evergreen International Airways, Weapons 130w
Export controls, Libyan Arab Republic 263w
Export licensing, Libyan Arab Republic 262w
HOTOL aircraft, Nuclear weapons 372w
Libyan Arab Republic, Exports 238w
Persian Gulf, Shipping 118w
School leaving certificates, Scotland 659-60w

Robinson, Mr Mark, *Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1321-2
Questions
Ambulance services, Gwynedd 364w
Ambulance services, Training 363w
"Arts & Disabled People", Welsh Office 449-50w
Cardiac surgery units, Cardiff 616w
Central heating, Wales 720w
Cervical cancer, Screening 34-5w
Childbirth, Wales 108-9w
Colposcopy, Medical equipment 317w
Council house waiting lists, Wales 5
Council housing, Housing construction 616-7w
Council housing, Housing finance 35w
Council housing, Wales 4-5, 363-4w
Departmental circulars, Welsh Office 33w
District health authorities, Public appointments 33w
Doctors, Wales 11
Homelessness, Wales 37-8w
Hospital beds, Wales 37w, 319w, 365w
Hospital waiting lists, Wales 163-6w
House condition survey, Wales 719w
Housing capital allocations, Wales 5-6
Housing completions, Wales 319-20w
Housing standards, Health 719w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, Wales 318w
Infant mortality, Wales 720w
Leasehold housing, Wales 10-1
Mental health services, Gwynedd 451w
Paediatric cardiology, Wales 12, 36w
Paediatrics, Community care 33-4w
Pharmacists, Working hours 107-8w
Planning appeals 616w
Planning appeals, Talbot green 8
Planning appeals, Wales 7-9
Private health services, Wales 36w
Private sector housing, Wales 5
Psychiatry 34w
Under-fives initiative, Wales 11
Whitchurch Hospital, Cardiff, Dangerous mental patients 11-2

Roe, Mrs Marion
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1260-2
Questions
EC Environment Council 578-9w
Tax relief, Companies 740w
Venture capital, Business expansion scheme 739w

Roebuck House
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 706w

Rogers, Mr Allan
Debates etc
Members' interests (10.12.86) 369
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1069
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 371, 565, 570-3, 589-93
Questions
District health authorities, Public appointments 33w
Flood control, South Wales 10
Monuments 1347
National parks, Conservation 581w

Rogers, Martin Robert 558w
Brixton Prison 558w
Medical treatments 558w

Rolls-Royce Aeroengines
Factory closures 261w
Hatfield 261w
Privatisation 179w, 605-6w
Redundancy 715w

Roman Catholic Church
Educational standards 723w

Rooker, Mr Jeff
Debates etc
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1131-2
Questions
Housing amenities, Government grants 1201-2
Mucodyne, Limited list prescribing 704w
Rents, Housing standards 748-9w
Rents, Landlord & tenant 749w
Sheltered housing 754w
Shopping centres, Perry Barr 680w
Urban planning, Birmingham City council 680w

Ross, Mr Ernie
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1210
Questions
Intervention stocks, Dundee 657w
Migrant workers, Dundee 170w
Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association, Ministers' correspondence 300w
Scottish Office, Civil servants background 361w
Social security benefits disqualification, Dundee 813-4w

Ross, Mr Stephen
Debates etc
Air transport, EC action (09.12.86) 305-6, 309
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1111-4

Rossi, Sir Hugh
Debates etc
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1058
Questions
Town & country planning 591-2w

Rost, Mr Peter
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 766
Coal, Imports 762

Rosyth dockyard (08.12.86) 34, 164-5
Babcock Thorn 165
Privatisation 164-5
Standing Order No 20 applications (08.12.86) 34

Rotherham
Employment schemes 537w
Youth unemployment 537w

Rothschild, Lord 611w
National security 611w

Rover Group 178w, 439w, 549-50w, 609w
Corporate plans 439w
Exports 333
Future 178w
Government assistance to industry 178w
Privatisation 178w

Rowe, Mr Andrew
Debates etc
Food aid from EC (09.12.86) 286
Great Lines, Gillingham (15.12.86) 951-2, 954
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 375-7, 648-9
Questions
Employment opportunities, Personal social services 523w
Nimrod aircraft 595w
Nimrod aircraft, Costs 595w
Residential care, Land acquisition 566w
Speech therapists, Equal pay 15w, 68w
Speech therapists, Industrial tribunals 633w
Speech therapy, Judgments 708w
Urban programme, Expenditure 584w

Rowlands, Mr Ted
Debates etc
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1070
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 502, 508, 511
Questions
Energy efficiency, Housing insulation 764
North Sea oil, Offshore structures 380w
Oil revenues, North Sea oil 759
Welsh Development Agency, Finance 6

Rowlands, Hywel 11-2
Dangerous mental patients 11-2

Royal Army Veterinary Corps 372w
Melton Mowbray 372w
Ministers' domestic visits 372w

Royal College of Nursing
Agency nurses 707w

Royal College of Physicians 289w

Royal docks
Compulsory purchase 748w

Royal Greenwich Observatory (19.12.86) 1549-56

Royal Military School of Music 173

Royal National Institute for the Blind 701-3w

Royal National Institute for the Deaf 783w

Royal Opera House 625-7w, 735-6w
Arts finance 625-7w

Royal ordnance factories
Redundancy 688w

Royal visits
Falkland Islands 168

Rumbold, Mrs Angela, *Minister of State for Education & Science*
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 59, 61, 101, 108-15
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 365, 378, 458-9, 473-7, 526-7, 586-8, 591, 600-3, 619-21
Questions
"Better Schools White Paper" 159w
City technology colleges, Civil service manpower 661w
City technology colleges, Educational administration 385w
Departmental progress, Further education 387w
Educational standards, Roman Catholic Church 723w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Educational finance 43w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Brent 384-5w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Professional qualifications 388w
Local education authorities, Leeds 42w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Dept of Education & Science 101w
Primary education, School discipline 724-5w
Statistics, Dept of Education & Science 158-9w
Teachers, Pay 44w
Teachers, Science education 101-2w
Vocational guidance, Schools 721w

Rural areas
Employment opportunities 25-6w
Exports 328
Government assistance 579w
Investment 25-6w
Small businesses 430-1w
Wind power 577w

Ruston Gas Turbines
Exports 334

Science & technology research 608w

SACEUR 146w

Sackville, Mr Tom
Questions
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 162
Health service staff, Equal opportunities 709w
VAT, Employment 486w

Sadlers Wells Theatre 774-5
Arts finance 774-5

Safety 98w
Airports 832w
Blood transfusions 124w
Coal mining 765
Exhibitions 670w
Forth road bridge 17w
Nuclear power 765
Shipping 118w
Upper Waiting Hall 670w

Safety measures 570w
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd 619w

St Helier Hospital, Merton (12.12.86) 748-56

St James Hospital 786w

St Lukes Hospital, Bradford 123w
Violence 123w

St Pauls Road 403w

Salford
Prime Minister domestic visits 613-4w

Salmon
Fish diseases 828w
Import controls 882w

Salmon Act 1976
Law enforcement 102w
Questions
102w

Sandwich courses
Higher education 389-90w

Sayeed, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc
British Shipbuilders, Nationalised industries borrowing (08.12.86) 147
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1412-3
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 133-5
Questions
Drug liaison officers 642-3w
Merchant seamen, Emergency planning 155w
Shipping, Investment 599-600w
Shipping, Marine surveys 599w
Shipping, West Germany 601w

SBK consortium
Central Electricity Generating Board 382w

Scheduled offences 374-7w

School admissions
City technology colleges 455w

School catchment areas
City technology colleges 453w

School closures
Administrative delays 42w, 458-60w

School discipline
Primary education 724-5w

School governors
Disclosure of information (10.12.86) 357

School Governors (Access to Information) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 357

School leaving
Greenock 357w
Wales 318-9w
Youth unemployment 318-9w

School leaving certificates
Appeals 659-60w
Comprehensive schools 662-3w
Grammar schools 662-3w
Scotland 659-60w

School meals
Nutrition (10.12.86) 355
Nutrition & health 232w

School teachers
Primary education 661w
Voluntary schools 661w

School transport
Privatisation 301w
Scotland 301w

Schools
Capital investment 725-9w
Corporal punishment 561w
Vocational guidance 721w

Science education
Teachers 101-2w

Scope of debate (10.12.86) 402-645
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 308, (17.12.86) 1321, (18.12.86) 1382, 1384

Scotland
AIDS 660-1w
"Arts & Disabled People" 507-8w
Average earnings 773w
Bus services 135w
Colposcopy 301w
Corporal punishment 774w
Dual carriageways 772-3w
Electoral register 507w
Employment (15.12.86) 838-40
Family doctors 301w
Farm buildings 550w
Farmers 507w
Gas flaring 508-9w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 305w
Health services finance 658w
Hill farming 508w
HM Inspectorate of Schools 504-5w, 547w, 769-70w
Homicide 300w
Hospital waiting lists 173-4w, 657w, 770-2w
Hotels 508w
Households 19w
Insulation grants 771w
Island councils (15.12.86) 958-70
Land registration (10.12.86) 356
Local enterprise grants for urban projects scheme 657w
Local government staff 361w
Manufacturing industries 303-4w
Motorways 506w, 773w
NHS 658w, 773w
NHS & private practice 549w
Personal income 530w
Physical education 304w
Police custody 298w, 772w
Prime Minister domestic visits 614w
Prison sentences 298-9w
Prisoners 299w
Radiation hazards 771w
Radioactive waste disposal 659w, 771w
Rate support grants 357-60w
Rates & rating (09.12.86) 200-78
Remand in custody 299w
Road accidents 172w, 506-7w
Road finance 506w
Roads 507w
School leaving certificates 659-60w
School transport 301w
Severe weather payments 693-4w
Sexual offences 768-70w
Sheep 16-8w
Social security appeals 697-8w
Social security payments 788w
Tenant farmers 507w
Total allowable catches 771-2w
Tourism 170w
Traffic education programme 770w
Trident 171
Unemployment 504w, (15.12.86) 838-40
Urban programme 359-62w
Voting rights 507w
Whisky 355w

Scott, Mr Nicholas, *Minister of State for Northern Ireland*
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1084, 1111, 1117-21
Prisoners' release, Northern Ireland (17.12.86) 1327-30, 1329-32
Questions
Bradley, Francis, Death 158w
Firearms certificates, Sports 620w
Flags, Northern Ireland 234w
International Fund for Ireland 234-5w
Ministerial advisory bodies, Northern Ireland Office 107w
Statistics, Northern Ireland Office 155-8w
Trials, Northern Ireland 472w

Scottish Amateur Music Association 660w
Government grants 660w

Scottish Arts Council 407w

Scottish Grand Committee (17.12.86) 1324

Scottish health boards
Hospital beds 17-9w

Scottish Health Education Group
Special health authorities 661w

Scottish Office
Civil servants' background 361w
Ministerial advisory bodies 135w

Scottish Prison Officers Association 302w
Peterhead Prison 302w

Scottish Tourist Board 508w

Scottish Transport Group
Government grants 507w

Screening
AIDS 122-3w
Breast cancer 217-8w, 562w
Cervical cancer 34-5w, 66w, 563-4w, 712-4w
Health service staff 34-5w
X rays 217-8w

Sea pollution
Oil pollution control 129w
Sellafield 580w

Sea Wolf 776w

Seas & oceans
Death 635w

Seaside & country homes scheme 749-50w, (19.12.86) 1515-25
Property transfer 749-50w

Second jobs 815-6w

Secondary education 232-4w
Departmental progress 386-7w

Secondary mortgage market 29-30w, 670w

Secondary Mortgage Market Working Group 29-30w, 670w

Secretarial staff
Health service staff 568w
Pay 568w

Section Ten Abolition Group 143w

Secure accommodation 705w

Secure community home schools 705w

Security
Armed forces' storage depots 593w
Housing 280-1w
Palace of Westminster 16-7

Security equipment
Motor vehicle theft 155w

Security industry (17.12.86) 1231, 1232
Law enforcement 647w

Sedgemore, Mr Brian
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 416
Questions
Chemical weapons, RAF Welford 141w
European Court of Human Rights, Corporal punishment 610w
Restart programme, Interviews 521w
Rogers, Martin Robert, Medical treatments 558w

Segregation of prisoners 732-3w

Seismic monitoring 236w

Select Committee evidence
Civil servants 774
Dept of Employment 255-6w
Nuclear reprocessing 255-6w

Self-employed 510-1w, 815-6w
Graduates 510w
Northern Ireland 537-8w
Taxation 1047-8

Sellafield 5-6w
Health & Safety Executive 631w
Nuclear accidents 5-6w, 580w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 1193-4
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 618-9w
Nuclear safeguards 618-9w
Nuclear safety 776-7w
Nuclear weapons 776-7w
Radioactive waste disposal 1192
Radioactive wastes 241w
Sea pollution 580w

Sentencing
Crimes of violence 645w
Youth custody (10.12.86) 357

Service industries
Employment opportunities 815w

Settle-Carlisle railway 132w
Leisure 132w
Railway closures 273w

Severe disability premium 701-4w
Attendance allowance 701-3w
Blind 701-3w
Cohabitation 703-4w
Exceptional circumstances additions 704w
Income support scheme 704w
Invalid care allowances 704w
Single people 703w

Severe weather payments 65-6w, 294-5w, 466w, 693-4w, 785w, (18.12.86) 1368-94
Greenock 693-4w
Leytonstone 65-6w
Scotland 693-4w
Tooting 785w

Severn barrage 195w, 617-8w, 674-6w, 762
Birds 675-6w
Electricity distribution 762
Energy consumption 618w
Environmental impact assessment 617-8w, 675-6w
Nature conservation 675-6w
Research 674-5w
Water pollution 674-5w

Severn bridge 600-1w
Court of Appeal 601w
Road traffic 600w
Toll bridges 600w

Severn estuary 195w, 673w
Special protection areas 673w

Sewage
River Thames 10-1w, 433w

Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Prosecutions 15w
Questions
15w

Sexual offences
Scotland 768-70w

Shakespeare cliff 278-9w

Share ownership
Insider trading 766-7

Shareholders 173-4
British Gas Corporation 766
Companies 345w
Privatisation 259w

Shares
Ownership 264w

Shaw, Mr Giles, Minister of State for Trade & Industry
Debates etc
British Shipbuilders, Nationalised industries borrowing (08.12.86) 145-6, 151-3
Shipbuilding, EC action (08.12.86) 123-6, 141-4
Questions
Ailsa shipyard 262w
Austin Rover, Future 182w
British Steel Corporation, External financing limits 609w
British Steel Corporation, Privatisation 440-1w
Confederation of British Industry 179w
Development agencies 181-2w
Early warning systems, GEC 331
Economic growth, Non domestic rates 331
Economic situation, North West region 20w
Engineering industries 331
Engineering industries, Industrial production 330
Engineering industries, Innovation 331
Engineering industries, Productivity 330
Ford Motor Company, Austin Rover 323-4
Foreign investment in UK, Employment opportunities 181w
Foundry industry 184w
General Motors, Balance of payments 607w
ICI 183-4w
Industrial development, Leicester 178w
Iron & steel industry, Defence contracts 330-1
Iron & steel industry, EC action 181w
Iron & steel industry, Readaptation benefits 346w
ISTEL, Management buy-outs 609w
Lawn mowers, Exports 439w
Lawn mowers, Factories 439w
Lawn mowers, Isle of Man 347w
Lawn mowers, Noise control 179-80w, 439w
Manufacturing industries, Investment 339-40
Manufacturing industries, Leicester 340
Motor industry, Manpower 96-7w
National Economic Development Council 22w
Northern Ireland 546-7w
Regional development grants 25w, 546w
Regional development grants, Government grants 26w
Regional planning & development 180w
Rover Group, Future 178w
Rover Group, Government assistance to industry 178w
Shipbuilding, EC action 175-6w
Shipbuilding, Government assistance to industry 99-100w
Shipbuilding intervention fund, Private sector 26w
Small businesses, Channel tunnel 98w
Textile industry, Trades Union Congress 180w
Tiles, Dumping 20w
Vauxhall Motors, Imports 545w
Vauxhall Motors, Motor vehicle parts 607w
Vosper Shiprepairers, Management buy-outs 607-8w

Shaw, Sir Michael
Questions
EC Fisheries Council 825-7w
European Communities, EC Presidency 759w

Sheep
Cumbria 829w
Export of live animals 528w
Hill farming 3-4
Production quotas 3
Radioactivity 16-8w, 162w, 829w
Scotland 16-8w
Wales 3-4

Sheep premiums
Wales 3

Sheerman, Mr Barry
Debates etc
Local enterprise agencies (15.12.86) 972, 976-8, 980-1, 983
Questions
Engineering industries, Skilled workers 1041-2
Industrial training, West Midlands 1047

Sheffield
Manufacturing industries 515-6w
Unemployment 511w

Sheikh, Mohammed Farid 444w
Members' correspondence 444w

Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1262-6
Questions
VAT, Tax yields 486w, 666-7w

Shellfish
Pollution monitoring 365w

Sheltered employment
Government grants 524w

Sheltered housing 754w

Shepherd, Mr Colin
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1218
European Council (08.12.86) 32
Local enterprise agencies (15.12.86) 979-82
Questions
Council house sales, Discounts 1195
Farm & countryside initiative 820-6w

Shepherd, Mr Richard
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1222
Questions
Skuse, Frank, Forensic science 81-2w, 1338

Shersby, Mr Michael
Questions
Agency nurses, North East Thames Regional Health Authority 707w
Agency nurses, Royal College of Nursing 707w
Business expansion scheme, Film industry 739w
District health authorities, NHS finance 707w
Doctors, Manpower 707-8w
Early warning systems, Exports 306w
Early warning systems, Military aircraft 306-7w
Film industry, Foreign investment in UK 606w
Film industry, Income 606w
Hillingdon Health Authority, NHS finance 706w
Nurses, Greater London 706w
Nurses, Manpower 290w
World Health Organisation, Diet & disease 789w

Shetland Islands Council (Ham Voe Foula) Order Confirmation Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
Rep* (09.12.86) 161
3R* (10.12.86) 323

Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Debates etc
Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986 (18.12.86) 1458-60
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1378-80
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 567-8
Questions
Animal cruelty, Legislation 648w
Common land, Land registration 1188
Confederation of British Industry 179w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence contracts 139w

Shipbuilding
EC action 175-6w
EC countries 99-100w
EC grants & loans (08.12.86) 123-44
Exports 263w, 347w
Government assistance to industry 99-100w
Yarrow 169-70

Shipbuilding intervention fund 26w
Private sector 26w

Shipping
Defence 113w
Investment 129w, 599-600w
Marine surveys 599w
Persian Gulf 118w
Safety 118w
Tax allowances 599-600w
Territorial waters 121w
West Germany 601w

Shipping accidents
Merchant ships (12.12.86) 699-702
MV Kowloon Bridge 275w

Shipyard closures 262w, 304w

Shopping centres
Greenbelt 685-6w
Perry Barr 680w
Planning permission 680w

Shops
Crimes of violence 649-50w, 1334
Firearms 79w

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1235
Early warning systems (15.12.86) 863-6, (16.12.86) 1072

Short, Ms Clare
Debates etc
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 813, 819-20
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 410, 416, 419, 421, 423, 436
Questions
Community programme, Young people 1043-4
Diplock courts, Judges 766w
Employers statutory sick pay scheme, Appeals 123w
Employers statutory sick pay scheme, Prosecutions 47w
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 817w
Forensic science, Bombings 1335-7
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 695-8w
Industrial training schemes, Employment agencies 817w
Restart programme, Interviews 521w

Short, Mrs Renee
Questions
Cement, Unfair competition 175w
Deaf, Mental hospitals 296w
Deaf, Special education 296-7w
Deaf, Teacher training 296w
Deaf, Training 296w
Drug abuse, Women 552w
Free school meals, West Midlands 45w
Handicapped 289w
Holloway Prison, Psychiatry 551w
Poverty 3-4w
Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Prosecutions 15w
Sixth form education 230w
Tinnitus 297w
Urban development corporations 283w

Sickle cell disease 71-2w
Ethnic groups 71-2w

Sickness benefits 213w
Costs 287w

Silvester, Mr Fred
Debates etc
Christie Hospital, Manchester (19.12.86) 1486-90, 1492

Simon Engineering 1345-6
Buy ins 1345-6

Simplified planning zones 256w
Employment opportunities 256w

Sims, Mr Roger
Debates etc
Business statement (18.12.86) 1364-5
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 345
Tobacco Smoking (Public Places) Bill, 1R (15.12.86) 781
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Greece 261-2w
European Road Safety Year 441-2w
Planning appeals, Dept of the Environment 1198
Postal deliveries, British Gas Corporation 1347

Single people
Households 19w
Severe disability premium 703w
Supplementary benefits 287w

Sites of special scientific interest 194w
Nature Conservancy Council 583w
Tree planting 771w

Sixth form education 230w

Sizewell B 380w
Cost effectiveness 380w

Sizewell inquiry 240w, 378w, 760-1

Skillcentres
Construction methods 543w
Deptford 225-6w, 369w, 542-3w, 1046
Greater London 225-6w
Women 225w

Skilled workers
Economic regions 518w
Engineering industries 518-9w, 1041-2

Skinner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 664
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1222, 1224
European Council (08.12.86) 29
MV Kowloon Bridge & MV Derbyshire (12.12.86) 702
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 184
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1062
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 479, 485, 493-516
Questions
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 768
Coal mining, Safety 765
Property transfer, British Coal Corporation 579w
Skuse, Frank, Forensic science 1335-6, 1338

Skuse, Frank 81-2w, 482w, 1335-8
Evidence 482w
Forensic science 81-2w, 1335-9

Slater Walker
Privatisation 768

Slaughterhouses
Licensing 246w

Small businesses 512w, (15.12.86) 971-86
Advisory services 1044
Billing 517w
Channel tunnel 98w
Copyright 326-7
Debt collection 632-3w
Enterprise & Deregulation Unit 818w
Government contracts 517-8w
Industrial health & safety 818w
Information 630w
Inner city areas 518w
Interest charges 258w
Loan guarantee scheme 519w
Merit awards 177w
Planning permission 517w
Rural areas 430-1w
Tourism 515w
Universities 517w
VAT 186-7w
VAT returns 187w

Small farms
Wales 4, 107w

Small firms service 1044
Local enterprise agencies 1044

Smallholdings (10.12.86) 672-8

Smallpox
Industrial health & safety 541w
Labelling 541w
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine 541w

Smith, Mr Chris
Debates etc
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages ((10.12.86) 485
Questions
Acid rain, Smoke & chimney gases 1199
Armed forces' training, Companies 688w
Families, Unemployment 123w
Fire services, Greater London 651-2w, 730-1w

Homelessness, Greater London 751-2w
Housing benefits 286w
Legal aid, Administrative delays 767w
Legal aid, Expenditure 767w
Legal Aid Efficiency Scrutiny 766
Magnox reactors, Nuclear safety 761w
Metropolitan Police 1333-4
Mortgage relief, Taxpayers 738-40w
Natural gas production, Pollution control 112-3w
News International, Public order policing 655-6w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 239w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Sellafield 619w
Nuclear power stations, Advanced gas-cooled reactors 240w
Nuclear weapons, Sellafield 776-7w
Oil pollution control, Fossil fuels 191w
Oil pollution control, Sea pollution 129w
Plutonium 239w
Plutonium, Exports 239-40w
Police, Official visits 652w
Pollution control, Industry 90w, 191w
Pollution monitoring, North Sea 9w
"Poor Man's James Bond", Import controls 259w
"Poor Man's James Bond", Publishing 151w
Rates & rating 577w
Road assessment studies, Greater London 40w
Supplementary benefits, Greater London 712w
Tilgate Forest, Land acquistion 365-6w
Uranium, Imports 473w

Smith, Sir Dudley
Questions
AIDS, Press advertising 781w
Counterfeit manufacturing 345w
Counterfeit manufacturing, Prosecutions 345w
Criminal injuries, Brain 413w
Horse racing 349w
Mass media, Council of Europe 482-3w, 487-8w
£1 notes 424w
Prosecutions, Counterfeit manufacturing 550-1w
Retirement pensions, Official Secrets Acts 259w

Smith, Rt Hon John
Questions
Early warning systems, GEC 331
Infrastructure, Investment 338
Manufactured goods, Balance of trade 334

Smith, Mr Tim
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 663-4
Questions
Planning permission, M25 579-80w
Road assessment studies, Greater London 154w, 277w
Vacancies, High techology 514w
VAT 83w
VAT, Customs & Excise 740-3w

Smoke & chimney gases
Acid rain 1199-200
Coal fired power stations 1192, 1194
EC countries 1199
Power stations 1194

Smoking
Children 1197
Long stay patients 785-6w
Prisoners 653w
Public places (15.12.86) 781
Publicity 700w

Smyth, Rev Martin
Debates etc
Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 2R (16.12.86) 1103, 1113

Snape, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Air transport, EC action (09.12.86) 299-302, 308, 310

Soames, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 267
Air transport, EC action (09.12.86) 302, 306-7, 310
Business statement (10.12.86) 665
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 784
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1382, 1387
Questions
Aircraft noise, Noise control 277w
Bus services, West Sussex 602w
Exports 175w
Structure plans, West Sussex 677-8w
Subversion 1344

Social fund 564-5w
Death grants 564-5w
Maternity benefits 564-5w

Social problems
Urban areas 582w

Social reform 695-8w

Social Security Act 1986
Questions
570w, 698w

Social security appeals
Administrative delays 469-70w
Birmingham 631w
Scotland 697-8w

Social security benefits
Expenditure 286w

Social security benefits disqualification
Availability for work 520w, 813-4w
Dundee 813-4w
Employment schemes 224w, 538w, 817w
Restart programme 813w
Wandsworth 813w

Social security benefits overpayments
Orders & regulations 791w

Social security benefits rules
Exceptional circumstances additions 466w
Exceptional needs payments 461w
Mobility allowance 124w

Social security benefits uprating (18.12.86) 1395-408, 1455-75
Supplementary benefits 418-20w

Social Security Benefits Uprating (No 2) Order 1986
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1395-408, 1455-75

Social Security Benefits Uprating Order 1987
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1395-408, 1455-75

Social security claims
Highlands of Scotland 471w

Social Security (Contributions Rerating) (No 2) Order 1986
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1475

Social security payments
Administrative delays 788w
Retirement pensions 694w
Scotland 788w

Social security recipients
Highlands of Scotland 296w
Housing benefits 695-8w
Northern Ireland 623w
Supplementary benefits 711-2w, 807-8w

Social security reform 124w, 215w, 462w, 571w, 704w
Board & lodging charges 571w
Costs 215w
Exeptional needs payments 462w
Handicap benefits 124w

Social Security (Treasury Supplement to & Allocation of Contributions) (Rerating) Order 1987
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1475

Solar power
Dept of Energy 381-2w, 529-30w
Housing 381-2w, 529-30w

Soley, Mr Clive
Debates etc
Crime prevention (15.12.86) 937-9, 941-5
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 798, 802-7
Prisons (15.12.86) 1004-5
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1058
Questions
Afghanistan, Human rights 444w
Civil service unions 773
Dept of the Environment, Prosecutions 762w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1341-2
Segregation of prisoners 732-3w

Solicitor-General
Letters 113w, 237w
Ministers' correspondence 4w, 159w, 353w, 530w

Solihull
Police 253w

Solway Firth barrage 381w

Sound insulation
Flats 753w
Housing 753-4w
Standards specifications 753-4w

South Africa
Antarctic treaty 265w
Apartheid 182w
Balance of trade 182w
Coal 762
Minimum wage 182w
UK companies abroad 182w

South Atlantic 140w

South East region
EC nationals 221w
NHS finance 48w
Overseas workers 114-5w

South East Thames Regional Health Authority 290w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 290w

South Glamorgan County Council 33w
Educational finance 33w

South Korea
British residents abroad 272w

South Wales 14, 836w, 839-40w
Flood control 10
Floods 10
Motor vehicle testing 836w
Public service vehicles 835-6w, 839-40w
Railway electrification 14

South West England
Regional aid (10.12.86) 356

South West (England) Development Agency Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 356

South West Thames Regional Health Authority 415w

South West Water Authority 1196
Government grants 1196

South Yorkshire
Nuclear weapons deployment 595w

Southend
Health services (15.12.86) 851-3

Southwark
Council house waiting lists 28w
Council tenants 747-8w
Employment schemes 630w
Health service staff 698-700w
Industrial training schemes 630w
Land registration 677w
New businesses 631w
Owner occupied housing 395w
Urban programme 590w

SP-70 guns 147w
Nuclear weapons 147w

Spain
Death 271-2w
Tourists 271-2w

Spare parts 545w
Manufacturing industries 545w

Speaker and his deputies, *For rulings & statements see separate heading Speaker's rulings and statements*
Debates etc
Amendments & new clauses (08.12.86) 38, 123, (09.12.86) 212, (15.12.86) 782
Business statement (10.12.86) 664
Disallowed questions (09.12.86) 166
Procedure (10.12.86) 339, (17.12.86) 1245, (18.12.86) 1348-9
Standing Order No 20 applications, Buchanan bottling plant (08.12.86) 36
Standing Order No 20 applications, Early warning systems (15.12.86) 778, (16.12.86) 1069-70, (17.12.86) 1229, (18.12.86) 1366
Standing Order No 20 applications, Harrier GR5 Mission Simulator (15.12.86) 779
Standing Order No 20 applications, MI5 (10.12.86) 352-3
Standing Order No 20 applications, Rosyth dockyard (08.12.86) 34
Standing Order No 20 applications, Wright, Peter (17.12.86) 1230-1
Unparliamentary expressions (10.12.86) 654

Speaker's rulings & statements
Adjournment debates (16.12.86) 1181
Business statement (18.12.86) 1363
Calling of Members (08.12.86) 53, (17.12.86) 1224, (18.12.86) 1359
Christmas (19.12.86) 1564
Emergency debates (18.12.86) 1408
House of Commons division of time (16.12.86) 1079
Members' conduct (16.12.86) 1053, 1055, 1062, 1157, (17.12.86) 1234, (18.12.86) 1353, 1412, 1448, 1453
Members' interventions (08.12.86) 53, 107, (09.12.86) 172, 176, (15.12.86) 908, 940, (16.12.86) 1181, (17.12.86) 1247-9, 1252, (18.12.86) 1389
Members' speeches (08.12.86) 102, (09.12.86) 262, (15.12.86) 825, 885, (17.12.86) 1313, (18.12.86) 1423
Members' telephones (09.12.86) 183
Ministerial responsibility (09.12.86) 173-4, 177, (16.12.86) 1048
Ministerial speeches (09.12.86) 311
Ministerial statements (08.12.86) 37, (09.12.86) 193, (10.12.86) 344, 349, (16.12.86) 1062, (17.12.86) 1226, (18.12.86) 1358, (16.12.86) 1057, 1059
Ministers (17.12.86) 1234-5, 1238
Order paper (10.12.86) 323
Orders & regulations (16.12.86) 1079
Parliamentary privilege (15.12.86) 783, (16.12.86) 1076
Points of order (09.12.86) 198-9, (10.12.86) 353, (15.12.86) 780, 870, (17.12.86) 1238, (18.12.86) 1426
Prime Minister (08.12.86) 37
Prime Minister's questions (09.12.86) 173-4, 177, (10.12.86) 323, (16.12.86) 1048
Private bills (17.12.86) 1324
Private Members' motions (10.12.86) 671
Scope of debate (09.12.86) 308, (17.12.86) 1321, (18.12.86) 1382, 1384
Standing Order No 20 applications (17.12.86) 1232
Sub judice (09.12.86) 178
Supplementary questions (09.12.86) 172, 175, (10.12.86) 334
Telephone tapping (17.12.86) 1232, (18.12.86) 1367
Ten minute rule bills (10.12.86) 671
Unparliamentary expressions (09.12.86) 183, (15.12.86) 1016, (16.12.86) 1073-5, (17.12.86) 1231, 1248, (18.12.86) 1387

Spearing, Mr Nigel
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1437
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1207
European Council (08.12.86) 28
London Residuary Body (19.12.86) 1524
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1057-8
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 41, 55
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 376, 385, 394-401, 536-7, 540-6
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1311
Questions
Better Schools White Paper 159w
Compulsory purchase, Royal docks 748w
Emergency calls, Metropolitan Police 646w

Special Air Service
Libyan Arab Republic 166-7

Special Branch
McCrae, William 352w

Special education
Blind 296-7w
Deaf 296-7w
Down's syndrome 664w

Special educational needs 663-4w

Special health authorities
Health Education Council 788w
Scottish Health Education Group 661w

Special protection areas 671-3w
Severn Estuary 673w

Special schools
Waltham Forest 231w

Speech impaired 210w

Speech therapists
Equal pay 15w, 68w
Industrial tribunals 633w
Manpower 209-10w

Speech therapy
Information 210w
Judgments 708w

Speed governors 533w

Speed limits
Lorries 131w

Speller, Mr Tony
Debates etc
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1318-9
Questions
Export of live animals, Sheep 528w
Hill livestock allowances, Marginal land 596-7w
Insulation grants, Housing insulation 754-5w
Protective clothing, Iran 346w
Rescue services, Bristol channel 37-8w
Wind power, Rural areas 577w

Spencer, Mr Derek
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 665
Questions
Territorial Army, Armed forces' strength 142w
Trident, Defence 172

Spicer, Mr Jim
Debates etc
Defence (15.12.86) 898-9, 901-3, 907

Spicer, Mr Michael, *Under-Secretary of State for Transport*
Debates etc
Air safety (15.12.86) 1025-6
Air transport, EC action (09.12.86) 295-9, 311-2
MV Kowloon Bridge, Ministerial statements (12.12.86) 699-702
Questions
Air freight transport, Weapons 129w
Aircraft noise, Noise control 277w
Airports, Freight transport 832-4w
Airports, Safety 832w
Evergreen International Airways, Stansted Airport 130w
Evergreen International Airways, Weapons 130w
Humberside airport, Privatisation 276w
Light dues, Republic of Ireland 41-2w
MV Kowloon Bridge, Inquiries 603-4w
MV Kowloon Bridge, Shipping accidents 275w
Navigational aids, Fees & charges 38-9w
Oil pollution control, Minches 602w
Oil pollution control, Sea pollution 129w
Radar, standards specifications 441w
Rescue services, Bristol channel 37-8w
Shipping, Investment 129w, 599-600w
Shipping, Marine surveys 599w
Shipping, West Germany 601w

Sponsorship
City technology colleges 453-4w

Sports
Firearms certificates 620w

Sports competitors 740w

Sports Council
Government grants 580w

Sports sponsorship
Tobacco industry 1196-8

Spot checks 836w
Public service vehicles 836w

Sprucefield
Land acquisition 377w

"Spy Who Never Was" 442w

Squire, Mr Robin
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 202
Rate support grants (16.12.86) 1060
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 348
Questions
Board & lodging charges, Social security reform 571w
Buses, Vehicle speed limiters 533w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Hornchurch 66w
International Year of Shelter for the Homeless 580-1w
Offensive weapons, Retail trade 652-3w
Personal income, Income tax 495-8w
Safety, Exhibitions 670w
Unemployment benefit offices, Hornchurch 117w
Vandalism 1187

Sri Lanka
Armed forces 687w
Peace negotiations 119w

Staffordshire
Unemployment 512w

Stanbrook, Mr Ivor
Debates etc
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1208
Questions
Civil service pensions, War service 773-4

Standard Chartered Bank 98w
Lloyds of London 98w

Standards specifications
Radar 441w
Sound insulation 753-4w

Standing Order No 20 applications (16.12.86) 1071, (17.12.86) 1230
Buchanan bottling plant (08.12.86) 35-6
Early warning systems (15.12.86) 777-8, (16.12.86) 1071, (17.12.86) 1229, (18.12.86) 1366
Harrier GR5 Mission Simulator (15.12.86) 779
MI5 (10.12.86) 352-3
Rosyth Dockyard (08.12.86) 34
Speaker's rulings & statements (17.12.86) 1232
Wright, Peter (17.12.86) 1230

Standing Order No 20 applications, Specific cases (08.12.86) 34-6, (10.12.86) 352-3, (15.12.86) 777-9, (17.12.86) 1229, (18.12.86) 1366

Stanhope, Eric (10.12.86) 672-8

Stanley, Rt Hon John, *Minister of State for the Armed Forces*
Questions
Aircraft carriers, Marines 310-1w
Armed forces, Sri Lanka 687w
Armed forces' training 310w
Armed forces' training, Companies 688w
Belize, Armed forces 88w
Binary chemical weapons 148w
Binary chemical weapons, RAF Welford 140w, 148w
Chemical weapons 141w, 498w
Chemical weapons, RAF Welford 141w
Chemical weapons, Warsaw Pact 145w
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 147w
D Notices, "Their Trade is Treachery" 310w, 373-4w
Exercise Monkfish 144w
Falkland Islands, Armed forces' deployment 140w, 167-8
Falkland Islands, Curteis, Ian 163-4
Falkland Islands, Defence expenditure 168
Falkland Islands, Royal visits 168
Gurkhas, Hong Kong 144w, 372w
Military aircraft, USA 206w
Military exercises, Oman 371-2w
NATO, Civil servants 313w
Navy, Warships 140w
Nimrod aircraft 595w
Nuclear submarines, USSR 87-8w
Nuclear weapons, Argentina 168
Nuclear weapons deployment, Defence 87w
Nuclear weapons deployment, South Yorkshire 595w
Nuclear weapons deployment, USA 150w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Warsaw Pact 147w
Nuclear weapons, Transport of radioactive materials 138w
Reykjavik summit, Defence 141w
Statistics, Ministry of Defence 206-7w
Tornado aircraft 146w
Trident, Holy Loch 139-40w
Trident, Radar 139w
UKAIR, Manpower 692w
War casualties, Disclosure of information 692-3w

Stansted Airport 130w
Evergreen International Airways 130w

Statutory Sick Pay (Rate of Payment) Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1475

"Staying at home" 211-3w

Steel, Rt Hon David
Questions
Civil servants, West Germany 611w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 175-6, 1050
Occupational pensions 698w
Profit sharing 425w, 665w
Scottish Amateur Music Association, Government grants 660w
Traffic education programme, Scotland 770w

Steen, Mr Anthony
Debates etc
Air transport, EC action (09.12.86) 297-8, 303, 309-11
Questions
Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, Devon 396w
Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, Finance 396w
Milk, France 367w
Milk, Production quotas 367-8w
Structure plans, Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980 748w

Stern, Mr Michael
Debates etc
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 347
Questions
Defective housing, Building repairs 584-5w
European fighter aircraft 141-2w
Motor components industry, Copyright 180w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 644w
Severn barrage 195w, 676w
Severn barrage, Electricity distribution 762
Severn barrage, Energy consumption 618w
Severn barrage, Environmental impact assessment 675-6w
Severn barrage, Nature conservation 675-6w
Severn barrage, Water pollution 674-5w
Special protection areas, Severn Estuary 673w
Tidal power, Energy research 617-8w
Wetlands, Nature conservation 672-3w

Stevens, Mr Lewis
Debates etc
Employment schemes (12.12.86) 734-8
Questions
Arts, Marketing 406-7w
Knowlden, Alan Richard, Prison escapes 484-5w
Small businesses, Billing 517w
UKAIR, Manpower 692w

Stewart, Mr Allan
Debates etc
Licensing (Amendment) Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 354
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 192
Questions
Health Education Council, Redundancy pay 787-8w
Health Education Council, Special health authorities 788w
Manufacturing industries, Investment 339-40
Property Services Agency, Civil service dispersal 589w
Scottish Health Education Group, Special health authorities 661w

Stewart, Mr Andy
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1226
Coal fired power stations, Nottinghamshire 763
Common agricultural policy, Expenditure 110-2w
Council housing finance, Local government revenue 682w
Housing Corporation, Housing finance 93-4w

Stewart, Rt Hon Donald
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 224-6
Defence industries (12.12.86) 695-7
Island Councils of Scotland Committee of Inquiry (15.12.86) 958-60, 966
MV Kowloon Bridge & MV Derbyshire (12.12.86) 700
Questions
Insider trading, Share ownership 766-7
Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Finance 390w

Stewart, Mr Ian, *Economic Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc
Debts, Developing countries (18.12.86) 1479-84
Questions
Bank notes 84w
Debts 84w
Financial institutions, Disclosure of information 84w, 138w
Foreign exchange markets 665-6w
Friendly societies 84w, 138w
Johnson Matthey, Bank of England 84w
£1 notes 424w
Taxation 260-1w

Stocken Prison 647w
Expenditure 647w

Stockton
Availability for work 520w
Museums & galleries 769

Stott, Mr Roger
Debates etc
MV Kowloon Bridge & MV Derbyshire (12.12.86) 699
Questions
Industrial training schemes, Take-up of employment 522w
MV Kowloon Bridge, Shipping accidents 275w

Strang, Mr Gavin
Debates etc
AIDS (Control) Etc Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 354
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 193-4
Questions
AST 1236 146w
Binary chemical weapons 148w
Binary chemical weapons, RAF Welford 148w
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 147w
Defence research, Higher education 205w
European Security Conference, Arms control treaties 120-1w
European Security Conference, Military exercises 119-20w
Fast reactors, Central Electricity Generating Board 198w
Fast reactors, Expenditure 171w
Fire services 76w
Fire services, Greater London 75-6w
Fire services, Recruitment 75w
France, Chemical weapons 121-2w
Harrier aircraft, Nuclear weapons 147w
London Fire Brigade, Finance 76w
Military aircraft, USA 206w
NATO, Armed forces civilians 148w
NATO, Construction 147-8w
Nuclear accidents 198w
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 170-1w, 195-6w
Nuclear accidents, France 197w
Nuclear accidents, Radiation hazards 196w
Nuclear power stations, Air traffic 198-9w
Nuclear power stations, Emergency planning 196-7w
Nuclear reactors, Nuclear safety 197-8w
Nuclear weapons deployment, USA 150w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Warsaw Pact 147w
Nuclear weapons tests, USA 147w
RAF Welford, Construction 149w
Rover Group, Government assistance to industry 178w
Shipping, Territorial waters 121w
SP-70 guns, Nuclear weapons 147w
Strategic defence initiative 139w
Tornado aircraft 146w
Trident, Employment opportunities 171
USA, Binary chemical weapons 121w
USA, Poseidon missiles 121w

Strangford Lough
Ferries 233w

Strategic defence initiative 139w
Defence contracts 139w

Strategic plans
Electricity supply industry 5w

Strathclyde
Housing starts 504w
Policewomen 774w

Straw, Mr Jack
Questions
UK 2000 1186

Strikes 220-2w
Industrial production 545-6w

Strip searches
Foreign tourists 350w

Structure plans
Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980 748w
West Sussex 677-8w

Student grants 158w, 721w
Mature students 43w

Student numbers
Higher education 229-30w, 389-90w
Higher education colleges 389-90w
Initial teacher training 159w
Teacher training 159w
Universities 390w
Visual arts 723-4w

Student unions
Costs 101w

Students
Finance 721w

Sub judice
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 178

Submarines
Navy 144w

Subsidies
Iron & steel industry 181w
Transworld Leisure 192w

Subversion 1344-5

Sugar
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy 464w

Sulphur dioxide 582-3w, 1194
Air pollution 582-3w

Sumberg, Mr David
Debates etc
European Council (08.12.86) 31-2
Questions
Research finance 161w, 238-9w

Superphenix reactor 242w

Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements & Resources) Amendment Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(16.12.86) 1125-56

Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1368-94

Supplementary Benefit Uprating (No 2) Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(18.12.86) 1475

Supplementary benefits
Bed & breakfast accommodation 693w
Camberwell 285w
Children 287w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 419w
Dependents 807-8w
Families 806w, 1348-50
Family income 128w
Gateshead 287w
Greater London 712w
Homelessness 564w
Married people 418-20w
Mortgages (10.12.86) 341-51, (16.12.86) 1125-56
Northern Ireland 621-2w
Residential care 126-8w
Restaurants 285-6w
Single people 287w
Social security benefits uprating 418-20w
Social security recipients 711-2w, 807-8w
Take-up 213w
Unemployed 469w
Wales 418w
West Midlands 711-2w

Supplementary benefits disregards of income 693w

Supplementary questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 172, 175, (10.12.86) 334

"Supply Estimates 1986/87, Supplementary Estimates" (10.12.86) 442

"Supply Estimates 1986/87, Votes on Accounts" (10.12.86) 442

Surgery
Orthopaedics 781w

Surpluses
Milk 829-30w

Suspended sentences (10.12.86) 357

Swan Hunter Shipbuilders 178

Syrian Arab Republic
Diplomatic relations 610w
Nationalised industries 666w

Takeovers
Ault & Wiborg 715w
Paint industry 715w
Pilkington Brothers 184w
Tobacco industry (15.12.86) 831

Taking & driving away 169w

Talbot Green
Planning appeals 8

Tamils
Immigrant detainees 733w

Tanks
Helicopters 170

Tax allowances
Charitable donations 259w
Company taxation 743w
Film industry 666w, 739-40w
Married people 426w
Mortgage relief 84-5w
Personal taxation 745-6w
Research 666w
Shipping 599-600w
Tax yields 745-6w

Tax collection
VAT 666-7w

Tax evasion
Building industry 261w
VAT 260-1w

Tax rates & bands 426-7w
Income tax 737w
Tax yields 426w

Tax relief
Companies 740w

Tax yields
Income tax 83w
Leasehold housing 260w, 428w, 666w, 740w
Tax allowances 745-6w
Tax rates & bands 426w
VAT 486w, 666-7w, 743-4w

Taxation 260-1w
Self-employed 1047-8

Taxpayers 738w
Mortgage relief 738-40w
Personal income 562w

Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1220
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1207
Questions
Ballyharry School, Newtownards 760w
Listed buildings, Northern Ireland 761w
Radioactive waste disposal, Irish Sea 1192-3
Rates & rating, Northern Ireland 233w
Strangford Lough, Ferries 233w
Victoria School, Ballyhalbert 760w

Taylor, Mr John Mark
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 202
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1074
Questions
Ancient monuments, Ministers' domestic visits 394w
Bangladesh, Contracts 3w
Economic growth, Non domestic rates 331
Immigrants, Unemployment 733w
Khan, Ammanullah, Deportation 251-2w
Land registration, Disclosure of information 431w
Limited list prescribing, Expenditure 700w
Local government finance, Rates & rating 1190
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Sellafield 1193
Police, Solihull 253w
Prime Minister official engagements 238w, 443w, 615w
Research assistants, House of Commons 27w
Restart programme, West Midlands 1047
West Midlands Free Port, Investment in financial assets 137w

Taylor, Mr Teddy
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1227-8
European Council (08.12.86) 23, 25
Health services, Southend (15.12.86) 851-3
Recess motions, Christmas (15.12.86) 868
Questions
EC budget 236w
EC budget, UK repayments 237-8w
Common agricultural policy 246w
Common agricultural policy, Deficiency payments scheme 246w
Common agricultural policy, Expenditure 528w
Council of Ministers, EC Presidency 762-5w
Cruelty to children, Headteachers 417w
Firearms, EC action 4w, 46w, 640w
Food subsidies, USSR 828w
Food surpluses, USSR 527-8w
Greece, Jehovahs' Witnesses 272-3w
Jobclubs, Take-up of employment 811w
Lawn mowers, Exports 439w
Lawn mowers, Factories 439w
Lawn mowers, Isle of Man 347w
Lawn mowers, Noise control 439w
Manufactured goods, UK trade with EC 186w
Milk, Production quotas 10w, 829-30w
National income, Public expenditure 187-8w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority, Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 214w
Prime Minister official engagements 615w
VAT, Tax evasion 260w
VAT, UK repayments from EC budget 666w
Water pollution, Nitrates 431w, 751w

Teacher training
Blind 296w
Deaf 296w
Down's syndrome 663-4w
Drug abuse 231-2w
In-service training 724w
Student numbers 159w
Training grants 724w

Teachers
Conditions of employment (08.12.86) 38-121
HM Inspectorate of Schools 769-70w
Pay (08.12.86) 38-44, 44w, 45-121, (10.12.86) 358-442, 445-658
Science education 101-2w

Teachers' appraisal 14-5
Wales 14-5

Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
2R (08.12.86) 38-121
Money res* (08.12.86) 122
Rem stages (10.12.86) 358-442, 445-658

Technical & Vocational Education Initiative (12.12.86) 734-46

Technical assistance
El Salvador 269w, 305w
Nuclear submarines 689w

Technology 87 20w
Tel Aviv 20w

Teddington
River Thames 748w

Teignbridge
Youth training scheme 540w

Tel Aviv 20w
Technology 87 20w

Telephone calls 95w, 203w, 482w, 717-8w
Computer privacy 717-8w
McGinley, Ken 482w
Palace of Westminster 16, 203w, 717-8w
Portsdown Park 31w, 95w

Telephone tapping
House of Commons (Services) Select Committee 718w
Members 161w
Palace of Westminster 718w
Speaker's rulings & statements (17.12.86) 1232, (18.12.86) 1367

Telephones
A180 275w

Television licences
Pensioners (10.12.86) 353

Television programmes
Codes of practice 649w
Ethics 649w
Intelligence services 2-3w, 442w

Telford Development Corporation 755w

Temperature
Cleveland 145w

Temporary immigrants 732w, 734-5w
Heathrow 733-5w
Indian subcontinent 252-3w, 733-4w

Ten minute rule bills
Speaker's rulings & statements (10.12.86) 671

Tenant farmers 597w (10.12.86) 672-8
Ceredigion 449w
Dyfed 449w
Scotland 507w

Tenders 421w, 833-4w
Local authorities 833-4w

Terlezki, Mr Stefan
Debates etc
Defence (15.12.86) 903-5
EC Foreign Affairs Council (17.12.86) 1208
Rate support grants, Wales (16.12.86) 1069
Questions
Employment opportunities, Wales 2-3
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, Wales 318w
Paediatric cardiology, Wales 12

Territorial Army
Armed forces' strength 142w

Territorial waters
Shipping 121w

Terrorism
EC action 174
Northern Ireland 374-7w
Research assistants 19-20

Test tube babies (10.12.86) 356, 469w
Medical research 790-1w
Multiple births 790w
Perinatal mortality 790w

Testing
Census of population 709w
Defence equipment 500w
Nuclear safety 197w

Textile industry
Trades Union Congress 180w

Thalidomide
Compensation 325

Thames Valley 514w
Vacancies 514w

Thames water authority 10-1w, 433w

Thamesmead Town 750w, (19.12.86) 1515-25
Property transfer 750w

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service
Debates etc
European Council, Ministerial statements (08.12.86) 21-33
Questions
Attorney-General 4-5w
Attorney-General, Publishing 5w
Babcock Power, Redundancies 1051-2
Bowe, Colette, Immunity from prosecution 236w
EC budget 236w
EC budget, UK repayments 237-8w
Cabinet committees 531w
Civil servants, Training 238w
Civil servants, West Germany 611w
Common agricultural policy 1348
Council of Ministers, EC Presidency 762-5w
Crown Proceedings Act 1947, Law reform 1346
Dept of the Environment, Prosecutions 762w
Detection rates 1347-8
Early warning systems 1048
Early warning systems, Defence procurement 1050, 1346
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 1048-50
Export licensing, Libyan Arab Republic 353w
Families, Supplementary benefits 1348-50
Financial management initiative, Quangos 352-3w
Firearms, EC action 4w
Gas safety, Ministerial responsibility 159w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Devon 353-4w
Intelligence services, Discolsure of information 5w
Intelligence services, Pensions 352w
Intelligence services, Television programmes 442w
Labour Party, Nuclear weapons 1347
Libyan Arab Republic, Exports 238w
Local government expenditure 1051
Members' voting behaviour, Public finance 1346
Metropolitan Police, Departmental coordination 236w
Ministers, Books 237w
Monuments 1347
National security 353w
National security, Leader of the Opposition 237w
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 610-1w
Nuclear weapons, Defence 1052
Nuclear weapons tests, USSR 236w
Nurses, Pay 611w
Personal income, Scotland 530w
Postal deliveries, British Gas Corporation 1347
Poverty 3-4w
Prime Minister domestic visits 614w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Armed forces 765w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Manchester 613-4w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Police 612w
Prime Minister domestic visits, Scotland 614w
Prime Minister official engagements 238w, 443w, 614-5w
Prime Minister visits aborad 612-3w
Prime Minister visits abroad, Costs 160w
Research finance 161w, 238-9w, 442w
Research, Industry 160-1w
Rothschild, Lord, National security 611w
Simon Engineering, Buy ins 1345-6
Solicitor-General, Letters 237w
Telephone tapping, Members 161w
"Their Trade is Treachery" 237w
Vanunu, Mordechai, Israel 762w
Westland Helicopters 442-3w
Westland Helicopters, Company finance 611-2w
Westland Helicopters, Disclosure of information 4w, 159w, 353w, 530w
Wilson, Harold, National security 1346-7

Theatres
Arts Council grants 247-8w
Dept of Energy 201w

"Their Trade is Treachery" 1w, 89w, 237w, 373-4w
D Notices 89w, 310w, 373-4w

Thomas, Mr D E
Questions
Armed forces' training, Mynydd Epynt 313-4w
Childbirth, Wales 108-9w, 126w
Civil defence, Government grants to local authorities 255w
Civil defence headquarters, Construction 255w
Defence land, Greater London 311-3w
Departmental circulars, Welsh Office 33w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Wales 631w
European Assembly, Committee on Energy Research & Technology 241w
Home Office, NATO 255w
Homelessness, Wales 37-8w
Industrial research, European Economic Community 716-7w
Ministry of Defence, Quality Assurance Directorate 313w
NATO, Civil servants 313w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Sellafield 618-9w
Nuclear power, Publicity 241w
Nuclear safeguards, Sellafield 619w
Nuclear weapons tests, USSR 236w
Planning appeals 616w
Police War Duties Committee 255w
Ports, Nuclear fuels 276w
Radioactive waste disposal, Nuclear power stations 318w
Radioactive wastes, Sellafield 241w
Recorders, Public appointments 429w
Science & technology research 608w
Sea pollution, Sellafield 580w
Superphenix reactor 242w
Under-fives initiative, Wales 11
University of Wales, Welsh language 231w, 663w
USSR, Nuclear test ban 267-8w
Wales, Ministerial responsibility 4
Welsh language, Government grants 322-44w

Thomas, Dr Roger
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1219
Questions
Cardiac surgery units, Cardiff 616w
Cervical cancer, Screening 34-5w
Junior hospital doctors, Hospital consultants 72-4w
Level crossings, Railway safety 39-40w
Paediatric cardiology, Wales 36w
Pharmacists, Working hours 107-8w
Prescriptions, Administrative delays 411-2w
Sheep, Wales 3-4

Thompson, Mr Donald, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture
Debates etc
Stanhope, Eric, Smallholdings (10.12.86) 674-8
Questions
Agricultural production, Prices 825w
Agriculture, Census of production 367w
Export of live animals, Livestock 526w
Export of live animals, Sheep 528w
Farm & countryside initiative 820-6w
Farm owners 597w
Farmers, Loans 526w
Food exports, Food standards 547-8w
Health foods, Prices 9w
Horticulture, European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund 366w
Medicines (Hormone Growth Promoters) (Prohibition of Use) Regulations 1986 10w
Milk & milk products, Brazil 596w

Nitrates, Fertilisers 110w
Pesticides, Publicity 366-7w
Plant diseases, Disease control 526w
Rhizomania disease, Cambridgeshire 624w
Sheep, Radioactivity 829w
Slaughterhouses, Licensing 246w
Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 195w
Tilgate Forest, Land acquisition 365-6w

Thompson, Mr Jack
Questions
Electricity consumption 241-2w
Sizewell inquiry 240w

Thompson, Mr Patrick
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1287
Defence (15.12.86) 894-9
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 48, 65, 67, 96-9, 105
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stage (10.12.86) 401, 609, 613
Questions
Civil servants, National security 605w
Defence procurement, Billing 775-6w
Energy efficiency, Conferences 763-4
Industry, Training 184w
Local enterprise agencies, Norwich 1044-5
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1340-1
Self-employed, Graduates 510w

Thorne, Mr Neil
Questions
Chemical weapons, Warsaw Pact 145w
Military exercises, Oman 371-2w

Thorne, Mr Stan
Questions
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines, Privatisation 179w
Skilled workers, Engineering industries 518-9w

Thurnham, Mr Peter
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 668
Bypasses, Bolton (15.12.86) 861-2
Questions
Council house sales 584w
Crime prevention, Lighting 249-50w
Defective housing, Compulsory purchase 394w
Defence procurement, Competition 86w
Engineering industries, Innovation 331
Fine defaulters, Custodial treatment 642w
Government grants, Bolton 748w
Handicapped children, Health services 694-5w
Industrial training schemes, Bolton 633-4w
Infrastructure, Investment 337-8
Local enterprise agencies, Government assistance 524w
Manufacturing industries, Spare parts 545w
RMS St Helena, Merchant ships 536w
Teachers, Science education 101-2w
Unemployment, Married people 814-5w
Young people, Industrial training 1043

Tidal power
Energy research 617-8w

Tiles
Dumping 20w
Imports 21w, 100w
Industrial production 21w, 100w

Tilgate forest 365-6w
Land acquisition 365-6w

Tinnitus 297w

Tobacco
Children 82w
Consumption 745w
Prosecutions 82w

Tobacco advertising
Codes of practice 68w

Tobacco duties 561w, 668w, 745w
Imports 668w

Tobacco industry
Manpower 16w
Redundancy 817w
Sports sponsorship 1196-8
Takeovers (15.12.86) 831

Tobacco Smoking (Public Places) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (15.12.86) 781

Toll bridges
Severn bridge 600w

Tooting
Severe weather payments 785w

Tornado aircraft 146w

Torness power station 136w, 173-4w, 240w, 675w, 774-5w
Emergency planning 136w, 774-5w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 173-4w
Nuclear safety 657w
Radiation hazards 657w
Training 305w

Torney, Mr Thomas
Questions
Electricity, Imports 381-2w

Total allowable catches
Scotland 771-2w

Toucan barbet birds 748w
Import licensing 748w

Tourism
EC grants & loans 515w
Government grants 448w
Local authorities 537w
Professional qualifications 519w
Regional aid 515w
Restart programme 522w
Scotland 170w
Small businesses 515w
Wales 316w, 448w

Tourist attractions 514-5w
Government grants 514-5w

"Tourist coaches in London" 441w

Tourist industry
Employment opportunities 449w
Government grants 514-5w
Wales 449w

Tourists
Canary Islands 272w
Spain 271-2w

Town & country planning 591-2w
Agricultural land 585w
Departmental circulars 583w
Farm buildings 550w
Nature Conservancy Council 583w

Town & Country Planning (Fees for Applications & Deemed Applications) (Amendment) Regulations 1987
Debates etc
(12.12.86) 679

Townsend, Mr Cyril D
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1425
Questions
Antarctic treaty 265-6w
Antarctic treaty, UN resolutions 265w
Assault ships, Defence procurement 178

Tracey, Mr Richard, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sport)
Debates etc
Homelessness (19.12.86) 1499-503
Homelessness, Wandsworth (19.12.86) 1537-40
Questions
Caravan sites, Greater London 27-8w
Community development, Architecture 584w
Council house sales 584w
Council house waiting lists, Leicester 588w
Council house waiting lists, London boroughs 28w, 96w
Council tenants, Building repairs 586w
Defective housing, Compulsory purchase 394w
District heating, Newcastle upon Tyne 392-4w
Farm buildings, Planning permission 590w
Finch, Kevin, Members' correspondence 589w
Football, Identity cards 678w
Homelessness, Greater London 576w, 670w, 751-2w
Homelessness, Households 30-1w
House renovation grants 395w
House renovation grants, Housing stock 1200-1
Houses, Central heating 753w
Houses, Heating 753w
Housing, Local authorities 588w
Housing amenities, Government grants 1201-2
Housing improvement 586w
Housing improvement, Departmental leaflets 752w
Housing insulation, Building regulations 753w
Housing investment programmes 747w
Housing stock 30w
Improvement for sale schemes 31-4w
Inner area programmes, Local authorities 190w
International Year of Shelter for the Homeless 90w, 580-1w
Land registration, Southwark 677w
Local authorities, Planning permission 1199
London Residuary Body, Mortgages 591w
Multiple occupation 589w
Newcastle upon Tyne 393-4w
Owner occupied housing, Derbyshire 589-90w
Owner occupied housing, Southwark 395w
Planning appeals, Bromley 579w
Planning appeals, Dept of the Environment 1198-9
Property transfer, British Coal Corporation 579w
Public sector housing, Capital investment 584w
Recycling, Newcastle upon Tyne 394w
Reema Houses, Defective housing 673w
Seaside & country homes scheme, Property transfer 749-50w
Sports Council, Government grants 580w
Sports sponsorship, Tobacco industry 1196-8
Town & country planning, Agricultural land 585w
Town & country planning, Departmental circulars 583w
Urban areas, Economic & Social Research Council 91w
Urban programme, Religion 27w
Urban programme, Southwark 590w

Trade Competitiveness
Arms trade 118w
British Steel Corporation 335
Industry 414w

Trade delegations
Iraq 715w

Trade Descriptions Act 1968
Questions
715w

Trade Descriptions Act 1972
Questions
98-9w

Trade union elections
Civil & Public Services Association 774

Trade union officials
Convictions 1339-40

Trade unions 523w
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd 619w
Youth training scheme 513w

Trades Union Congress
Textile industry 180w

Traffic education programme 770w
Scotland 770w

Traffic lights 532-3w
Road traffic offences 80w

Training
Agriculture (10.12.86) 353
Ambulance services 363w
Blind 296w
Civil servants 238w
Deaf 296w
Family doctors 760w
Handicapped workers 816w
Industry 181w, 184w
London Ambulance Service 467-8w
Managers 509w
Physiotherapists 209w
Torness power station 305w

Training aircraft 88w, 776w

Training allowances 115w, 509w, 516-7w, 522w, 1040
Housing benefits 115w, 516-7w
Industrial training schemes 509w
Job start scheme 1040

Training grants
Teacher training 724w

Training levies 178w
Industrial training 178w

Transfer pricing 69w
Drug industry 69w

Transient people
Caravan sites 27-8w

Transplant surgery (08.12.86) 154-60
Death 569w
Kidneys 569w

Transport
Mobility of disabled 130w

Transport infrastructure
EC action (09.12.86) 197, (19.12.86) 1556

Transport of hazardous materials
Channel tunnel 39w

Transport of radioactive materials
Nuclear weapons 138w
Ports 276w

Transport policy
Greater London 41w

Transport supplementary grants 402w
Roads 535w

Transworld Leisure 185-6w, 192w, 315w
Company liquidations 185-6w
Fraud 315w
International Garden Festival 1984 192w
Subsidies 192w

Treasury
Women 665w

"Treasury & Civil Service Select Committee on Autumn Statements" (17.12.86) 1233-306

Treaties
Cultural property 756w

Tredegar
Redundant mineworkers payments scheme 382w

Tree planting
Conifers 505w
Forestry Commission Regional Advisory Committees 505w
Forestry grants 505w
Land ownership & tenure 505w
Land use 505w
Nature reserves 771w
Sites of special scientific interest 771w

Trent Grain 828-9w
Annual reports 829w
Company finance 828-9w
Intervention stocks 828-9w

Trespass
Common land 1188-9

Trials
Administrative delays 472w
Northern Ireland 472w

Tribunals
Racial discrimination 415w

Trident 139w
Defence 172
Defence contracts 171
Defence expenditure 171-2
Employment opportunities 139w, 171
Holy Loch 139-40w
Labour Party 172
Northern region 139w
Radar 139w
Scotland 171
USA 172

Trippier, Mr David, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment
Debates etc
Employment schemes (12.12.86) 740-6
Hotels (19.12.86) 1544-8
Local enterprise agencies (15.12.86) 982-6
Low pay, West Yorkshire (15.12.86) 1030-4
Questions
Adult education 513w
Adult training strategy 512-3w
Civil Service Manpower, Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 369w
Dept of Employment, Select Committee evidence 255-6w
Employment opportunities, Leicester 521w
Employment opportunities, Personal social services 523w
Employment schemes 257w
Employment schemes, Batley 257w
Employment schemes, Fees & charges 223-4w
Employment schemes, Finance 257w
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 224w, 538w, 817w
Engineering industries, Skilled workers 1041-2
Enterprise allowance scheme 509-10w, 1039-40
Enterprise allowance scheme, Company liquidations 510w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Expenditure 510w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Leicester 816w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Wales 631w
Foreign tourists 515w
Further education colleges, Educational standards 629w
Hazardous materials, Chlorine 525w
Health & Safety Executive, Sellafield 631w
Hotels 512w
Hotels, English Tourist Board 525w
Industrial health & safety, Divers 514w
Industrial health & safety, Hazardous materials 525-6w
Industrial health & safety, Power stations 629w
Industrial training 1042-3
Industrial training, Adult education 1046
Industrial training, Company taxation 1046
Industrial training, High technology 514w
Industrial training, North West region 256w
Industrial training schemes, Bolton 633-4w
Industrial training schemes Employment agencies 817w
Industrial training schemes, Professional qualifications 628w
Industrial training schemes, Take-up of employment 629w
Job start scheme 370-1w
Lindane, Bats 258w
Loan guarantee scheme 519w
Loan guarantee scheme, Small businesses 519w
Loan guarantee scheme, Take-up 519w
Local enterprise agencies, Government assistance 524w
Local enterprise agencies, Norwich 1044-5
Manpower Services Commission, Local authorities 542w
Manual workers, Pay 371w
New businesses, Southwark 631w
New workers scheme, Batley 256-7w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Manpower 258-9w
Polyurethane, Mining 369-70w
Printing industry, Industrial training schemes 628-9w
Self-employed 510-1w
Self-employed, Graduates 510w
Self-employed, Taxation 1047-8
Skillcentres, Deptford 369w, 542-3w, 1046
Skilled workers, Economic regions 518w
Skilled workers, Engineering industries 518-9w
Small businesses 512w
Small businesses, Advisory services 1044
Small businesses, Billing 517w
Small businesses, Debt collection 632-3w
Small businesses, Government contracts 517-8w
Small businesses, Information 630w
Small businesses, Interest charges 258w
Small businesses, Planning permission 517w
Small businesses, Tourism 515w
Small businesses, Universities 517w
Small firms service, Local enterprise agencies 1044
Smallpox, Industrial health & safety 541w
Smallpox, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine 541w
Social security appeals, Birmingham 631w
Tourism, EC grants & loans 515w
Tourism, Local authorities 537w
Tourism, Professional qualifications 519w
Tourist attractions, Government grants 514-5w
Training allowances, Housing benefits 516-7w
Unemployment benefits, Birmingham 257-8w
Unemployment, Monklands 370w
Viruses, Industrial health & safety 541-2w
Viruses, Prohibition notices 542w
Voluntary projects programme, Government grants 258w
Wages Councils, Employment opportunities 1041
Wages Inspectorate, Civil service manpower 524w
Women's employment, Pregnancy 629-30w
Youth training scheme 513w
Youth training scheme, Development aid 513w
Youth training scheme, Ethnic groups 632w, 814w
Youth training scheme, Leicester 631-2w
Youth training scheme, Manpower Services Commission 513-4w
Youth training scheme, Teignbridge 540w
Youth training scheme, Trade unions 513w

Tropical rain forests (15.12.86) 853-7

Tucano aircraft 88w, 776w
Administrative delays 88w
Air force 776w

Tunnels
River Thames 39w

Twinn, Dr Ian
Questions
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Conferences 644w

Tyneside
Assault ships 179

Type 23 frigates 143w, 168-9
Defence contracts 143w

Tyre tread depths 402-3w

Uganda
Ministers' visits abroad 543-4w

UK 2000 1185-6
Local government expenditure 1185

UKAIR
Manpower 692w

UN High Commissioner for Refugees 351w

UN resolutions 265-6w
Antarctic treaty 265w

Unborn Children (Protection) Bill 1986/87
Debates etc
1R (10.12.86) 356

Under-fives initiative 11, 284w
Wales 11

Unemployed
Dependents 814-5w
Ethnic monitoring 15-6w, 226-7w
Supplementary benefits 469w

Unemployed workers centres 588w
Local government expenditure 588w

Unemployment 114w, 511w, 1040
Basildon 219w
Basingstoke 511w
Cumbria 523w
Dunfermline 14w
Families 123w
Glasgow 656w
Greenock 355-6w
Handicapped workers 520w
Immigrants 733w
Inner London boroughs 220w
Liverpool 11-4w
Lothian 504w
Married people 814-5w
Merseyside 11-3w
Monklands 370w
Newport 1-2
North West region 523w
Northern Ireland 620-1w
Restart Programme 14w
Scotland 504w, (15.12.86) 838-40
Sheffield 511w
Staffordshire 512w
Statistics 512w, 537w, 1037-8
Vauxhall 1038
Wales 1-2, 35w, 321w
West London 522w

Unemployment benefit offices 117w
Hornchurch 117w
Road safety 117w
Working conditions 117w

Unemployment benefits
Availability for work 1039
Birmingham 257-8w
Costs 287w
Northern Ireland 622-3w

Unfair competition
Cement 175w

Unfair Dismissal (Increase of Compensation Limit) Order 1986
Debates etc
(17.12.86) 1322, 1324

Unfair dismissal (Increase of Limits of Basic & Special Awards) Order 1986
Debates etc
(17.12.86) 1324

Unfair trading practices
Cement 21w
Japan 339

Uniforms
Fire services 76w

Unisys
Factory closures 773w

Unitary taxation 667w

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority
Nuclear accidents 245w

Universities
Higher education 389-90w
Small businesses 517w
Student numbers 390w

University College of Wales 107w

University Grants Committee
Listed buildings 101w

University of Wales 231w
Welsh language 231w, 663w

Unpaid taxes 186-7w
VAT 186-7w

Unparliamentary expressions (10.12.86) 368-9, 425, 617, 654
Speaker's rulings & statements (09.12.86) 183, (15.12.86) 1016, (16.12.86) 1073-5, (17.12.86) 1231, 1248, (18.12.86) 1387

Upper Waiting Hall
"Building for the Future" 432w
Deaf 783w
Hospitals 705-6w
Mentally handicapped 420w
Safety 670w

Uranium
Exports 473w
Imports 473w

Urban areas
Economic & Social Research Council 91w
Rate support grants 582w
Social problems 582w

Urban development corporations 283w, 580w

Urban housing renewal unit
Welsh Development Agency 7

Urban planning
Birmingham City Council 680w

Urban programme
Arfon Borough Council 449w
Employment opportunities 587w
Expenditure 584w
Glasgow 359-60w
Parking 449w
Religion 27w
Scotland 359-62w
Southwark 590w

Urban regeneration grants 668w
Government grants 668w

US bases 138w
NATO 138w

USA
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 175
Binary chemical weapons 121w, 148w
Chemical weapons 150w
Computers 118-9w
Early warning systems 503w
Export controls 185w
Iran 113w
Kinnock, Neil 174, 177
Middle East 758w
Military aircraft 206w
NATO 172
Nuclear submarines 689w
Nuclear weapons deployment 150w
Nuclear weapons tests 147w
Poseidon missiles 121w
Trident 172

USSR
Food subsidies 828w
Food surpluses 527-8w
Nuclear accidents 384w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 112w
Nuclear fuels 112w
Nuclear submarine 87-8w
Nuclear test ban 267-8w
Nuclear weapons tests 236w
Political prisoners 757-8w, (15.12.86) 840-1
Pollution monitoring 88w
Radar 139w

Vacancies
Bracknell 1038
High technology 514w
Midwives 291w
Newport 2
Printing industry 538w
Public Health Laboratory Service 288w
Thames Valley 514w
Wales 2

Vacant land registers 586w

Vaccination
AIDS 70w
Compensation 416w
Handicapped 416w
Measles 288-9w
Mumps 288-9w
Nurses 68w

Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979
Questions
416w

Vaccine damage tribunals 416w

Vaccine damaged children 416w

Van Straubenzee, Sir William
Questions
Church of England, Inner city areas 12-3
Churches, Inner city areas 13
Clergy, Family income supplements 13
Clergy, Pay 14

Vandalism 1187
Government grants 1187-8
Housing estates 1187
Local government expenditure 1186-7
Wandsworth 1187

Vanunu, Mordechai 269w, 762w
Israel 269w, 762w

VAT 83w
Alcoholic drinks 261-2w
Company taxation 743w
Customs & Excise 426w, 740-4w
Employment 486w
Small businesses 186-7w
Tax collection 666-7w
Tax evasion 260-1w
Tax yields 486w, 666-7w, 743-4w
UK repayments from EC budget 666w
Unpaid taxes 186-7w

VAT returns 187w
Small businesses 187w

Vauxhall
Unemployment 1038

Vauxhall Motors 545w, 607w
Exports 545w
Imports 545w
Motor vehicle parts 607w

Vehicle speed limiters
Buses 533w

Venture capital 739-40w
Business expansion scheme 739w
Wales 7

Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering 688w

Victoria School, Ballyhalbert 760w

Viggers, Mr Peter, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Harland & Wolff, Government assistance to industry 760w
Land acquisition, Sprucefield 377w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 620-1w

Violence
Bradford Royal Infirmary 123w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 412w
Health service staff 412w
St Lukes Hospital, Bradford 123w

Violence on television (15.12.86) 844-9

Viruses
Industrial health & safety 541-2w
Prohibition notices 542w

Visas
Administrative delays 122w
Entry clearances 121-2w
Indian subcontinent 732w

Visual arts
Arts finance 735w
Auctions 735w
Higher education 389-90w
Kent 723-4w
Student numbers 723-4w

Vocational guidance
Schools 721w

Vocational training
Family practitioner services 789w

Voluntary organisations
Drug abuse 708-9w
Housing insulation 379w
Local government reform 1343-4

Voluntary projects programme 258w
Government grants 258w

Voluntary schools
Capital investment 725-9w
School teachers 661w

Vosper Shiprepairers
Management buy-outs 607-8w

Vosper Thornycroft
Defence contracts 169
Frigates 169

Voting rights 560w
Scotland 507w

Waddington, Mr David, *Minister of State for the Home Department*
Debates etc
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 794-802, 827-8
Questions
Beaufoy, Stephen, Members' correspondence 351w
Commonwealth immigrants, Mother tongue instruction 250w
Disclosure of information, National security 654w
Entry clearances, Immigration applications 165-6w
Ethnic minorities, English language 250w
Foreign tourists, Strip searches 350w
Immigrant detainees, Tamils 733w
Immigrants 732w
Immigrants, Unemployment 733w
Immigration 653w
Immigration controls, Ports 480w
Khan, Ammanullah, Deportation 251-2w
Licensing laws, Law reform 647w
Licensing laws, Young people 648w
Political refugees, Immigrant detainees 103-4w
Political refugees, Iran 351w
Raj, Hans, Members' correspondence 484w
Temporary immigrants 732w, 734-5w
Temporary immigrants, Indian subcontinent 252-3w, 733-4w
Visas, Indian subcontinent 732w
Women, Home Office 650-1w

Wages Councils
Employment opportunities 1041

Wages Inspectorate
Civil service manpower 524w

Wainwright, Mr Richard
Questions
Central Electricity Generating Board, Accounting 474w
Employment schemes 115w, 257w
Employment schemes, Finance 257w
Industrial disputes, Picketing 520-1w
Inner cities initiative 228w
Inner city partnerships, Disadvantaged 16w
Job start scheme 1040-1
Local government services, Contracts for services 577w
Restart programme, Interviews 813w
Restart programme, Unemployment 14w
Tobacco advertising, Codes of practice 68w
Tobacco, Children 82w
Training allowances, Housing benefits 115w
Unemployed, Ethnic monitoring 15-6w, 226-7w
Urban areas, Economic & Social Research Council 91w

Wakefield Metropolitan District Council 677w
Local government property 677w

Waldegrave, Mr William, *Minister of State for the Environment (Countryside & Local Government)*
Debates etc
Common land, Land registration (16.12.86) 1181-4
Questions
Acid rain, EC Environment Council 586w, 1199
Acid rain, Smoke & chimney gases 1199-200
Air pollution, Sulphur dioxide 582-3w
Ancient monuments, Ministers' domestic visits 394w
Animal welfare, Ealing 684w
Architectural conservation, Historic buildings 581-2w
Bird watching 432w
Bird watching, Leisure facilities 432w
Birds, Nature conservation 671w
Building land, Housing construction 281-2w
Channel tunnel, Waste disposal 278-9w
Conservation areas 193w
Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, Devon 396w
Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, Finance 396w
Croxteth Hall 434-5w
Dept of the Environment circular 22/80 282w
Deprivation in rural England 396w
Development Commission, Finance 582w
EC Environment Council 578-9w
Environment protection, EC law 434w
European Year of the Environment 585w
Greenbelt 193w
Greenbelt, Planning permission 587w
Greenbelt, Shopping centres 685-6w
Hazardous wastes, Accidents 755w
Lead poisoning, Blood lead levels 754w
Lindane, Bats 398w
Listed buildings 194w
Marine nature reserves 90w, 1188
Mercury pollution, Batteries 433w, 1194
Mercury pollution, Pollution control 433-4w
National parks, Conservation 581w
National parks, Conservation areas 193w
National parks, Public appointments 752w
National Tree Week 194w
Nature Conservancy Council, Sites of special scientific interest 583w
Nature Conservancy Council, Town & country planning 583w
Nature conservation, Estuaries 582w
Noise, Research 754w
North Sea, Pollution monitoring 191w
Oil pollution control, Fossil fuels 191w
Old Bells School, Portsmouth 680w
Peak Park Joint Planning Board 28-9w, 397w, 586w
Peak Park Joint Planning Board, Government grants 28w
Peak Park Joint Planning Board, Public appointments 28w, 397-8w
Planning appeals, Administrative delays 194w
Planning authorities, Property development 398w
Planning permission, Housing construction 399w
Planning permission, M25 579-80w
Pollution control, Industry 90w, 191w
Pollution control, Water pollution 191w
Pollution monitoring, Lead pollution 394-5w
Property development, Planning permission 278w
Radioactive waste disposal, Compensation 28w, 591w
Radioactive waste disposal, Public inquiries 396w
River pollution 434w, 578w
River Thames, Sewage 433w
Rural areas, Government assistance 579w
Rural areas, Investment 25-6w
Sea pollution, Sellafield 580w
Severn barrage 676w
Severn barrage, Environmental impact assessment 675-6w
Severn barrage, Nature conservation 675-6w
Severn barrage, Water pollution 674-5w
Shopping centres, Perry Barr 680w
Sites of special scientific interest 194w
Small businesses, Rural areas 430-1w
Smoke & chimney gases, Coal fired power stations 1194
Smoke & chimney gases, Power stations 1194
Special protection areas 671-2w
Special protection areas, Severn Estuary 673w
Structure plans, West Sussex 677-8w
Toucan berbet birds, Import licensing 748w
UK 2000 1185-6
UK 2000, Local government expenditure 1185
Water pollution, Nitrates 683w, 751w
Wetlands, Nature conservation 672-3w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 580w

Walden, Mr George, *Under-Secretary of State for Education & Science*
Debates etc
Herstmonceux Castle (19.12.86) 1554-6
Questions
"Arts & Disabled People", Dept of Education & Science 456w
Departmental progress, Higher education 385-6w
Ealing College of Higher Education, Polytechnics 661w
Higher education, Age 389-90w
Higher education, Educational finance 721w
Higher education, Mature students 389-90w
Higher education, Men 388-9w
Higher education, Per capital costs 229-30w
Higher education, Polytechnics 389-90w
Higher education, Sandwich courses 389-90w
Higher education, Student numbers 229-30w, 389-90w
Higher education, Universities 389-90w
Higher education, Visual arts 389-90w
Higher education admission, Waltham Forest 663w
Higher education teachers, Pay 44-5w
Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Finance 390w
Listed buildings, University Grants Committee 101w
Mature students, Student grants 43w
Medical Research Council, AIDS 44w
Medical Research Council, Drug industry 44w
Medical Research Council, Resignations 43-4w
Student grants 158w, 721w
Student unions, Costs 101w
University of Wales, Welsh language 231w, 663w
Visual arts, Kent 723-4w

Wales
Acid rain 1194
Ambulance services 363w
Ancient monuments 718-9w
Assisted places scheme 319-20w
Beef premiums 35w
Burglary 635w
Capitation allowances 320w
Central heating 720w
Channel tunnel 14
Childbirth 108-9w, 126w
Colposcopy 317w
Council house waiting lists 5
Council housing 4-5, 363-4w
Doctors 11
Employment opportunities 2-3, 317w
Enterprise allowance scheme 631w
Farm incomes 15
Farms 529w
Floods 9

Government assistance to industry 718w
Health services finance 321-2w
HM Inspectorate of Schools 365w
Homelessness 37-8w
Hospital beds 37w, 319w, 365w
Hospital waiting lists 163-6w
Hotels 451w
House condition survey 719w
Housing associations 5
Housing capital allocations 5-6, 35w
Housing completions 319-20w
Housing standards 719w
Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 318w
Infant mortality 720w
Leasehold housing 10-1
Local government finance 361-2w
Local plans 8
Location of industry 2-3
Medical education 11
Ministerial responsibility 4
Monuments 718-9w
Motorways 616w
Nuclear power stations 318w
Oral questions 17-8
Paediatric cardiology 12, 36w
Perinatal mortality 451-3w
Planning appeals 7-9
Population 450-1w
Poverty 418w
Prime Minister domestic visits 614w
Prisoners 732w
Private health services 36w
Private sector housing 5
Public appointments 364w
Public service vehicles 835w
Rate support grants 317-8w, 362-3w, 450-1w, (16.12.86) 1063-70
Regional selective assistance 718w
Roads 35w
School leaving 318-9w
Sheep 3-4
Sheep premiums 3
Small farms 4, 107w
Supplementary benefits 418w
Teachers' appraisal 14-5
Tourism 316w, 448w
Tourist industry 449w
Under-fives initiative 11
Unemployment 1-2, 35w, 321w
Vacancies 2
Venture capital 7
Young people 320-1w

Wales Tourist Board 616w
Government grants 616w

Walker, Rt Hon Peter, *Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
British Coal Corporation 377w
British Gas Corporation, Privatisation 7-8w, 244w, 381w, 766-8
Britoil, Privatisation 767
Coal fired power stations, Combined heat & power 763
Coal fired power stations, Electricity generation 762-3
Coal fired power stations, English Channel 763
Coal fired power stations, Nottinghamshire 763
Coal mining, Investment 757-8
Coal mining, North East region 757-8
Coal mining, Privatisation 380w
Dept of Energy, Theatres 201w
Energy efficiency, Conferences 763-4
Energy efficiency, Housing insulation 764
Energy efficiency, Local authorities 764
European Assembly, Committee on Energy Research & Technology 241w
Insider trading, Share ownership 766-7
Insulation, Community programme 764
Nuclear accidents, Emergency planning 378w
Nuclear power, Publicity 384w
Power industry, Exports 763
Sizewell inquiry 240w
Statistics, Dept of Energy 201-3w

Wall, Sir Patrick
Questions
Aircraft carriers, Guided weapons 776w
Aircraft carriers, Marines 310-1w
Assault ships, Defence procurement 179
Council of Europe, UK contributions 757w
Harland & Wolff, Government assistance to industry 760w
PC9 aircraft, Civil servants 776w
Tucano aircraft, Air force 776w
Tucano aircraft, Garrett engines 776w
Warships, Defence procurement 145w

Wallace, Mr James
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 203, 243, 257
Arms Exports, Iran (15.12.86) 834-7
Business statement (18.12.86) 1362
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1170-3
Defence (15.12.86) 898, 902, 906, 912
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1355, 1423-6
House of Commons division of time (10.12.86) 644
Island Councils of Scotland Committee of Inquiry (15.12.86) 960-4, 966, 969
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 644
Questions
Acid rain, EC Environment Council 586w
Assault ships, Defence procurement 181
Dockyards, Privatisation 164-5
Early warning systems, Boeing 162
Early warning systems, USA 503w
HMS Vulcan, Nuclear reactors 690w
Nuclear submarines 689-90w
Nuclear submarines, Armed forces' training 688-9w
Nuclear submarines, USA 689w
Restart programme, Take-up of employment 1035-6
VAT, Small businesses 186-7w

Waller, Mr Gary
Questions
Boundary Commission for England, Parliamentary constituencies 559-60w
Education (No 2) Act 1986, Orders & regulations 456-7w
Further education, Local government expenditure 457-8w
Nursing homes, Hospital beds 781w
Rag Flock & Other Filling Materials Act 1951 278w

Walters, Mr Dennis
Questions
Tyre tread depths 402-3w
Warminster bypass, Contracts 831w
Warminster bypass, Road construction 601-2w

Waltham Abbey
Public order policing 1335

Waltham Forest
Higher education admission 663w
Personal social services 207-10w
Special schools 231w

Walthamstow
Restart programme 114w

Wandsworth
Homelessness (19.12.86) 1534-40
Hospital beds 782w
Pay beds 784w
Restart programme 813w
Social security benefits disqualification 813w
Vandalism 1187

Wandsworth Health Authority 411w, 782w, 784w
Contracts for services 784w
Hospital waiting lists 411w
NHS finance 411w

War casualties
Disclosure of information 692-3w

War pensions
Dixon, Joe 788-9w

War service
Civil service pensions 773-4

Ward, Mr John
Questions
Assault ships, Defence procurement 180

Wardell, Mr Gareth
Questions
Accidents, Bicycles 130w
Adult training strategy 512-3w
Bus services, Children 131w
Central heating, Wales 720w
Cycling, Crash helmets 131w
Doctors, Wales 11
Flats, Sound insulation 753w
Handicapped 124w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Professional qualifications 388w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Wales 365w
House condition survey, Wales 719w
Houses, Central heating 753w
Houses, Heating 753w
Housing, Sound insulation 753-4w
Housing improvement, Departmental leaflets 752w
Housing insulation, Building regultions 753w
Housing standards, Health 719w
Infant mortality, Wales 720w
Lorries, Injuries 400w
Lorries, Motor vehicle safety 400w
Lorries, Speed limits 131w
Medical examinations, Driving licences 130-1w
Mobility of disabled, Transport 130w
Motor vehicle testing, South Wales 836w
Noise, Research 754w
Paediatrics, Community care 33-4w
Pedestrians, Casualties 405w
Public service vehicles, Motor vehicle testing 835-40w
Public service vehicles, South Wales 835-6w, 839-40w
Public service vehicles, Spot checks 836w
Public service vehicles, Wales 835w
Public transport, Mobility of disabled 131w
Quota of handicapped workers 116w
Residential care, Elderly 46w
Road accidents, Lorries 151w
Road safety, Psychology 276-7w

Wardle, Mr Charles
Debates etc
Herstmonceux Castle (19.12.86) 1549-54
Questions
Confederation of British Industry 179w

Wareing, Mr Robert N
Questions
Bombings, Convictions 639-40w
Croxteth Hall 434-5w
Invalid care allowances, Married women 68w
National Economic Development Council 22w
Nuclear weapons, Zero option 117-8w
Prime Minister official engagements 238w

Warminster bypass 601-2w, 831w
Contracts 831w
Road construction 601-2w

Warren, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc
Air transport, EC action (09.12.86) 302-5
Common fisheries policy (16.12.86) 1174-5
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1358
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Trade competitiveness 335
Rolls-Royce Aeroengines, Privatisation 605-6w

Warsaw Pact
Chemical weapons 145w
Nuclear weapons deployment 147w

Warships
Defence procurement 140w, 145w

Navy 140w

Waste disposal
Channel tunnel 278-9w

Water
Legislation 683w

Water authorities
Capital investment 1196
Investment returns 436w, (17.12.86) 1307-23
Land acquisition 398w
Privatisation 683w
Water charges 398-9w, 1196

Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986
Debates etc
(17.12.86) 1307-23

Water charges
Water authorities 398-9w, 1196

Water pollution
Inland waterways 578w
Nitrates 392w, 431w, 683w, 705w, 751w
Pollution control 191w
Severn barrage 674-5w

Water supply
Nuclear accidents 171w

Water treatment
Fluoridation 789-90w

Watts, Mr John
Debates etc
Business statement (10.12.86) 668
European Council (08.12.86) 31
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 350
Questions
Cruelty to children 643-4w
Engineering industries, Industrial production 330
Local government finance, Rate support grants 1191
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1341
Small businesses, Planning permission 517w

Waverley Borough Council
Rate support grants 582w

Weapons
Air freight transport 129w
Evergreen International Airways 130w

Weetch, Mr Ken
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1279-81
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, 2R (08.12.86) 65, 92, 97, 99-102
Questions
Administration of Justice Act 1985 1w

Weir Pumps
Exports 328w

Welding
Road safety barriers 274w

Welfare of Livestock (Prohibited Operations) (Amendment) Regulations 1986
Debates etc
(09.12.86) 197, (18.12.86) 1475

Wells, Mr Bowen
Questions
Museums & galleries, Art works 406w

Welsh Development Agency
Advance factory programme 317w
Agriculture 6
Estate Action 7
Finance 6
Urban housing renewal unit 7

Welsh language
Departmental correspondence 37w
Government grants 322-44w
Local valuation panels 36w
University of Wales 231w, 663w

Welsh Office
Arts & disabled people 449-50w
Departmental circulars 33w
Ministerial advisory bodies 108w
Statistics 162w

Welsh Office circular CT/5275/86 33w

Wessex Regional Health Authority 71-2w, 421w
Arthur Andersen 71-2w, 421w
Computer applications 71-2w, 290w, 421w
Contracts 421w
Government contracts 290w, 421w

West, Nigel 2w, (15.12.86) 782-828
National security 2w

West Bank 263-4w
Import duties 263-4w

West Germany
Civil servants 611w
Government assistance to industry 601w
Shipping 601w

West London
Industrial training schemes 522w
Unemployment 522w

West London Hospital 786w

West Mercia Police 731w
Government grants 731w

West Midlands
Free schol meals 45w
Industrial training 1047
Restart programme1047
Supplementary benefits 711-2w

West Midlands County Council 137w

West Midlands Free Port 137w
Investment in financial assets 137w

West Midlands Regional Health Authority 785w
Computer applications 785w

West Sussex
Bus services 602w
Structure plans 677-8w

West Yorkshire
Empty housing 750w
Low pay (15.12.86) 1027-34

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive 601w
Expenditure 601w

West Yorkshire Residuary Body 677w
Local government buildings 677w
Local government property 677w

Western European Union
UK contributions 757w

Western Infirmary, Glasgow 43-4w

Western Isles
Ferries 550w

Westland Helicopters 4w, 113w, 159w, 236-7w, 353w, 442-3w, 530w, 611-2w, (15.12.86) 862-3
Company finance 611-2w
Disclosure of information 4w, 113w, 159w, 236-7w, 353w, 530w

Wetlands 672-3w
Nature conservation 672-3w

Wheel clamps 76-7w, 167w, 482w, 654w
Buses 167w
Contracts 654w
Diplomatic service 76-7w
Greater London 76w
Motor vehicles 77w, 482w

Wheeler, Mr John
Questions
Bangladesh, Refugees 756w
Diplomatic service, Parking offences 444-8w
Heating, Fees & charges 686w
Metropolitan Police, Crime prevention 1334
Prison sentences, Indictable offences 729w
Radio Laser 346-7w

Whisky
Redundancy 355w
Scotland 355w

Whitchurch Hospital 11-2

Whitchurch Hospital, Cardiff
Dangerous mental patients 11-2

White-collar workers
Pay 371w

Widows benefits
Armed forces' pensions 594w
Industrial death benefits 47w
Police 730w
Retail price index 700w

Wiggin, Mr Jerry
Debates etc
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1074
Questions
Helicopters, Amphibious vehicles 182
Helicopters, Army 170-1
VAT, Customs & Excise 426w, 743-4w

Wigley, Mr Dafydd
Debates etc
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1222-3
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1131-2, 1148-9
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 347
Water Authorities (Return on Assets) Order 1986 (17.12.86) 1315-6
Questions
A487, Road works 364w
Advance factory programme, Welsh Development Agency 317w
Ambulance services, Gwynedd 364w
Ambulance services, Training 363w
Armed forces, Sri Lanka 687w
British Council, Caribbean 266w
Council housing, Wales 363-4w
Debts, Africa 424w
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 538w
Exceptional needs payments 460-2w
Exceptional needs payments, Costs 462w
Exceptional needs payments, Social security benefits rules 461w
Exceptional needs payments, Social security reform 462w
Hemborough, Mr & Mrs J 294w
Housing capital allocations, Wales 5
Industrial death benefits, Widows benefits 47w
Mental health services, Gwynedd 451w
Mergers, Legislation 178-9w
Monuments, Wales 718-9w
Nuclear accidents, USSR 384w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Manpower 258-9w
Nurses, Pay 783w
Oral questions, Wales 17-8
Pregnancy, Research 790-1w
Prisoners, Wales 732w
Prosthetics, Industrial disputes 697w
Psychiatry 34w
Public appointments, Women 364w
Radioactivity, Sheep 162w
Rate support grants, Wales 317-8w, 451w
Repossession orders 278w
Republic of Ireland, Radioactive waste disposal 266w
Safety 98w
Sheep, Scotland 16-8w
Smoke & chimney gases, Power stations 1194
Sri Lanka, Peace negotiations 119w
Test tube babies 469w
Test tube babies, Multiple births 790w
Tourism, Government grants 448w
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 449w
Urban programme, Arfon Borough Council 449w
Welsh language, Departmental correspondence 37w
Welsh language, Local valuation panels 36w
Widows benefits, Retail price index 700w

Wild animals
Estuaries 582w

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 580w
Questions
580w

Wilkinson, Mr John
Debates etc
Defence industries (12.12.86) 688-9, 697-8, 703-5, 717
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1417, 1425, 1442-3
Questions
Boundary Commission for England, Public appointments 560w
Gurkhas, Manpower 167
Leyland Bus 348w

Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Debates etc
Attorney-General (16.12.86) 1074
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1234
Early warning systems (16.12.86) 1072
Employment schemes (12.12.86) 738-42
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 790, 794, 820
MI5, Disclosure of information (10.12.86) 353
Office of Fair Trading (15.12.86) 991-4, 997-8
Questions
Copyright, Counterfeit manufacturing 327
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 5w
Manufacturing industries, Investment 340
Members' facilities, Parking 18-9
Palace of Westminster, Security 16-7
Product liability 325

Wilson, Mr Gordon
Debates etc
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Bill, 2R (09.12.86) 227
Business statment (18.12.86) 1362-3
Public expenditure, Scotland (09.12.86) 192
Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 (18.12.86) 1372-4, 1376
Questions
Aberdeen College of Education, Public appointments 305w
Adams, D, Aberdeen College of Education 136w
Forestry grants, Companies 505w
Forestry grants, Tree planting 505w
Forestry, Manpower 548w
HM Inspectorate of Schools 300-1w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Aberdeen College of Education 300-1w
HM Inspectorate of Schools, Scotland 504-5w, 547w, 769-70w
Jordanhill College of Education 301w
Social security appeals, Scotland 697-8w
Tree planting, Conifers 505w
Tree planting, Forestry Commission Regional Advisory Committees 505w
Tree planting, Land ownership & tenure 505w
Tree planting, Land use 505w
Tree planting, Nature reserves 771w

Wilson, Harold 113-4w
Intelligence services 175
National security 113-4w, 1346-7

Wind power
Rates & rating 577w
Rural areas 577w

Winnick, Mr David
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1234
Free Television Licences for Pensioners Bill, 1R (10.12.86) 353
Intelligence services (15.12.86) 782, 795, 806, 825-7
Ministerial statements (08.12.86) 37
Supplementary Benefit (Housing Requirements etc) . . . Regulations 1986 (16.12.86) 1126, 1128-9, 1132-3
Supplementary benefits, Mortgages (10.12.86) 347-8
Telephone calls, Members (16.12.86) 1076-7
Questions
Housing stock 30w
Intelligence services 170w
Intelligence services, Disclosure of information 314w
Intelligence services, Pensions 352w
Supplementary benefits, West Midlands 711-2w
Wilson, Harold, Intelligence services 175
Wilson, Harold, National security 113-4w

Winterton, Mrs Ann
Questions
Midwives 291, 291w
Midwives, Manpower 292w
Midwives, Pay 292w
Midwives, Vacancies 291w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc
Business statement (18.12.86) 1365
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1430, 1434
EC Agricultural Council (17.12.86) 1224-5
Stanhope, Eric, Smallholdings (10.12.86) 672-4
Questions
Abortion, Young people 568-9w
Black economy 187w
Civil service, Management 405-6w
Dogs, Bye laws 552-6w
Early warning systems, Nimrod aircraft 163
Hotels 512w
M25, Road traffic 533w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Expenditure 1342
Sports sponsorship, Tobacco industry 1197-8
Tobacco duties 561w, 668w
VAT, Tax evasion 261w

Wolverhampton Group
Iron & steel industry (09.12.86) 313-22

Women
Dept of Education & Science 455-6w
Dept of Employment 811-2w
Dept of the Environment 431-2w
Dept of Trade & Industry, 544-5w
Dept of Transport 399-400w
Drug abuse 552w
Employment discrimination 15w
Equal opportunities 431-2w, 443w, 455-6w, 544-5w, 650-1w, 665w, 709w, 811-2w, 817-8w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 443w
Higher education 388-9w
Home Office 650-1w
Life imprisonment 652w
Police custody 298w
Prison sentences 298-9w
Prisoners 299w
Public appointments 364w
Remand in custody 299w
Skillcentres 225w
Treasury 665w
Young offenders 298w

Women's employment
Pregnancy 629-30w

Wood, Mr Timothy
Questions
Hospitals, Exhibitions 705-6w
Resource Allocation Working Party 710-1w
Trials, Northern Ireland 472w
Water pollution, Nitrates 392w

Wood preservatives 398w

Woodcock, Mr Mike
Questions
General Motors, Balance of payments 607w
Small businesses, Inner city areas 518w
Vauxhall Motors, Imports 545w
Vauxhall Motors, Motor vehicle parts 607w

Woolwich
Armed forces' married quarters 146w

Woolwich ferry 273-4w, 276w
East London river crossing 276w

Work permits
British Dependent Territories 371w

Working conditions
Unemployment benefit offices 117w

Working hours
Fire services 651w
Pharmacists 107-8w

World Health Organisation
Diet & disease 789w

World in Action 2-3w

World War II
Medals 205-6w

Wrigglesworth, Mr Ian
Debates etc
Autumn statement, 1986 (17.12.86) 1233, 1286-7
Questions
A19, Road safety barriers 42w
A174, Road safety barriers 277w
British Steel Corporation, Trade competitiveness 335
Coal fired power stations 765
Infrastructure, Investment 338
Investment income surcharge 424w
Manufacturing industries, Balance of trade 177w
Museums & galleries, Stockton 769
Select Committee evidence, Civil servants 774
Sizewell inquiry 760
Small businesses, Advisory services 1044
Tax allowances, Research 666w

Wright, Peter 1w, 316w, 442w, (15.12.86) 782-828, (17.12.86) 1230
Kinnock, Neil 772
National security 316w
Standing Order No 20 applications (17.12.86) 1230

X rays
Medical records 214w
Orthopaedics 214w
Screening 217-8w

Yarrow
Frigates 169-70
Shipbuilding 169-70

Yeo Mr Tim
Questions
Crimes of violence, Sentencing 645w
Rate support grants 577-8w

York City Council Bill (HL) 1985/86
Debates etc
2R order read (15.12.86) 757, (18.12.86) 1333

Young, Mr David
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1359
Teachers' Pay & Conditions Bill, Rem Stages (10.12.86) 364

Young, Sir George
Questions
Ealing College of Higher Education, Polytechnics 661w

Young offenders
Prisons 350-2w
Remand centres 350-2w
Remission 653w
Women 298w

Young people
Abortion 568-9w
Bows & arrows (10.12.86) 353
Community programme 1043-4
Drinking & driving 404w, 840-1w
Family planning clinics 782-4w
Industrial training 1043
Licensing laws 648w
Pay 320-1w
Wales 320-1w

Younger, Rt Hon George, *Secretary of State for Defence*
Debates etc
Early warning systems (18.12.86) 1415-23, 1427-8
Early warning systems, Ministerial statements (18.12.86) 1351-9
Questions
Assault ships, Clydesdale 181
Assault ships, Defence procurement 178-82
Assault ships, Design 182
Assault ships, Marines 181
Assault ships, Tyneside 179
Crown Proceedings Act 1947, Law reform 85-6w
Defence procurement, Billing 775-6w
Dockyards, Privatisation 164-5
Falkland Islands, Fishery protection 170
Frigates, Defence contracts 168-9
Frigates, Harland & Wolff 169
Frigates, Vosper Thornycroft 169
Frigates, Yarrow 169-70
Helicopters, Amphibious vehicles 182
NATO, US bases 138w
Warships, Defence procurement 145w

Youth custody
Sentencing (10.12.86) 357

Youth employment schemes (12.12.86) 734-46

Youth training scheme 513w
Apprentices 1042
Development aid 513w
Ethnic groups 632w, 814w
Leicester 631-2w
Manpower Services Commission 513-4w
Teignbridge 540w
Trade unions 513w

Youth unemployment
Greenock 357w
Liverpool 12-4w
Rotherham 537w
School leaving 318-9w

Zero option 117-8w
Nuclear weapons 117-8w

Zoos
Ealing 684w